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The first task for all of us here in Janata, a pleasant one, is to wish all our readers a happy 2014. In the context of national politics, the year we have just ushered in is a crucial one for the polity and the country. We begin 2014, as we have done with earlier new year arrivals, with hope laced with abundant optimism. The year we have just rung out did not meet with all our expectations. Indeed, it left us highly dissatisfied, displeased and even angry. But it has gone. Let it go.

But in its own way, it gave some shape and substance to its successor by ushering in some important changes in national politics. To those of us who had anticipated the 2014 Lok Sabha polls to be a direct contest between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (and their respective allies), the political events of 2013 came as an eye-opener. Till the elections to five state assemblies in November-December, we had assumed that a dress rehearsal was being held for the bigger round in the offing. But the emergence and consolidation of the Aam Aadmi Party(AAP) has introduced a new element in the scene and a new dimension and dynamic to national politics. The AAP has

already formed a government in Delhi. It has announced that it intends to go national and field a substantial number of candidates for Parliament. The party is not lacking in public support for its unconventional style of politics. The people at large are funding it in a surprisingly big way. Its anti-corruption crusade, initially launched under Hazare's inspiration and leadership, has caught popular imagination, which has been further fortified by the welfare measures set in by the Kejriwal government. In short, the ground has been laid, and now exists, in many states of India, for a pan-Indian entry into the national mainstream politics by the AAP.

The AAP may not make as much difference to the outcome of 2014 Lok Sabha polls to the Congress and the BJP as the Delhi polls did to them. The AAP arrived on the scene as a spoiler of the BJP's hopes of capturing the state from Sheila Dixit, and a killer of the Congress hopes of retaining Delhi for another term. It can't repeat this on a national scale and, if it snatches votes from the two major parties, as also from some regional outfits, it can be a crucial player overall in Parliament.

Between the lines

Profligate legislators

Kuldip Nayar

Narendra Modi has remained a serious contender for the top post as a BJP candidate. He has the powerful backing of the RSS, and this assures him the Hindu vote, although not in all states. Rahul Gandhi is formally entering the prime ministerial race soon. While the Modi-Rahul fight is to be formally joined, the AAP will come in with its own band, baaja and baraat. The BSP and the SP have been dominating regional politics with just less than 30 seats, selling their allegiances for a share in power to the ruling coalition. The AAP may not indulge in that game, but play another kind of interventionist politics in the name of the common man. Kejriwal as CM has become reality. Maybe, by 2019, Kejriwal as PM may also come true. In India, 2013 witnessed the politics of the improbable. In 2014, politics is bound to change under any scenario in the sense that the Congress may have a UPA 3 (anything is possible), the NDA may rule or the AAP may be sitting in the Lok Sabha as the principal opposition. That is why we said earlier that 2014 will be a momentous year of change for Indian polity and country. Democracy zindabad!

Despite the moral edge that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) movement has given to politics, a 16-member team of legislators from the Congress-ruled Karnataka in the south were determined to tour a few South American countries at government expense. It is the intervention of Congress-vice-president Rahul Gandhi, a reinvigorated person after the drubbing the party received in Rajasthan and Delhi elections, that they finally buried the trip, which was a joy ride, from the tax payers' money.

The most shocking aspect, however, is that the members going abroad were from the State Estimates Committee, entrusted with the task of saving superfluous expenditure. Representatives of both the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) constituted a team for the proposed tour. The BJP members developed sudden cold feet when some in the media criticized the junkets. The Congressmen caved in after Rahul Gandhi pointed out that the expense of Rs. 16 crore was a waste when 60 districts of the state faced drought and when more than 200 farmers had committed suicide.

The members were technically justified because the state assembly has laid down that the legislators could tour foreign countries twice in their five-year tenure. Probably, the same provision is offered to members in most other states as well. The Andhra Pradesh legislators are reportedly planning a

trip abroad. Nearer home, the Akali Dal government sent the legislators to Scotland to see how the scotch whiskey was brewed.

All such trips are considered study tours. Since the reports following the tours are not published, it is anybody's guess whether the legislators submit anything in writing at all. In fact, they are all paid holidays for pleasure, something which the government uses to placate its own members and those in the opposition. And this favour is not confined to legislators alone. Members of the committee of the Scheduled Caste and Minorities in Karnataka have just returned from a 16-day trip abroad. Their itinerary showed that they were visiting beaches, posh restaurants and pleasure resorts.

I found the same craze of going abroad among our parliamentarians. Since I was a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha, I was never included in any such trip. Because of the media, an ethics committee was sought to be set up to stop extravagant expenses. The political parties normally distributed the "study tours" among themselves. It is flabbergasting that the Language Committee members, including persons other than MPs, go to England and America every year to assess the spread of Hindi.

In fact, a phoren trip is as much a craze in India as in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The legislators there also go abroad on one pretext or

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the other. Whether it is a hangover of the 150-year colonial rule of the British or part of thoughtless expenditure of the burgeoning middle class is difficult to say. Probably, both assumptions are correct. Yet, it cannot be denied that a free foreign tour is the best “bribe” any government can offer.

Foreign countries in the West know this. Missions of the United Kingdom and the United States utilize this way to have the best of concessions. Top bureaucrats fall for “invitations” from abroad. It would be revealing to find out how many children of secretaries to the government have gone abroad on scholarships or fully paid studies. Foreign missions see to it that the children of highly-placed people are given pre-travel and full expenses on board and lodging in schools, colleges or other educational institutions.

Unfortunately, bureaucrats are falling prey to the generous hospitality of foreign missions. Since booze is free and flows like water, you can spot out top officials at parties of minor officials of foreign missions. This greed is nothing new. It has been there since a few years after independence.

India’s first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru was so shocked by the presence of secretaries to the government at parties of third secretaries in foreign missions that he issued a circular to instruct that the top officials should respond to invitations of only foreign officials of equivalent status. As days went by, the violations of the circular increased. Today it is free, for all. Invitations are sought even by MPs. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

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The real face of politics

Rajindar Sachar

Lok Sabha elections are due in four or five months. But instead of parties putting forth ideological issues such as human rights or right to equitable development, the only test being applied is the marketability of the party, even though it may flout the ideal laid down in our Constitution or the vision of the freedom struggle.

Though the Lokpal Bill has been passed under the shadow of forthcoming elections, both parties made adjustments they previously proclaimed not possible. But two other legislations — the Whistleblowers Protection Bill and the Public Grievances Bill — which have been pending for so long and would have given great relief against bureaucrats’ angularities, were not even given the courtesy of being discussed, much less being passed with just a day’s extension of the Parliament session.

The self-serving political parties’ exemption from the Right to Information Act was passed unanimously to a thundering applause. Significantly, the question of donation to political parties by the corporate sector is being studiously kept under cover. It is no longer a secret that the amount of donations to political parties is determined by the fact whether they are in power or in the opposition.

The High-Powered Committee to revise the Companies Act constituted in 1977 had recommended the continuation of the ban on political donations by the corporate sector because of the warning given by

Chief Justice Chagla as far back as 1958, when it warned that “any attempt on the part of business houses to finance a political party is likely to contaminate the very spring of democracy”. All this, however, fell on deaf ears of politicians and political donations were permitted after some time during Indira Gandhi’s rule. These have now been continued under the Companies Act, 2013. So much for the campaign against politics messed by money power! That is why corporate funding of the new Aam Aadmi Party, which is forming the government in Delhi, is a matter of concern, especially when it claims to be different. The danger of corporate involvement in politics is not lessened by receiving contributions through a website or cheques from the corporate sector, which in any case finds mention in balance sheets of the companies. It is the source of the money funding political parties that is the real danger to democracy. How it is displayed is a small matter.

India is among just 10 per cent of the countries that allow parties and candidates to receive anonymous donations. Even Nepal and Bhutan fare better. Of Rs 2,365 crore raised by the Congress between 2004 and 2012, about Rs 2,000 crore could not be traced to an individual or organisation. Similarly, the BJP attributed Rs 952 crore out of the total Rs 1,304 crore raised between 2004 and 2012 to unknown sources.

Hypocrisy in politics to some extent is accepted. But when hypocrisy takes on the role of

mentor while concealing its real intentions, it amounts to cheating the electorate. Look at the way the BJP and the Congress are projecting their approach to the judgment of the Supreme Court reversing the view of the Delhi High Court, which had held Section 377 as unconstitutional, resulting in the section being restored on the Statute.

Initially, Congress leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi both publically termed it an unhappy decision and interference in individual liberties. The normal course of action would have been to have Section 377 (LGBT) repealed through Parliament. But then the BJP, which had initially broached the idea of placing this matter before all parties, took a sudden reverse turn and openly declared its support to the Supreme Court decision. Obviously, the BJP feels that in the country at large, especially amongst rural voters and even among the older generation, deletion of Section 377 would not find favour. The BJP has taken the cover of the Supreme Court order to retain Section 377.

The Congress hypocrisy is even messier. The Central government has moved a review petition in the Supreme Court against the order upholding Section 377. Filing a review petition is a way of misleading the public. Legal experts would tell you that filing a review is impermissible because courts have held that merely because another view could be taken is no ground for review. It is also embarrassing when out of two judges who gave the judgment, the senior judge has retired. I do not understand why the government

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Apartheid of the world unite!

K. S. Chalam

Nelson Mandela, the indomitable hero of anti-apartheid movement of the world passed away recently marking the end of an era. Nations and groups that are discriminated, humiliated, disgraced and exploited in their homeland by hostile and crooked settlers breathed a sigh of relief after the fall of white empire in the form of colonialism. Yet, it is still acted in the form of globalisation and is openly co-opting groups and forces that are akin to the philosophy of apartheid or Jim Crow. The so-called neo-colonialism or globalisation has been made popular due to several institutions and support structures that were non-existent during the eighteenth century. We have now World Bank, IMF, WTO and a host of NGOs and some civil society organisations, with the mission of carrying the message of globalisation, are very active in most of the countries. India has been considered as a non-aligned country and was in the company of nations that were fighting the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxons during the Nehruvian era. It is now part of history and we have a different category of scholars and rulers who pounce on anyone who attempts to critically evaluate the globalisation policies. It is in this context that the Devayani episode surfaced recently.

The Hans India English daily has published two episodes, one on the front page and the other prominently on the fifth page of nineteenth December. Both are interrelated. The former is on "India shields Devayani" and the latter relates

to "Dalit raped as her son marries upper caste girl". The victims in the incidents hail from educated dalit groups of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh respectively. This reflects the contemporary social reality which most of our intellectuals and experts refuse to recognise. It is also a warning signal to the exuberant Dalit capitalists that money and power do not get them a visa in to mainstream and might ultimately make them to prostrate before racial and caste hierarchies. Interestingly, the U S officers who are associated with Devayani arrest, Preetinder Bharara, Nisha Biswal and others being Indian born upper caste American citizens, questioned on the social media as prejudiced. Strangely, the socialite and progressive commentators of a particular group pampered by media in Delhi have voiced diverse opinions, saying that it is competitive politics that make the issue trivial. Is it true?

The Devayani case has become so popular today that everyone knows her as a Deputy Consular General of India in New York was handcuffed, strip-searched and placed in a cell of the court house on 12th December on charges of underpayment of wages to her maid. Her father in India, a retired civil servant shattered after the news of his daughter being subjected to cavity search, perhaps was reminiscent about the Khairlanji incident in his state where the Bothmange women were given similar treatment and killed in 2006. Since it has happened in the USA, the most civilized country of the world, the naughty boy being

Uncle Sam, the treatment is perhaps little sophisticated. But the episode is evocative of America mimicking India in social norms while India is copying their economic structure. This way both the nations are benefitted helping about 30 lakh Indians settling down with nearly 30 Indian-American officers in US administration, exchange of agents, etc. After an African American, the MNCs and Jim Crow operators, it is reported, would try an Indian born Bania as their next Presidential candidate. This appears to be unique and reformist in a market economy, USA. But, there seem to be something beyond that. I had a mistaken impression that America was only an extension of Europe without the Atlantic sea, is now seen accommodating nations that are geographically far off but similar in taste and mindset. Thanks to globalisation, this is a great boon to India and a windfall to USA.

We do not know why the Ministry of External Affairs and the political establishment reacted leisurely one week after the incident. It is increasingly believed now that Diplomats and other staff postings have become political appointments and the poor bureaucrats in the MEA are helpless. In fact, the ministry is still following archaic structures with little support from the IAS dominated bureaucracy (some allege) with modest cadre of IFSs. It is contended by some of the officers that the missions abroad do work under great economic strain, shortage of staff and insufficient allowances. There are cases of indiscipline and corruption charges against a few diplomats including career ambassadors who were suspended/ dismissed from service. We know very little about the kind of politics and diplomatic games

played by some of the seasoned and influential personnel of our missions abroad with political links to occupy important positions in government on return from external assignments or after retirement. Some experts of international relations feel that there is a need to review the edifice of the ministry in view of the change in the functions of our missions, overburdened with more economic and business issues and less of customary roles. Naturally, there is a possibility of disharmony of interests leading to acrimonious incidents. Devyani case is not the first incident in the USA, her predecessor Prabhu Dayal from whom she took charge was subjected to similar charges in 2011 and Neena Malhotra in 2012. It is contended that none of them is given the kind of treatment that this elite dalit girl was subjected to.

There are fascinating interpretations about the incident in our media. There are also denunciations and aspersions on Devayani mentioning about her social background and the treatment given to Sangeeta Richards, the Tai (Nanny). But, the fact of the matter is the US government, particularly the Indian born American attorney, Bharara who is reported to have claimed that "America's law is law for the rest of the world" did not use it against the Russian diplomats for medical insurance fraud. The social media is flooded with cases of similar nature that were disregarded in the past. An interaction with some Hispanics in Tampa (Florida) recently gave us an account of how the US economy survives particularly in the semi-skilled jobs, with millions of underpaid undocumented residents. Of course, the law enforcement agencies in the US give us an impression that they are very strict and the legal

system relies heavily on the trained attorneys in the market. It is here we got a hitch how the Richards seem to have approached private attorneys in the US to get out of the hands of Devayani on the way to acquire the Green card. This is one of the routes many non-residents use to change their status from illegal to legal category, making in the process the naïve personnel of the foreign missions becoming casualties of greed. Or, it could be, as Devyani's father claims that the Richards being adept employees of the American mission in Delhi bowed as CIA agents. The way the Richards were evacuated from Delhi by the American embassy just before the arrest of Devyani is anybody's conjecture.

The incident as some commentators claim is an indication of the end of an era of Bush-Man Mohan Singh friendship in our relations with USA. But Man Mohan Singh was immediate in his reaction to this saying it is "deplorable". We may go beyond this and see the implausible hidden message. The globalisation project jointly operated with Indo-US and some other countries is encouraging every sundry person, particularly from Asia to enter USA, steal their jobs and get the advantage of differential pay/wage. It may be taken as a case to send a strong message that no one particularly the diplomatic community in New York could take liberty with US laws and play with their domestic helps. That is alright, but why a Dalit diplomat who married an American citizen with two children is subjected to this treatment? After all what is globalisation without free movement of labour? Is it only to facilitate free flow of finance capital?

We can see a veiled strategy facilitating the fusion of races/ castes that subscribe to self-interest, inequality and discrimination under globalisation passed off as values of merit and efficiency. The irony is that how the minority of settlers/ outsiders as in India, impose such measures on the majority natives? Are they justified in picking Indians with different social backgrounds in the present case as their experimental group?

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should issue a circular on the lines Nehru had done.

But I have lost hope after seeing the manner in which the Government of India has suffered humiliation at the hands of the State Department. Devyani Khorbragade was handcuffed and put in jail to share the cell with criminals. Secretary of State John Kerry has refused to tender an apology on the incident. It has now been found that she enjoyed the full diplomatic immunity when she was arrested. I am not surprised because of America's arrogance of power. President Obama, who looked different initially, has become part of the establishment. He does not either evoke confidence or hope. He should have himself rung up Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to express remorse.

The loss is that of America's. The Indians were beginning to feel that the US was different from the rest of West. That impression has dissipated. Washington may talk of strategic ties and New Delhi may reciprocate to be on the same page with the biggest power. But this relationship will stay at the official level only. People of India will remain distant. For

them, the treatment meted out to Devyani has little to do with the diplomatic niceties. They consider it as an instance of the weight that Washington throws about. The persistence in prosecuting Devyani says it all.

The entire case began when Devyani was not paying her domestic servant the wages as per the US laws. I recall when I was

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is taking the tortuous route of review when a straightforward easy course of repealing this provision is available. I say this because the Supreme Court judgment had given them clear power when it said: "Notwithstanding this verdict, the competent legislature shall be free to consider the desirability and propriety of deleting Section 377, IPC, from the Statute Book". When this convenient solution is in hand why this double game of Congress leadership?

This is not being done because the Congress is both running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The party wants to present itself as modern and liberal, appealing to the younger generation and urban population, but at the same time does not want to risk angering the rural and older generation. This may be a good political stratagem, but is a devious strategy, which brings more shame to the ambiguous conduct of the politicians. Compare this with the humility and bold response of Pope Francis: "If a person is gay and seeks God and goodwill, who am I to judge him;" and this when Italy has a law against LGBTs.

Though AAP claims to be radically different from other

parties, its decision to have the Cabinet sworn in at Ramlila Ground is the same as the old feudal Roman practice of giving the people circus because you cannot give them bread. There is nothing radical about it. The likes of Akhilesh Yadav and Lalu Yadav have done it earlier. Such coronation does not befit a party purporting to speak for the rickshaw-pullers and slum-dwellers of Delhi. It would be far more democratic if the Delhi Cabinet after having been sworn in at Raj Bhawan in the usual staid manner were then to go to Ram Lila Ground and mix with the crowds as before. That would give the aam admi a greater sense of belonging than being pushed around by the police while the oath is being taken and dignitaries are seated safely.

The times have changed since when Dr. Lohia's precept to the Socialist Party as the first principle of political work was summed up in 'Spade, jail and vote', meaning field work, readiness to go to jail and faith in democratic elections. The present generation has come a long way to 'SMS, TV and middle corporate sector'. Where does the aam admi, i.e., 90 per cent of the urban Indians who spend less than Rs 142.70 a day to survive, fit in the present new political language?

Though AAP claims to be radically different from other

No roadblocks for AAP agenda

Nitish Chakravarty

The Aam Aadmi Party's week-old minority government winning the confidence vote in the Delhi Legislative Assembly was neither a big nor a small surprise. Assured of Congress support, the fledgling AAP government was in no danger of losing the confidence vote. Sure of defeat the opposition did not press for a division; only a headcount settled the matter. In the event the AAP is unlikely to face any roadblocks for the coming six months in pursuing the agenda it had set for itself in the run-up to the December elections. The rules of business in the Assembly do not allow a no-confidence motion being tabled until after six months from the date such a motion is dealt with in the House. An opportunity for the opposition to confront the government may however arise during the budget debate and consideration of the finance bill.

The BJP's insinuation that the AAP had struck a quid pro quo deal with the Congress to stay in power is no different from the pot calling the kettle black. The BJP backed out of government formation when it became crystal clear that with 32 MLAs in its kitty – four more than the Aam Aadmi Party's 28 – it had no chance of gaining the support of at least four more legislators needed to win a trust vote in the 70-member Assembly. AAP leaders never made any overtures to any party to back them in ministry making. They made history by going in for a referendum to gauge the people's views on the AAP climbing to power without a legislative majority. The people responded with an affirmative verdict.

The Congress chose to back the confidence motion not out of altruistic intentions but for its survival in Delhi politics. The Congress was left with no choice but to stand up along with the AAP legislators on the floor of the Delhi Assembly. As I see it, the reason for the Congress volunteering to support the AAP government is two-fold: first, its mascot Rahul Gandhi's giving the fight against corruption top priority in the Congress party's new agenda would be perceived as an eyewash if the Congress denies support to the AAP whose Jan Lokpal slogan has dramatically changed the country's politics; and second, many Congressmen fear that the Aam Aadmi wave can turn its fate far worse in the event of fresh elections in the short run in Delhi.

A couple of the Congress party's eight MLAs and a few of its senior leaders – Sheila Dikshit among the latter – were reluctant to give the AAP a carte blanche, Mrs. Dikshit, who may have a lot to answer for some questionable decisions she made as chief minister, put a rider on the Congress offer of support to the AAP. There was nothing like unconditional support in politics and this would depend on performance, she declared. What was her authority to impose conditions she alone knows, for after the elections she holds no position in the Congress party.

The BJP's floor leader, Dr. Harshvardhan's jibe that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had reneged on his "solemn pledge" not to buy any other party's support for the sake of grabbing power was an obvious misstatement. His other insinuation against the AAP

government that it had not honoured its promise to put corrupt ministers of the previous regime behind bars was equally illogical. Chief Minister Kejriwal and his cabinet colleagues have taken historic pro-people steps within a couple of days of coming to power. In politics a week is said to be a long time; what they have done within the first week of office has raised the benchmark for performance by public functionaries.

Mr. Kejriwal was himself in the thick of the movement to fight corruption in the Delhi Jal Board, a government undertaking for water supply, and in the private sector companies which took over the supply of electricity in the national capital. He tore up what were perceived to be highly inflated electricity and water bills sent to consumers and advised them not to pay up. Much to the delight of lakhs of consumer a drastic reduction has already been made in the prices of water and electricity payable by consumer households. And on the corruption front, the decision to get the account books of the three main power distribution companies audited by the Comptroller General of Audit and Accounts is expected to throw light on many a shady deal.

The chances are that many skeletons will tumble out of cupboards in the coming weeks. No wonder those who have a lot to hide are perturbed. Even as public support for the AAP is steadily increasing, there is no dearth of paid mercenaries willing to harm them. In such a scenario Arvind Kejriwal will be well advised to rethink the threat perception. God may not approve of their decision to leave their security in His hands.

Why I am not in AAP?

Sandeep Pandey

Some friends are calling to suggest that I should join Aam Aadmi Party while others want to know whether they should join. Some think that I am close to AAP and want me to recommend their names as candidate for the next general elections from their respective constituencies while some experts of different fields are offering their services for the benefit of schemes for poor to be implemented by AAP in Delhi. One policewoman called me to beseech that Arvind Kejriwal should accept security as she thought, with her experience of having watched politicians from close quarters, they cannot be trusted.

I am not in AAP because Justice Rajindar Sachar, when he revived the Socialist Party in 2011, asked me to join it. This is the party of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev, Achyut Patwardhan and others which had merged with Janata Party in 1977. I was also part of People's Political Front, which was formed by Kuldip Nayar before the last general elections. I am devoting my energies to build both the Socialist Party as well as the PPF, which brings together about a dozen small parties. Now I think that just because AAP has become successful I should not leave my organizations and join it. We have to remember that the political culture that we wish to cleanse includes defecting from one party to another when one sees greener pastures. That is why law against defection had to be enacted. Of course, the option of alliance when there is agreement in ideology and working style is open.

But the main reason why I am not in AAP is because AAP's focus is on corruption whereas I think that the central issue for our society as well as globally is inequality. So long as we are not able to build a society where every human being respects another human being to the same extent that he/she expects for himself(herself) from others we'll not have a humane society. This will not be achieved by merely getting rid of corruption or establishing swarajya.

Let us assume that in Arvind Kejriwal's rule corruption has been totally banished. There is not a single paisa of bribe being given or taken. Let us also assume that people directly participate in every decision making through gram sabhas or mohalla sabhas, i.e., swarajya has been established. Will we be satisfied then?

What will happen to the caste based discrimination? Will every rich be willing to sit beside the poor? Will every woman feel safe and there will be total end of patriarchy? Will there be end to violence? Will half the children, victims of malnutrition and therefore school dropouts, start receiving full nutritious meals as well as be able to attend schools of the quality, which children of rich go to? Will a poor be able to receive treatment of the same quality which a rich can buy in private hospitals?

AAP has promised to halve the electricity bill but what about those who are yet to be connected to the grid and probably will never get connected? We simply don't produce

enough electricity in this country for everybody because we don't have enough resources. The rich and the poor in the service of rich will get it and but not every poor. If we don't find a cleaner alternative to thermal power soon, the situation of paucity is not going to change in near future.

Water is a natural resource and meant to fulfill basic needs of all human beings. The government or any private company doesn't have any right to sell it. It is government's responsibility that all human beings get as much water as they need for drinking, irrigation, bathing, clothes washing, etc. But water should not be wasted in swimming pools, water parks, golf fields and other big lawns, etc. In fact, there should be a ban on private installation of water pumps except for the purpose of irrigation. If this happens there will be no need to place a limit on water usage. When farmers adopt organic farming the need for water for irrigation will also reduce.

Since we want to build a humane society which will not have any place for violence and we dream of creating a weapons free world - at the level of individual as well as nations. Hence, Socialist Party has decided that its members should not just not discriminate among human beings, be against all forms of corruption but also believe in the concept of security without weapons. Brave people like Arvind Kejriwal don't feel the need for weapons for their security.

AAP's foundation is based on the concept of nationalism. The popular
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Amendment of RTI Act

The amendment made in the RTI Act by the Parliament that proposed to keep political parties outside its ambit has been approved by the Parliamentary Committee, entrusted with the task of reviewing it despite much opposition from civil society organizations and citizens.

In a landmark decision on June 3, 2013, the Central Information Commission (CIC) pronounced that the political parties (INC, BJP, CPM, CPI, NCP and BSP) are public authorities under section 2(h) of the RTI Act. The Government brought an amendment to the RTI Act excluding political parties from its ambit.

However, due to mounting public pressure, the Parliament chose to refer the Bill to the Parliamentary Committee, which invited suggestions on the proposed amendment to the RTI Act. Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) was one of the organizations which made its submission apart from NCPRI, MKSS, Subhash Chandra Agarwal and Shailesh Gandhi among others. All of them strongly objected to the amendment.

Rejecting Parliamentary Committee's nod to the amendment, Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar, one of founder members and trustees of ADR, said, "*The committee has not given any logical reasoning for its recommendation in its report. Excluding political parties from RTI Act is unconstitutional. It is odd to argue that transparency is good for all state organs but not for political parties, which in reality control all the vital organs of the state.*"

Expressing a similar view, Shailesh Gandhi, ex-CIC, stated, "*The*

standing committee doesn't appear to have taken into account objections to the RTI amendments submitted by the civil society organizations. No arguments have been given in the report which indicate that the committee has noted our objections. It is obvious that no reasons were taken to counter our views before suggesting construing citizen's fundamental rights."

Subhash Agarwal stated, "*Report of Parliamentary standing committee recommending that CIC-verdict holding political parties being covered by RTI Act is not justified because according to the committee it was not intent of legislature to cover political parties under the transparency Act. There are many bodies claiming not covered under RTI Act but are declared public-authorities by Information Commissions and even endorsed by High Courts as public-authorities. None of such bodies were 'intended' specifically by the legislature to be covered under RTI Act. Surprisingly, the committee has overruled Attorney General's advice that any legislative step against CIC-verdict may be struck down by courts. It is not appropriate that it may become compulsory to involve precious time of Supreme Court in every matter to get things done in public interest.*"

Anjali Bhardwaj from NCPRI also questioned the Parliamentary Committee's approval to the Bill, saying, "*NCPRI has consistently held that the proposed amendment to RTI Act is unconstitutional. Political Parties ought to be covered as public authorities under the RTI Act. There is no rationale for people who made the law to keep themselves out of its ambit. We feel there are adequate*

exemptions under section 8 of the Act. The law doesn't need any amendment."

Justifying its decision to amend the Bill the Government said – *The political parties are neither established nor constituted by or under the Constitution or by any other law made by Parliament.*

An authority or body does not require to be established or constituted by or under the constitution or any other law made by the Parliament, to be called a public authority. According to Section 2(h) of RTI Act, *an organisation that is 'substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government' can also fall under the category of public authority.*

The Government also claimed – *"There are already provisions in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 as well as in the Income-tax Act, 1961 which deal with the transparency in the financial aspects of political parties and their candidates."*

However, an analysis by Association for Democratic Reform (ADR) of Income Tax returns for six National Political Parties and the statements filed by them with the Election Commission show that *over 75% of the funds cannot be traced and are from 'unknown' sources.*

Another point made by the government was – *Declaring a political party as public authority under the RTI Act would hamper its smooth internal working. Further, the political rivals may misuse the provisions of RTI Act.*

Modi pro-corporate

The above-mentioned claim of the Government does not hold much ground as the *RTI Act has enough built in protection in the form of the section 8- "Exemption from disclosure of information."*

The Parliamentary Committee observed that *none of the six political parties, who happened to be respondent to CIC Order of 3rd June, 2013, has challenged the order in the higher judiciary which is a case of misrepresentation of a clear provision of law."*

However, the correct and the established practice for a party aggrieved by a decision made by the CIC, is to go to the High Court to challenge the CIC's decision. If this is a case of 'misrepresentation of a clear provision of law' there is no necessity of an amendment of the law.

—ADR

(Continued from Page 8)

slogans of AAP are *Bharat Mata ki Jai and Vande Mataram*. We believe that concept of nationhood is as divisive as that of caste and religion. The security of nations is ensured by relations with neighbours based on trust and not by nuclear weapons.

It is because of abovementioned differences in some of these basic ideological issues and also because of the corporate style functioning of AAP where people are being associated not on the basis of human relationships but because of their utility value, a person like me doesn't feel comfortable being part of AAP. However since AAP is out to change the decadent political culture of this country it has our full support and we wish it will rid the politics of this country of corruption and criminalization.

National Alliance for People's Movements (NAPM) convener Medha Patkar has said the model of development promoted by BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi is clearly pro-corporate.

Addressing a meet-the-press programme, she said the Modi model of development was not different from the one promoted by the Manmohan Singh-Chidambaram-Montek Singh Ahluwalia combination.

We need to be cautious and careful while exercising our franchise. The reality after elections may be vastly different from the manifestoes prepared and the promises delivered," she said.

She alleged that Shri Modi was increasingly uttering lies about the Sardar Sarovar dam project.

She alleged that debates and controversies over the Lavasa project and reports of Western Ghats panels, and subsequent developments had led to the resignation of Environment Minister, Jayanthi Natarajan. "Earlier, Jairam Ramesh too had faced the same. Anyone who tries to revive environmental regulations will be shown the door. Anyone who is pro-corporate is in," she said.

She criticized Maharashtra Governor K. Sankaranarayanan for refusing sanction to the CBI to prosecute former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan in the Adarsh housing scam.

"The Maharashtra Cabinet had rejected the report of a judicial commission on the scam. All these have the support of Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi," she added.

She said the union and State governments should accept the

report of the western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP), chaired by Madhav Gadgil. "Instead of convincing the people of the recommendations of WGEEP, the government had appointed the Kasturirangan-led high-level working group (HLWG) to review the Gadgil report. The NAPM demands that the Union government should reject the Kasturirangan report as it has violated the terms of reference and subverted the concept of decentralization and participatory development upheld by the Gadgil report. A division of Western Ghats, with two thirds of it as cultural landscape, will result in its further degradation," she said.

She called for an end to the false propaganda that people who lived in the Western Ghats would be evicted from their land and livelihood if the Gadgil committee report was implemented. She said the Left parties had taken an unscientific stance on the issue.

"The NAPM demands withdrawal of proposals for airports in the Western Ghats region of Wayanad and Idukki". The government must take immediate steps to stop all illegal activities in the Ghats, including mining and quarrying," she added.

She described high-speed rail corridors, privatization of national highways and the proposed Aranmula airport as anti-people activities.

She called for the closure of Nitta Gelatin India Limited (NGIL), a company based in Kathikudam, that faced allegations of environmental pollution.

—Special Correspondent

Communal violence in 2013

Irfan Engineer

The year 2013 was worse than 2012 from the standpoint of communal violence. According to the Home Ministry data released in the National Integration Council meeting, 107 people were killed in communal riots across the country, which includes 66 Muslims and 41 Hindus in 479 incidents of communal violence this year. Apart from those killed, 1,697 people including 794 Hindus, 703 Muslims and 200 policemen were injured. Bihar saw 40 communal disturbances, 25 incidents of tension-like situation and recorded nine deaths - five Hindus and four Muslims. Among the injured, 123 were Hindus, 66 Muslims and 19 police officials.

Gujarat reported 6 deaths (3 Muslims and 3 Hindus.) 147 injured (85 Hindus, 57 Muslims and 5 policemen) in 64 incidents of communal violence this year (up from 5 deaths and 500 injured last year). Incidents wise, Gujarat is next only to UP, while number of people killed in communal violence in Bihar is higher than Gujarat.

UP recorded the highest casualties until October 2013 at 62 deaths, of which 42 victims were Muslims and 20 Hindus in 93 riots and 108 incidents of communal tension (ToI dtd. 14.12.13 reports 95 deaths in UP in 500 incidents). Communal conflict in Muzaffarnagar alone witnessed 53 deaths. A total of 219 Muslims and 134 Hindus were injured. According to Indian Express dtd 18-10-13, in Muzaffarnagar riots 62 people died – 46 Muslims and 16 Hindus.

In 2012, the country had witnessed 93 deaths - 48 Muslims, 44 Hindus

and one police official – in 640 incidents of communal violence. 2,067 people were injured, including 1,010 Hindus, 787 Muslims, 222 police officials and 48 others. Though the number of communal incidents reduced from 640 in 2012 to 479, the number of deaths increased from 93 to 107. In the year 2012 also, UP had recorded the highest number of deaths (39) in 117 incidents of communal violence, in which 20 Hindus and 19 Muslims were killed. Among the injured, 266 were Hindus, 197 Muslims and 25 police officials. This shows that with fewer incidents, and less spread out riots, the rioters were more angry or better armed and organized, or both.

The other factor behind higher fatality of riots is the approaching Lok Sabha elections in 2014 and mobilization of voters along caste and communal lines. Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP, got his trusted lieutenant Amit Shah appointed as in-charge of UP State. Amit Shah soon visited the site of demolished Babri Masjid and prayed for construction of Ramjanmabhoomi Temple – revisiting the communal agenda of construction of Ram temple with the intention of communal polarization ahead of general elections. The Sangh Parivar next tried to promote communal polarization by organizing chauryasi kosi parikrama of Ayodhya, something that is not even a tradition, and timing wise, the only justification would be forthcoming elections. For over a year, the Sangh Parivar stigmatized love between a Muslim boy and a Hindu girl as “love jihad”. Unsubstantiated allegations of

love jihad – a figment of imagination of course – is supposed to mean that every love of a Hindu girl by a Muslim boy is a conspiracy for which the Muslim boy receives a handsome amount and the Hindu girl suffers. The reverse – love between a Muslim girl and a Hindu boy – of course is not a conspiracy because Hindu boys are supposed to be only virtuous. Baseless and in fact obnoxious propaganda was carried out through leaflets. The written word in large sections of Indian society is unfortunately considered as proof. Muslims as a community therefore appear as bundle of evil lot, even when some of them are not terrorists.

Relentless campaign was carried on regarding “illegal immigration from Bangladesh” and practically the whole Bengali speaking Muslim community in Assam State, Delhi, Mumbai and other places was branded as illegal Bangladeshis. In addition to AASU, the Bodo leaders in Bodoland areas are also now accusing their neighbours since generations to be illegal Bangladeshis. Anti-cow slaughter campaigns have been used very effectively in Gujarat, MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and to some extent, in Maharashtra. Sangh Parivar linked vigilante having links with police personnel regularly stop cattle being transported and whenever either the driver or owner of the vehicle, or the owner of the cattle is a Muslim, then hefty bribes are asked for and on refusal, the cattle is ceased calling in the police, the Muslim owner or driver beaten up. Media contacts publicising the event

as Muslims were illegally taking cows slaughter house. Regular news of Muslims illegally slaughtering cow, a religiously revered animal makes them object of hatred. These issues are in addition to traditional propaganda like “all terrorists are Muslims”, “Muslims are loyal to Pakistan”, “Muslim population is growing at an alarming rate due to polygamy and they would soon be a majority in the country” etc. This continuous propaganda and mobilization around the above issues contributed towards higher fatality during communal riots. The riots also appear to be better planned and rioters better armed as compared to 2012. The culpability of the Sangh Parivar is clear from the fact that in Bihar, there were 17 incidents of communal violence in 4 weeks after breakup of the alliance with the BJP and 24 incidents 6 weeks after the break up.

In the year 2013, the Sangh Parivar used both methods to polarize communally – shock and awe, as well as low intensity conflicts. The examples of shock and awe seem to Muzaffarnagar and Kishtwar where as the others, as we shall see below were low intensity, particularly in MP and Gujarat. In UP, students of Darul Uloom Deoband and Nadwatul Ulama were regularly attacked while travelling in train or outside their campus during the entire year with Urdu press carrying the reports, besides Indian Express dtd 9/9/2013. This year, restaurants became additional sites of conflict – in Dhule, Jalgaon (Maharashtra) and Nawada (Bihar). Social media was used ‘effectively’ in addition to rumours to mobilize the rioting mob on streets. Sangeet Som, BJP MLA was arrested and charged for circulating a fake MMS purportedly depicting Muslims beating up Sachin and Gaurav who later died. The video clip was

actually pertaining to an incident in Pakistan. The video clip was widely circulated through WhatsApp and MMS. Without any doubt, the circulation of the video clip added towards large mobilization of Jats in their Mahapanchayat and the brutality that was witnessed during Muzaffarnagar riots, which included the brutal sexual assaults. A woman was dismembered into two and a ten year old’s head was smashed and 13 of the 53 bodies on which post mortem was carried on were beyond recognition. Maximum charred bodies came from Phugana (Sunday ToI dtd 15-9-13). After Gujarat in 2002, this appears to be the first time when sexual assaults were used with brutality as a weapon.

Women’s organizations visiting Muzaffarnagar reported several incidents of rape, however, the women assaulted were not ready to complain. A team with Farah Nazqvi and several other members that visited relief camps in Muzaffarnagar and other riot affected areas reported “The team heard accounts of sexual assault on women of varying degrees of brutality – from tearing clothes to rape and gang rape. We gathered first-person testimonies from two young women who spoke with great difficulty and trauma about gang rape being committed on them. Several girls spoke of their clothes being torn off. These were difficult testimonies to elicit, for the women were frightened and spoke about ‘their honour’ and ‘family honour’ and, at this stage, no one we met wants to go public or pursue a legal criminal case of sexual violence. We heard reports that many families had sent young girls who were assaulted away to relatives’ homes. They did not want them to be in the camp, or for the stories to spread. There is an urgent need for women’s rights activists to spend time in these camps and help

create an environment of trust and security in which women may be able to speak freely and seek help, justice and restitution.”

The other very disturbing pattern was the spread of communal polarization to rural areas in Muzaffarnagar. The Jats and Muslims, largely from backward castes share the same culture and speak the same dialect. They shared strong bonds of harmony for ages and fought with unity against the Britishers right from the first war of Independence. The backward class Muslims in Western UP did not respond enthusiastically to the Pakistan movement. Sir Syed too was not enthusiastic to spread his Aligarh Movement for education of Muslims among this class of Muslims. The campaign on love jihad stigmatizing Muslims, and the bahu beti bachao (save daughter-in-law and daughter) campaign persuaded Jats, who maintain strict control over their women, to believe that their women are under threat from the predating Muslims. It is ironic that the khap panchayats (caste based organizations that strictly enforce marital relations) known for maintaining strict control over women in the family and resort to honour killing of their daughters should name their campaign as bahu beti bachao muhim. These campaigns, nevertheless, “succeeded” in creating anti-Muslim consciousness. Scores minor incidents and skirmishes took place between the Jats and Muslims over teasing women, a common incident in patriarchal and feudal society. The incidents in which Shahnawaz was killed by Sachin and Gaurav also emanated from the allegation of teasing their sister and then, Sachin and Gaurav were killed. This enabled the BJP to hijack the Jat Mahapanchayat which metamorphosed into Hindu

Mahapanchayat. The spread of riots in 4 districts in rural areas is devastating new trend. The displaced Muslims are still not able to return to their villages.

Seven people were killed in police firing (7 in Dhule – all Muslims) and one died in Tonk (Rajasthan) due to injuries sustained when police entered mosque and subjected namazis to baton charge. Several policemen were also injured in line of their duty. The police were able to contain and prevent only a few riots while they were either mute spectators or participants in the rest. In Dhule and Tonk, the casualties were solely due to police rather than rioters and victims of police brutality in both the cases were Muslims.

The theatre of communal violence was in Maharashtra, Gujarat, MP, UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K and Assam i.e. mainly West and North.

Statewise break up of some incidents of communal violence:

Maharashtra:

In Maharashtra, 11 people were killed and 271 injured in 64 incidents of communal violence until October this year. Seven of the 11 killed were from the minority community. Of the injured, 101 were Hindus, 106 Muslims and 64 police officials (figures given by the Central Govt. during the National Integration Council meeting).

Year	Incidents	Dead	Injured
2013	64	11	285
2012	84	15	280
2011	88	15	342
2010	117	16	290

The communal violence in 2013 started with Dhule in Maharashtra. On 6th January 2013, a Muslim auto driver had an argument with Kishore

Wagh, owner of a restaurant in Madhavpur near Machchi bazaar in the heart of Dhule over nonpayment of a Rs 30 bill. Wagh hit the driver on his face with a ladle. Bleeding profusely, auto driver went to the police chowki, a 100 yards away, but they turned him away. The driver returned with a dozen or so youth, only to find that the crowd near the restaurant had also swelled. Stone pelting began from both sides. The police chowki, like a kiosk, was in the middle. The constables ran away. The Muslim mob pulled out the furniture and papers from the chowki, made a pile on the road and set fire to it. Police arrived and their fire was directed only on the Muslims. Six Muslims were shot dead and more than 229 people, including 113 policemen, were injured. Four of them, including a minor, were shot in the back, while one received a bullet in his neck. Muslim houses and shops, within a stone's throw from the police formation, were looted and gutted almost under police supervision.

A Maharashtra Police report on the January 6 Dhule riots in the state indicted cops of firing "in excess" and without following the procedures. Six policemen were arrested on February 8 and two have been suspended based on the report, which states that the suspended policemen looted and vandalised property in the area.

On 5th February 2013 at 5.30 pm there was tension following communal clashes in Lonar town in Buldhana district. The District is known for its hot water spring in. One person from majority community died while being treated in hospital. Spread of riots was prevented by combing operations and increasing police reinforcements. Five people were arrested (Sahafat Daily, dtd. 7/2/ 2013).

On 13-6-2013, curfew was imposed in Saudagaon (Raver Tehsil, Jalgaon Dist.) following clashes between two communities during which shops and vehicles were scorched. 7 persons were injured in the clashes. A small dispute in a hotel turned into heated arguments and soon members of the two groups pulled out sharp weapons and resorted to stoning each other. Police arrested 20 people. (Sahafat, 14-6-2013)

On 18/8/13 there were communal clashes in Mumbai over collection of donation for Ganeshotsav in Agripada area. Shiv Sainiks insisted on contribution of a certain amount for the festival from a Muslim vendor who expressed his inability due to poor business. This led to clashes. Two policemen were injured while trying to control the situation.

Rajasthan:

Communal riots broke out in Sawa village, a Muslim majority village in Chittorgarh, on 28/6/2013 following a road accident in which one person was crushed to death by a dumper. Large crowd gathered after the incident and burnt the dumper and demanded compensation. There are many China clay mines in the region and their dumpers ply regularly through Sawa village on its way to Gujarat. The rash driving by dumper drivers led to pent up anger among the residents. The mine owners mobilized their forces and burnt shops in the village. 22 persons from minority community, including sarpanch of the village and 12 persons from majority community were arrested. One person was injured in police firing.

On 11 July 2013 when Muslims of Tonk City were offering Maghrib Salat (Prayer after sunset) at the Chhawni Jama Masjid, a Baraat procession came from the nearby

‘Keer’ Hindu locality playing D.J. in loud voice and stayed a bit longer in front of the mosque. Some people requested the Keers not to play the D.J. in front of the mosque. A heated argument took place which soon turned into conflict and then stone pelting from both sides began. The police came and controlled the situation.

On 12 July 2013, as the Muslims gathered at the Chhawani Jama Masjid in order to offer special Friday (Juma’) prayers, huge Police force was deployed along with

RAC and STF personnel. The Juma’ prayers went peacefully and people came out of the mosque. According to the eye witnesses, all was peaceful and under control and the people were heading towards their homes. All of a sudden, allegedly without any provocation, about 150 policemen (including RAC and STF) stormed into the mosque breaking the back door of the adjacent Madrasa and instantaneously fired a number of teargas shells straight on the people offering Namaz in the mosque. One of the shells hit a youth, Nasir in his face, who died on the spot and

another injured critically. Then the police resorted to ‘lathi charge’ and started beating everyone irrespective of their age. Even a Muslim police officer, who was praying at the mosque, was also thrashed by the STF. Even the Imam of the Jama’ Masjid was not spared. About 80 people were injured and two died. The person died other than Nasir could not be recognized, as the police took him away in very serious condition and he didn’t belong to Tonk.

(to be concluded)

Say no to social sector budget cuts

Open letter to the Prime Minister

It was prominently reported in the media a few weeks ago that the Finance Ministry of the Government of India, was likely to mandate significant expenditure cuts across the board, ostensibly to rein in fiscal deficit and wasteful expenditure. Such a move raises several disturbing questions related to both to its underlying presumed economic wisdom and its procedural propriety.

We do not wish to get into a detailed discussion of the relevant issues here but would like to flag a few pertinent points in the following letter and urge the Government of India to rethink its reported move. In particular we strongly feel that the promise of universal old age pension for elderly workers from unorganized sector, which has been long overdue, should be fulfilled.

1. Such cuts typically occur in social sector ministries and schemes. As reported in the media, the Finance Ministry has already proposed expenditure cuts amounting to around Rs 15,000 crore for Rural

Development Ministry and Rs 5,500 crore for the education sector which falls under the Ministry of Human Resources Development. In addition, ministries are reportedly being told to limit their last quarter spending to below the average of the first three quarters and a further cut of same by around 20 percent might be imposed.

2. Expenditure cuts have been specifically proposed for these sectors in light of surplus unspent funds that they had accumulated in the previous fiscal year. We must ask why unspent funds existed with these ministries and whether it relates to implementation failures by the government at various levels.

3. Further, in event of existing surplus funds, what is the rationale for not using same to address the urgent and pressing issue of universal old age pension across India which can benefit the elderly population coming from the unorganised sector?

4. The main reason for the present state of the fiscal deficit has been inadequate revenue mobilization in light of liberal taxation policies followed by the government. Therefore, reducing expenditure to match the declining revenues receipts on account of liberal taxation policies is tantamount to asking the poor to bear a disproportionate share of this fiscal consolidation burden. Also, it needs to be mentioned that projecting low revenue receipts on basis of low tax revenues before the end of the fiscal year might be misinformed as tax revenue collection increases considerably over the last few months of the fiscal year when many direct tax collections occur.

5. The Constitution explicitly mandates the democratic oversight of the raising of resources and spending by government, with the underlying principle for being that resource raising and spending patterns of the government must be subject

to popular scrutiny through a broad consultative process. Thus, in addition, a consultative mechanism with concerned ministries is strongly desired before going for such policy measures.

6. We must remember that the incumbent UPA government, agreeing with the Pension Parishad demands earlier this year had assured and promised to universalize (with exclusions) and upscale the monthly old age pension amount to a dignified level for ensuring economic independency to senior citizens.
7. Suggested policy measures, as reported in the media, also neglect previous statements by the Finance Minister who had assured a poor friendly fiscal consolidation roadmap for the next five years.
8. Hence, in light of these observations it becomes pertinent

to ask if the present fiscal consolidation strategy, at the cost of social sector expenditure and by neglect of old age pension, is at all a strategy of “inclusive growth” as emphasized by the government regularly. Also, it raises a serious doubt about government’s claim regarding insufficiency of funds and its concern regarding the welfare of elderly from the unorganized sector, many of whom did not even receive basic minimum wages during their productive years.

We urge you as the Prime Minister:

A. To ensure that no budget cuts are made from any social sector funds and that there is no reduction in the funds allocated for the social sector

B. To ensure that unspent balances and savings are used to fulfill the promises to universalize pensions

and enhance pension amounts for the elderly with exclusions.

C. To institute a consultative process to deliberate measures for increasing revenues.

D. To make sure that all such budgetary processes should henceforth be subjected to a pre-budget consultative process.

Signed by: Aruna Roy, Baba Adhav, Akhila Sivadasa, Utsa Patnaik, Prabhat Patnaik, Jayati Ghosh, Ravi Srivastava, Praveen Jha, Nikhil Dey, Brinda Karat, Poornima Chikarmane, Amrita Chhachhi, Seema Mustafa, National Alliance for Peoples Movements (NAPM), Madhuresh Kumar, Mary John, Mathew Cherian, Himanshu Thakkar, K.P. Shankaram, Ram Singh Parmar, Pradeep Priyadarshan, Jaya Bharti, Neha Saigal, J Deshpande, Kiran Shaheen, Sudeshna Sengupta, Rted. Air Marshal PK Dey, Asha Dey, SWARAJ group, Karnataka.

Middle class

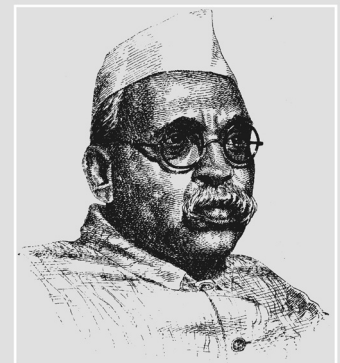
There is an unfamiliar animal sprawled across the war rooms of most political parties ahead of the 2014 polls. It is the Indian middle class. Not so long ago, its presence was insignificant. Hard-nosed political strategists dismissed it as of little consequence, and they could not be faulted. Most members of this class were self-righteously disinterested in politics; they voted but sporadically; their vision rarely transcended their immediate familial and municipal concerns; and their numbers constituted neither a tactically consolidated bloc, nor a significant numerical size.

But something has changed this time round. The docile, half asleep

animal is stirring itself. And nobody is really sure of the consequences of ignoring its importance. There are tangible reasons for this turnaround. If we take a strictly economic criterion of defining a middle class person as anybody who belongs to a household which has a monthly income of between Rs 20,000 and Rs 100,000 a month, the middle class starts to look very substantial. Estimates reveal that as per this criterion the size of the middle class in 1996 was a paltry 25 million. Today, it is in excess of 160 million. And, by 2015, its numbers are expected to go up to 267 million.

Pawan K. Verma
in *The Times of India*

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Democracy zindabad!

S. Viswam

Uncertain neighbourhood
Kuldip Nayar

**Do the world institutions
function democratically?**
K. S. Chalam

**A new phenomenon
in Indian politics**
Qurban Ali

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**Socialism of the coming age
and its foundation**
Sishir K. Dhar

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The new year has ushered in significant changes in the dynamics and grammar of electoral politics in India. The outcome of any election, to the assemblies or parliament, has always been an open question but 2014 has clouded electoral issues even a bit more darkly. Predictions are risky these days. Certainties of yore have become debatable issues. All parties are confident, yet, no party is willing to bet it will come to power with a majority. Indeed, is the ground situation conducive at all for any single party to get a majority in the Lok Sabha on its own? The answer is a clear no. Therefore, the question arises: what kind of coalition(s) are in the offing? Who is the front-runner and who are the runners-up?

As things stand today, four clear months ahead of the Lok Sabha, the outlook for the Congress seems bleak, whereas, judging purely by the superior propaganda strategies and tactics of the saffron parivar groups, the BJP-led parties have already won the day. Electoral outcomes are not that simply achieved. Experience teaches us that nothing should be taken for granted in politics. Equations change overnight, and what seems valid today becomes history tomorrow. Any comment therefore must give equal footing to all contestants and

speculate on their likely performance on the basis of the public perceptions about their relevance and utility.

India's electoral history testifies to one fact: performance of parties in state assembly polls is not an accurate barometer of popular preferences in a Lok Sabha poll. It would be wrong to assume that the Congress' dismal performance in the four assembly elections means that the concerned states will vote the same way for parliament. Similarly, it is no guarantee that parties/coalitions doing well at the Centre will automatically secure a second chance. We have the famous debacle of the NDA with the "India Shining" slogan, we know that not only the NDA did not anticipate the drubbing, the Congress also did not anticipate the windfall. Now, to the extreme discomfort of the NDA and the UPA, there is a spoiler in the field in the form and shape of the Aam Aadmi Party, which is yet another player, more hopeful than the erstwhile spoilers like the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Trinamool Congress and the two communist parties.

Will it be right to assume that the AAP will divide the anti-Congress and anti-BJP votes, or will it be right to assume it will attract special

Between the lines

Uncertain neighbourhood

Kuldip Nayar

popular patronage on its own and in support of its platform? Yes, and no, we have to say. Delhi, where the AAP scored so heavily, putting well behind it seasoned parties like the Congress and the BJP, cannot be the trend-setter for the entire country for the simple reason that the AAP has no pan-Indian presence, no pan-Indian ideology and no experience. As against this, its performance so far and its achievement in forming a government in Delhi has caught the imagination of the public, and this is expected to stand it in good stead if and when it enters mainstream politics and fields candidates for the Lok Sabha polls.

The general assumption on the basis of reactions from various states currently is that the AAP can expect a good response if it decides to contest between 250 and 300 seats mostly in urban constituencies because its presence is yet to be felt in rural areas. For the present, the AAP is regarded as an urban or elitist party with no ideology that is relevant or applicable on a national scale. Yet, the youth—the above 18 segment—is so impressed with the Kejriwal phenomenon that a favourable response in all states is taken for granted. The question whether the AAP on its own can secure 272 plus seats in the Lok Sabha is one no one is attempting to answer seriously now. Apparently, the political class is still calculating!

Let us wait and see where and now the cookie crumbles!!

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It was not a midnight knock. It was a blatant arrest in the broad daylight. Moudud Ahmed, former Prime Minister, was picked up by the police as soon as he stepped out of a hotel at Dhaka.

His crime is that he is a top opposition leader belonging to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), headed by former Prime Minister Khalida Zia. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief of Awami League, hates both. The last time when Moudud was detained it was during the military rule of General Ershad. He too is at present detained and shares the same prison. He and his party, Jatiyo Sangshad, had refused to support the Prime Minister.

No doubt, fortunes change. Rulers of today are the opponents of tomorrow. Yet what is seen in Bangladesh is the politics of vendetta. Khalida even had gone to the extent of eliminating Hasina when she was in the wilderness. Moudud and other detainees have dared to oppose the authoritarian rule of the Prime Minister. An autocratic ruler is bad enough. But it is worse when she or he does not want to give up power. This is the crux of Bangladesh problem.

The opposition parties' demand is to hold free and fair polls under a neutral authority. Instead, Hasina has held elections under her government, having done away earlier with the constitutional provision to conduct the polls by a care-taker government headed by the outgoing Chief Justice.

The farce of elections, even before one vote was cast, returned as many as 154 members unopposed and 103 through the one sided polls a few days ago. Parliament in the country has strength of 300. Hasina's victory makes little sense when the BNP and most of the parties boycotted the election and refuse to accept the new government. A survey by a daily newspaper shows that 77 per cent of people do not accept the verdict.

The most disconcerting part is the unending violence. Dozens of people have died in boycotts and hartals. This is bound to affect the economy which has had a steady growth of 6 per cent for the last five years. There will be more unemployment, more poverty and more inflation. Neither Hasina nor Khalida are worried about the situation which is deteriorating day by day.

The beneficiary is the Jamaat-e-Islami which, no doubt, is on the side of Khalida but targets own line to polarize the society and spread fundamentalism. Organised as the Jammata is, it has contaminated the intelligentsia as well. Violence through its cadres is the Jamaat's contribution. Unfortunately, India has openly come out on the side of Hasina. There is no doubt that she is secular and, like her father, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, founder of Bangladesh, she is staunchly pro-liberation. But her determination to retain power by hook or by crook has thrown all norms to the wind. New Delhi should have played a conciliatory role. Initially it did but it

is now seen partisan. The anti-India feeling is spreading and the Hindu population, nearly eight million is feeling the heat. If at all India had to show preference, it should support a person like Kamal Hussain, first foreign minister of Bangladesh and Nobel Prize Winner Yunus, to provide the third front.

Khalida, otherwise pro-liberation, puts a question mark against her credentials when she voices protest against the hanging of Abdul Quadir Mullah who had collaborated with Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh war. Those who committed the excesses on this count have to be punished by a regime which liberated the country. Yet hanging person beyond the age of 80 makes little sense.

Pakistan cuts a sorry figure when its National Assembly passes a unanimous resolution to hail Mullah as a martyr. It indicates a biased mind. Instead of expressing remorse, the Pakistan establishment goes on behaving as if it is not sorry for all that it did. The country is pursuing a wrong policy on Bangladesh. The Pakistan nation proves again and again that it cannot come up to the expectations of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who advised Pakistan not to mix state with politics. Islamabad first trained Taliban to fight against Afghanistan and Kashmir. Now those very Taliban are endangering the stability of Pakistan.

Fundamentalism in Pakistan is increasing and even liberal voices are rare. When the lawyers shower flower petals on the accused for the murder of Punjab governor Taseer who wanted amendments to the blasphemy law, it shows the deepening of extremism in Pakistan.

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Do the world institutions function democratically?

K. S. Chalam

Post-colonialism is a buzz word in cultural and literary studies signifying that colonialism is a bygone era. But, social sciences are very slow in capturing the nuances of literary studies and are developing their own methods of enquiry to focus on the issues that come under post-colonial or post-modern or post-industrial, etc. categories. It seems the euphoria of post-modernism at least in India seems to have weakened and might continue in the metropolitan centres, may be for some time. Some of commentators who were trained in the traditions of classical writers are resistant to the new and innovative concepts, notions and research output brought out by young scholars mostly from the West or West oriented Indian schools of thought. May be some of us are becoming back numbers. But the fact of the matter is that, except splendid English and excellent narrative skills, they have not substantially enhanced our understanding about the contemporary problems. It seems the concerns that are projected by some of the experts are not new, and in fact they are the extensions of the old themes. Neo-colonialism is seen as globalisation or imperialism or some other concept advanced by the experts of 18th century. Nevertheless, the centre of all economic manipulations is known to everyone at least after the collapse of the so-called social imperialism. It is commended by the defenders of democracy that totalitarianism under the guise of socialism or equity considerations is perfidious for the

future of mankind. Therefore, an alternative is suggested: have faith in market (based on self-interest of individuals). However they did not tell us that the modern market is under the control of those who control finance and other resources by hook or by crook. Several Nobel laureates have produced treatises to demonstrate how market is a democratic institution and proposed the much deliberated, Washington consensus. Let us see how they enhanced the democratic values.

Experts of international economic order, particularly the political economists like Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Arrighi, Kohli, Cardoso and others have narrated how development patterns in Asia and Latin America are dissimilar. The development policies in Latin America are dependent, Atul Kohli points out, while nationalist state and capitalist alliances have helped development of an "indigenous capitalism" in India. But, the process of development in both the regions is done through the US sponsored globalisation. It is said that the World Bank-IMF pressured Latin American elite to embrace Washington consensus whereas India and other Asian countries have succumbed to "US informal empire". However, the two patterns of development are pursued ultimately under the direct control of World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc. The methods of the institutions have been subjected to academic study by different scholars and the results are available now.

There seem to be a disciplinary bias in the analysis of some scholars. Economists try to project that the economic fundamentals like savings, investment, interest rate, fiscal deficit, etc. (no definition yet) play a role in how economy performs. The political scientists (of late called as public policy experts) do try to explain growth of a nation in relation to the health of the state, democratic institutions and the rulers. There is a subtle competition between the two as to which factors dominate in the description of growth, each complimenting the other factors that are displayed in their explanations. The market is swamped with books of propaganda to show that the American and western democratic institutions are superior and responsible for the third world nations achieving rapid growth by imitation. Some authors are capable of attributing the whole development to democratic institutions and market, underdevelopment to narrow elite rulers (irrespective of historical conditions), with their excellent narrative skills (for example 'Why Nations Fail' by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson). They do not see any purpose in the unequal exchange and the institutions that promoted inequality and injustice within a nation and among nations. Political economy, on the other hand, is an independent subject with its own tools of analysis to combine the given factors in relation to the dynamics of economy, society, polity, history, etc. and interrogate the process as interrelated. As we are concerned about the institutions and not so much about development here, we may look at the functioning of some of the world organisations noted above.

Samir Amin, a political economist in his 'Beyond US Hegemony' has

narrated how the US enlightenment was not a variant of Europe, but a protest against it. The political culture of America was an amalgamation of philosophy of enlightenment, bourgeois revolutions, workers movements and impact of Russian revolution. He has identified that the poor migrant workers have generated a religious ideology that rejected enlightenment and facilitated the inclusion Article 51 in European Union charter about the role of churches. The recognition of church in the so-called secular world in the twenty first century is an acknowledgement of its assertion and at the same time empowers the democratic claims of other denominations like Hindu, Islam, etc. Thus, the US cannot break out of Atlanticism, Amin says, so long as the political alliances that define its ruling blocs remain united on dominant transnational capital leading to "Collective Imperialism". In other words, the political culture and the economic philosophy of globalisation are shared by every country that joined the club and are in a way not averse to institutions that perpetuate inequality and discrimination. It is here that Amin has said, "And the United States today-through the intermediary of NGO's 'defending human rights'- tries to manipulate the Dalit community's protests in the same way and to contain them in offensive spaces for the management of capitalism as a whole." This may be a limited view of Amin about the Indian situation, but makes him to say that, 'the right of interference of the Western civil society, a party to manipulation of dominant capitalism in pursuit of its own objectives'. This complex analytic of Amin makes us anxious to look at the social institutions (race, caste) that are enduring in the host nation, America.

Keeping the democratic wheedling of the US, one expects that the social and political institutions that it promotes at the national and world bodies carry the same values. Now look at the much publicised and pampered institutions that are responsible in converting the whole world as a borderless village; IMF, World Bank. It is generally believed that these institutions as world bodies provide equal weight to each member nation or in relation to the weight of the population in decision making. But, IMF, for instance, is a structure based on the wealth of the member nation and carry voting rights in proportion to this amount. Consequently, India gets 2.34, China 3.81, Russia 2.39 per cent of votes and the OECD countries now have 59.5 percent, of which, America alone has 16.75 per cent votes followed by Japan with 6.23, Germany 5.81, UK and France each with 4.29 per cent votes. But, as per GDP ranks, US stands at 1, China 2, India 10 and so on. It seems there is no relationship between the wealth and quota of rights, of certain countries!

The value of voting rights in the World Bank and other institutions is almost the same. In other words, the four or five countries of Europe unlike the Security Council (with Veto) would decide and control all economic policies of the world. Of late, they allow the unfair institutions to survive as long as they do not clash with globalisation. It appears that certain pieces of sponsored research of the so-called paid intellectuals contain propaganda material to popularise the democratic agenda of globalisation and debunk the above trend. Do the adversaries have the same kind of support and patronage to make the discourse really democratic?

A new phenomenon in Indian politics

Qurban Ali

“The emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) vis-a-vis the traditional Indian political parties like the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Delhi assembly elections signifies a change”, said a leading Pakistani daily, *Dawn*, in an editorial. The newspaper further said that “State elections in India re-established the growing assertive presence of the middle class in politics. The AAP has emerged as a force by securing a large number of seats in Delhi, containing the Congress but also denting the BJP. It appears that a sizeable number of Indian voters locate the reasons for political malfunctioning in the system itself, beyond the incompetence and corrupt practices of a single political party.”

A senior Congress leader and Minister of External Affairs, Salman Khurshid had conceded that “There is a revolution of sorts that took place in Delhi because people said that institutional form of politics is inadequate. We have to go to another level which is the grassroots level.” Khurshid spoke against the backdrop of AAP’s stunning victory in Delhi elections while delivering a lecture in the conclave ‘One World - Role of India, China and USA in fostering it’.

There is no doubt that the emergence of Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi state assembly elections is a new and revolutionary phenomenon and a warning to major mainstream

political parties to act responsibly in the future or be ready to vanish.

The victory of AAP is multi-dimensional. Major political parties failed to live up to the hopes and aspirations of the people and AAP has given a voice to the anger of the people. It is a sign of a healthy democracy and should be welcomed.

Delhi election clearly shows that the AAP vote has cut across castes, classes and communities and its candidates have uniformly won from middle class colonies as well as from slum-bastis. Since the AAP is a beneficiary of the prevailing mood in urban India, its emergence could spell the beginning of the end of politics segmented along caste, religion and community lines in the last two and a half decades of the post-Mandir/Mandal era.

The AAP also signifies a reaction to the traditional politician and therefore could open out politics in other parts of the country. Cynics may dismiss the AAP’s role outside the national capital, though it has already set up units in over 300 districts. So while the Congress-led UPA Government is down, maybe even out, as far as 2014 elections are concerned, the Delhi election could catalyse the formation of a new force nationally, which could potentially stop the Narendra Modi juggernaut in its tracks.

This may sound like wishful thinking, but ground level shifts are taking place in the country,

spearheaded by the youth. The AAP may well decide to field many candidates for the parliamentary polls. But if the party puts up, say, around 100-150 candidates in urban and semi-urban areas, they could emerge as a ginger group in the next Lok Sabha. Even more important, it could end up creating a climate against both the Congress and BJP in many places, in the process helping “like-minded” socialist-left of the centrist parties or their conglomerates.

What is more important than floating a party, winning elections or forming the governments is to launch a new kind of clean politics, committed to the basic idea of shaping of Indian polity on the basis of values inherited from national movement and embodied in the Constitution of India. Thus the AAP should fully commit to its vision document released in October, 2012 in New Delhi and highlight the need of a political party and dreams of freedom fighters. The vision document cites the reason for the forming of AAP:

For the past two years, millions of people came out on the streets to fight corruption and demand Jan Lokpal. This two year anti-corruption movement has exposed all our political parties and has made us all realize that we cannot expect any political party to work for a corruption free India.

For two years we tried all available avenues. We negotiated for our cause with the government,

prayed to all parties, begged in front of them, sat on dharna, organized protests and sat on indefinite fasts thrice; but nobody listened, neither the parties nor the leaders. They went on fooling the people of this country.

We realize now that begging will not work. It is the time to uproot these parties and change the whole system. We are not saying that every single politician is corrupt nor are we saying that only we are honest and only we will run the Government honestly if we come to power. We are saying that the whole political system of the Government needs a complete overhaul so that the key of the system rests only with the public. Hence we are not planning to enjoy the power if we get it, but to tear down the power conclaves and pass on the power directly to public.

Why this Party? The Dream of Our Freedom Fighters

Millions of martyrs including Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Afshfaq Ullah Khan, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Mangal Pandey, sacrificed their lives to free the nation. Did they sacrifice their lives so that our own people should plunder the country instead of the British? These gallant freedom fighters envisaged an India that is described in the preamble of our Constitution.

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

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

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

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

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of

November, 1949, DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

This preamble depicts our dream, the dream of ordinary Indians.

(Continued from Page 3)

Taseer's son, kidnapped two years ago, remains untraced and has been forgotten even by the media which is otherwise alive and kicking.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's efforts to make up with India and Afghanistan are a breath of fresh air. He has to reckon with the rightist forces, many in his own camp, on one hand and the military on the other. Still he sent his brother, Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Nothing concrete seems to have come out.

New Delhi is not willing to resume the composite dialogue, which is the only option to span the distance between the two countries. Nawaz Sharif would have accelerated the process of détente if he had pushed the punishment of the 26/11 perpetrators, the terrorists, who attacked Mumbai. Pakistan may underplay the retired General

This is a dream of democracy, social justice, secularism and of sovereign India. The preamble of the constitution promises a just society. It is a promise of Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood.

By forming the government in Delhi, and fulfilling two of its major poll promises regarding free water supply and slashing electricity rates, AAP has proved its credentials in the eyes of the masses that it believes what it says and can deliver. Now AAP should be ready to take plunge in national politics as an alternative to mainstream parties. It may take some time but eventually it will be a success of its vision.

Pervez Musharraf's challenge that the army still 'stands behind me'. But there has been no contradiction by the army chief or his publicity setup. This makes a mockery of the case of treason being heard by a law court. It means that the military continues to remain Pakistan's third chamber. That the Pakistan army agreed to a solution of Kashmir, the main impediment, has come around is indeed a surprise. The army cannot afford to have an ex-general sentenced to death or life imprisonment. It seems that an honourable way like his bad health is sought to be found to send him out of the country. One plus point in the relationship between India and Pakistan is the acceptable agreement on Kashmir. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said in a press conference that the Kashmir problem had found a solution but 'some other things' came in the way before it was finalized. Why not renew the same solution?

The AAP conundrum: Steering clear of doctrines

Praful Bidwai

That the Aam Aadmi Party represents something unprecedented in Indian politics is a truism. AAP is India's first party since the JP movement of the 1970s to have evolved from a civil society mobilisation. It is formally a regional party, but with unhidden national ambitions and a fast-growing presence outside its original base. Unlike most regional outfits, it has no crystallised caste, class, ethnic, religious or location-specific identity.

AAP claims to have no ideology or affinity to doctrines like socialism, secularism, liberalism or Hindutva. Ideology, it says, is "for the pundits and the media..." AAP is itself content to be "solution-focused". It deplores the "tendency to pin down political parties as Left, Right, Centre..."

AAP is less about goals - barring eradicating corruption, its principal agenda - than process: popular participation to reduce the distance between people and politics, rulers and ruled.

This is a mix of positive and negative features. Take the positives. AAP has publicly rallied the normally apolitical middle class. It will willy-nilly eat into the BJP's votes. No party places as much emphasis as AAP on grassroots democracy, gram-sabha and mohalla deliberations, local ownership/control of resources like water, minerals and forests, and participatory decision-making,

including referendums. This can empower people and give them a sense of ownership of politics, so lacking in India. AAP's social agendas like providing water, power, health and education are also welcome.

The negatives are AAP's silence on vital questions like poverty, inequality, communalism, and gender and caste discrimination; prevarication on affirmative action for the underprivileged; refusal to take a stand on Narendra Modi while mainly targeting the Congress; and ad-hoc policy-making unrelated to a broader vision.

Rejection of ideology, which alone can provide vision, is crucial here. Take the AAP government's first two decisions: to supply 700 litres of water free to each Delhi household daily, and halve electricity tariffs for monthly consumption below 400 units. Contrary to appearances, these don't favour the poor as much as the middle/upper-middle class, and duck issues of universal access and equity.

More than one-third of Delhi's households, typically poor, don't have piped-water connections, and will be effectively excluded. Little will be done to improve supply to water-deprived areas or break the water-tanker mafia's stranglehold. But 54 per cent of Delhi's water will continue to be wasted. A person only needs 50-60 litres daily. Giving 140 litres free to all will increase waste.

Take electricity. Private distribution companies (discoms) have been overcharging consumers through meter-tampering, cost-padding, etc. AAP should have ordered an audit, and then proceeded towards tariff reduction. Instead, it raised subsidies to discoms! Poor and middle-class people don't need 400 monthly units. Even an un-airconditioned three-bedroom home with a refrigerator uses 200 units. Halving tariffs for 400 units means subsidising the rich, but leaving eight lakh poor families unconnected.

AAP's transportation policy is similarly warped: its minister opposes bicycle lanes and Bus Rapid Transit, which is superior to the Metro. AAP's "Vision" document talks of education and health unpardonably naively. It only wants to raise government schools' quality to that of private schools—not establish common schooling. Healthcare involves nutrition, sanitation, environmental safety, and preventive and curative medicine. AAP reduces it to hospitals alone.

Worse, AAP is bending to pressure to conform to "mainstream" positions. That's why Prashant Bhushan had to recant his sensible statements on Kashmir. As MNC executives, bankers and professionals join AAP, its composition and positions will become more elitist. Whether and how it will combine this with a grassroots orientation remains unclear.

Deliberateness and spontaneity in violence

Raheel Dhattiwala

An Ahmedabad metropolitan court recently rejected a petition challenging the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) 2011 conclusion that the post-Godhra violence in Gujarat in 2002 was an impulsive reaction of Hindus enraged by the Godhra killings and not a political conspiracy fronted by Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

On the other hand, some in the media, academia, police, and advocacy groups have maintained that the violence was a well-orchestrated anti-Muslim "pogrom," not a spontaneous "riot." The Sangh Parivar had diligently planned the violence to help a wilting Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat, they charged, and disgruntled members among Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) were instrumentally mobilized to execute the plan. It was suggested that "spontaneity" was a ruse, following ploys adopted by earlier governments, notably the Congress in 1984 and the BJP-RSS in 1992-93.

The first question about the post-Godhra violence that comes to mind, and has indeed been noted by scholars like Achyut Yagnik and Lancy Lobo is: why did it occur so unevenly across the State? Although violence affected many towns, and pervaded rural areas with unprecedented frenzy, many places in Gujarat remained peaceful. By implication, if the post-Godhra killings were an outcome of anger and revenge, why were perpetrators selectively angry or vengeful?

If different places experienced different levels of violence, did these spatial variations occur at random or did they indicate a pattern?

These are crucial questions to be addressed for any event of large-scale violence. To do so, I teamed up with Dr. Michael Biggs, a sociologist at Oxford University, to conduct a systematic analysis taking account of all possible factors that might have caused the violence. We meticulously gathered information on the population of Muslims, scheduled castes and Tribes -on socioeconomic conditions such as unemployment and migration. We measured the strength of BJP by its vote in the 1998 Assembly election and by the presence of a BJP MLA. Crucially, we compared peaceful with violent places in order to identify specific risk factors associated with violence. Explaining the factors leading to violence by examining only those cases where violence occurred can lead to spurious conclusions. This methodology follows from the exemplary work on ethnic violence in India by sociologists and political scientists such as Paul Brass, Steven Wilkinson, Henrik Urdal and Ashutosh Varshney.

We found persuasive evidence that the violence was not spontaneous. Had it been spontaneous, it would be correct to expect the most outraged people - and, subsequently, the worst violence - in places, where the BJP was strong. Even if the party had not taken a leading role, it was its supporters who would

be most likely to lash out against Muslims. Instead, after taking into account other economic and social factors, we found that lethal violence was considerably less likely where the BJP was strong (for example, Junagadh, Navsari). Endorsing this pattern, we found that violence was less likely to happen in places with a sitting BJP MLA.

Killings were less likely where the BJP was very weak (for example, Narmada, Dangs). It was in places where the BJP faced the greatest electoral competition, having gained about 35-40 per cent of the vote in 1998, that lethal violence was the worst (for example, Anand, Kheda). Hereo the party will face the greatest competition for votes in the coming election.

These findings take into account the social and economic factors that could have led to "spontaneous" violence, and so identify the specific effect of the BJP. This cannot be judged by taking one or two well-known instances of violence.

Violence delivered votes

Violence, therefore, was greatest in places where the BJP faced the greatest competition from other parties. By inflaming anti-Muslim sentiment, it was possible that people who had previously voted for the Congress or other parties would switch to the BJP the next time. Remember that it was later in 2002 - nearly a year after the most lethal anti-Muslim attacks occurred and close to the next election - that Mr. Modi delivered the now infamous

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Reprint

Socialism of the coming age and its foundation

Sishir K. Dhar

Deeds inspired by hate are not duties, whatever pain and self-sacrifice they may involve. Life and hope for the world are to be found only in the deeds of love

- **Bertrand Russell.**

Socialism is at bottom a question of ethics or morals. It has mainly to do with the relationships, which should exist between a man and his fellows.

- **Keir Hardie.**

Social means different things to different persons, but if by socialism we mean a form of society in which the material needs of every individual are satisfied and also in which the individual is a cultured and civilized being, is free and brave, kind and generous, then I am absolutely clear that we will never reach this goal except by strict adherence to certain human values and standards of conduct

- **Jayaprakash Narayan.**

We believe, power corrupts those who wield it as much as those who are forced to obey it. ... Intellectuals, positivists, doctrinaires, all who put science before life, defend the state and its authority.... the difference between such revolutionary dictatorship and the modern state is only one of external trappings. In substance, both are a tyranny of the minority over the majority – in the name of the many and the supreme wisdom of the few – and so they are equally reactionary, devising to secure political and economic privilege to the ruling minority and the enslavement of the masses, to destroy the present order, only to erect their own rigid dictatorship on its ruins.

- **Michael Bakunin.**

In the “Roads to Freedom”, published in 1918, Bertrand Russell observes: “Socialism, like everything else that is vital, is rather a tendency than a strictly definable body of doctrine”. Here, the word ‘tendency’ is significant, and this statement indicates the difficulty in trying to present a unanimous doctrine of socialism. However, looking at the historical background, we may say that the concept of socialism emerged first of all in Western Europe in the modern age as a humanist-ethical protest against the suffering of workers in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the injustice that the existent capitalist system, thriving on this revolution, manifested. Side by side, the French

Revolution inspired humanists in general and, in particular, socialist thinkers for a better society based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity that the French Revolution proclaimed. Basically, the concept of socialism is an aspiration of ‘visionaries’ with a humanist-ethical bent of mind to build a better society, eliminating grievous deficiencies and injustice in society, offering people the opportunity to build a richer life that is, as Gandhi felt, “healthy, happy and spiritually developed.” Thus, Rosa Luxemburg emphasized: “Socialism in life demands a complete spiritual transformation in the masses degraded by centuries of bourgeois class rule. Social instinct in place of egotistic ones, mass

initiative in place of inertia, idealism which conquers all suffering etc.”

In the ultimate analysis, the individual is at the centre in any socialist or humanist society. Thus, Karl Marx, who dedicated himself to the building of a collective socialist movement with the proletarian class as the ‘vanguard’, emphasized at the same time that “man is the root of mankind”. In fact, humanists in general have placed the individual at the center of the social universe. Long ago, Protagoras held that “man is the measure of everything”. Immanuel Kant viewed man as an end and never as a means and to him, the sanctity of life was a ‘categorical imperative’. In our

times, we have the voice of Gandhi: “The supreme consideration is man”, On the supremacy of the individual, Bertrand Russell’s explanation is: “People do not always remember that politics, economics, and social organization generally, belong to the realm of means, not ends..... It is in the individuals, not in the whole, that ultimate value is to be sought. A good society is a means to a good life for those who compose it, not something having a separate kind of excellence on its own account.” In short, the society, a human construct - and extremely important or rather indispensable for all except saints and lunatics - is for the human individual and not the vice versa.

Socialists, to whom an all-round development of man is the *summum bonum* - the fruition of man’s talents that makes his life creative and happy, have envisioned in socialism a relatively specific programme for growth of such a society – a society that does away with all kinds of injustice, oppression, deprivation and antagonistic relations among men. Socialism, said the eminent French socialist leader, Jean Jaures, is the fulfillment of the ideals of the French revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. It seems to me, fraternity, or a lively fellow-feeling or compassion is the deepest of the three ideals. It appears likely that liberty and equality are not absent where there is fraternity or fellow-feeling. Here, we can think of a family with cordiality among the members that inspires them to sink or swim together. Essentially the society is a larger family only with greater diversity that this largeness implies, and fraternity or fellow feeling among the members is the final goal wherever the humans are to live together. Fraternity grows where the humans are guided with a sense

of compassion or sympathy. This, it seems, is the noblest condition, the acme of human existence as member of a society. The Upanishad’s affirmation that all life is one is seemingly the farthest point of such a relationship. Socialists might take this idea of the Upanishad as reflecting the psychology or ethics of socialism. Ideally, the socialist society is one where there is caring for all and sharing with all, where cooperation, as against animosity, is the most valued path.

The world would become an earthly paradise when, if ever, compassion or fellow-feeling became the dominant trait of society. Where fellow-feeling binds the people, there is, by definition, no injustice or oppression and no lack of liberty and equality. A vision like this may appear rather utopian. The humans, with their frailties, seem incapable of building a perfect society. Yet, with their potential for great things, with removal to the utmost of factors that degrade a man, a society can be enlivened for an onward march from progress to progress, when its inhabitants have an honest firm will, the required vision and most important, compassion to reach out to others – these qualities of mind are not totally unrealizable. Further, we must be ever conscious of the ideal that shows the farthest point that we might endeavour to reach with an unwavering commitment to the ideal; and this takes us further ahead. Mankind has progressed, as also regressed, and there is no reason why it cannot move in either direction further.

The goal of socialism has two major aspects: the foundational aspect, based on values of humanism, ethics, democracy and rationality, and the programmatic

aspect, related to the given condition and it is pragmatic - the ideal and practical aspects of socialism. (“only a system of values can construct a culture, a civilization, and a new way of living together as men,” said Ignazio Silone in ‘The New Machiavelli’). Undoubtedly, compassion or humanism constitutes the most essential foundation; minus humanism, there is no socialism. This point needs to be sufficiently stressed as in our own time humanism and such other foundations of socialism as ethics and democracy have been strangled in the name of socialism, merciless tyranny riding roughshod over the people and mocking at the very ideal. It bears repetition that socialism or any such system is for man and no system should make man just a cog in the machine. Socialism, because of its very goal, must mean ‘compassionate socialism’ – ‘socialism with a human face’. As Sidney Hook explained, “if we are completely indifferent to questions of human cost and suffering, only physical and biological necessities limit our action. We can make a desert bloom into a garden if we are prepared to fertilize it with human corpses and water it with rivers of blood.”

“Establishment of a socialist society cannot become a reality until the majority of the people, and particularly its elite, accept the ethical basis of socialist society,” asserts M. L. Dantwala. He adds “The progress towards socialism can truly be judged not by the number or sweep of ‘socialist’ measures but by the nature of change in the value system of the society. In the effect, this view rejects the orthodox belief that if the structure of the economy is changed, for example, through public ownership of the instruments of production it will *ipso facto* change the

value system, which in the Marxist literature is considered as merely a superstructure. We would go further and say if there is a basic change in the value system appropriate to a socialist society, it may not be necessary to enact a succession of cultural revolutions after the overthrow of the capitalist system". Further, as he says 'Expressions like 'Socialist Ethics' and 'Value System' are difficult to define and attempt to bind them in words perhaps circumscribes their import. I may define them negatively as the urge to share the 'surplus'- material as well as non-material – which may accrue from birth, wealth or wisdom (skill) or sheer chance. The ethics of it is embodied in the dictum 'from each according to his capacity' to 'each according to his needs'. "Relevant here is an observation by Mao Zedong, as Dantwala refers to : "a mere public ownership of production cannot usher in socialism, because such a change does not by itself rid men's minds of selfishness, personal concept or the desire to have the better of others, nor end workers' alienation arising from division of labour."

At the beginning of this essay, we have highlighted the views of Keir Hardie and Jayaprakash Narayan, belonging to different countries and to different periods, on the ethical foundation of socialism. These views are based on strong realistic grounds. In reality, morality and compassion have an intimate, harmonious relationship. Thus, as Bertrand Russell points out, "Moral progress has consisted in the main, of protest against cruel customs, and of attempts to enlarge the bounds of human sympathy." There is, it seems, a humanist content in morality and a moral content in humanism. When one imposes fanatically and

ruthlessly his will in the name of morality or humanism, both the moral and humanist contents get petrified with that action.

Today, with a strong disenchantment with Leninism and an urge to discriminate between 'wheat' and 'chaff' in Marxism, unlike in 1920-40s there is a clearer perception of the relationship of ethics and democracy to socialist society, most noticeably in the thinking of democratic socialists. Thus keeping an eye on the deformity of socialism in Russia and concerned with questions creeping in on some aspects of Marxism, Jayaprakash Narayan wrote in 'In the Lahore Fort', the notes of which had been prepared in 1944 while imprisoned in the Lahore Fort : "it is not sufficient to pay attention to the material aspects of life alone" and when "lying, deceit, dishonesty, hatred are exalted into a principle of state-craft and party management, all who are not drunk with power must be seriously concerned with the wisdom of such a one-side development".

With a relentless quest for truth and with a striking open-mindedness, so characteristic of him, Jayaprakash Narayan continued crystallizing his thoughts and thus expressed himself in a famous article, 'Incentives to Goodness': "For many years I have worshipped at the shrine of the goddess - Dialectical Materialism - which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of his means to become truly human. In a materialist civilization man has no rational incentive to be good. It may be that in the kingdom of

dialectical materialism, fear makes men conform and the party takes place of God, but when that God himself turns vicious, to be vicious become a universal code. I feel convinced, therefore, that man must go beyond the material to find the incentive to goodness. As a corollary, I feel further that the task of social reconstruction cannot succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy." Later, at the Rangoon Conference of the Asian Socialists he said "If we concern ourselves only with shaping the environment, and neglect the individual, we will find that all the elements which constitute human nature will nullify our efforts at building a new society."

On the question of appropriateness of the means to be followed vis-a-vis the end of socialism, a valuable yardstick offered by Rammanohar Lohia was what he called the 'test of immediacy', in terms of which the goodness or badness of an action in relation to the ultimate end could be, and should be, judged by its immediate impact. He says, "whatever one does in the immediate goes into the total of what one achieves in the future." In short, the character of an action must not contradict the character of the ultimate end, when moral quality of the means followed acts strongly on the end. It is significant that socialists as a part in their ideological moorings as R. H. Tawney and Antonio Gramsci recognized that a decent society could grow only with a commitment of the people to a decent ethic.

The strong Gandhian emphasis on the sanctity of the means, on the essentiality of good means even for good ends, pinpoints a vital criterion for socialists who are eager to honour

the values of humanism, ethics and democracy. Gandhi is categorical that the means must be harmonious to the moral quality of the ends; acting for a good end does not mean a licence to be unscrupulous. Not only from the moral standpoint, also pragmatically, this is a sound rule. Referring to the continuity between means and ends Sidney Hook is precise that “The shape of the future is moulded not by our words about ends but by our day-to-day deeds.” As you sow, so you reap. “As the means so the end,” holds Gandhi. It is nothing but self-deception to attempt building, for instance, a democratic or humanist society by resort to tyrannical methods that will naturally strengthen the force of tyranny. Gandhi uses a nice metaphor on the intimate ends-means connection: “The means may be likened to a seed, and the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree”.

In reality, there is a difference between geographical ends and social ends; one can reach an existent place by different means but one has to create a moral society by morally appropriate means. This moral connection is there in Marx’s assertion that “An end that requires unjust means is not a just end.” Similarly, the seed and the tree relationship is obvious when he says : “Nothing can emerge at the end of the process which did not appear as a presupposition or precondition at the beginning.” However, Marxism with its ‘historical materialism’ rather dilutes the point. Thus, contrary to this emphasis by Marx in the above statements, in a letter to Herson Trier in 1889, Engels declared that, “any means that leads to the aim suit me as a revolutionary, whether it is the

most violent or that which appears to be most peaceable.” But can the end remain uninfluenced by the means? On this issue Lenin was close to Engels and he thus presented his ‘Communist Morality’: “Morality for us is subordinate to the interest of the class-struggle of the proletariat”. In practice, this meant that the upholder of such a morality could resort to any means to crush the ‘class enemy’, when any opponent was his class enemy. At the root of the Stalinist tyranny lays the moral deficiency of Leninism. Let us consider the matter along with Jacques Maritain’s explanation that the means are “ways to the end and, so to speak, the end itself in its very process of coming into existence. So, applying intrinsically evil means to attain intrinsically good end is simple nonsense and a blunder.”

The fate of socialism in Russia, in particular, bought a new awareness to socialists all over the world on the essentiality of democracy and freedom of the people for building a socialist society or any humanist society. After his visit to USSR in 1920, Bertrand Russell had warned at an early stage, when Lenin was at the helm of the party and the state, that ‘The system created by violence and forcible rule by the minority must necessarily allow of tyranny and exploitation... I see no reason whatever to expect equality of freedom to result from such a system.’ A prophetic warning that was! After a rule of more than seventy years, the gap between the rulers and the ruled remained unbridgeable in the ‘land of socialism’ (eulogizers’ words). And the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ continues weighing on as a ‘dictatorship over the proletariat’ (Trotsky’s words before his joining Lenin’s party). On the eve of the seizure of power Lenin

had proclaimed “all powers to the Soviets”, but the Soviets turned into mere ornaments within three years of seizing power. Things could not be otherwise in the Leninist system.

“Socialism properly belongs to the age of democratic ideologies that began at the end of the eighteenth century”, points out Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders. An undemocratic climate is repugnant to development of socialism. Lenin also was categorical in 1905 that “whoever wants to approach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy will inevitably arrive at the most absurd and reactionary conclusions in the economic and in the political sense.” But in 1917, when he had the opportunity to seize power by undemocratic means, Lenin did not hesitate to jettison democracy, overwhelmed with his characteristic obsession with power. In the ‘Russian Revolution’, strongly criticizing Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg said, “Lenin is completely mistaken in the means he employs” and “the remedy which Lenin and Trotsky have found, the elimination of democracy as such, is worse than the disease it is supposed to cure; for it stops up the very living source from which alone can come the correction of all the innate shortcomings of social institutions”.

Surveying the growth of democracy from a historical perspective Acharya Narendra Deva said : “Democracy is the result of a long and painful effort: and “if we want to survive in the present age we shall have to accept those social and political values which are essential for a modern society”. One of those values is democracy.” No doubt, democracy is integral both as means and as an end to any sane society, including the socialist

society. Democracy is valuable not only as a political concept but as a civilized way of life. Ideally, democracy in its positive promises is (i) freedom when it allows even the weakest (as also the smallest minority) to speak out against even the mightiest; (ii) Progress ensuring “free struggles of opinion” and with that helping elimination of wrong ideas and fruition of good ones: (iii) peace as in democracy people can settle their discords - or fight their ‘war’, peacefully instead of depending on brute force; and (iv) civilization as in democracy might is not right but reason and right of the individual are might : in democracy ‘the rule of law’ replaces the ‘law of the jungle’ (and the caprice of an autocrat). “As long as I have any chance, I will only stay in a country where political liberty, toleration and equality of all citizens before the law are the rule,” held Einstein. Hopefully, democracy is a universally valued principle in the world today.

Rationality is a precious characteristic of a civilized life, the best bridge of communication between two conflicting opinions, and is an essential base of socialism or any progressive society. It teaches us not to be dogmatic or fanatic even when committed to a noble cause, but to be open-minded, dispassionate and objective in our thinking. There is no single definite formula of social progress and even if it were so, none could claim that his formula was necessarily the correct one. A mature mind, not swayed with any dogma, shall examine questions with objectivity and try to arrive at a balanced view. No doubt, democracy with its free struggle between differing ideas is the most rational political system and it tames power and discord with

reliance on peaceful rational means.

It should be recognized that socialism has both democratic and totalitarian potential. Hence, one must be careful about the choice of means. We remember how Lenin had captured power in the name of workers – a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, as he claimed - by strangling the incipient democracy that the people of Russia got after long years Czarist autocracy, and how the people continued groaning under Lenin’s tyrannous system, until its fall, mocking at the Marxian vision of “an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” In course of his controversy with Engels, Prof. Duhring had sounded a note of warning that force possessed an evil potential that might affect the character of the user, and the proletariat should be circumspect to use it lest it corrupted the society they wanted to build. Significantly, the erstwhile Leninist parties in Russia and East Europe have now opted for a multiparty democratic system, discarding the Leninist autocratic methodology.

Obviously, the values of humanism, ethics, democracy and rationality reflect the basics on which a free, egalitarian and compassionate society is to be founded. At the same time, there is a need for a programme of action. And when the norms or the above values are inviolable, the programme is pragmatic, subserving the values and the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. This means what the socio-economic structure, rules, regulations, policies and programmes, etc. should be or whether there should be nationalisation, central planning, etc. and of so how much, and what

their actual form should be or whether, for instance, agricultural growth shall have priority over industrialization, the appropriate technologies, etc. – all these are highly important but they must be considered in terms of their actual contribution in a given socio-economic context. Of instrumental value, the programmes are just means to the goal. The fundamental question is what values shall vibrate society and the life of the people. The social structure and all such things may be modified in the light of their actual service. There is sanctity of values and not of the structure of programmes.

Vehicles of reaching the goal, the socialist agenda must be related to the given objective condition and to its changes. Thus, the socialist agenda, never oblivious to the goal, shall be based on an understanding of the character and two major phenomena today - the existing capitalist system and the modern industrial civilization, besides a recognition of problems faced or achievements by the forces of capitalism in different countries.

Karl Marx who made a unique study of the capitalist system and was highly perceptive on some features relating to its growth was at the same time erroneous on its fall and on its staying power. More than 150 years ago, Marx had predicted in the ‘Communist Manifesto’ the “inevitable fall” of capitalism. Marx’s emphasis on the history-specificity of capitalism exercised a strong influence on thinkers in general. After him, not a few eminent thinkers and critics of capitalism predicted regularly the end of capitalism, for instance, Warner Sombart – ‘Modern Capitalism’ (1902), Rudolf Hilferding – ‘Finance

Capital' (1910), Rosa Luxemburg – 'The Accumulation of Capital' (1913), Lenin – 'Imperialism: the Last Stage of Capitalism' (1916), Joseph Schumpeter – "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" (1943), Richard Lowenthal – 'Beyond Capitalism' (1946) and, may be, some others. To them, capitalism was in its last stage. Rosa Luxemburg stated. "Though imperialism is the historical method for prolonging the career of capitalism, it is also a sure means of bringing it to a swift conclusion." The title of Lenin's book itself is self-explanatory; he arrived at the same conclusion as that of Rosa Luxemburg through somewhat different arguments. Schumpeter, not an enemy of capitalism, argued from a different angle than that of Marx, that "there is inherent in the capitalist system a tendency towards self-destruction..." when "objective and subjective, economic and non-economic factors, reinforcing each other in imposing accord, contribute to that result." Richard Lowenthal, an important figure in German SDP, pleaded in 1946 for a federation of European socialist states, beyond capitalism. The capitalist system also witnessed a number of recessions in the twentieth century. The world wide depression of 1930s was the most severe one, reminding many of the Marxian prediction of the doom of capitalism.

Today, the situation for capitalism is much different from what it had been before World War II, after which it made a strong resurgence. In 1984, the then President of the USSR, Chernenko, conceded that even through it had repeatedly appeared in history that the fall of capitalism was inevitable, it "still possesses quite substantial and far from exhausted reserves for development." on the other hand,

the USSR itself and several states, subscribing to the Leninist faith, have toppled down. Now capitalist thinkers are aloud on the superiority of the capitalist system, whether true, half-true or false they are.

In any case, since the time of Marx to today, capitalism has traversed a long distance and it is now remarkably different from what Marx had seen and thought of its

future course. When Bernstein had shown how capitalism had diverged from the path chalked out by Marx, orthodox Marxists only expressed their fury against Berstein, the revisionist. They were wrong and Bernstein right. Similarly, the well-known communist economist, Eugene Varga, also argued that the anarchy of capitalist production and distribution was considerably curbed through state intervention.

(to be concluded)

Stop recommending impunity for pimps and brothel-owners

Apne Aap Women Worldwide and over 1190 signatories, including several organizations and individuals, submitted a petition to the Executive Director of UN Women yesterday asking them to withdraw recommendations in a Note and two reports -*Sex Work and the Law in Asia and Pacific: A UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS report*, Oct 2012 and *HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights and Health, UNDP, 2012*- asking countries to decriminalize pimping, buying sex and brothel-keeping*.

"Such a move will fuel huge sex-trafficking as those who buy and sell women will get off scot free," said Apne Aap Founder, Ruchira Gupta. "The UN Women note and the UNAIDS recommendations are in violation of agreed upon protocols and conventions that India and other member states of the UN are party to. This backdoor attempt to push through policies without getting the formal agreement of member states is a dangerous precedent. If India and other member states ignore this, other treaties and conventions may be flouted as well."

More than a 1,000 individuals and organizations representing victims and survivors, women's, Dalit, De-notified Criminal Tribe, Backward Class, Hill Tribe, Indigenous, LGBT, and First Nation groups have signed a petition that Apne Aap will submit to UN Women in Delhi on 7th January.

All India Dalit Adhikar Manch, ABC Nepal, Bangladesh National Women's Lawyer's Association, Budhan Theatre, Calcutta University, Women's Studies Research Centre, Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health, Eklayvya, Jabala, Kandamahal Zilla Sabuj Vaidya Sanghatan, Lady Sri Ram College, Women's Development Cell, Miranda House, Dept of Political Science, Maiti Nepal, National Alliance of Women, National Commission for Dalit Human Rights, National Dalit Forum, National Dalit Watch, South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy, PRAJWALA, River Basin Friends, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development, Socialist Front, School of Women's Studies, Lady Barbourne College, STOP,

SANLAAP are some of the groups that have signed the petition.

The recommendations and note are in direct violation of the following:

UN Protocol to End Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000

Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956;

Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others, 1949;

Guidelines in the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979).

Petitioners have also objected to UN Women recommending that their sexual exploitation be called “sex work”. The Apne Aap petition addressed to the Phumzile Mlambo Ngucak, Executive Director, UN Women says: “We do not want to be called ‘sex workers’ but prostituted women and children, as we can never accept our exploitation as ‘work’. We think that the attempts in UN documents to call us ‘sex workers’ legitimizes violence against women, especially women of discriminated castes, men and women from poor and marginalized minority groups, who are most vulnerable to being trafficked and prostituted.”

There are three million women and girls trapped in prostitution in India, of which 1.4 million are girls, according to the CBI. The average of entry into prostitution is between nine and thirteen, according to the National Human Rights

Commission. The majority of the prostituted are girls and women are from scheduled castes and other backward classes.

Girls and women are trafficked mainly for purposes of prostitution, child marriage, organ trade,

(Continued from Page 8)

speech in Mehsana with obvious references to “Alis, Malis and Jamalis” and their “child producing factories.”

So, did this electoral tactic work? We measured how the BJP’s vote went up or down between 1998 and the Assembly election at the end of 2002. We found a strong pattern: where more Muslims were killed, the greater the boost to the BJP’s vote. For example, the BJP’s vote increased substantially in districts where the violence was severe, as in Panchmahal. In districts without violence, by contrast, the vote declined, as in Surendranagar.

These findings flag a crucial aspect about the post-Godhra violence: that it had an implicit political logic. There is much evidence, not only from India, of the link between political authority and its capacity to arouse ethnic tensions, sometimes leading to violence. Depending on the will of the government controlling local law and order, the resulting violence is either allowed to continue or is stopped. This is particularly the case in multi-ethnic societies because they provide wider scope to change the salience of ethnic issues to suit political elites.

The foil of “spontaneity” in violence has worked admirably in favour of the political elites in India. Rajiv Gandhi used it to justify the “spontaneous” reaction of angry Hindus at the assassination of Mrs Gandhi in 1984; Mr. Modi continues

surrogacy, and cheap labour. One of the worst forms of trafficking is now inter-generational prostitution where former de-notified criminal tribes are forced to pass down prostitution from mother to daughter or daughter-in-law by upper caste and upper class gangs.

to use it with eclectic references to Newton and puppies. His latest blog post following the metropolitan court verdict, where he expresses “absolute emptiness” at the violence again signals the government’s purported helplessness at the spectacle of perpetrators letting off steam.

Courtesy: The Hindu

Veteran leader of fishermen community in India, **ND Koli**, passes away and we salute him.

He led many struggles of one of the most marginalised communities in India. Like farmers, fishermen also are exploited largely by Globalisation and in the name of so-called Development. He was instrumental in forming National Fish workers’ Forum.

The struggle against foreign trawlers, and mechanised trawling, were fought vehemently by Koli and he gave a vision to Indian fishing community like what Prof. Nanjundaswamy did for farmers...

Socialist fraternity expresses deep grief in the loss of a comrade from the struggle front.

George Jacob



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Disquieting scenario

S. Viswam

Political Scene
Kuldip Nayar

**Dreams of Lowest of
the lowly subaltern**
K. S. Chalam

The AAP Revolution
Irfan Engineer

**Prof. Ila Pathak
(1933-2014)**
Vibhuti Patel, Sonal Shukla

**Socialism of the coming age
and its foundation-II**
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After delivering his farewell message to the nation at one of his rare press conferences, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has lapsed into his all-too-familiar silent mode. Like the proverbial monkeys, he neither hears nor speaks nor listens; so things can be said to be normal in his area of operation. As for the other major, and real, centre of power, what Sonia Gandhi does or does not do, what she says or means and what she tells others to do, only she knows. Her son and heir to the Congress dynasty, is even worse: one day he is willing to become prime minister, the next day he would like to devote himself exclusively to party work and the third day, he is disgusted with everything in Indian politics, including with his own party. The long-standing disconnect between the Indian masses and the triumvirate continues. There are others in the Congress who try to connect with the masses, but they do not have the ears of Sonia, Rahul and Manmohan. So, as far as Indian masses are concerned, there is no government in Delhi. Not now, not in the last five years.

As for the principal opposition party, nothing else exists or matters other than Narendra Modi and

the prospects or otherwise of his becoming prime minister. As for Modi himself, it would seem that he has left the governance of his state Gujarat to officialdom and is wandering all over the country attacking whosoever he can in the Congress but without telling the nation what he intends to do if and when he becomes prime minister. His vision, as far as one can make out, is to live in a Congress-free India. Beyond that he does not have an inkling of what the post of prime minister entails and what it symbolizes. However, what is clear from his travels and speeches is that he is carrying out an assignment entrusted to him by the RSS. And, he is doing his best. Modi wants what the RSS wants. And the RSS wants a Hindu Rashtra and rule of India by a Hindu majority implementing the concept of religious majoritarianism.

Modi travels all through India and captivates his audience with his oratorical skills, but one wishes he would occasionally tell us what is wrong with India apart from its having to contend with the Congress Party. Rahul Gandhi at least identifies the ills of the country having much to do with the nature of the political system we have chosen for ourselves.

Between the lines

Political Scene

Kuldip Nayar

So does the Aam Aadmi Party, but the difficulty with the AAP is that it sees everything through the prism of corruption at higher levels of the government. Surely, corruption is only one negative in a plethora of negatives in the system. Modi does not want to share confidences with us on the kind of ills that are making democracy useless in India.

Considering that in just five months India will be going in for the most crucial general election in its post-independent electoral history, the run-up to the polls present a disquieting picture. What the scenario portrays cannot be true or acceptable for a country of 1.2 billion people. What the scenario obtaining today tells us is that we have to choose between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi or between alliances led by Modi or Gandhi. There seems no alternative. Yet, something in our instinctive assessments tells us that there cannot be such an acute famine of leaders in India that it is currently experiencing. Where are all our eminent leaders gone?

Even three months ago, it seemed that the possibility of regional leaders forging an alternative to the Congress and the BJP should not be ruled out. But the advent of the AAP seems to have ruled out such a probability as the AAP willy-nilly is being taken to be the Third Front of which everyone spoke but to bring about which no one did anything seriously. Now, even the CPM sees the AAP in a position to deliver the kind of goods the communists wanted to and hoped to deliver. So where do we stand?

The AAP cannot be faulted for entering the national mainstream politics after its runaway success

(Continued on Page 4)

Indian Political scene, even though fractured and patchy, is acquiring a shape of sorts. The emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party, founded by NGOs, sneeringly called the johlawalas, has changed the scene. It has provided the much-needed alternative to the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party which are the same wine in two different old bottles.

Regional parties, which have a sway in the states, look like the biggest losers. Their appeal in the name of language, area or religion has lessened in effect. The success of the AAP in the Delhi assembly elections has hit the polarization the most that the party has transcended caste, creed and such other considerations. When both Congress and the BJP admit that they have to learn from the way the AAP has come up, they should transform themselves. Yet they remain the citadels of status quo. Whether the AAP has the Marxists and Naxalites within its ranks does not matter as long as they are in tune with the people's aspirations. Ultimately, the test is how soon the AAP eliminates poverty which encompasses half of India's population even after 67 years of independence.

One thing sure is that the Left has been trampled upon mercilessly. It is a loss, no doubt. But the communists and the nascent Socialist Party have to blame themselves because they are no more tethered to the grassroots. Espousing the cause of progress and egalitarianism cannot be confined to slogans or

rhetoric. The AAP has come out with an agenda and time frame for uplifting the lower half. When the communists could not improve the quality of life in West Bengal in their 35-year-old rule, they have proved that the Marxism of their type is only a veneer of progress. Scratch their skin, they are found part of the establishment. What they could not do—arouse the poor to have their say—for decades, the AAP promised to do in about 12 months.

The two main parties, Congress and BJP, are like mahants in temples. They have learnt nothing, forgotten nothing. Instead of correcting their policies, they consider the AAP an aberration or a bubble which will burst by the time the Lok Sabha elections are held this April. They are mistaken because the party has caught the imagination of the people and it has spread like a wild fire. Lakhs of people who have joined the AAP show that.

The manner in which the wave of Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, has waned indicates that he does not command the crowd he once did although media continues to play him up. That is the reason why the RSS is frantically telling the BJP to stop the AAP, not the Congress, which has been its opponent for years. The attack by the leaders on every step the AAP takes in governing Delhi confirms the perception that the Congress has slipped to the third position. The Congress has reportedly come to the conclusion that it should unofficially support

the AAP to stall Modi. It also means that the Congress has realized that it cannot come back to power. In fact, it may try to marshal the different parties in the states along with its own strength in support of AAP to form the government at the centre.

The Congress will leave no stone unturned to keep Modi out of power. The most disturbing aspect of political scene is the corruption. Both the Congress and the BJP, the latter especially, have no hesitation in getting the support of tainted leaders. The Congress refuses to take action against Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadrha Singh who allegedly favoured a company in which his relations have a large number of shares. Modi, otherwise talking about cleanliness in public life, retains in his cabinet a minister who has been convicted by the court. Both Bihar's Lalu Yadav and Rashid Masood of the Congress ceased to be members of parliament as soon as they were convicted. Why the BJP is shielding the convicted members in Modi's government in Gujarat?

Another disturbing feature visible is the personality cult. The democratic polity is sought to be changed to the presidential form. Modi is to blame the most because he has raised the slogan of a strong man and a strong government. A ruler, who presided over the massacre of his own citizens some 12 years ago, can be dangerous to the dissent that the constitution guarantees.

It is not surprising, however shocking it is, that the police refused to register a First Information Report (FIR) against Modi at Ahmedabad. The snooping scandal which implicates Modi in having a girl under surveillance raises many questions. An FIR is in order to determine the truth. A centre-

(Continued on Page 7)

Dreams of Lowest of the lowly subaltern

K. S. Chalam

This is an age of dreams. Everyone starting from the former President of India down to the current presidents of various business groups prod the young Indians to dream. The activists in Delhi are dreaming to put an AAP man in the PM chair and different social groups particularly in Andhra Pradesh are dreaming to capture political power. Perhaps the hallucinations of intelligent people with media (print and electronic) support, of late are becoming dream projects for many. Yet, none of them has given sufficient and reasonable indications as to how to realise the dreams in the absence of resources and opportunities. Prof. K. Ramakrishan Rao of Andhra University was the first in the country to establish a dream lab in the Psychology Department to study telepathy and dreaming. Now dream labs are a big business venture, both in USA and India.

The young and opulent sections narrate stories how they realised their dreams while the devious experts colour them. We have hundreds of books in the market explaining the rags-to-riches stories of some individuals without telling us the frauds and tricks that they employed. This seems to be a tactic to put on the back burner the traditional methods of perspective planning to achieve set goals of an economy or society followed in all civilized nations at one time. The present fad for dreams looks like a process of change from scientific planning to vision documents and presently landing in a dream circle. However, it is not in any way close to what Martin Luther

King Jr. spoke 50 years ago in 1963 against "the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination" (I have a dream).

This brings us to the circumstances under which the most desolate babies of Muslim refugees in Muzaffarnagar camps are reported dead and the resultant gloomy silence all over. The death of malnourished babies and the orphans in different parts of the country was never a public issue. Then, who are the lowest of the lowly in this great *Karmabhumi* of 125 million people. Everyone is sacred, but there are few who are profane and despicable, may be due to their past karma. What we the mortal humans can do except dreaming and praying for their sins in temples, churches, etc. Therefore, agendas of the political parties have no place for them, except for those who can contribute or reciprocate. The term poor are moved out and Aam Admi has taken its place. Now Delhi CM Kejriwal has clarified that Aam Admi need not necessarily be a poor man as there are many good people among the rich corporates. It is now simple to locate the lowly as those who are beggars, wretched of the earth, the asocial people as in Europe, ex-criminals, ex-untouchables, tramps, traipses, vagabonds and several other names given in the English dictionary. Interestingly, India is not short of such categories, we have structurally and philosophically developed sorts that have been surviving here for ages without much modification.

The history of man is full of stories of rebellious movements

against injustice and tyranny starting from Spartacus down to French and Russian revolutions and many anonymous engagements in different parts of the world. Yet, most of the movements and struggles are carried in the name of the lowest of the lowly in every generation with the subaltern remaining as a residue. This number has remained substantial in India due to our social norms and religious/spiritual practices. Therefore, we have a scheduled caste community today in Bihar surviving only by eating dead, or hunting, rats, called as Musahar. Bhangi or their equivalent names in different parts of the country are the people who eke out their living by carrying the night soil on their heads not only in the remote rural areas but in urban regions and in the so-called secular sectors like the Railways. They are not few and to the amazement of our executive, they are in millions as per the Safai Karmachari Andolan. Strangely, we have untouchables among the Brahmins who do the menial jobs and *pretakarmas* of the upper castes and are not equal to that of the priests of temples dreaming to enter mainstream.

Thus, it is difficult to identify the lowest subaltern. The Planning Commission and our colleagues in the profession are busy in churning out the number of poor to be limited to 30 per cent of the total population (to satisfy MDGs). But, one committed civil servant (retired) placed the number around 50 per cent for the Ministry of Rural Development. Then who are they and where do we locate them?

It is reported that 80 to 85 per cent of Adivasis in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chattisgarh and parts of Andhra Pradesh (isolated) live

below the poverty line. Majority of them eat tamarind and mango seeds, tubers, etc. during summer or drought spells and have developed indigenous methods of animal instinct to survive. The experts sitting in Columbia and Delhi have decided that the body mass index has undergone a change and therefore Indians do not need the minimum of 2100 and 2400 calories of food per day in urban and rural areas respectively. They have elegantly demonstrated in their international publications that liberalisation has reduced poverty in India and there is no place for the lowly. Perhaps this has impelled some of our civil society activists to concentrate on corruption (not private frauds under liberalisation) that is inhibiting public provisioning. Some left and radical groups (parties) have been addressing the oppressed class for the last several decades and seemed to have failed to locate them yet, while the AAP smiled at Aam Admi. AAP have a national agenda now and the left and socialist outfits will be soon made redundant to lick their wounds of rhetoric.

Women and the differentially abled particularly from the socially disadvantaged groups are subjected to double marginalisation. The nation has suddenly waked up to discover that US has outraged the modesty of Dalit Devayani but, the civil society never troubled to look at 33655 crimes against dalits and 244270 women victims in 2012(CRB). Several traditional occupations of the ostracised groups like fisher folk, weavers and even professional dancers are appropriated by others making original artisans jobless, dribbling in silence. The number of roofless victims succumbing to cold waves has made the apex court to pass an order for night shelters.

There is suffering and anguish no doubt, among the middle classes and even the rich in getting safe drinking water, sufficient parks, sparkled roads, enough flights to roam about, sufficient Demat securities, etc. But, the misery and desolation of the indigent paupers are so grave that the compassionate should appeal to the political class to pay some attention to the woes of the lowly who are everywhere, from remote jungles to urban slums, city pavements, etc.

In the absence of feign service or even crocodile tears before elections, the lowest of the lowly who constitute 50 per cent of the official poor (30 crores) have no alternative except dreaming for a future deliverance. Is there anyone to heed or at least glimpse at them in the melee of triumph of common man?

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in Delhi. It now proposes to contest more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha poll. This means it will be one of the parties which will contest as many seats as will make it possible for it to touch the magic figure of 272 out of 543. The question now is how this agenda of the AAP will affect the process of alliance formation that will begin soon. Will not some of the erstwhile partners of the UPA and the NDA be wanting to join hands with the AAP and bring into being a new kind of Third Front which will be a more effective challenge to the UPA and NDA?

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The AAP Revolution

Irfan Engineer

Aam Admi Party has aroused a lot of enthusiasm among the people of India after its spectacular debut in the Delhi elections. Though AAP could not get majority and was not even the single largest party, it was obliged to form its government. AAP was nudged by both – Congress as well as the BJP to form its government in the National Capital Territory - Congress by extending unconditional support and BJP, by deciding to sit on opposition benches in spite of being the single largest party. Harsh Vardhan, BJP's Chief Ministerial candidate in his tweet challenged the AAP to form its Government. Both the parties were hoping that AAP would fail to fulfill its promises and AAP's failure would be beneficial to expose during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

In its manifesto, AAP had promised among other things that it would provide 700 litres of water to the residents of Delhi free and reduce the energy charges by 50 percent. BJP and Congress were hoping that AAP would fail to deliver on its promise and hence expose the party before the impending Lok Sabha elections. Nevertheless, AAP turned the challenge of forming the government into its advantage and delivered on some of the promises. While deciding to form a minority government with the Congress supporting it from outside, AAP adopted some unusual methods by holding "referendum" through mohalla sabhas. The concept of mohalla sabhas was new to the electorate as well as other political parties. In the TV studio debates, the

AAP spokespersons are proclaiming that while the traditional national parties like the Congress and the BJP are replacement to each other, AAP was an alternative. Arvind Kejriwal's book titled Swaraj is selling like hot cakes and has aroused a lot of interests.

Jamat-E-Islami and other small parties have declared its support to the AAP. Soon there was a rush in many metros and small towns to join the AAP. Some media reports stated that in matter of three days, three lakh persons have become members of AAP and Arvind Kejriwal, the AAP Chief Minister of Delhi has set a target of membership of ten million by 26th January. The AAP received wide coverage and news channels during prime time. Some notable personalities too have joined the AAP, including Mallika Sarabhai in Gujarat and industrialists like Meera Sanyal.

Meanwhile, one witnesses a lot of incoherence, if not contradictions, in the AAP rank and file. Meera Sanyal has often been on TV studios and aired her views in favour of more rigorous and speedier less regulated inflow of foreign investments, less regulated market and removing fretters on capital and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, many activists who are opposed to liberalization and globalization too have joined the party. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, an accomplished academician and member of CPI, has joined the AAP. Mallika Sarabhai who contested against Narendra Modi who presided over the Gujarat carnage has joined

the party in Gujarat while Kumar Vishwas, one of prominent leaders of the AAP has praised Narendra Modi and is busy mobilizing voters in Amethi to defeat Rahul Gandhi. Mallika Sarabhai even publicly rebuked Kumar Vishwas for being sexist gay hater and for praising Modi. There is incoherence within the party on account of mainly being a single issue party which focuses on corruption. People following all kinds of ideologies and political programmes are against corruption and therefore Meera Sanyal as well as anti-globalization activists are attracted to the AAP, particularly with the success of the party in Delhi. With the target of ten million members till 26th January, there is an aggressive recruitment drive throughout the country, including online and the verification process of those joining the AAP during an aggressive drive is going to be lax. While CM Kejriwal talks of simplicity, integrity and honesty, those joining the AAP may be ambitious seeking opportunities of being in various posts.

Understanding the AAP 'Revolution'

The quick popularity of the AAP is not difficult to understand. There was exposure of series of scams beginning from Commonwealth games, 2G spectrum, coal block allocation and the rest. Team Anna's agitation supported by liberal coverage by media demanded Jan Lokpal as one off solution to all corruption gave a vent to popular frustration and anger. Team Anna's strategy to fight corruption placed

heavy reliance on the institution of Jan Lokpal with jurisdiction over the PM, the judiciary and lakhs of government employees including class IV and control over the CBI and the CVC. Team Anna, which included CM Kejriwal, demanded nearly unlimited powers for the Jan Lokpal and with little or no accountability. Arundhati Roy, the celebrated author, in one of her articles asked, would the common man and the elite now have to bribe one more institution in addition to the traditional authorities to continue their everyday affair.

The media and people cared little whether the Jan Lokpal was the right and desired solution to the problem of corruption, what prompted them to support the agitation, including the opportunist opposition, was that the issue of corruption was being publicly debated and rebuked. While the BJP wanted to put the ruling Congress in the dock, Team Anna wanted to put all the politicians and institutions of democracy, including the Parliament and Judiciary in the dock. The agitation bordered on anarchism with all powerful Jan Lokpal as a solution to all problems of the people. The agitation was peppered by undercurrents of majoritarian nationalism and liberal use of symbol of Bharatmata. The middle class, with its usual abhorrence to politicians as “less intelligent” and “less educated” and even rural and backward thinking, enthusiastically supported the Team Anna agitation prompted by media. It is this backdrop that gave birth to the AAP – an offshoot of Team Anna. Origin of the AAP was in opposing all the democratic institutions without proposing any alternative and therefore sounded like anarchic in its solutions. However, with elections, it is going more towards

being a system compliant party from a system adverse party.

Mohalla Sabhas and Renunciation

The USP of the AAP has been basically twofold. One, Arvind Kejriwal and his team’s simplicity, plebian background and renunciation of all privileges of office, like official residence, cars, security cover and the rest. Renunciation resonates with common people as they hope that those who renounce privileges of office are going to be non-corrupt. That need not be so. How far will all of them now in positions of authority and with opportunities to make quick bucks would be able to resist temptations in spite of maintaining their appearance as renouncers, remains to be seen. It is not only temptations that they will have to resist. They will have to resist coercive attempts of the land mafias, water mafias, and the rest. The second USP of the AAP is innovative ways in which they have utilized social media as a tool to continuously communicate with their constituencies in a way the traditional parties could not have imagined (to borrow Rahul Gandhi’s phrase). The way in which “referendum” on the issue – whether the AAP should form a minority government with external support from the Congress – impressed everybody. The AAP’s decision making organs are going to be not just party leaders or a small coterie, but the ordinary members of the party and the people in the mohalla sabhas.

However, there are many issues of who would constitute the mohalla sabha? What would be their decision making process? Simple majority? Overwhelming majority? Or complete unanimity? What are the

issues on which the mohalla sabhas would be entrusted to decide? There are many issues on which the mohalla sabhas could not be entrusted with decision making, particularly on the issues that are in conflict with the Constitutional morality of liberty, equality, fraternity and dignity of every individual. Can affirmative actions for dalits, adivasis and minorities be decided in mohalla sabhas? What if the Khap panchayats were to decide on section 377 of the IPC pertaining to the rights of sexual minorities? Or on liberties of women? However, it could be experimented if the mohalla sabhas should be called upon to deliberate how they would like to spend their funds for development of their local area. There could be a danger here too that those in position of hegemony over the mohalla sabhas could exclude the marginalized sections like the dalits, adivasis, minorities etc. It is for this reason that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had misgivings about Gadhiji’s concept of gram swaraj. Autonomous gram swaraj could turn into instrument of oppression of the dalits and institutionalization of untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar therefore advocated strong centre, where the elite, informed of Constitutional morality of equality, could be relied upon to take on the caste oppression through Constitutional measures.

The unique feat that the AAP achieved in Delhi was that through their door to door campaign on the issue of inflated energy bills, promise of free water upto 700 litres per person per day, promise to halt demolition of slums until alternative accommodation was provided, and on anti-corruption plank, it could mobilize the middle class as well as the slum dwellers of Delhi to vote for it!

The AAP's Strengths:

The AAP holds the hope for the future as it has been mobilizing the citizens not on the basis of their caste, region, community, language, ethnicity or any other identity markers. It mobilizes citizens on the issue of transparency within the system; for participatory processes and anti-corruption. Since all sections of the society, except those in positions of authority and the elite, including industrial houses, want more participatory democracy, transparency and corruption free system, all sections have been joining the party despite the identities they profess. It mobilizes citizens as citizens and not as Hindus or Muslims or South Indians or North Indians! If the AAP were to succeed and continue on these lines, communal and caste based politics would become irrelevant. But there is capital IF. In this sense, the AAP is catch-all party. It promises to set up right systems for accountability of those in power. The free market advocates and anti-globalization activists – all can be members of the party. Only the free market advocates within the party would be worried that energy and water and indeed other services should not be subsidized.

The social origin of the AAP has been its campaign for RTI and anti-corruption. The leadership of the party is so far drawn from ordinary people and its professed political goals are policy seeking rather than office seeking or vote seeking.

Problem areas

The biggest challenge that AAP faces in spite of its strengths is that it does not follow any ideology nor does it seem to have any professed political programme or direction.

The party is too nascent and has not yet deliberated on many political issues. The leaders are speaking in different voices on, e.g. presence of military in Kashmir. Prashant Bhushan has taken position stating that military should be withdrawn from civilian areas in Kashmir while others are disowning Prashant Bhushan's stand. Similarly, on the issue of Kudankulam Nuclear plant and nuclear energy, different leaders are speaking in different voices. While Kumar Vishwas is praising Modi, others are strongly differing. Arvind Kejriwal is maintaining silence on some of the issues. People from varied ideological stream are infiltrating into the party in absence of ideological or clear and declared political positions. The incoherence on varied issues can pose a challenge of alienating one section or the other once its positions on various issues are declared. In coherence can lead to indecisiveness on issues.

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appointed commission may be able to dig it out. But the state machinery is not willing to cooperate, as is obvious from the attitude of the local police.

The Congress should have seen through Modi's game to convert the 2014 elections into a clash of personalities, not of issues. But the party is guilty of projecting Rahul Gandhi as if the contest is between the two. Rahul Gandhi is too often speaking on important policy matters and having the government's decision reversed. One example is that of the ordinance to save politicians from the Supreme Court judgment that a legislator would cease to be member once he is convicted. Yet another issue is that of the housing scandal in Maharashtra.

The party does not seem to have put in place strong structure in place. Sudden expansion will bring all kinds of elements in the party – the left wingers and the right wingers, the honest and the opportunists, notables like Meera Sanyal, Mallika Sarabhai and the ordinary grass root activists. How this plays out remains to be seen. But for now the AAP's expansion is posing challenge to the BJP's victory at the hustings. Kejriwal has demonstrated that leaders who renounce privileges are more popular. Modi in contrast uses considerable financial resources hopping in helicopters, constructing massive podiums and spending millions of rupees in technology and mobilization of people. Congress failure at hustings in the four states in which elections were held recently had boosted the morale of BJP workers however, with AAP dominating the media and expansion of AAP has the BJP now worried. Good enough justification for existence of AAP!

Rahul Gandhi has partly retrieved the Adarsh Housing report which was rejected by the Congress-led government in the state. Still the politicians have gone scot-free. Only bureaucrats will have to bear the brunt.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal should realize that the AAP government is not coterminous with him. Strange, he retains 16 departments. The Janata Party in the wake of a movement by Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan did not last. But it saw to it that there would be no Emergency. Democracy was deeply entrenched. If the AAP could clean the system and make sure that it stays that way, this will be a great contribution even if the AAP does not last.

Prof. Ila Pathak (1933-2014)

**Vibhuti Patel
Sonal Shukla**

In passing away of Prof. Ila Pathak due to breast cancer on 9-1-2014 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat has lost a dedicated social activist who stood by socially excluded sections of society, especially brutalized women. She tirelessly supported women survivors of dowry harassment, rape victims, crimes of honour ('fallen' women whose noses were cut as punishment for being 'adulteress' by their husbands and in-laws) not only in the urban areas but also in the rural and tribal areas. She campaigned against selective abortions of female fetuses way back in 1980s.

Together both of us have been aware of her work with AWAG from 1981 when she attended the first national conference of women's studies at the SNDT Women's university's Juhu campus that resulted in formation of the Indian Association of Women's studies. Ilaben brought her own energies and perspective to women's movement. She had been an untiring worker right from the beginning. A master's degree in law, a Ph.D. in English literature and a high post in NCC were indicative of her capacity to achieve the goals she had set for herself. Her devotion to working for women's rights and development was reflected in her writings and action through Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG) and innumerable institutions she was associated with.

Feminist Activism

Ilaben began her career as a university teacher of English language and literature at H. K. Arts

College, Ahmedabad and free lance journalist who wrote on women's concerns. In the early seventies she started her crusade against misogyny in Gujarati plays rife with double meaning sentences full of crude and crass jokes/puns that degraded women and objectified women's bodies. In 1981, Ilaben with her young colleagues/students such as Dr. Ila Joshi, Aditi Desai (Theatre artiste), Sofia Khan (now a human rights lawyer) established a women's rights organization, AWAG (acronym means noise). AWAG energetically made noise against sexism in advertisement, media and textbooks. They blackened sexist advertisement at public places - roads, square -, staged dharna against a phallogocentric play "*Putra Kameshti Yagna*" to be aired on All India Radio and got the broadcasting cancelled. Her tireless work resulted in Government of Gujarat appointing a committee under her leadership to examine portrayal of sex stereotypes and subordinate status of women in the school textbooks in which she involved us also. Mandate for evaluation of the textbooks was decided within the framework of equality, development and peace.

In 1982, she spearheaded participatory action research project of AWAG to bring out precarious condition of homeless and miserable tribal migrant works near railway tracks of Ahmedabad city who eked out their subsistence through collection of coal fallen from engine on the tracks. She started income generation activities for them based on tribal art and beadwork. In 1982,

when a tribal woman in Sagbara village of South Gujarat was gang raped and Sahiyar stood by the victims, it was Ilaben who activated the government machinery and took the case up to Amnesty International. As a result all the rapists were punished and a tribal woman got justice and her dwelling place. Ilaben took leadership for movement against Patan P T C College gang rapes of students by their male teachers backed by powerful politicians. She also supported Manipur's Irom Sharmila's agitation against Armed Forces Special Powers' Act (AFSPA). Ilaben raised her voice against all forms injustice without fear of consequences. Her courageous and consistent work among victims of communal riots post-demolition of Babri Musjeed in 1993 and among Muslim refugees after Gujarat riots in 2002 symbolised her secular humanism.

Ilaben's command over language came handy to coin catchy and hard hitting slogans in Gujarati such as "Silence is not a virtue, Break the silence of oppression", "Putting up with injustice is not a virtue, fight for justice". She gave great emphasis to documentation, research and training and AWAG always provided material in local language and case studies and resource persons for capacity building of community workers, elected representatives and youth. During 1986-1992, she regularly wrote for a feminist quarterly in Gujarati, *Nari Mukti* (Women's Freedom) that was collectively brought out by feminists

of Mumbai, Valsad, Surat, Vadodara and Ahmedabad.

We have fond memories of spending quality time with Ilaben in IAWS Conferences, Nairobi End of the Decade Conference, 1985, Gujarat Human Rights Conference, 1990, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2011) and capacity building conferences of Gujarat University on Sexual Harassment at Workplace. To take women's political agenda in the mainstream politics, she also contested election for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1990.

Social Movements

Her persuasive style of speaking was her success mantra. She could reach out to all - Gandhians, liberals, feminists, human rights activists, leftists... She could establish communication with the rich and powerful without getting cowed down by them.

She reached out to the weak and marginalized people with utmost humility. She made lifelong friends among women's studies scholar and feminists whenever she attended national Conferences of Indian Association of Women's Studies and international conferences at of the United Nations. She attended these conferences with over a dozen women of her organization and she looked after them very well.

Crucial Contribution

Ilaben served on many apex bodies to further the cause of women. She was a member of Women Development Cell of Gujarat University that had to perform twin tasks of prevention of sexual harassment and promotion of gender sensitization in the university and its affiliated colleges. Ilaben was also governing board member of Centre for Social Studies, Surat. She played important role in all women centred activities of Gujarat Vidyapeeth.

Ilaben was president of India Chapter of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was an active member of Movement for Secular Democracy. In 2012, Ilaben Pathak was honoured for her work among poor and oppressed women and four books based on compilation of her articles promoting women's striving for dignity and struggle for empowerment were published.

Her four decades of pioneering work will always give us strength and inspiration to keep the torch of women's rights burning in today's volatile circumstances. She has left a huge fan following among students and all those women whom she supported pro-actively, intellectually and emotionally. Ilaben will always remain with us in spirit. As fellow travelers in the women's movement who shared common her-story and collective memory, we salute our sister, Ila Pathak.

Cancel Environmental Clearance for POSCO Project

A protest was organised by 14 groups under the banner of Delhi Solidarity Group at Paryavaran Bhavan today to protest the Environmental Clearance given to POSCO project in Odisha in violation of the Honorable National Green Tribunal's decision and the Meena Gupta Committee findings. The groups demanded cancellation of the clearance until recommendations of the NGT and Meena Gupta Committee are fulfilled as well as a complete halt on forceful land acquisition and destruction of forest and beetel vines. The action was organised in solidarity with POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS) as part of observing January 15th as National Protest Day against POSCO.

In the ongoing case the NGT had decided to stay the earlier clearance given to the project even while the question of forest clearance has not been settled. Despite this, the MoEF has cleared the project just before the arrival of the South Korean President, Ms. Park Geun Hye. On 30th March, 2012, in the matter of Prafulla Samantra v/s Union of India, the National Green Tribunal suspended the clearance given to the project by the ministry until a full review by a committee consisted of judicial and expert members of the committee. The tribunal in its order even reduced the total capacity of the project from 12 MTP to 4 MTP. But the ministry has again given clearance to the project without following these conditions and more

specifically without an MoU of the Project proponent i.e. POSCO with the state of Odisha. To note, the MoU had lapsed in June, 2010.

The Meena Gupta Committee in 2010 too reported the Environmental Clearance and the Forest Clearance as illegal and it recommended for additional study and due compliance of all the conditions. But, the Environment Ministry which is incharge of ensuring environment policy for the country overlooked all the conditions, violations by the project proponent, state and more importantly the ongoing struggle against the project by the people for their right to life and livelihood for last seven years now.

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People's Movements Extend Support to Aam Aadmi Party

People's Movements for years have been striving in non-violent, democratic ways for a broader social and political transformation. These struggles at times manifest in changing government policies and laws and raise broader questions of alternative development and address questions of societal values. For years and decades long struggles have evolved consensus among various sections of farmers, workers, labourers, fish workers and across classes, including the middle class in the cities and villages. The movements are in alliance across the country and have achieved many things, in the form of protecting people's rights, livelihood and resources as well as changing their relations with the rulers, the power holders. We have always stood for people's power.

However, the movements have over the years witnessed the changing face, culture and approach of political class to people's issues and priorities. The mainstream parties, in power, have just not been insensitive to people's demands but also have been insulting the people's power, role and violating their rights. Corruption – as misuse and misappropriation of monetary and natural resources - is hitting not only the micro level livelihoods and downtrodden but the macro economy of the nation as well. When the politicians are engaged in loot and don't care for the large majority of common people, they resort to caste-religion and other bases to gain vote bank and distribute notes, freebies, liquor to regain and retain political power. This needs to be condemned. People's movements have always fought against these fraudulent ways and means that defeat democracy and become

barriers in achievement of the goal of peace, justice and development of the country.

Today a new context and content has been provided to the people in the movements by the ongoing churning among the common masses, emerging beyond the non-electoral processes. People are eager and full of confidence, courage and commitment to bringing in change, distinct and deep.

A number of attempts by small and large parties and fora to create an alternative to the mainstream politics, creating space for those at margins by the power holders have played a role in the past. Earlier it was JP Movement (post-emergency rise of new alliance of parties) and again with V P Singh that such churning happened. Once again and with a difference, the concern of the masses has led to formation of Aam Aadmi Party reflecting a need for changing the political cultures and system. The people's movements have found their issues and visions reflected in the position of the AAP, that includes :

1. Decentralisation of power and governance to grant primacy to people and the lowest smallest unit of democracy – gram and Bastis.
2. Rooting out corruption from bottom to top though not only legal but social-political processes.
3. Due place and scope for alternative economic and technological solutions rooted in the land of India and Bharat.
4. Rising above caste, religion, gender based divisions and discriminations while retaining positive discriminatory

measures such as reservations.

5. Resolutions of conflicts between the state and people - may those be farmers, dalits, adivasis or urban poor - through due democratic processes and on the basis of the Constitutional values and principles
6. Solutions to inequality, injustice, corruption and water, energy crises.
7. Working for an alternative political culture for the political class.

Arvind kejariwal and the team of youngsters, with Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, Prof. Anand Kumar, Prof. Ajit Jha and many experienced intellectual activists took a lead and have made a dent into the electoral politics. Their achievements through innovative strategies, principles of transparency and accountability in realm of governance have raised hope for everyone today.

We consider the attempt of AAP as a movement and appreciate the endeavour to fill in the political vacuum. It's because the AAP is following the movement ways, giving regard to mass participation and bringing in simplicity and selfless service into politics that many comrades and colleagues in various people's movements have decided to extend our active support to AAP. This is a decision taken through dialogue to deliberations within movements in states taking note of diverse opinions with a common ground. Narmada Bachao Andolan, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan (Maharashtra), Jan Sangharsh Vahini (Delhi), lok Shakti Abhiyan (Orissa), Kosi Baadh Prabhavit Sangharsh Samiti and Jan Jaagran Shakti

Sangathan (Bihar), Unorganised Sector Workers federation (South India) and many others.

The decision is based on our viewing AAP as an evolving political vehicle for people's movements. With Indian Constitution as the guide with fundamental rights to directive principles and 'we the people of India' as our resources, we feel AAP is committed to both. Hence, without any dogmatic views and traditional dilemmas, we see a hope and extend our support and contribute to ideological strengthening of the party programmes and policies. We appeal to other movements too to join and support. The victory in Delhi should be taken forward to all states, villages, hamlets, bastis and cities in the country.

We are however, yet to discuss some aspects – ideological to strategical – with AAP leadership and ensure a mechanism to establish a relation of the party with the people's movements. Many of us are part of National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), a non-party political platform, which will continue to retain its independent identity and provide input to programmes and policies and also lead struggles on people's issues as done always. We see AAP itself as a movement that bring in complementarity and hence we confide in its leadership to evolve such process and spaces within for the long term struggle to clean politics and bring in an alternative politics and political culture..

We will announce forms of support and our interventions into the political arena with AAP with all formalities and processes after our dialogue in Delhi on 16-17th of January and look forward to a new era of politics – electoral and

non-electoral as strengthening each other and the Indian society with democracy, unity in diversity and equity.

Signed by

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The Neros Of Uttar Pradesh

The Muzaffarnagar riot victims have been left to fend for themselves while leaders of the ruling Samajwadi Party enjoy lavish celebrations and foreign jaunts. Deevakar Anand reports (<http://www.tehelka.com/the-neros-of-uttar-pradesh-2/>)

Samajwadi Party supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav can certainly brave the chill of the January nights. On the night of 8 January, he was at the annual Saifai Mahotsav in his native district of Etawah, along with his son, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. The father-son duo looked absolutely comfortable enjoying the "Bollywood Night" as actors Salman Khan and Madhuri Dixit, among others, shook their legs to various dance numbers.

Around the same time when the Bollywood performers were regaling the Yadavs, along with their select list of guests that included the who's who of Uttar Pradesh politics and bureaucracy, about 400 km away at Malakpur village in Shamli district, Akbari, a 60-year-old widow, struggled to keep herself warm by burning dried sugarcane leaves in front of an 8x6 feet tarpaulin tent. Akbari, along with her two teenage sons, had run away from her home in Lank village on 8 September last year to escape the riots — India's deadliest in a decade that left 59 dead and rendered over 50,000 homeless.

The tent that serves as her shelter is in one corner of a camp where there are more than 200 such tents — temporary shelters for families that were displaced from their homes during the communal riots that ravaged Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts. Like several other such camps that came up during the riots, the Malakpur camp too was set up hastily on an open field near the narrow road leading to the village.

An almost unbearable chill had begun to set in earlier in the evening. At quarter past seven, the road from Kairana, a municipal town in Shamli district, to Malakpur village was already shrouded in thick fog, with visibility less than 30-40 metres. As the mercury dipped to freezing levels, the tarpaulin tents ceased to provide any protection against the chill. As it is dangerous to light a fire inside the tent to bring in some warmth, Akbari and others in the camp had no option but to go out into the open, gather dry leaves to burn and sit huddled around the fire.

- **Qurban Ali**

Reprint

Socialism of the coming age and its foundation-II

Sishir K. Dhar

Evidently, capitalism has scaled great heights with enormous progress in productivity and prosperity, particularly in the West, benefiting not only the owning class but, though less, also the people at large, when “the fate of Marx’s laws of Increasing Misery has been increasingly miserable” (Pranab Bardhan). And, Schumpeter observes: “Measured in real terms, relative shares (in national income) have substantially changed in favor of the lower income groups. This follows from the fact that the capitalist engine is first and last an engine of mass production, which unavoidably means production for the masses ...” Further, “...an avalanche of consumer goods that permanently deepens and widens the stream of real income although in the first instance they spell disturbance, losses and unemployment.... In other words, the capitalist process, not by coincidence but by virtue of its mechanism, progressively raises the standard of life of the masses.” Scientific and technological innovations, which seem to be at the core of the dynamics of capitalism, lead to ‘mass production’, flooding the market with various durables and non-durables, and things, necessary and not necessary, continue along with an aggressive advertisement policy to rouse the consumers’ craze for more and more items.

The capitalist system, remarkably flexible in practice and ready to make compromise when the situation so demands, shows a strong resilience,

and hence a remarkable staying power. During the depression of 1930s, when the capitalist economy was in dire straits, the upholders of the laissez-faire system accepted a big role of the state in the economy, following the Keynesian prescription of a kind of recovery programme, known as “pump priming”, in which the private investment was to be stimulated by public investment programmes. Here relevant is Schumpeter’s opinion that “The capitalist civilization is rationalistic and ‘anti-heroic’” and “even disliking warrior ideology that conflicts with its ‘rational’ utilitarianism, the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie is fundamentally pacifist...” Such a characterization does not fit in with the analysis by Marx, whose emphasis on the role of impersonal forces in the social process relegates to the background personal traits of individuals or groups. However, with an awareness of its real interests the capitalist makes compromises, recognizing the demands of the changing situation. He acquiesces even to part with the principles of laissez-faire, held sacrosanct by his predecessors, and accepts, grudgingly various controls imposed by the state on what hitherto had been his domain, including what Keynes called “a somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment.” As Adolf A. Berle sums up the situation: The capital is there, and so is capitalism. The waning factor is the capitalist.

Such developments Marx did not anticipate, while emphasizing excessively on the economic factor. He also did not recognize, though he had a presentiment of it as late as in 1872 (when it was perhaps rather late to make thorough revision of the system he had so assiduously built) that with the growth of democracy a new factor of profound significance would be operative in the socio-political system, that democracy would give the workers an unprecedented power, hardly available to their forefathers groaning under various restrictions and repressions, to organize themselves by peaceful means and to counter the monopolistic advantages enjoyed by the capitalist following concentration of capital. The workers did not give up the idea of class consolidation or class struggle, which, however, did not sharpen into violent class war, when the calculating bourgeoisie of Schumpeter’s description also was perceptive of the ground reality. (Some critics of capitalism with a Marxian prism thought that to save itself from a difficult situation, capitalism would turn into Fascism. They proved unrealistic). At the same time, the workers found that with the backing of a powerful labour movement they could carry on fairly successfully, what one might call a class struggle around the negotiation table, face to face with employers’ representatives.

It seems, at the root of Marx’s failure to anticipate such a development,

with all its implications, were two important errors: (a) his failure to assess realistically the potential of democracy and the increasing strength it gains as it grows and (b) his failure to analyze correctly the real character of the state (Marx's characterization of the state is somewhat dogmatic and presents a 'half-truth'). Actually, in spite of all the depth of his study of capitalism, he ignored an important trait in the capitalist – his flexibility and capacity to compromise so as to save as much as possible of the system when, otherwise, the whole of it might be lost. As Robert Heilbroner points out, "Marx was not so much 'wrong' in his economic vision as he was wrong in assuming that his psychological perceptions were fixed and unalterable". The idea of democracy, the idea of a somewhat neutral state in a democratic system, seeking to reconcile divergent interests of the people as a whole transcending the class barriers, was rather a fantasy to Marx.

Thus, the cataclysmic view of history that Marx visualized has lost much of its earlier passion in his disciples, particularly in countries of advanced capitalism. The owning class also is inclined to stave off any violent conflict in society that harms its pursuit of more wealth, and majority of the people have little fascination for any violent uprising when peaceful means might serve their urge for a better life – better food, greater security in a condition of freedom. (Even in India, where democracy and national economy are yet less advanced than in the western countries, the Indian communists' attempt at an armed uprising in some pockets just after India's independence received little popular support. If anywhere in the world believers in violent action get

some response, it is mainly because those who wield power and are entrusted with affairs of the society are too callous to the condition of the people, or even connive at oppression and exploitation or denial of justice, with a modicum of good governance and growth of democracy internal political violence will have little footing.) In this context, there has emerged the 'welfare state' in all the industrially advanced countries, and it is accepted by most others.

How far does the 'welfare state' fit in with the socialist vision of a compassionate, egalitarian and free society? The 'welfare state', hardly thinkable in Marx's time, has originated largely because of a sustained struggle by the working class in a democratic set-up. The Social Democratic parties are the main initiators. Verily, 'the welfare state', partly capitalist and partly socialist, is a mid-way house between the two. It is capitalist in that the ownership in it is to a large extent in private hands. It is socialist in that to a large extent distribution, and to some extent production also, are under public control, when the capitalist class has lost much of its earlier hold on the economy and when the public authorities are the major determinants of socio-economic policies, along with a considerable abridgement of the power of the owners and a simultaneous enlargement of that working class. The state is no more the 'governing body', of any single class.

The 'welfare state' signifies a great victory of the socialist point of view that it is the function of the state or society to create a condition helpful to people's security, welfare and progress. As Michael Walzer says, the state is to be devoted

to what Bentham called 'welfare production' and it is judged by the amount of welfare it produces and by the justice and efficiency of its distribution system. The 'Welfare State' also shows that the weakness in distribution in capitalist system cannot be rectified sufficiently by the 'invisible hand' that Adam Smith had thought of. In short, the 'welfare state' is primarily a matter of humane distribution in a mainly capitalist system of production. Looking back, one may note that those whom Marx and Engels called 'utopian socialists', desirous of separating the good from the bad in capitalism, thought of such a possibility. However, notwithstanding all the welfare ensured by it so far, much remains to be done, if one looks at the situation with a vision of a socialist society. It appears that the 'welfare state' cannot overcome the existence of private ownership and that of a class-based society but can mitigate the drawbacks of this class-base as it has done so far in the multi-class system. We may add here in passing that the Marxian idea of the state 'withering away' followed by the emergence of 'classless society' is a remote possibility, if at all. And even if all the economic conflicts are resolved, perhaps non-economic conflicts, e.g. racial, cultural, communal, etc. and also conflict at the individual level for greater eminence and more power will be there and a government may be there with an avowed function of maintaining order in the context of conflicting claims by different sections of the population in such a classless system.

Do the socialists have a better alternative to the 'welfare state', in a democratic set-up? The democratic system with its peaceful methodology and freedom for all

people allows the existence and functioning of different cultural groups and economic classes. On the other hand, as already explained, elimination of democracy by force, in the name of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', of working class rule, or on any other ground, is likely to be a remedy worse than the disease.

While discussing the question whether there is any alternative to the welfare state it may be recognized that there is nothing wrong with its principles. Basically, in any humanist society that socialism is, a government must play a positive role of safeguarding the security, welfare and progress of the people. The important question here is how far efficient in practice the welfare state can be in translating its principle into reality. Also, it has not only to ensure the needed welfare but also to motivate the people with a greater sense of social responsibility. Contrasting the Marxist-Leninist approach with the democratic socialist approach Leszek Kolakowski writes "The apocalyptic belief in consummation of history, the inevitability of socialism, and the natural sequence of 'social formations', the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', the exaltation of violence, faith in the automatic efficiency of nationalizing industry, fantasies concerning a society without conflict and an economy without money - all these have nothing in common with the idea of democratic socialism. The latter's purpose is to create institutions which can gradually reduce the subordination of production to profit, do away with poverty, diminish inequality, remove social barriers to educational opportunity, and to minimize the threat to democratic liberties from state bureaucracy and the seductions of the totalitarianism.

All these efforts and attempts are doomed to failure unless they are rooted in the value of freedom - what Marxists stigmatize as 'negative freedom', i.e. the area of decision, which society allows to the individual." The only apparent snag in the 'welfare state', contrasting with socialist theory, is the existence in it of private enterprise. Anyway, whether one appreciates or opposes the democratic socialist approach, the Social Democrats in a number of countries, particularly in the Scandinavian countries, have succeeded in ensuring to the people a high degree of liberty, equality (political, economic and social) and security along with prosperity even while working in a parameter of private ownership. What other system in human history has done better in terms of the quality of life of the common men and women? That the Social Democrats in these countries have remained in power for long periods at a stretch, winning democratic elections, would only make obvious the appreciation received by them from their countrymen.

Of course, much remains to be done and democratic socialists must ever be introspective as to how to do better. As C. A. R. Crosland observes, "For all the rising material standards and apparent contentment there is a significant residue of distress, resentment, and injustice (which) affords a prima-facie justification for further social change... in a socialist direction". The contention is valid. In a sense, the endeavour for a 'better society' is a perennial one. As we shall discuss presently, the socialist agenda widen as the society moves ahead.

Today, capitalism appears to be in a state of resurgence. The fall of the

communist governments in Russia and in East European countries proved, after all, a failure or an autocratic system of government that the people threw away at the earliest opportunity. But as already stated, votaries of capitalism have hailed it as a failure of the socialist system and are aloud that capitalism is the only viable system for human society. Thus, emphasizing on the superiority of the capitalist system, a British historian, Paul Johnson, claims capitalism to be "a natural force rather than a contrived ideology springing from instincts deep in our human nature", He also avows, "never will any considerable body of opinion seriously doubt its wealth-producing capacity or seek to replace it with something fundamentally different". Further, "many idealists, early in the 19th century, saw it as devil, rejected it entirely and sought to replace it. We have come to the end of argument. We have discovered that there is no effective substitute". Such views overlook the Social Democratic model in which the state guides substantively the country's economy without itself becoming an omnipotent, totalitarian state that the Soviet Russia had been and has done so much in terms of a better quality of the life of the people.

What is the actual performance of capitalism? Historically, capitalism is a more progressive system than feudalism. More important, capitalism has built a strong 'engine of production', which is gaining strength continually, is much colossal today than ever before, that even the most eloquent critic of capitalism, Karl Marx himself had recognized. In spite of these positive contents, capitalism is unable to rectify by itself its basic deficiency in ensuring a just distribution, leading

to a gross inequality in society, poverty in the midst of plenty. The 'welfare state', a product of socialist movement, negating the laissez-faire principle of capitalism and giving an upper hand to government in the formulation major socio-economic policies, removed this capitalist deficiency to a large extent, in some advanced capitalist countries in particular. Yet a sizable section of the population remains deprived in several preponderantly capitalist countries – and, this deprivation is sometimes stark enough. A former editor of 'The Times', London, William Rees-Mogg points out: "In the USA and Britain, there is a growing under-class, suffering from poor education, poor job opportunities, poor health, poverty, the break-down of family structures, bad housing, crime, drug and social alienation." Similarly, referring to the maldistribution of wealth, Huck Gutman (who was a Fulbright Visiting Professor) points out that "In the USA the wealthiest one percent of the population own more than the bottom 95 per cent." Gutman concludes: "Economic injustice is the unacknowledged spectre which haunts American society. And this injustice is, sadly, increasing." Undeniably, as Michael Harrington observes, "Capitalism continues to be a contradictory, crisis ridden system." An 'inner contradiction' as Karl Marx noted, is rooted in capitalism.

Today, while some of the basic deficiencies of capitalism persist, new problems, highly serious, unthinkable in Marx's time, are rearing their ugly heads. What should be the socialist agenda in the coming age that is going to be loaded with challenging, obdurate problems both on material and psychological planes? To refer to

a highly threatening example, a very recent report, introduced by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, warns that "unchecked global warming will devastate the world economy on the scale of world wars and the Great Depression,". Obviously, we should get out of the old mould of thinking. Hitherto socialist thought and action have aimed mainly at fighting the evils of capitalism and building a material base for a better society, mainly on the economic plane. The evils of capitalism have not mitigated totally in spite of significant modifications in the system and they have to be resisted. Referring to the character of capitalism, Paul Johnson says capitalism is "single minded in its thrust (for efficiency)... is blind to all other factors; blind to class, race and colour; to good and evil. It is materialist, impersonal and nonhuman... Capitalism is morally indifferent and so productive of great miseries as well as great blessings." This is the fundamental ground for the socialist struggle against capitalism. Socialists, as human beings cannot be indifferent to a nonhuman system, cannot be blind to good and evil and to production of great miseries in any social system. Capitalism with its efficiency in production and indifference to human misery presents the image of a powerful machine without any sense of direction and should be treated as such, and should be dealt with resolute well-meaning human efforts. While socialism requires economic growth, it cannot be content with "production for production's sake", a feature of capitalism that Marx had pointed out long ago. Efficiency of production, however needed, is not the only thing of importance. As Keynes emphasized: "the political problem of mankind is to combine three

things: economic efficiency, social justice and individual liberty".

The socialist programme should be richer with experience and should recognize (a) the resilience of capitalism, (b) its moral indifference, (c) the failure of the Leninist model of socialism that petrified itself into a tyrannous autocracy, attributable very much to Leninist methodology, and (d) the evils of the modern materialist civilization on which, beginning with Gandhi, good many thinkers in the East and West are highlighting today.

(To be concluded)

(Continued from Page 10)

Delinking of Port Project is not enough, the clearance should ensure of no mining which is already proposed as the project will include iron ore mining for over 30 years (total 600 million tones) at captive mines located in Keonjhar and Sundergarh district of Odisha, destroying the beautiful Khandadhar mountain and disturbing the tribal culture of the area.

When none of these conditions were looked into and recommendations ignored then how can the Ministry go ahead and clear the controversial POSCO Project at the cost of life and livelihood of such a large population?

Delhi Solidarity Groups demanded:

1. The Environmental and Forest Clearance should be canceled until the recommendations of the NGT and Meena Gupta Committee are fulfilled
2. Forceful land acquisition and destruction of forest and beetel vines should be stopped
3. Construction of boundary walls for the project should be stopped immediately, since there is no MoU and any construction is completely illegal



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S. Viswam

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Arun Kumar

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Decline in Standard

S. Viswam

What we had feared, and warned also, in these columns awhile ago, is sadly coming to pass as the electoral tempo rises in the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. After the entry of Narendra Modi in the electoral campaign as the BJP's nominated prime ministerial candidate, we had commented that the tone and temper of the campaign was getting more personalized and that there were indications that the level of the debate would decline if personalities instead of issues were projected in the debate. Well, the standard of the current debate is by no means high and is in marked contrast to the usual levels observed in the past. Even during the past elections, the level of debate often tended to fall as the campaigners resorted to abuse instead of argument and campaigners indulged in below the belt canvassing forgetting that abuse only invites counter abuse resulting to the debate being dragged to the level of the gutter. What is one to say when comment is made about the choice lying between a "moron and a murderer" and the comment is endorsed by a constitutional functionary like a chief minister. Instead of deploring that someone should sacrifice good taste for a little sensationalism, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal chose to endorse the twitter message he had received by re-tweeting it. A Congress party leader describes Modi as a tea-vendor as if vending tea is a crime. The description gets widely circulated and gains currency and becomes a talking point. A Union minister calls Modi a Bhasmasur and adds for good measure the statement that like Bhasmasur Modi will swallow the party who created him. A lot more, and worse, has been said by both sides, and the standards are falling. There is still time for the campaigners to raise the level of the debate and talk of issues rather than of personals.

Responding to criticism that Modi had not taken the people into confidence on his agenda for the nation, the Gujarat chief minister has issued a statement identifying his priorities. To the extent that his agenda is neither far-fetched nor too ambitious, the list is worth an analysis and an in-depth reaction. Unfortunately, even the media did not denote enough space to the list of priorities given by Modi. The list shows that Modi is a

pragmatist and has identified only what is possible to be delivered. Here, he has kept up with the stipulation of President Pranab Mukherji that those who seek the trust of the voters must promise only what is possible. Government is not a charity shop. Of course, we have to wait and watch and see whether the BJP manifesto incorporates Modi's wish list and to what extent. Whatever the semantics indulged in by the Congress leadership, it is now clear that Rahul Gandhi is the party's prime ministerial candidate. Hence, the nation is entitled to know the young man's agenda for the nation. Recently, we had the opportunity of listening to him in a rare television interview. There is a marked contrast in the styles of the two prime ministerial candidates. While Modi is a powerful orator and is often vituperative in his anti-Congress comments, Rahul is sober, calm and collected and gives the impression of choosing his words carefully. However, while he is articulate, he tends to be vague and superficial, and also unfortunately repetitive. What comes through clearly is his earnestness and sincerity, but mere reiteration of the imperative of "changing the system" without indicating the methodology of change does not carry us far enough. How is the system to be changed? What new form should parliamentary democracy assume? Does he want to convene a new constituent assembly to draft a new constitution adopting systemic changes? We notice that while Rahul spouts lofty sentiments, like women's empowerment, decentralization and regeneration of youth power, there is no suggestion for concrete action in regard to the goals. And above all, the martyr complex is too much on display in his pronouncements, as if losing a grandmother and father to political violence is a special qualification for leadership! And even now strangely enough he gives the impression of wanting to change the system not through political governance but through party politics. The run-up to the 2014 polls indicates that in the coming days and weeks, the election debate will focus more closely on the personalities and thought processes of the two contestants. It should be an interesting debate and hopefully some issues that each side champions will be highlighted.

The Current Economic Scenario

Arun Kumar

1. The rupee has fallen dramatically last year. Any one particular reason that you'd say is the reason for this fall.

The most obvious one is that foreign investors and Indian businessmen have lost confidence in the economy. This has led to the expectations of a declining value of the Rupee. Since the currency markets are notoriously speculative, there is speculation on the decline in its value. Often expectations are self-fulfilling in a speculative market and that is why the Re has been falling rapidly since May 2013. Over the last two years it has fallen from its peak value of around Rs. 44 to the dollar.

The consequence of these self-fulfilling expectations is that there is withdrawal of funds from India by say, the FIIs and NRIs. They feel it is better to withdraw funds before the value of the Re declines any more. Further, the exporters delay bringing back the proceeds of their sales abroad so as to make more money and the importers import more so that they can take advantage of the cheaper Re. Finally, to take capital out, there is greater under invoicing of exports and over invoicing of imports. All this results in an increase in the trade and the current account deficits in the BOP which then justifies the fall in the value of the Rupee.

2. The RBI has tried to stem the fall. Was the RBI right in seeking to defend the Rupee or should we let market forces decide the Rupee's value?

The RBI's steps may be characterised as 'too little too late'. It should have defended the Rupee much earlier rather than when it had fallen below Rs. 60 to the dollar. The market forces in a speculative situation are destabilising so there is no market determined value of the Re. When the Re fell from Rs. 47 to below Rs. 50, that is when the RBI should have intervened. This would have prevented expectations of a further fall from building. The RBI has had a kitty of \$280 billion dollars in its reserves. It is true that this is based on borrowings of \$ 380 billion. However, early intervention would have required small amounts of release while later it required massive releases to correct the situation.

The RBI has been trying inflation control while in India inflation is not strictly a monetary phenomenon. It

should have lowered interest rates to help spur growth. Inflation control in India requires supply side responses and a political will to stop speculative activities and to check the growing black economy. Black liquidity rushes in to speculate so any tightening of money supply by the RBI is undone by the funds from the black economy.

3. Could the RBI and the government have done anything to stem the fall? Will the move to tighten capital account help the Rupee?

RBI by itself cannot control the value of the Re. Both fiscal and monetary policy instruments have to be used. The government correctly set into motion steps to address the trade and current account deficits in BOP by curbing the inflow of inessentials like, gold.

While it is true that smuggling of gold has increased but overall the demand for gold has moderated and the outflow of foreign exchange on this account has moderated. It needs to be remembered that the inflow of gold increased from 160 tons per annum in 1992 to the current level of about 900 to a 1000 tons after liberalization of the import of gold in 1992. This has led to a massive out flow of foreign exchange.

Capital account restrictions are important since they stem the outflow of capital and foreign exchange. However, the government's steps are half hearted and leave many channels for the outflow to continue. It needs to be remembered that in the 1997 Contagion in the SE Asian Tiger economies only Malayasia emerged unscathed because it imposed capital account controls. The IMF was critical of Malayasia at that time but later praised it for the management of the economy.

The government also needs to lower the fiscal deficit in its budget by raising more resources and investing more on the Plan account (rather than cutting it). It has been lowering Plan expenditures in the last few years by a whopping Rs. One lakh crores each year. This has resulted in lower demand in the economy and a slowing economy. In a period when the private corporate sector is not investing enough, the cut in the plan expenditures has resulted in a fall in the investment rate of the economy from its peak

in 2007-08 and that has adversely affected growth in the economy.

More resources can be raised by lowering the 'tax expenditures' in the budget which are running at about Rs. 5.5 lakh crores (See Receipts Budget). Further, a moderate dent on the black economy of 50 per cent of GDP can raise the additional funds required for maintaining the Plan expenditures budgeted for.

Finally, the investment model adopted by India is based on crony capitalism (more so after 1991) and this has collapsed since 2008 when major scams were unearthed and the public started reacting. Since then the politicians and bureaucracy have become wary. Businessmen have also suffered with cancellation of licenses, so they too are wary. Further, the public has lost trust in big projects that lead to massive displacement while the rich and the politicians make money. Thus resistance has built up to all major projects, like, power plants, SEZs, steel plants and mining projects. All these have stalled and there are cases of withdrawal of projects like, Arcelor Mittal and POSCO.

There is a need for transparent and market based investment in which the public can have confidence and where these projects appear to be in the national interest and not just to fill the pockets of the rich and the powerful. Such a model of investment has not emerged and that is why investment is suffering in the country.

Unfortunately, given the political uncertainty due to the weakness of the present government and the impending national elections and the uncertainty of who will come to power, private investors are holding back investments. This is not likely to change any time soon.

4. Where do you see the rupee vis-à-vis the dollar in the coming months?

There is no way to predict the value of the Re even a few months down the line. If the government can successfully reverse expectations, the Re can strengthen and go back to Rs. 55 to the dollar but if not, it could breach the Rs. 70 mark. The latter appears more likely at present given the uncertainties and the lack of confidence in the economy.

5. How has the Rupee fall impacted the economy? For example, petro product prices going up, and pushing up inflation even as growth remains stagnant. Is "stagflation" likely?

The fall in the value of the Rupee results in the prices of all goods with imported content to rise in price.

Immediately the price of energy (petroleum products and coal) rises and since this is used in all production, all prices tend to rise. Electricity, petrol, diesel, gas prices rise. Energy is required for transportation so all goods face a rise in price due to higher transport costs. All electronics goods, automobiles, etc., with high import component see a price rise. Internal tourism is adversely affected because of its import intensive character but foreign visitors may increase in number with the weakening Rupee.

In India, growth is not stagnant but it is still at around five per cent per annum which is better than what the IMF prediction for the world economy is. Thus, Indian economy's rate of growth remains better than the world average and this cannot be called stagnation. The rate of growth will fall as inflation rate rises. Employment generation which is a big concern for India will fall further and lead to persistence of poverty and more crime amongst the unemployed youth.

Exports will do better over time as the prices of Indian goods decline and this would help the growth of some sectors like, software, call centres, textiles and leather goods. However, the rise in exports will not be able to compensate for the decline in internal demand due to inflation. Hence the rate of growth would tend to fall unless other steps are taken.

6. Moving to the general economy, how much of the blame for the economic downturn can be put on the external factors, and how much with the current government's ineptitude?

We are facing major macroeconomic imbalances in the economy.

On the external front, the Current Account Deficit in BOP is also a result of the slow growth in the major world economies – USA, Eurozone, China and so on. That is why the growth rate in exports has fallen while imports continued to surge due to import of energy and gold (prices of both of which rose or remained high). Now with the improvement in growth in US and Euro zone while Indian economy is weakening, capital has begun to go out leading to a decline in the value of the Rupee. Finally, the fear of tapering off of the Quantitative Easing (QE) by the Federal Reserve has made many believe that days of easy money are numbered and capital flows to emerging markets are set to fall. This has created the expectation that the currencies of emerging markets will decline in value and that is what happened.

On the internal front, the high rate of persisting inflation, high fiscal deficit (kept in control by cutting plan expenditures) and falling rate of growth (especially in industry) reflect deep macro imbalances.

The internal and external factors have dented the confidence in the Indian economy and led to credit rating agencies repeatedly threatening a downgrade. Even though the performance of these agencies was not creditable during the crisis starting 2007, their actions are still influential with investors.

Along with these factors one can add the 'policy paralysis' of the present government since 2009 due to the surfacing of the various scams. The government has been busy warding off pressures due to these exposes rather than setting new directions in policy. Now with elections round the corner, investors will wait and watch and the government will have to get more proactive in encouraging growth through its actions.

7. You have written that the problems we face is because we are following a "borrowed development model"? But many would argue that 22 years of liberalisation has helped India far more than 44 years of state control policies ever did?

We borrowed a development model in 1947 and another one in 1991 – both have been based on copying western modernity and not what India needed. Both have been based on a top down approach and not a bottom up one. Both have depended on trickle down to the poor. The post 1991 path has not increased growth rates as much as the pre 1991 path did. Our average rate of growth in the period between 1950 and 1980 jumped by a factor of 5 as compared to that in the 50 years before independence. After 1991, the rate of growth has barely increased by 50% over the average growth rate in the 1980s and that too over a few years between 2003 and 2008. We are now back to around 5% rate of growth.

The growth in the last two decades is based on the achievements of the earlier four decades. Also, the growth rate has accelerated due to structural changes where the services sector has become dominant and the slow growing agricultural sector has become marginal to the growth story. Further, the present path is leading to massive disparities since the growth is concentrated in a narrow section of the population. Finally, poverty is changing its characteristics so that in spite of increase in incomes of the poor, poverty is persisting in its changed forms.

We are pursuing a policy of 'growth at any cost' with all costs falling on the workers and the environment. The cost of a deteriorating environment is borne disproportionately by the poor who live in poor conditions. Studies show that the health cost of the poor have risen sharply so that their increased incomes cannot compensate for the increase in the cost of living for them.

The new policy paradigm which has led to increased consumption by the middle classes and the well-off hides a massive rise in social and political instability in the country. This has its hidden costs. Further, consumerism is the means used by the ruling class to divert the attention of the people from the real problems faced by them. But rather than provide the solution it is creating additional problems due to the rising expectations amongst the youth which is bombarded with images of high consumption in TV ads, serials, films, etc. However, there is no way that these expectations can be fulfilled since the organized sector jobs paying well are only six per cent of the total jobs. Ninety six per cent of the 12 million children joining the work force every year will have to take up low paying jobs in the unorganised sectors and they cannot fulfil their expectations. This is leading to terrorism and crime all around.

8. If the current development model is flawed, then what is the development model best suited for India?

One has to go for an indigenous path based on social justice and equity. This does not mean a closed economy. Development has to be from below as suggested by Gandhi. That is what the government also now wants when it talks of inclusive growth but it lacks the will to implement such a path. Its flagship programmes are mere safety devices to take care of the problems its policies are creating. The alternative path would target productive full employment and not just investment. It would be based on an appropriate mix of various levels of technologies. It would create conditions for decentralized urbanization and decentralized development with autonomy devolved from the Centre to the States to the local bodies. It would curb the black economy to release resources from the present unproductive sectors and channel them to productive activities. It would be based on protecting the environment and making everyone not only literate but also creative through high quality education to all. Such a path was spelt out in the alternative budget presented in 1994 which also showed 'how to make the desirable feasible'.

Economic and Social Costs of Environmental Degradation in India

K. S. Chalam

Economists have been considering the relationship between climatic change and its effect on GDP quite for some time. In this context, they seem to have remembered the 14th century thinker Khaldun who lamented that hot countries tend to be poorer. The recent debate on the environmental issues in the country therefore, could be reflected with reference to the publication of two important reports on environmental degradation. The IPCC Report on Climatic Change 2013 and the World Bank, India: Diagnostic Assessment of Environmental challenges 2013 are noteworthy. If we read these reports together and relate them to the political economy of development process and the drama in the Paryavaran Bhavan in Delhi where more than 1.5 lakh crores of pending projects are reported to have been cleared in a matter of days, we would know what is in store for India. That doesn't mean all the projects are bad, but some are helpful to a small number of citizens, and quite a few may be fatal to all of us in the long run.

Economists who analyse data and presage the society, have been considered as pessimists from the time of Malthus. Yet, there are sane policy makers and people's representatives and even civil society organisations like the Club of Rome who have taken the sage advice of the experts seriously. There is no doubt that exceptional individuals might believe in the tautology of, nothing is created from the unknown and all that happens in the universe is only a change from one element to the other. This way, humans neither are capable of changing the quantity of water available nor influence the climate. Thus, they might say, we need not bother about the negative propaganda and should openheartedly invite all development projects. If someone conveys the death toll or displacements due to the adverse effects of the projects, certain of them might say, after all human beings must ultimately make over as the five elements in universe, why do you bother now. However, as mundane beings we cannot ignore our immediate present.

Scholars have conducted studies and found that national income falls by 8.5 per cent on an average per degree of Celsius rise in temperature (Dell, Jones, et al).

They have also examined whether it is a happenstance or due to adverse effect on the productivity of agriculture, mortality, morbidity, cognitive performance, crime and so on. It is noted that this effect is severe among the poor countries and may not affect the already rich. The present global climatic change would lower growth rate by 0.6 in median poor countries until 2099 and make them 40 per cent poorer. These calculations are based on certain assumptions and are only warning signals for our policymakers to mend their policies. In fact, the 19th century economist W.S. Jevons, one of the founders of the Neo-classical Economics wrote on the Coal question in 1866, indicating how even technology is not going to solve the problem. He said that, "now, if the quantity of coal used in a blast-furnace, for instance, be diminished in comparison with the yield, the profits of the trade will increase, new capital will be attracted, the price of pig-iron will fall, but the demand for it increase; and eventually the greater number of furnaces will more than make up for the diminished consumption of each." Modern economists have worked on the theme and developed "rebound" and "backfire" concepts to indicate how the technological improvements do not lead to the reduced use of a resource. For instance, Boulding has written, in 1959, as: "(a)ny technical improvement can only relieve misery for a while, for as long as misery is the only check on population, the improvement will enable population to grow, and will soon enable more people to live in misery than before. The final result of improvement, therefore, is to increase the equilibrium population, which is to increase the sum total of human misery". Therefore, some scholars claim that the key to avoiding the Jevon's Paradox is to adopt the principle that neither efficiency improvements, nor any other approach to reducing resource use (including voluntary conservation), can be allowed to reduce the cost of consumption. Based on empirical studies, scholars have suggested that energy efficient technologies as a solution to the world's energy and environmental problem will not work. Rather, energy efficient technology improvements are counter-productive, promoting energy consumption. Instead of recommending an undesirable policy, we can introduce taxes, rates, concessions, etc. as incentives and penalties to circumvent the Jevon's paradox.

National governments should tax more energy-efficient appliances and use such revenue only for expanding natural reserves such as, set aside forests in order to prevent more human development in the long run. We could see some of the things happening in USA, Europe and in other developed countries where the forests, water courses and other natural resources are well protected and polluting industries dumped elsewhere. It may be due to the accessibility of acquisitive and short sighted corporate interests and their cronies in developing countries, that it is possible to exchange carbon credits with the advanced countries and accept pollution, infirmities and death.

Let us examine the results of the study on environmental damages in India and the social costs estimated by the World Bank. It provides estimates of social and financial costs of environmental damage in India from three pollution categories. We are reproducing here important paragraphs from the report:

(i) urban air pollution, including particulate matter and lead, (ii) inadequate water supply, poor sanitation and hygiene, (iii) indoor air pollution; and four natural resource damage categories: (i) agricultural damage from soil salinity, water logging and soil erosion, (ii) rangeland degradation, (iii) deforestation and (iv) natural disasters. The estimates are based on a combination of Indian data from secondary sources and on the transfer of unit costs of pollution from a range of national and international studies (a process known as benefit transfer). Data limitations have prevented estimation of degradation costs at the national level for coastal zones, municipal waste disposal and inadequate industrial and hospital waste management. It is doubtful, however, that costs of degradation and health risks arising from these categories are anywhere close to the costs associated with the categories considered. Furthermore the estimates provided do not account for loss of non-use values (i.e., values people have for natural resources even when they do not use them). These could be important but there is considerable uncertainty about the values.

The loss of life as a result of pollution that has shown the strongest association with the health endpoints is particulate matter and other secondary particles with similar characteristics of less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10). The report mentioned that "Research in the United States in the 1990s and most recently by Pope, et al (2002) provides strong evidence that it is particulates of less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5) that have the largest health damaging effects. Other gaseous

pollutants (SO₂, NO_x, CO, and ozone) are generally not thought to be as damaging as fine particulates. However, SO₂ and NO_x may have important health consequences because they can react with other substances in the atmosphere to form secondary particulates. In particular, the evidence implicates sulphates formed from SO₂, but is much less certain about nitrates, formed from NO_x. The focus of this report therefore is the health effects of all fine particulates (PM10 and PM2.5) since they are regarded as criteria pollutants and include components of other pollutants. They are an important cause of cardiovascular and pulmonary disease, and lung cancer in the population. This requires data on who are exposed, the health impacts of that exposure and the value attached to those impacts. Given data limitations we can only estimate impacts for the urban populations and in fact only for a part of that population. Only major cities have TSP and PM10 monitoring data. In this study we focus on cities with a population of 100,000 and above only. Since the baseline population is from the 2001 census there are many cities that have achieved population of 100,000 since 2001 and have not been included in the study".

Pollution data for all cities, where available, was taken from the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) Environmental Data Bank website for the year 2008. Health damage estimates for PM10 were calculated based on observations for the year 2008. The study included 96 cities with monitoring stations and 223 cities with no monitoring stations (254 million people in total). The population for 96 cities with monitoring stations amounts to 186 million, or about 16 per cent of the country's population. Interestingly, the most pollutant city in terms of PM10 is Meerut at 313, Delhi at the rank 6 with a value of 214, Mumbai with a value of 127 is much below Delhi, and above Andhra Pradesh cities. Vijayawada with 96, Ramagundam at 87, Hyderabad at 84 and Visakhapatnam at 81 appear to be not as much polluted as Delhi. It may be due to the fact that the ICT (in Hyderabad) does not load with pollutants except the vehicles used by the wage earners and might have other kinds of pollutions that are not yet considered as environmental damages?

The terminology used in this report needs some qualification. Environmental damage means physical damages that have an origin in the physical environment. Thus, damages to health from air or water pollution are included as well as damages from deforestation. The term cost means the opportunity cost to society, i.e., what is given up or lost, by taking a course of action. When goods traded in markets are damaged,

prices and knowledge of consumer preferences for the damaged goods (embodied in the demand function) and production information (embodied in the supply function) provide the necessary input for computing social costs. Estimating social costs of reduction in productivity of the agricultural land due to erosion, salinity or other forms of land degradation is a good example. However, many damages from environmental causes are to "goods," such as health, that are not traded in markets. In these cases, economists have devised a number of methods for estimating social costs based on derived preferences from observable or hypothetical behaviour and choices using shadow pricing, etc. One example is the value of time lost due to illness or provision of care for ill family members. If the person who is ill or the one, who is providing care for someone ill, does not otherwise has a paid job, the financial cost of time loss is zero. However, even in such a case the person is normally engaged in activities that are valuable for the family and time losses reduce the amount of time available for these activities. Thus, there is a social cost of time losses to the family. In an economic costing exercise this is normally valued at the opportunity cost of time, i.e. the salary or a fraction of the salary that the individual could earn if he or she chose to work for income. In summary, social costs are preferred over financial costs because social costs capture the cost and reduced welfare to society as a whole. All costs are estimated as flow values (annual losses).

The report has considered six categories of damages and estimated the costs involved. The following table provides annual cost of environmental damages by different assumptions. We have taken the mid-point

estimate and noted that it stands at Rs. 3751 billion per annum. The sub-categories are (in billions): 1.Outdoor air pollution Rs.1,100, 2.Indoor air pollution Rs. 870, 3.Crop lands degradation Rs703,4.Water supply, sanitation and Hygiene Rs 540 , 5.Pastures degradation Rs. 405 and 6.Forest degradation Rs133 . It is found that the total cost of environmental degradation in India at about Rs. 3.75trillion (US\$80billion) annually, is equivalent to 5.7percent of GDP in 2009, which is the reference year for most of the damage estimates. In fact, the higher side of the estimate at Rs 5821 billion is more than 10 per cent of GDP seem to be closer to the reality and is equal to the total revenue of the union government.

The report has devoted some pages for the estimation of health related damages. They are based on the data sets made available by the government agencies and are based on certain assumptions. For instance, Value of Statistical Life in India as the average VSL from the available studies comes out at about \$375,000 (Rs. 17.8million) and this figure was applied in the report. It can be seen that the ratio of VSL/HCA is about 16 times for children and 44 times for adults. In this report, the experts said, "we used the average of the VSL and HCA values for adults (i.e.\$192,000 or Rs. 9.1 million). For children we do not use the VSL at all as none of the VSL studies are for children. Hence we take only the HCA value of \$24,168 or Rs.1.148million. This conservative approach is also consistent with other costs of degradation studies that have been conducted." The Human Capital approach takes in to consideration the earnings foregone or loss of income taken at Rs 150 for urban and Rs 60-75 for rural areas per day are lower in value, and is not based on facts. The baseline survey

Table 1
Annual Cost of Environmental damage-low, High estimates Rs Billion per year

<i>Environmental categories</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Mid-point</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Mid-point estimate as % of Total cost of Env damage</i>
1. Outdoor pollution	170	1100	2080	29%
2. Outdoor air pollution	305	870	1425	23%
3. Crop lands degradation	480	703	910	19%
4. Water supply, sanitation&Hyg	475	540	610	14%
5. Pastures degradation	210	405	600	11%
6. Forest degradation	70	133	196	4%
TOTAL ANNUAL COST	170	3751	5821	1%
Total as % of GDP 2009	2.60%	5.7%	8.8 %	----

Source: The World Bank, 2013

of the World Bank relied heavily on NFHS, NSS and other secondary sources which have further reduced the values that are again adjusted for the expected value at 2010. In other words, the cost of life valued around Rs 1.5 crore seems to be low-priced.

Climate Change Report

The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report on Climatic Change-2013 is complimentary to the World Bank report on India. As it is a scientific report, I have reproduced below some important findings verbatim for an informed debate on the issues raised in the report.

It is reported that each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850. In the Northern Hemisphere, 1983–2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years. Given the position of earth in the solar system for the last millions of years, the average temperature in the troposphere according to the scientists, became warmer since 20th century. The globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature data as calculated by a linear trend, show a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06] °C³, over the period 1880 to 2012, when multiple independently produced datasets exist. The total increase between the average of the 1850–1900 period and the 2003–2012 period is 0.78 [0.72 to 0.85] °C, based on the single longest dataset available.

The atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have increased to levels unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Carbon dioxide concentrations have increased by 40 per cent since pre-industrial times, primarily from fossil fuel emissions and secondarily from net land use change emissions. The ocean has absorbed about 30 per cent of the emitted anthropogenic carbon dioxide, causing ocean acidification. The mean rates of increase in atmospheric concentrations over the past century are, with very high confidence, unprecedented in the last 22,000 years.

The Co₂ emissions in to the atmosphere through fossil fuels during the period 1750 to 2011 is estimated to be at 375 GTC (Giga Tons of Carbon) while deforestation and other changes in land use released 180 GTC making the total 555 GTC. Further, the long-time scales of heat transfer from ocean surface to depth, ocean warming will continue for centuries. Depending on the scenario, about 15 per cent to 40 per cent of emitted Co₂ will remain in atmosphere longer than 1000 years. It is virtually certain that global mean sea level rise will

continue beyond 2100, with sea level rise due to thermal expansion to continue for many centuries. The few available model results that go beyond 2100 indicate global mean sea level rise above the pre-industrial level by 2300 to be less than 1 m for a radioactive forcing that corresponds to Co₂ concentrations that peak and decline and remain below 500 ppm as per one scenario. Changes in many extreme weather and climate events have been observed since about 1950. It is very likely that the number of cold days and nights has decreased and the number of warm days and nights has increased on the global scale. It is likely that the frequency of heat waves has increased in large parts of Europe, Asia and Australia. There are likely more land regions where the number of heavy precipitation events has increased than where it has decreased. The frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has likely increased in North America and Europe. In other continents, confidence in changes in heavy precipitation events is at most medium.

Methods that aim to deliberately alter the climate system to counter climate change, termed geo-engineering, have been proposed in the report. Limited evidence precludes a comprehensive quantitative assessment of both Solar Radiation Management (SRM) and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) and their impact on the climate system. CDR methods have biogeochemical and technological limitations to their potential on a global scale. There is insufficient knowledge to quantify how much CO₂ emissions could be partially offset by CDR on a century timescale. Modelling indicates that SRM methods, if realizable, have the potential to substantially offset a global temperature rise, but they would also modify the global water cycle, and would not reduce ocean acidification. If SRM were terminated for any reason, there is high confidence that global surface temperatures would rise very rapidly to values consistent with the greenhouse gas forcing. CDR SRM methods carry side effects and long-term consequences on a global scale.

What we learn?

The content in both the reports are extremely useful in understanding the environmental damages and the benefits of possible mitigation. The World Bank study shows that policy interventions such as environmental taxes could potentially be used to yield positive, net environmental benefits with minimal economic costs for India. The General Equilibrium model of Economics shows that addressing "public bads" via selected policy instruments need not translate into large losses on GDP growth. The environmental cost model

developed in this study can thus be used to evaluate the benefits of similar pollution-control policies and assist in designing and selecting appropriate targeted intervention policies (such as a SO₂ tax, a CO₂ tax, or emission trading schemes). Once the impact on ambient air quality of a policy to reduce particulate emissions is estimated, the tools used to calculate the health damages associated with particulate emissions can also be used to compute the welfare impacts of reducing them. The monetized value of the health benefits associated with each measure can be calculated, using the techniques developed in this study, and compared with the costs.

The comparisons made between the BAU (Business As Usual) scenario and the Green Growth scenarios reveal that a low carbon, resource-efficient, greening of the economy should be possible at a very low cost in terms of GDP growth. This makes the Green Growth scenarios attractive compared to the BAU scenario. A more aggressive low carbon strategy (Green Growth Plus) comes at a slightly higher price tag for the economy while delivering higher benefits. The extent to which GDP growth would be impacted under more severe cuts on polluting emissions can be determined by further study using the CGE model. On the other hand, the modest GDP impacts indicated in this study depend on the availability of minimal-cost mitigation options (energy efficiency improvements, embodied technological improvements, improved daily operating practices of boilers).

Both Green Growth scenarios have other important benefits. Most significantly they reduce CO₂ emissions, which have an important value. If we take that value at even a modest US\$ 10 per ton, reflecting what might be gained in revenues from participation in emerging carbon abatement markets, India could realize an additional benefit of around US\$ 59 billion (with a PM₁₀ tax). Global carbon models estimate that these emissions could be worth much more -US\$ 50-120 - by 2030.

There are however, several limitations in the World Bank study indicated by the authors themselves at the end of the report. In addition to the constraints recognised by the report, we have noticed that they have not included the costs of loss or damage of the ecosystems such as grass lands, wetlands, mangroves and coral reefs. In fact, the report has stated the value of service of this category of natural resources at Rs. 108600 crores per year. But, it has also not considered the damages due to the construction of major dams that affect the above scarce resources in addition to the human costs. The damages done to the society

due to disasters mainly as a result of the depletion or non-judicious use of natural resources mentioned above are not taken in to consideration. Economists generally consider resources that are tangible or scarce or that have pecuniary value, therefore seem to have overlooked these issues, or may be for some other reasons – but it is a serious gap. Further, the social costs of environmental damages like loss of livelihoods of adivasis, poor and others that affect the identity of the group are not considered. Social costs of uprooting of communities in ecosystems like marsh lands being treated as bunzar and assigned to industries, fisher folk who are displaced due to extinction of species with excess mechanisation, loss of indigenous knowledge systems and culture owing to displacement of communities, etc. are not considered here.

The growth models tested by the report and the issues raised by it are based on technology like the Green Growth and or models that take in to consideration coal tax or green tax, etc. It is here that we may get back to the early part of this paper where we have explained the Jevons Paradox. In this context we may refer to a perceptible book, “The Myth of Resource Efficiency: the Jevons Paradox”, where the authors have made a very interesting observation: “Technological energy-efficient improvements such as hybrid cars may represent a crucial component of a different trajectory of evolution of the metabolism of households in developed countries. However, the adoption of hybrid cars per se will not solve the problem of the unsustainability of modern lifestyles if adopted by a world population of 9 billion people. If the energy-environment situation is to improve, consumers will need to change their behaviour patterns by including concern for the environment among the priorities determining their choices.” I do feel that metabolism, an attribute of living organisms, seems to have slowly influencing the technology or gadgets used by human beings. The authors have added that, humans have to accept losing something in order to be able to retain something else. It sounds like an Indian philosophical precept that we should all consider in the matters of environment of a finite world, with infinite greed.

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Between the lines

It's Politics Mr President

Kuldip Nayar

Kuldip Nayar President Pranab Mukherjee has been making speeches verging on politics from Day One. He has been commenting on the problems confronting the nation as if he is presiding over the affairs of the country. His Republic Day broadcast beats them all and has naturally evoked some angry comments. Several political parties like the Communist Party of India have characterized the speech as political.

What President Mukherjee says is generally correct. For example, his remarks that populist anarchy is no substitute for governance or that there is a rising trend of hypocrisy in public life are correct. But he forgets that he is only a constitutional head and has to observe the decorum which the elected parliament and state legislatures expect from a person who occupies that position.

No doubt, he finds politics a familiar turf but he left it when he was elected President. His grievance with Congress president Sonia Gandhi may be genuine. But that is between her and him. The nation is not concerned with what goes on in a political party.

Mukherjee would have been a natural successor after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh steps down. Precisely this is the reason why a person who had wide contacts was kicked upstairs. Sonia Gandhi's determination to make her son, Rahul Gandhi, the Prime Minister came in the way of Mukherjee's political ambitions.

It was up to Mukherjee not to accept the post of President. But when he announced that he would not contest in the 2014 election, it became clear that he was exasperated, waiting in the wings. Sonia Gandhi readily accepted the position because he had himself cleared the deck for Rahul Gandhi. Mukherjee had taken it for granted that due to the key role he had portrayed as a fire fighter during the troubled times he could not be ignored for having served the dynasty relentlessly. Unfortunately, Mukherjee has not adjusted himself to the institution of President. He should refrain from making such remarks which he could do as a politician.

I have not liked the dharna by Aam Aadmi Party's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on the demand of transferring two police officials who had reportedly insulted his Law Minister Somnath Bharti. But Chief Minister Kejriwal has set a bad precedent by letting his Law Minister off the hook. He should have left it to the state chief secretary to deal with the "defiance" by the police officials. The chief minister's defence that his dharna was not unconstitutional does not wash. He does not realize that the middle class, his forte, wants an orderly administration and feels let down over the tactics like dharna by the state chief minister.

But why should President Mukherjee comment on political matters is really beyond me. His defence is that he did not violate the Constitution. It is a strange logic when he threw to the wind the very letter and the spirit of the Constitution which has given all powers to the executive of which he is only a figure head. President Mukherjee's comment that the "government is not a charity shop" is criticism of the promises that the government makes to draw the electoral support. All political parties do so. Mukherjee was in the cabinet of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi when she raised the slogan of Garibi Hatao. The Manmohan Singh government has doled out favours to the DMK to sustain its support. It is an open secret how the CBI case against Mulayam Singh Yadav was withdrawn to get his party's support. Mukherjee was part of the government when there was a quid pro quo to save Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government from falling. If President Mukherjee felt so strongly, as his criticism indicates, why did he not speak out at that time? His opposition would have mattered because he was a senior leader.

For example, his recovery of tax retrospectively dried up foreign investment. As Finance Minister, he should have anticipated the adverse effect his decision would have on investment. Even today when reasons for stagnation are adumbrated, Mukherjee's name is mentioned repeatedly. He lives in the luxury of Rashtrapati Bhavan while the nation is paying the price for his follies.

Mukherjee was a minister when Smt. Gandhi had stopped sending any paper to the then President Giani Zail Singh who differed with her on Punjab. What Smt. Gandhi did was a violation of the Constitution. I wish Mukherjee had raised his voice then. The office of President is an institution which should not be disfigured. Yet the political leaders do that. That Mukherjee should also be doing so is a sad commentary on his sagacity and those like him.

Yet another example is that Mukherjee's silence when Smt. Gandhi imposed the Emergency in 1975. She delivered a severe blow to the institutions which her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, had fostered.

Mukherjee was then a close collaborator of Sanjay Gandhi, an extra-constitutional authority. The worst aspect of the Emergency was that morality was banished from politics. There was fear which made the then President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, to sign the

proclamation even before the cabinet gave its approval.

My experience is that a Prime Minister pays scant attention to a President. The constitution framers, who preferred parliamentary democracy to presidential form of government, have laid down what the President can do. But this has been nullified over the years because the Congress takes the President's wishes for granted. By making political speeches, the occupant of Rashtrapati Bhavan only aggravates the problem.

There is a very thin line dividing the right and the wrong, moral and immoral. Institutions are ought to protect that line. It is easy to say from the pulpit that such and such thing is dangerous to the country. However correct President Mukherjee's observations may be, he should introspect whether what he did as a cabinet minister was correct, not only legally but also morally. The ball is in his court.

Western Railway Employees' Union

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The Western Railway Employees' Union ("WREU"), earlier known as Bombay Baroda & Central India Railway Employees' Union was established in 1920 at Parel, Mumbai. WREU is one of the oldest trade unions not only in Railway but also in the country, its registration number being 5. After enactment of the Trade Union Act, 1926, the WREU got itself registered on 30.10.1927.

WREU is a founder member of All India Railwaymen's Federation ("AIRF") and All India Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), WREU, AIRF and HMS are free, independent and democratic trade unions.

WREU fought for upliftment of railwaymen and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 87 years. WREU-AIRF is instrumental in creation of Permanent Negotiating Machinery ("PNM") for solving the grievances of railwaymen in 1951. Productivity Linked Bonus, large scale upgradations, etc. To the Railwaymen, these are some of the major achievements of WREU. WREU is the most popular union amongst the railwaymen on implementation of modified recommendations of the 6th CPC w.e.f. 1.1.2006

WREU was led by prominent trade union leader, late Miss. Maniben Kara and in memory of her, WREU established "Maniben Kara Foundation", a charitable trust fighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, WREU along with Maniben Kara Foundation is conducting various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Checkup Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HN-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Trade Union Education Class, etc. for the benefits of the railwaymen and the general public.

Umraomal Purohit
President

J.R. Bhosale
General Secretary

A Round up of a Decade of Adarsh Scam

Lyla Bavadam

First, a bit of background before looking at the current events in the Adarsh building scam.

In the 1970s the spot where the Adarsh building now stands was just marsh and mangrove forest with bits of land along the edges. Part of the strip of land between the mangrove and the road was occupied by a few dhobis who would use the nearby military dhobi ghat and dry the clothes on the mangroves. The only other human activity was deep inside the mangrove forest where a few local bootleggers prepared their brew. The whole area belonged to the military as was apparent not just by clear sign boarding but by a rusty old barrier of colonial vintage that stood about 700 mtrs north from where Adarsh is now.

Gradually the mangrove forest was hacked, rubble from Mumbai's nascent construction industry was dumped and land appeared where once there was marsh and sea. At the same time some land was handed over by the military to the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport Corporation (there are allegations of corruption in this but no case was ever made). A large bus depot was constructed there. Over the years the reclaimed land was extended further into the sea and vast colonies of slums ruled by slum lords came up.

In the early 1990s there was talk about constructing a building for retired armed forces officers on 6,490 sq mtrs of land alongside the bus depot. In prime real estate area in one of the nicest locations in the city, the plan generated great enthusiasm among retired officers. However, for a long time nothing seemed to materialise and the idea faded away till construction activity started on the site in the mid 2000s. The secrecy around the case started from this time – no one seemed to know if it was the same plan as earlier or something different. Even those keen to own a flat there had no success in finding out.

As the building grew taller and reached its height of 31 storeys the mystery remained. From being a housing scheme for retired armed forces officers it grew to include serving personnel then later was modified to benefit Kargil war heroes and their widows. While all this speculation was going on the real intention, it

seems, was for ministers and bureaucrats to appropriate the flats and assign a few to senior armed forces officers.

In 2003 a press report exposed what was clearly a scam in the Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society Ltd. From starting off as one meant for defence personnel it had a motley group of members that included high level ministers and bureaucrats, a few very senior armed forces officers and a dubious 'promoter' who was already under CBI scrutiny for irregularities in another defence land deal.

Not much notice was taken of the report at the time but in 2010 it was resurrected again by the media. By this time the scheme was accepted as being meant for

Salient points of the Justice J. A. Patil Commission Report on the Adarsh Housing Society

1. Four former CMs of Maharashtra indicted, including the current Union home minister Sushilkumar Shinde, Ashok Chavan, Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar and the late Vilasrao Deshmukh
2. Of the 102 members of Adarsh, 25 were found ineligible. They included Devyani Khobragade and three close relatives of Ashok Chavan – his mother-in-law, sister-in-law and a brother of his father-in-law.
3. Some allottees had already been granted subsidized housing by the government but were also granted membership at Adarsh in violation of rules.
4. The report said the land belonged to the state government and not the Defence Ministry.
5. The Commission determined that membership of the society was not restricted to retired defence personnel or Kargil war heroes or their survivors.
6. The report found several violations of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act, Road Transport Act, Coastal Regulation Zone Act and the norms for granting membership of the cooperative housing society. Several rules of the Road Transport Act were also flouted.

Kargil heroes (though when this change occurred is not known) and the uproar centered round flats being owned by non-participants in the Kargil war, top politicians, military officers and bureaucrats. Furthermore, it was alleged, construction clearances were given inordinately fast, there were development plan violations, security violations and the flats were sold at artificially lowered prices. Flats that would have cost a minimum of Rs. 4 crores at the time went for an average of Rs. 70 lakh.

Such controversies forced the resignation of the then Chief Minister, Ashok Chavan, in 2010. His successor, Prithviraj Chavan, appointed a 2-member judicial commission headed by retired High Court judge Justice J. A. Patil to probe the allegations. The mandate was to look into several aspects including the land ownership, who the housing society was intended for and whether rules were bypassed during construction. Meanwhile the CAG report for 2011 had castigated the episode saying, "The episode of Adarsh Co-operative Housing Society reveals how a group of select officials, placed in key posts, could subvert rules and regulations in order to grab prime government land - a public property - for personal benefit."

In April 2013 Justice Patil's report was submitted. It indicted four Congress CMs including Ashok Chavan. The other former CMs include the present Union Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde, the late Vilasrao Deshmukh and Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar. Two ministers in the state cabinet, one former chief secretary, three additional chief secretaries and several officers in the ranks of principal secretary and secretary were also indicted. Both Chavan and Nilangekar were named for the role they played as revenue ministers in the period from 1999 to 2004. The other two ministers named are from the NCP. Both Sunil Tatkare, minister for water resources and minister for higher education, Rajesh Tope were indicted for taking advantage of their positions as junior ministers in the urban development ministry from 1999 to 2004. The report said the land belonged to the state government and not the Defence Ministry, nor was Adarsh reserved for war widows. It also said rules were flouted during the construction. The Patil report said 25 people of the 102 members were ineligible to be members of the housing society; among them Devyani Khobragade who is at the centre of a diplomatic quarrel between the US and India and three relatives of Ashok Chavan. Furthermore, the report said that the required construction permission was not sought from the Ministry of Environment and

Time line of the Adarsh Scam

- July 1999- Adarsh society approaches government seeking plot of land in Colaba.
- July 1999 - Government Resolution allots plot to the society.
- Oct 2004 - Collector, Mumbai hands over possession of plot to the society. At the same time the Western Naval Command seeks details of the society from deputy registrar of co-operatives.
- Sept 2010 MMRDA gives occupation certificate
- October 2010 Vice Admiral Bhasin writes to the naval chief saying the land belonged to the defence forces and had been misappropriated
- Nov 2010 Ashok Chavan resigns as CM after his role in Adarsh is exposed. CBI registers an inquiry. Files go missing from Mantralaya. Prithviraj Chavan becomes new CM of Maharashtra.
- Jan 2011 A judicial commission headed by Justice J. A. Patil is appointed to probe the scam. Environment Ministry issues order that the building be demolished in three months.
- The CBI registers an FIR naming 13 people including former CM Chavan.
- March 2011. The Bombay High Court questions the CBI on its failure to make arrests forcing the agency to arrest a few retired officers and bureaucrats. More arrests in the following months
- July 2012 The CBI files a 10,000 page charge sheet indicting 14 people including Ashok Chavan.
- April 2013 The judicial commission submitted its final report to the state government but this was not tabled.
- Dec 2013 The Bombay High Court questions the delay and the state is forced to table the report on the last day of the winter session of the state legislature so that there could be no discussion on it.

Forests despite the building falling within the CRZ II category which states that construction activity of more than Rs.5 crore in this zone requires ministry clearance.

Instead of tabling the report when it first received it, the Congress-NCP government delayed it by saying the Action Taken Report was not ready. An enraged BJP moved the High Court and the government was

forced to table it on the last day of the winter session on December 20. On December 20 the state government rejected the report. It is worth noting that though the CM heads the cabinet and it was a cabinet decision to reject the report he, in his personal capacity, was apparently unhappy with the decision. Interestingly what changed the game was the public rally held by Narendra Modi in Mumbai on December 22. Mocking Rahul Gandhi's attack on corruption Modi said the Congress was protecting the perpetrators of the Adarsh scam and suppressing judicial probes. Soon after this there was a change in attitude. Rahul Gandhi criticized the state government for rejecting the report and South Mumbai MP, Milind Deora, who is believed to be close to Gandhi, tweeted his support saying the party should not hush up the Adarsh report.

On December 13 the CBI received a setback to its ongoing investigation against Ashok Chavan. The agency said it had enough evidence to proceed

with prosecution of the former CM but was refused permission for this by K. Sankaranarayanan, the Governor of Maharashtra.

The Prithviraj Chavan-led government is faced with many dilemmas. Adarsh is now clearly a political hot potato. The very fact that it is back in the news in an election year proves this. There will be pressure from those who are already members. Adarsh is prime real estate – no one, least of all its powerful members, is going to let it slip through their hands. While prosecution of erring members has been recommended the government has already made it clear that this is not a step it will take easily. Scanting moral victories the Opposition is badgering the CM to convene a special meeting of the house to debate the report's findings.

It would be suicidal for Prithviraj Chavan and the Congress to disregard the J. A. Patil report but to implement its recommendations would mean walking a political tightrope.

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Birth Pangs of Swaraj

Uday Dandavate

Arwind Kejriwal's disruptive approach to reimagining India's democracy has generated a major controversy in India. The extent of this controversy can be gauged by a sense of alarm expressed by President Pranab Mukherjee's in his republic day address where he warned, "populist anarchy cannot be a substitute for governance".

The term "anarchy" refers to a society without a publicly enforced government. Used in this sense, anarchy may or may not be intended to imply political disorder or lawlessness within a society. Many anarchists have challenged attitudes similar to the one expressed in President Mukherjee's address that anarchy is synonymous with 'civil war'.

What has escaped media attention is that there are forms of anarchy that attempt to avoid the use of coercion, violence, force and authority, while still producing a productive and desirable society. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj is essentially an example of anarchy without coercion, violence, force and authority.

Swaraj warrants a stateless society; according to Gandhi, the overall impact of the state on the people is harmful. He called the state a "soulless machine" which, ultimately, does the greatest harm to mankind. The *raison d'être* of the state is that it is an instrument of serving the people. But Gandhi feared that in the name of molding the state into a suitable instrument of serving people, the state would abrogate the rights of the citizens and arrogate to itself the role of grand protector and demand abject acquiescence from them. This would create a paradoxical situation where the citizens would be alienated from the state and at the same time enslaved to it which according to Gandhi was demoralizing and dangerous. The politician-police-criminal nexus Arwind Kejriwal was protesting against is in fact the anti-people manifestation of the state Gandhi had in mind. It is not surprising therefore that while mainstream media and several civil liberties groups as well as women's rights groups have focused on Somnath Bharati's behavior in leading a mob for a raid on alleged peddlers of drugs and sex trade racket in the Khirki area of Delhi, the locals are coming out in support of Arwind Kejriwal turning the focus from

Somnath Bharati's indiscretions to exposing the nexus between Delhi police and the criminals.

I want to clarify my position. The claims of African women have not been verified yet. The videos released by the AAP do not support the claims of the ladies that Bharati led an assault on them. The matter must be investigated through judicial inquiry. While the local citizens attribute police's refusal to follow Somnath Bharati's orders to connivance between the police and local drug and sex trade. If, through proper inquiry Somnath Bharati is proved guilty, he should face the consequences. Regardless of the outcome of the inquiry a clear message from this episode is that grass root level activism calls for moral leadership and disciplined management of crowds.

In March 1918, Gandhiji led a Satyagraha for peasants of Kheda. While in April, he appealed for a nationwide hartal protecting the enactment of the barbarous Rowlatt Act. However violence broke out and for the first time Gandhiji had to suspend the Satyagraha calling it a Himalayan miscalculation. In 1920, Gandhiji was elected the president of the All India Home Rule League. He urged a resolution for Satyagraha campaign of non-cooperation. Gandhiji decided upon an experiment of mass civil disobedience at Bardoli in 1922. He had to suspend the campaign owing to the outbreak of violence at Chauri Chaura. Gandhiji realized that a peaceful agitation could only be led by trained Satyagrahis. As the Aam Aadmi party pursues its mission towards replacing the current corrupt system of governance with a participatory model, it needs to engage resources in training its cadres and leaders in the morality, legality and discipline of bringing about change. I would consider Somnath Bharati case an aberration in a movement that is genuinely reflecting the frustrations and aspirations of millions of suffering Indians who see in the current political establishment an exploitative machine and an era of slavery that needs to be disbanded and replaced with a more participatory form of governance.

In his thesis "Hind Swaraj" Gandhi has clarified, "In South Africa. I came in contact with every known

Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I feel that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills, and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection".

Gandhi was a mass leader, a visionary, and had the capacity to invent symbols that would capture mass imagination and inspire people with a vision of a non-violent revolution. He inspired popular imagination by organizing Salt Satyagraha, inventing Charkha, propagating use of Khadi. He introduced into the popular vernacular concepts such as Satyagraha, Harijan and of course- Swaraj. Even his recommendation to make Mohamed Ali Jinnah the first prime minister of undivided India was a symbolic masterstroke that did not go well with the Congress leadership.

The core of Gandhi's vision resonated with the concept of anarchy. Being an expert in semantics, he was able to lend a positive affordance to the idea of anarchy by calling it Swaraj. Driving an entire nation towards an anarchist utopia required the moral stature, mass reverence, organizational discipline and conceptual palatability. Gandhi's genius in crafting narratives could alone make anarchy palatable to the nation's imagination.

The concept of Swaraj is also echoed in the idea of convivial society envisioned by another anarchist, Ivan Illich. In his book *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) Ivan Illich envisioned a modern society of responsibly limited tools. Illich believed that, "Scientific discoveries can be used in at least two opposite ways. The first leads to specialization of functions, institutionalization of values and concentration of power and turns people into accessories of bureaucracies or machines. The second enlarges the range of each person's competence, control and initiative, limited only by other individuals' claims to an equal range of power and freedom". Illich believes that in a convivial society, "People will rediscover the value of joyful sobriety and liberating austerity only if they relearn to depend on each other rather than on energy slaves."

German philosopher Immanuel Kant's description of four types of governance explains anarchy in relation to other forms of government. 1. Law and freedom without force (anarchy), 2. Law and force without freedom (despotism), 3. Force without freedom and law (barbarism), and 4. Force with freedom and law

(republic). AAP's vision of Swaraj, contrary to the media projection does not subscribe to either despotism or barbarism. It aims at replacing the republic of India with Swaraj, where self-rule could be established without requiring the force of the government.

The recent agitation in Delhi has brought to the surface establishment's panic reaction the idea of Swaraj because it threatens control being currently welded by established political class and challenges their established methods of winning elections and governance. First of all, compared to many other street agitations, the agitation in Delhi was of a much smaller scale and a lot less threatening to the government. It is not unusual for political parties to engage in mass agitations to turn public opinion against the government of the time. To proclaim that the decision with regard to bringing police under the command of Delhi government should have been discussed and resolved within the chambers of Delhi assembly or in consultation with the central government, and that the AAP was wrong in resorting to agitations is hypocritical of the Congress and the BJP. Agitations are necessary for forcing governments to open their eyes to pressing issues faced by people.

Jayaprakash Narayan gave a call for Total Revolution in response to Indira Gandhi's totalitarian and corrupt rule. Sensing her predisposition to assume absolute power he even went to the extent of appealing to the armed forces to disregard her orders if she ordered them to resort to violence against the opposition. At the time, the Congress government accused JP of treason. However, within a few weeks of this accusation, Mrs. Gandhi proved JP right by imposing a state of Emergency and pushing India into a period of autocracy.

After the Janata Party Government assumed power, Sanjay Gandhi initiated back door manipulations to bring about a split in the Janata Party. At the same time, he resorted to street agitations to revitalize a demoralized Congress party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Ram Janmabhoomi movement, especially the march to Ayodhya which led to demolishing of the Babri Masjid, is another example of a party resorting to the streets, and engaging in a criminal act (unlike the demonstration by Kejriwal in Delhi) to capture power. While the AAP has the ultimate goal of transcending the vote bank politics with participatory democracy where every individuals

regardless of his/her religion, caste, creed, color or gender had equal opportunity to participate in governance, both the BJP and the Congress party have gone to the extend of presiding over genocide (in 1984 and 2002) of minorities in order to consolidate power. In my view AAP's approach to Swaraj shows greater promise, over the discredited political class against which the youth have risen in response to the call for change first by Anna Hazare and then by the AAP.

Some people suggest that Arwind Kejriwal is taking India back. That he is bringing back socialist ideologies at a time when India has already embraced Liberalization and Globalization under successive UPA and NDA governments. The truth is - the suffering masses in India, even those from urban India, are flocking to AAP because they find India's democracy being subverted to the interests of commercial enterprise in the era of liberalization and local capacities being undermined. Corruption has continued to grow while the new symbols of prosperity - Malls and Global Brands - induce people to follow their greed.

The youth is behind the AAP because they have a different worldview. They are not indoctrinated by old ideologies. They care less about vote bank politics. They have access to the Internet and have got accustomed to the Open Source model of contributing their own ideas for a larger good. Crowd sourcing has become a reliable method of finding patterns in people's needs and aspirations, more reliable than any expert opinion. In this background the youth are less loyal to centralized control and delivery mechanism and more tuned into the fuzzy space of collaboration and co-creation.

Eric Schmidt, Founder of Google describes this phenomenon as

“The Internet is the first thing that humanity has built that humanity doesn't understand, the largest experiment in anarchy that we have ever had”.

Anarchy works. It will challenge and disrupt the power centers but will unleash a new area of “Convivial Society” of Ivan Illich's imagination and turn India into a Swaraj of Gandhi's dreams.

The real opportunity for the AAP is to put in place an HR mechanism that can help guide the participants of this revolution with a moral, disciplined and inspiring framework.



अपना बाजार को-ऑप.

मुंबई कामगार मध्यवर्ती ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था मर्यादित
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ठळक वैशिष्ट्ये

- ६४ वर्षाची अभिमानास्पद ग्राहक सेवा
- भारतातील एकमेव बहुराज्य ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था
- एकूण विक्री दालने २८
- वार्षिक उलाढाल : १३४ कोटी
- २५ लाख निष्ठावंत ग्राहक
- दोन वेळा जमनालाल बजाज उचित व्यवहार पुरस्कार प्राप्त (१९८९-२००१)
- “अवॉर्ड ऑफ एक्सलन्स (Award of Excellence)” सन २०१२-२०१३

➤ आरोग्यसेवा

- ☆ दादा सरफरे आरोग्य केंद्र, नायगांव
- ☆ होमियापथिक चिकित्सा केंद्र, भौतिक उपचार केंद्र व
- ☆ नेत्ररोग चिकित्सा केंद्र
- ☆ आरोग्य मार्गदर्शन शिबिरे

➤ सामाजिक उपक्रम

- ☆ कुटिरोद्योग, ग्रामोद्योग व शेतमालाला मार्केट उपलब्ध
- ☆ खरेदी बचत योजनांना प्रोत्साहन
- ☆ अशी भेसळ अशी चलाखी प्रात्यक्षिके
- ☆ ग्राहक शिक्षण आणि संरक्षण मेळावे

➤ सभासदांना खरेदीवर वटाव

अपना बाजार सर्वासाठी

आपले सहकारी

अनिल गंगर
कार्याध्यक्ष

श्रीपाद फाटक
उपकार्याध्यक्ष

ज्ञानदेव दळवी, सुहास बने
भारती शिरसाट, संतोष सरफरे
एक्झिक्युटिव्ह कमिटी सदस्य

एस. टी. काजळे
मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी

सतिश लगड, श्वेता साठे, कुसुमाकर प्रभुदेसाई, शिवाजी पवार,
शिवाजी गावंड, विश्वनाथ मलुष्टे, अश्विनकुमार उपाध्याय, नंदिनी गावडे,
अंजना सावंत, प्रभाकर साटम, कृष्णा जाधव, दीपक राक्षे, नागेश तावडे,
अनिल कांबळे
संचालक

दीपक राक्षे, नागेश तावडे, अनिल कांबळे
सेवक प्रतिनिधी

Running a Government is a Sober and Serious Business

Rajindar Sachar

It is hoped that the Delhi Law Minister has understood Article 227 of the Constitution of India providing for the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary. He along with Chief Minister Kejriwal had an audience with the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court the other day so as to remove any impression of even indirect interference in the domain of the judiciary. It does not behove an AAP minister to reach late by one hour and disrupt the screening of a film at a public centre to deliver a lecture. Is this not an act more of a feudal lord than that of an elected minister? The AAP government also needs to clarify its announced policy of 95 per cent of the Delhiites only being eligible for the Delhi colleges — a policy opposed by DUTA and student associations.

It is self-evident that any political party must present a defined socially relevant policy. That the country should have a corruption-free government is unexceptional and no party can possibly say to the contrary. People naturally will judge it by actual experience. But then people want to know whether the objectives laid down by our founders of the Constitution are the ones on which any government, state or Central is functioning. Some of the basic unalterable objectives of our Constitution postulate the government's active role in developing an inclusive society with special consideration for the minorities like the Muslims and the Christians and to minimise inequalities in society. In short, any political party must spell out clearly its position vis-à-vis the big corporate sector, foreign as well as Indian, and its commitment to socialism and the public sector, emphasised by Dr. Ambedkar as being the objective of the Constitution. Unfortunately, on all these policy matters there is a resounding silence by AAP.

It is not enough to say that a party is committed to the poor - that bald declaration is made by even neo-fascist groups all over the world, including India. A party has to spell out the instruments it will apply to achieve the growth of the economy. In India public sector undertakings like Oil India and NTPC are a strong bulwark of growth as against the failure of some of the biggest private sector corporations, the hands of some of them being sullied by the Coalgate and

telecom scandals. With that experience for a party to cast a doubt on the public sector's existence is to betray the constitutional mandate. Also a party going national must also indicate its position on the ongoing policy of the Central government in selling off the family silver (PSUs) to private predators. The AAP policy against FDI in retail is, of course, on the right direction.

The right to food is an absolute right of every citizen in the country. The PUCL has been fighting for the acceptance of the right in the Supreme Court for years - it is because of this that the governments have been obligated to pass the Right to Food Act for supplying the food at subsidised prices. But if a party has doubts about the subsidy, then it must enlighten the public how the poor are to get even the minimum food required for keeping alive.

The AAP government is obligated to clear its policy on the demand of the Socialist Party and the Pension Parishad to raise the pension for Delhi's elderly people who get a monthly minimum pension of Rs. 5,000.

An immediate response from the AAP government is called for to the danger of displacement of lakhs of people, pointed out by Medha Patkar, the NAPM leader, due to the decision on the Delhi-Mumbai and Amritsar-Kolkata corridors being activated soon.

The self-praise by AAP that it has solved the water problem in Delhi is cynical. The supply of 700 liters free water a day means nothing to about 40 per cent of the people simply because there are no water pipes in their areas and the government is not supplying water at all. They depend on water mafia tankers available at exorbitant rates. Areas like Zakir Nagar and Sangam Vihar have the D.J.B. water pipes passing them by at a little distance but the D.J.B. refuses to connect these areas, thus leaving them at the mercy of the mafia. In fact, the experiment of privatisation of water must be discontinued. This facility must remain in the public sector as the right to water is a human right.

No doubt, corruption is an evil eating into the vitals of our society. But you do not fight it by spreading suspicion about every one's honesty excepting those

belonging to the ruling party. To what dangerous proportion this is sought to be practised is clear when AAP unabashedly announces that its government is creating a service which will teach public callers how to conduct a sting operation. The government feels this will create a fear psychosis in each civil servant. This is frightening. This method reminds me of the system devised during the decadent period of the USSR regime when Russian children were indoctrinated to spy on their parents and report to the secret service and then were publicly honoured. Corruption is not eased out by such hare-brained sting operations but rather by the top of the administration being above reproach.

It is a pity that Chief Minister Kejriwal has announced with a boastful flourish that the defaulters of

the electricity bills from March 2013 onwards belonging to his party will not be required to pay the arrears and instead these will be paid by the Delhi government. The justification given is that it has to be assumed that all these defaulters were part of the “andolan” launched in March by AAP. This is a dangerous view apart from being legally impermissible. The state government cannot distinguish between people who vote for or against it. As it is, a question may well be asked at this partiality by lakhs of voters who had paid their electricity bills and also voted for AAP: Are some people more equal than others? It needs to be continuously remembered that running a government is a sober business and not a public bluster or empty rhetoric.

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Will the Muslims Become a Vote Bank for AAP?

Prem Singh

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) did not succeed in the Muslim majority constituencies in the recently held Delhi Assembly elections even though the AAP leadership tried hard, even monetarily, in this direction to help the candidates. In order to secure the Muslim votes, the AAP supremo visited the heads of many Islamic organizations/bodies, and also approached to Maulvi Taukir Raza Khan in Bareilly. AAP found Muslim candidates easily enough, even the BJP is able to seek out Muslim candidates, but it could not convince the Muslim 'voters'. This indicates that the perception of the Muslim community about politics is much different from that of the mainstream civil society in the country; they do not cast their votes simplistically – merely because the candidate happens to belong to a particular or common category. The contenders of the 'new' politics, the leaders of AAP, who want to fly before hatching, might consider Muslims' perception about politics to be old fashioned and stagnant as their India Against Corruption (IAC) comrade Chetan Bhagat has suggested.

In the last three decades, most mainstream political parties of the country have become 'agents' of neo-liberalism, but its direct 'product' is AAP. Neo-liberalism and communalism had begun to join hands in the 1980s, disregarding the Indian Constitution. It became stronger with the implementation of the new economic policies in 1991 and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in the last month of 1992 and has been regularly gaining strength ever since. The hype that the new avatar of this alliance i.e. AAP, created in Delhi, has been challenged only by the large Muslim population of Delhi. Therefore, it is a cause of worry for AAP and it has formed a 'special task force' to win the Muslim votes in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

Before the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections, when AAP started a special drive to involve some important Muslim names the party, as is practiced by the other political parties, it became clear that the leadership of AAP too considers Muslims to be a vote bank first and not equal citizens. The making of a 'special task force' confirms that AAP leadership considers Muslims to be a separate vote bank. The people, who equate the success

of AAP with the success of 'new' politics, manage to underscore the fact that this new politics too looks at sections of the population of the country as categories, by dividing them into religions and castes. It won 9 out of 12 reserved seats in the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections, but did not put forward a single Scheduled Caste candidate on any of the other seats. Its next target is Haryana, where it has already started politics based on caste equations. To put up a Yadav candidate for chief minister's post in the Jat dominated politics of Haryana, first and foremost priority has been given to the inclusion of Jats. The Jats are falling over each other to fulfill their political ambitions by doing 'clean politics'. They hope that a Jat's name may be decided upon later, to make victory certain.

Like other political parties who are said to be secular, AAP while keeping a firm hold on the Hindus, wants to cast its sway over the Muslims by placing before them the fear of Narendra Modi. Now it depends upon the Muslim community whether it continues the same relationship with AAP, the sort that it had with the other secular parties. As per this relationship, the Muslims vote for the candidate of any other party that is capable of defeating the BJP. This decision is not wrong in view of the security necessary for their life and livelihood. Since AAP is a party run on strategy rather than struggle, its leadership does not declare its position clearly, position either on neo-liberalism or on the question of communalism. Its only goal is to have electoral success as soon as possible by being vague and non-committal about these two major issues. In its bid to win votes from different communities/strata of society, it speaks in so many voices. In the coming elections its multi-facedness may even beat the RSS.

From the time of its RSS-backed anti-corruption movement, AAP has had a large number of neo-liberal and communal elements. Many BJP/Congress and SP/BSP leaders had joined the party before the Delhi elections. AAP now has a growing number of opportunistic and power-hungry elements after its success in the Delhi elections and the formation of its government. In this scenario, the assurance to the Muslims that it has many secular faces is questionable.

We must keep in mind that a neo-liberal can never be truly secular. The Muslims should keep in mind that there are a number of more secular parties other than AAP which do not hesitate to form a government with the BJP at the centre or in states. AAP too, after getting the Muslim votes might repeat this practice. A secular leader from AAP, Prashant Bhushan, has already advocated the formation of a government with the support of the BJP instead of the Congress in Delhi. Additionally he has also made the 'grand comment' calling CPM corrupt, with which an alliance cannot be made.

It is unfortunate that along with many Marxists, secular intellectuals, politicians, peoples' movements and civil society activists are trying to push Muslims in AAP's fold. Obviously, they all perceive the Muslims only as a vote bank and are succeeding too, at it. Some Muslim clerics and political leaders are apparently impressed by their campaign. They have started talking in terms of helping AAP's candidates to win, considering it to be a part of the truly secular camp. In this period of grave danger to the constitutional value of secularism, the Muslim leadership/intelligentsia should take a decision on this contentious issue after giving it a serious thought. For the Muslims and the other minorities in India, this is a question not just of debate/discussion but one concerning life and death. The minorities suffer most by the havoc unleashed by communal politics. Communal forces are so strong in the present times that there have been communal riots, one after the other, in Uttar Pradesh under the secular Samajwadi Party government.

Communalism has grown steadily with neo-liberalism. Fundamentalism is gaining greater footage in every religion rather than tolerance. Its latest proof is that when there were congratulatory declarations about political 'miracles, God's grace, celebration, hawan and Vande Mataram' in Delhi on the occasion of the oath-taking ceremony in Delhi, just 100 km away, more than 60 people were killed and 60,000 people uprooted from 185 villages during communal riots in Muzaffarnagar-Shamli districts. Thousands of them are still not ready to go back to their homes after four months. The SP government has been rightly denounced for their misdeed of holding and attending the Saifai Mahotsav. But those who denounced Saifai had no qualms about the celebrations in Delhi. The New Delhi government's oath-taking ceremony that could have been managed within a few thousands at the Lieutenant Governor's

house was accomplished with a lot of fanfare at the cost of crores in the Ramlila Maidan. The celebration of the 'feel good' factor generated by AAP's electoral success led to the celebrations of the New Year with a special zeal by the rich in Delhi and other metros in the country. Those who claim to check Modi did not even take a peek at the riot affected areas. Nevertheless, they are grinding their political axe by organizing membership campaigns in that area.

The Muslims need to seriously examine the arguments being propagated by secularists in favour of AAP. The argument that Arvind Kejriwal has faded Modi's glow may be an excuse for the secularists. This argument may help some Muslims from AAP to reach the Parliament and the legislative assemblies. But it will not strengthen secularism. The fading of Modi's 'glow' will not lead to the fading of communal fascism. The ideologically neutral stance – 'neither left nor right' – could only lead towards strengthening of fundamentalism forces, be it market or religion. It is to be noted that the corporate world and the media, who have already pronounced Modi to be the next prime minister, is simultaneously singing paeans of Kejriwal.

The Muslim voters need to realize that that Modi is not just a name that they are gearing to challenge. Communal fascism will not end even if Modi loses the election. The extremist views of the RSS are personified in some or the other leader, from time to time. This time it is Modi who has risen as its biggest representative. There is a need to look at this extremist streak. May be on a smaller scale, but the same is visible in Kejriwal. There is some solid evidence available on that count.

Modi easily won the third Legislative Assembly elections in Gujarat. Many individuals and organizations have been trying to find justice for the victims, ever since the time of the state sponsored massacre in 2002. Kejriwal and his followers, who despite repeated and loud claims of saving the country, have not spoken a word about it, neither at the time of incident nor later. We do not find any comments on the anti-constitutional and anti-civilization deed of the demolition of the Babri Masjid either from him or his Guru, Anna Hazare. Anna Hazare, whom Kejriwal brought from Ralegaon Sidhhi to Delhi, dropping his first choice Baba Ramdev, had first praised Modi from the Jantar Mantar. Modi immediately conveyed his thanks by a letter. At the same time he cautioned Anna, that his detractors will

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Sixty Four Years of the Indian Republic

Radhey Shiam

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution declares that India is a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic. India became Republic on 26th January, 1950. On the occasion of 64th Republic Day celebrations in India, it is important to introspect the meaning and the relevance of these words which are incorporated in the Preamble.

India

The name of this ancient land was declared to be “India” after long deliberations in Constituent Assembly. Beside ‘India’, other names, ‘Bharat’ and ‘Hindustan’, were also considered. However this nomenclature was finalised at the instance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru.

India is a large country having different religions, castes, creeds, languages, etc. We are next only to China in population. The name “India” even after 67 years of its independence could not however touch the hearts of the Indian people. Sometimes it appears that ‘India’ stands for urban population of the country and ‘Bharat’ for rural India. Maybe this country is the only country in the world having three names ‘India’, ‘Bharat’ and ‘Hindustan’. Perhaps this makes it difficult to develop a sense of nationality in the minds of the people.

We have to confess that we have not been able to develop the sense of nationality as other leading countries of the world have done whose advancement is in great measure due to the national sentiment and the inspiration of the people, from the past history.

Sovereign

It means that the ultimate power remains with the people and they are the masters of the land and that all the sovereign nations of the world are independent and equal. They are supreme within the domain in their geographical territory.

We feel proud of the fact that our nation is a sovereign nation in the world. However, in the last 67 years of our independence, there are unfortunate examples when our country has been challenged by China and Pakistan. The ‘soft’ nature of our state has been perceived by many countries as a weakness. We must assert our right as

a sovereign nation in the world to take care of Indian nationals who are living even in other countries.

Secular

Secularism is a special feature of our Constitution. Secularism means that the state doesn’t have any religion of its own and that the Indian people enjoy equal rights as citizens of the country without any discrimination of caste, creed, religion and sex. Secularism in India reflects the spirit of unity in diversity in our land which is a legacy of our cultural heritage. Our national leaders had rejected the two nation theory in 1947 based on religion.

Religion cannot be the basis for the creation of any state in modern times. In the Indian context, Secularism is not only a constitutional right of the people but something more than that. It is a way of life, sharing cultural beliefs and living together, in spite of the fact that people belong to different religions and cultures.

We still recall the fact that in World War II, there were two camps having one common religion: Christianity. We are witnessing the conflict and war between Muslim nations in Middle Eastern countries also. The religion no doubt made its historical impact throughout the world and is still relevant to shape the destiny of many countries. It is also a historical fact that a number of wars have been fought in the name of religion. The lessons from the ancient history reemphasize that the problem of modern society cannot be resolved only on the basis of religion, especially in this scientific age and when the coming age shall be the age of spirituality and science.

Our freedom struggle against the British was having the support and the participation of the people belonging to different castes, creeds and religions. As a result of that, we got our freedom. The eminent freedom fighters were inspired by the highest teaching of all religions, which is the unity of the people and brotherhood of mankind. Stalwarts like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Gandhiji, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Maulana Azad, Bhagat Singh were highly motivated by the spirit of sacrifice, in the service of our motherland. In fact, the remarkable combination of the highest sense of

nationalism and secularism is the greatest gift of Indian freedom movement.

The real challenge to the unity of this country is from within as well as outside. We are witness to the increasing emergence of caste, religion and communal politics in recent times. No doubt, the conflict between secularism and religion that has emerged in recent years should be a matter of concern to all the Indians.

Secularism means nationalism which is based on humanism. It is sharing of values and beliefs of different communities and religions. The basic teachings of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism promote the basic ethical values for the development of the society. No doubt their metaphysics is separate but there is remarkable unity about the basic approach. It is now time to create a synthesis between secularism and spiritualism. In this background, the Indian cultural heritage has special message for the unity and synthesis of varied beliefs.

Socialism

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution contains Socialism, though this word was inserted in the Indian Constitution by 42nd Amendment Act in 1976. However, time has come to consider the relevance of socialism in present times. After independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, inspired by Russian Revolution was of the opinion that economic policy of India should have socialistic content. All the public undertakings in different parts of the country were established in the same direction. The nationalization of Indian Banks by Indira Gandhi in 1969 was considered a landmark in the Indian economic scenario. But after that, a drift started towards the capitalistic economy and in 1992, under the leadership of Narashima Rao, the then Prime Minister of India, and Dr. Manmohan Singh, his Finance Minister, a new chapter started - of liberal economy with new momentum to market economy.

In the period thereafter, the shadow of capitalistic economy has loomed large over the country and our institutional framework has been on the roadmap of capitalism. It has however not provided solutions to problems faced by our society. It is paradoxical that India is one of the richest country but having the poorest people. More than half of the population is still facing the problem of survival due to their worst economic condition. It is interesting to note that in this country under the banner of socialism, capitalism is thriving.

It is significant that presently, the whole world is facing the worst depression in its economy, having its impact on India too. A number of economic analyses has given the indication that the above economic crisis was the result of capitalistic economic system and market economy. As a result of that, many countries are raising the question about the role of globalization in the poverty and unemployment in their countries.

The economic crisis and the problem of poverty and unemployment demand the consideration and relevance of 'socialist' economy in our plan and action.

In this context, there is lot to learn from Chinese experience where they have combined talents of private entrepreneurs with their government policies and have made their economy global and competitive throughout the world.

There is a great need to set up an Institute for Socialist Studies and also as a challenge to socialist thinkers to prepare an alternative 5-year plan for economic reconstruction of the country to be placed before the nation and also before the newly elected Parliament in the months to come.

National integration

Even after 67 years of independence, India is facing the problem of national integration. India is the only country in the world having so many religions and sub-sects. There are number of political parties and citizens having different approaches and perceptions about the national Integration of the country. Many a time their conflict of interest creates a problem to maintain and sustain the national integration of the country.

In fact the problem of national integration cannot be left in the hands of the government alone. The people of the country have to play their due role to maintain the national integration. Ultimately these are the people who are victimized at the time of communal riots. It is worth observing that in the last three decades, a number of communal riots took place in different parts of the country and some of them that are noteworthy are the riots of 1984, after the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; riots in 1992 in the aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid; communal riots in 2002 in Godhra and the recent communal riots in 2013 in Muzaffarnagar

All the communal riots were the result of deep conspiracy of vested interest and anti-social elements.

Though a number of commissions were set up to investigate the communal riots, however their reports were not implemented. This indicates the indifferent attitude of the official agencies and their hypocrisy.

Agriculture and industry

Agriculture and industry are the two main spheres of economic activities in this country. We presently witness the imbalance between agriculture and industry. The agriculture sector could not get due attention in our Five Year Plans. More than three lakh farmers have committed suicide particularly in the States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka due to lack of proper attention to them. Time has come to recognize agriculture as industry. The Indian economy depends on the progress of agriculture. The rural Indian life depends on agriculture. It is a matter of great concern that in today's India, there are examples of starvation of farmers and the government is unable to resolve their problems. This is also due to the capitalistic approach and lack of sense of responsibility on the part of the government. In the long run, agriculture demands the status of industry to enable the farmers to take advantage of industrial policy made by the government in regard to creation of facilities providing agricultural tools, machineries and marketing.

Tiny industries

There are about 30 million tiny industries in the

country. They are providing employment to about 20 crore people. However, they are not able to take the advantage of credit and other facilities provided by the government as they are unable to repay the loan. It is high time to take some lesson from Bangladesh where they have been able to develop grass root mechanism to resolve the problem of tiny industries.

Small scale industries

As a result of globalization, many industries in small scale sector have lost their base as they are not able to face the challenge of globalization in their enterprises due to the lack of facilities, lack of quality products, marketing and capital. It is imperative to consider the development of small scale industry as the backbone of our industrial development, providing employment to a large number of people and exporting their products to a number of countries, earning foreign exchange in the process.

India is undoubtedly on the threshold of transformation as one of the topmost 'global power' as vocalized by several statesmen including Former President of India Abdul Kalam. In this journey, all citizens of India must play a significant role towards building a prosperous and progressive nation based on national pride. The key words of the Preamble - Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic – must be realised effectively to achieve the above objective.

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try to create differences between them. Some secularists tried to attempt damage control, but Kejriwal still didn't speak up.

An important member of the India Against Corruption team, Chetan Bhagat, had campaigned for Modi even before the RSS came out with its decision in his favor, and is still doing so. Lately he has been trying to 'educate' the Muslim youth in favour of 'modern and progressive' Modi cautioning them against 'old fashioned and stagnant' Muslim community. An important leader of the anti-corruption movement and Kejriwal's comrade in arms, Ramdev's utterances and literature are not hidden from any one. Ramdev called Modi to his ashram at Hardwar and declared him to be the leader of Hindus. Kejriwal did not speak even after that. The Sachar Committee report and its recommendations came out in 2006. This report has become a central issue in the India politics. All the

political parties advocate the implementation of the recommendations of the report in one way or the other. Only RSS-BJP has opposed it. But AAP has still not issued any comment on that report. Therefore, one may assume that AAP sides with the BJP on this count. The Sachar Committee report records the pathetic state of Muslims in the country and seeks their empowerment by suggesting some immediate measures. The Ford Foundation sponsored AAP's leadership, including Kejriwal, never speak a word against the neo-imperialism conducted from the American-Israel axis.

It is astonishing that the secularists consider Kejriwal to be their card against Modi, when he has never said a word against Modi. It will be interesting to see what decision the Muslim public takes with regard to AAP which has pushed back the real socialist and secularist forces and is continually hobnobbing with the neoliberal-communal nexus!

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What makes a prime minister strong and what makes a prime minister weak? Are there well-laid criteria to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of prime ministers, or for that matter, presidents? On what basis did L. K. Advani describe Dr. Manmohan Singh as the “weakest prime minister” India has had? Was it only because Dr. Singh shares power with the Congress president Sonia Gandhi or because it is a little more than mere sharing in the sense that Mrs. Gandhi commands more power than the Prime Minister? Unfortunately, whatever the basis for Mr. Advani’s assessment, Dr. Singh cannot live down the description as long as he remains prime minister under the present arrangement in which his position, status and authority are subservient to those of Sonia Gandhi. Since Dr. Manmohan Singh has made virtue out of a necessity, he finds comfort in the anomalous position he is in thanks to an unusual conspiracy of circumstances. However, despite his loyalty to the party and to its president, there must be moments when the good doctor must be rueing the day he was forced to become a mere *naam-ke-vaaste* prime minister. He may feel comfortable, but certainly he cannot be enjoying the high office. If he did, he will be less than human. That, notwithstanding his professed

comfort level, a part of Dr. Singh’s persona resents being described as weak, surfaced at his press conference on February 1. He surprised the media persons at the conference venue of Vigyan Bhavan and also all those who watched him on television by his spontaneous response to a question. Dr. Singh adroitly turned the table on Mr. Advani by pointing out that while he himself still retained his job, Mr. Advani had lost his by trying to assert his power and authority as president of a major political party! The implication clearly was that between the two, Mr. Advani was the weaker! This was an unsuspected display of political aggressiveness by the Prime Minister. Evidently, he has a hidden side to him! Did Mr. Advani choose the word “weakest” after careful deliberation or was it just an off-the-cuff choice in the heat of a political moment? Obviously, the latter. The term “weakest” implies that Dr. Manmohan Singh is the weakest among a line of weak prime ministers. Mr. Advani is second to none in loyalty to his own party. He could not have meant that Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, the only BJP prime minister so far, was also a weak prime minister! If this thought had occurred to Mr. Advani, he might well have described Dr. Singh as the “weakest Congress Prime Minister! In that, he may have

Between the lines

Communalism will be poll plank

Kuldip Nayar

been correct because Manmohan Singh is the first Congress prime minister who is also not the president of his party and is having to share power with another centre of power. Mr. Advani has been long enough in politics to have witnessed the performance of a number of prime ministers in office right from Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru had the longest innings, lasting 17 years. His daughter ran close with 14 years in two spells. Her son Rajiv Gandhi completed the full term of five years in office, an achievement matched by one of his Congress Party successors P. V. Narasimha Rao. In between, we have had six non-Congress Prime Ministers, Morarji Desai, V. P. Singh, Chandra Shkhar, H. D. Deve Gowda, Inder Gujral and Vajpayee. (Have I left out anyone?). Of these, only Vajpayee lasted the term. Which of these would Mr. Advani describe as strong and which weak? Since Dr. Manmohan Singh has earned the status of the weakest in Mr. Advani's eyes, it will be useful to assess the standing of all or most of them in ascending order of strength and descending order of weakness. Strong and weak are but relative terms and since there is no yardstick other than public perception, on what basis is one to test Mr. Advani's description or in, Dr. Singh's word "epithet"? In the case of Dr. Manmohan Singh, does public perception share Mr. Advani's assessment? Was Dr. Singh strong or weak in sorting out the Goa and Jharkhand embarrassments for the party? Was he strong or weak in dealing with President Pervez Musharraf and President Bush? Or in dealing with the Nepal King? Or in concluding a civilian nuclear energy deal with President Bush? Or in ordering the Indian delegation at the IAEA to vote against Iran? Or, in accepting Buta Singh's recommendation to dissolve the Bihar assembly?

The Congress is a late starter. It firmed up its campaign for the April-May parliamentary elections only two months ago. The party was complacent till it was woken up by the dismal defeats in four of the five states during the assembly polls.

The surveys conducted by different media hands confirm the drubbing which the Congress is all set to receive in 2014 general elections. The predictions are that it may not even reach the three-digit figures. Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, appointed as the head of the election strategy, was a disaster in a television interview. He made little difference because he repeated the clichés that the Congress has been harping on endlessly. He has unnecessarily revived the controversy of 1984 massacre.

It looked from some of his recent speeches that as if he has changed in tone and tenor, tearing a leaf out of the Aam Aadmi Party's book and talking about the participatory democratic state. He has very little time between now and the polls. Even otherwise, he could not revive the sagging fortunes of the Congress, first in UP and Bihar and, more recently, in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and, finally, in Delhi.

It would not be fair to put the blame entirely on Rahul Gandhi. The fault is the non-performance of the Congress-led government at the centre. A decade is a long

enough period to make a dent into the country's chronic problems of poverty, unemployment and disparities. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a well-known economist, has turned out to be an astute politician. His forte does not seem to be economics but political manoeuvres.

History may be charitable and infer Manmohan Singh as only the stalking horse. He should have quit in protest against the imposition of certain decisions on him. Yet, not even once did he offer his resignation. The real power was concentrated at 10, Janpath, where Sonia Gandhi and her son live. She could have become the prime minister in Congress' second term in 2009 but Sonia Gandhi did not want to revive the controversy of being Indian. Moreover, she wanted Rahul Gandhi to occupy the chair. Her thinking was that it would be taken as a dynastic succession. Rahul Gandhi has built up the young cadre in the party. This was his plus point.

The biggest problem that the Congress faces is to explain the scams which took place during its regime. Corruption is palpable in the Commonwealth Games, 2G Spectrum regarding mobiles and the allotment of coal blocks. The Prime Minister cannot shrug his shoulders and say that he did not know about them because the PMO has approved all the deals.

The Congress cadres belatedly are beginning to be active, yet their

predicament is how to rationalize the corrupt deeds and non-governance. No doubt, Rahul, a young face, is at the helm of party's affairs. But the declaration that he was the party's candidate for the prime ministerial position may have helped to some extent. However, it would have been undemocratic to name him before the elected candidates chose their parliamentary party leader.

In contrast, the Bharatiya Janata Party straightaway nominated Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi for the office of prime minister. The RSS, the party's mentor, insisted on it. Whatever the compulsions, the BJP has imposed Modi on the MPs who are yet to be elected. They have no other choice. Probably, the BJP high command believes that Modi's nomination itself will get it more seats. The calculation may turn out to be correct. Yet there is no running away from the fact that the procedure adopted to name the prime ministerial candidate smacks of autocracy.

Indeed, Modi has drawn crowds even in the South where the BJP has very little base. His appeal in the Hindi-speaking states has been astounding. Still the argument that he has peaked too early has a ring of truth. Modi has had thin crowd when he had visited a state for the second time. His slogan of development does not hide his saffron plan to polarize the society.

The analysis of last six speeches by Modi and Rahul shows that both are playing with the emotions of people in the name of country's unity. The two are targeting corruption without realizing that they are making no impact on the voters who believe that both are

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Public Policy Reports and Private aspirations

K. S. Chalam

The country is jubilant with the triumph of the middle classes who are hurt with the insensitive attitude of the governments towards their needs. The business community, particularly the corporate houses are happy that the effective consumer's class are responding to their market charms and would respond effectively with the increase in their incomes in future. Then how to get them engaged commercially is a business management problem. And we have in our country experts, scholars and commentators with political connections and external support to devise methods and policies that would make them mutually beneficial. Nevertheless, most of the public policies in recent times became contentious and helped to escalate public protest due to their limited world view.

It is fascinating to note that we have readymade and convenient policy packages and directives for the government that is expected to occupy power soon in Delhi. Already there seem to be debates on the need for abolishing all taxes so that it would act as an incentive for the business and corporate groups to bring in more efficiency to double our wealth in short period of time and eliminate poverty altogether just in a decade. There is also an interesting and sincere attempt being made to bring financial inclusiveness in the country through RBI appointed committee of Bankers. These two important issues though appear to be independent and parallel, are the economic agenda points for the future government. There seem to

be no published document on the formal policy recommendation of abolition of tax, but the people who are airing the issue are capable of influencing the government policies irrespective of the party in power. Both the ideas are being discussed by public intellectuals in different forums for quite some time.

The 'Report of the Committee on Comprehensive Financial Services for Small Businesses and low Income House Holds' under the chairmanship of Nachiket Mor of RBI, known as the financial inclusion report is just out. This is a report headed by an economist turned banker with Pennsylvania university qualifications and academic rigor with the support of about a dozen experts in the field which has recommended policies to be implemented by the RBI/ Government. The terms of reference of the report are basically related to framing a clear and determined vision of financial inclusion and deepening, with a design of institutional framework to execute and monitor the implementation of the policy. It seems the committee is overloaded with private bankers including the infamous Vikram Pandit of ex-Citi bank. It is reported that there was an internal dissent over the recommendations and in all probability it could be due to the wish list of the private bankers.

The report has arrived at a six point vision consisting of the following:

1. A Universal Electronic Bank Account.

2. Ubiquitous Access to Payments and Deposit Products at Reasonable Charges.
3. Sufficient Access to Affordable, Formal Credit.
4. Universal Access to Investment Products at Reasonable Charges.
5. Universal Access to Insurance and Risk Management Products at Reasonable Charges.
6. Right to Suitability.

The goals laid down by these six vision statements and the desired outcomes are:

1. Each Indian resident above the age of 18 will have access to financial services within fifteen minutes' walk by 2016 within 1 Sq KM, for every 400 people.
2. The credit to GDP ratio of 50% will be achieved in every district by 2020.
3. Universal coverage of risk management with reasonable charges by 2016.

The recommendations that enticed controversy are: All loans given to landless labourers, small and marginal farmers are to be counted as under Agriculture and no direct subsidy to the farmer. CRR and SLR of RBI are to be abolished. Definition of doubtful assets as of now as 12 months period is to be revised. Current capitalisation of foreign equity funding relaxed and money laundering concerns should be mitigated through measures of reporting by dealers and brokers. The priority sector lending is to be raised to 50 per cent to fund godowns, silos, ware houses and Non-Banking Financial companies, NBFC, etc. The permission to fix price of farm loans below base rate should be withdrawn and Banks be allowed to fix the rates as per

market conditions. Link the UDAI Aadhar card with all bank accounts. There are several other constructive recommendations like linking the mobile phones with the customer in consultation of TRAI, insisting on the credentials of the client, grievance redressal mechanism to help the customer, and so on.

This is not the first time that a committee was constituted to recommend inclusive financial policies. In fact in 2008 RBI constituted a committee under C. Rnaga Rajan who defined inclusion as "a process of ensuring access to financial services timely and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups such as weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable cost." He had reviewed the situation and found that 54 per cent of the households did not have access to credit and therefore recommended a National Rural Financial Inclusion plan. He found that the functioning of RRBs were satisfactory with 33 per cent coverage and to be continued. He has also recommended SHG- Bank linkage scheme and revitalisation of cooperative system to ensure financial inclusion. Ranga Rajan was RBI Governor and he kept the system of the economy as a whole in mind while making the recommendations. What happened to the recommendations and why this report again?

The 265 pages report produced in three months, the shortest period given to make recommendations, reminds one the kind of dissertations that the young enthusiastic scholars in social sciences create. M.Phil. dissertation is a basic exercise done by a scholar to take up serious study of the problem given by his supervisor who first concentrates only on the topic nothing else. She/ he devotes all the time and pages

only on the topic and does not look at the linkages or the conditions or circumstances in formulating the problem and elucidating one's account of the topic. This is reasonable as it is the beginning of a serious work and cannot be adjudged as a comprehensive work. But, policy reports that are adopted by the government affect the lives of millions, should be comprehensive enough to understand and conjecture the inter-linkages of milliard issues in a pluralistic country like India. India is not New York to get a Bank outlet within 15 minutes' walk, curtail agriculture, reduce real transactions of people, monetise tribal areas, and so on. It is not just money matter; it is the whole economy that the Report wants to reorient. However, they have not looked at the fact that out of the Rs7585.8 billion of broad money, M3, only Rs 1138.3 billion or 15 per cent is with the public. May be the bankers wish to raise the amount to 30 percent. How does it help the poor and the underprivileged in a country where job cards of NAREGA are held by contractors and musclemen in the villages? Is it a good strategy to control the economy and society with such a low premium? India is diverse in several respects where many traditional transactions are still made in barter or other mediums that are not necessarily involved with money. Do the priest, the barber, beggar carry swipe machines? Further, we had bitter experiences with the tyranny of micro finance, Sahara, scams, chits and cheats where the poor and the gullible are the victims. What would happen to them if the whole economy is monetised and handed over to few corporate houses?

Money is not only a store of value, a unit of account, medium of exchange, deferred payment;
(Continued on Page 10)

Wobbly Take Off for Third Front

Nitish Chakravarty

As the country sprints towards the 16th general election, efforts are on to string together a third (or is it a fourth?) front of regional parties and also of parties with a marginal presence across the country. Much of the credit (or discredit) for giving shape to the woolly idea of a feckless third front belongs to the Communists who refuse to learn from past experience. They, more than others, are doggedly pursuing the utopia of bringing under an umbrella disparate family-run outfits, masquerading as political parties, enmeshed in mutual rivalry and contradictions. It was mainly at their initiative that representatives of nearly a dozen parties met in Delhi last week to flesh out the idea of a single bloc in Parliament, even as they do not share any common set of values and agendas. The only thing common about some of these leaders is a burning ambition to become the prime minister of India.

What does Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, for all practical purposes a family enterprise, have in common with, for instance J. Jayalalithaa's AIADMK? Or what values does Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal share with Sharad Yadav-Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) or H.D. Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular)? The mutual contradictions, if not antagonism, of these leaders are so obvious that it is well nigh impossible for them to evolve a shared agenda on any critical issue facing the nation. Mulayam Singh's antediluvian views on women's rights and reservation of seats in Parliament and other elected bodies places him on a head-on collision

course with the CPI(M)-CPI agenda. How will Mulayam Singh square with Tamil Nadu's wily chief minister, J. Jayalalithaa, his oft-articulated ambition to occupy the prime minister's chair?

Deve Gowda, notwithstanding his tiny outfit's microscopic presence at the national level, is also very much in the race for the prime minister's post which he once occupied. Then there are other players waiting in the wings to stake their claim to the office of prime minister if and when the time comes. Without shared values, and with conflicting personal egos and ambitions, can the hunger for power be a cementing force? Many of these leaders have little respect for principles and have a history of renegeing on their promises.

Predictably Mamata Banerjee, the irascible chief minister of West Bengal, is not a part of this joint venture. And for obvious reasons. If circumstances compel, Mamata might share a room with a tiger but will not be under the same umbrella with the CPI(M) no matter how heavy it rains. There are other roadblocks to her joining the emerging third front. Hence her Trinamool will most likely stick to her declared intention to go it alone in the upcoming general elections. A tie-up with Mulayam Singh appears to be out of the question for at least two reasons: one, Mulayam ditched Mamata after consenting to her move to scuttle Pranab Mukherjee's election as President; and second, both of them are nursing the ambition to grab the prime minister's chair.

The Congress at the national level is eager to have Trinamool back in the United Progressive Alliance but other alliance partners like the DMK having shown their back to it and the Congress' relations with Sharad Pawar's NCP having plummeted to a new low, Mamata knows there is no advantage to gain by jumping aboard Sonia-Rahul Gandhi's leaky boat. Moreover relations between the West Bengal Congress leaders and Trinamool have soured resulting in the exit of the Congress from the coalition government they had formed after the 2011 state elections. This makes it even more difficult for Mamata to line up with the Congress.

BJP leaders have been trying to woo Mamata back into the National Democratic Alliance for some time, but they cannot be unaware that Mamata is unlikely to cozy up to their party in the run-up to the national polls. So the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, at an impressive rally in Calcutta's Brigade Parade Ground last week, gave a new spin to his grand strategy to woo Mamata by offering her government help to fulfil its development goals in exchange for her MPs' support to the BJP in running the government he hopes to head in Delhi next summer. Since Mamata is not in the reckoning as far as the hobbling third front is concerned, the possibility of her tryst with Modi in case he romps home with credible numbers cannot be ruled out.

None of the opinion polls conducted across the nation gives the Congress party even a slim chance

of retaining power after the polls. Narendra Modi's daily shenanigans against Sonia and Rahul have set the Congress worrying, even as the outgoing MPs hurtle between hope and despair. The Congress appears to have lost the battle without putting up a decent fight.

The much trumpeted first TV interview of Rahul Gandhi on the Times Now channel has done nothing to refurbish the image of the Congress party's undeclared prime ministerial candidate; it has rather raised questions about his perceptions and plans to deal with the country's multifarious and complicated problems. Rahul's single point focus on empowerment of women as the most important issue facing the nation has pushed unemployment, healthcare, education et al to the back burner. He has not clarified how would he take forward the multi-faceted agenda of his party such as job creation, healthcare, education for all, to name only a few.

The move to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh has boomeranged. Not only several non-Congress formations but numerous Congress workers and their allies outside of the Telangana region are up in arms against the Centre's boorish stand. Voters in Andhra Pradesh have remained loyal to the Congress over the past decades but the ongoing developments have turned out to be a nightmare for the party. For the first time ever a Congress chief minister (Kiran Kumar Reddy) has declared war against his own party's high command. The Lok Sabha (at the fag end of its five-year tenure) and the Rajya Sabha have plunged into a turmoil upsetting the government's plans to legislate on key issue bearing on important concerns for the nation. In the event economic development has taken the back seat.

Pension Reforms Can Bring Hope to Millions

Bharat Dogra

For tens of millions of elderly citizens in India, there is now at least a glimmer of a new hope for social security, thanks to a persistent campaign for over two years by Pension Parishad, a mobilization of several social organizations and activists across the country.

India has a population of over 140 million elderly citizens (defined as all people over 54 years of age). A lower age is considered suitable in the context of pension as poorer people tend to age early. Among these elderly people old age pensions under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) reach only 23 million people.

While the central government contributes only 34 per cent of the annual expenses on old age pensions estimated currently at about Rs. 14,370 crore, the remaining 66 per cent is contributed by various state governments. But even after adding up all the money, state plus central expenditure, the overall contribution to the social security of elderly citizens remains dismal. This amounts to Rs. 83 per month per elderly persons for India. While the situation is somewhat better in a few states like Goa (Rs. 446), Rajasthan New scheme (Rs.272) and Haryana (Rs. 272), this is extremely poor in Bihar (Rs.52) and Gujarat (Rs. 21). The figure for Gujarat is glaring low.

In terms of monthly benefits given, a few smaller states or union territories are way ahead with Goa and Andaman-Nicobar providing Rs. 2000 per month to almost all senior

citizens. However many states not only cover only BPL or destitute families, but in addition provide very low pensions, often less than Rs. 500 per month.

Most states cover only people over 60 years of age as elderly, while in some states only those above 65 years are accepted. The overall result is that only a small percentage of those who need and deserve pension get some pension at all. Even among those who get pension, a majority get less than Rs. 500 and an overwhelming majority get less than Rs. 1000 per month. Hence it can be said that less than 5 per cent of elderly persons in the unorganized sector get a reasonably adequate pension.

A note prepared by the Union Minister for Rural Development, Jairam Ramesh, and sent to the Prime Minister about NSAP also agreed that "the pension amounts cannot be considered dignified under present cost-of-living circumstances." This note further said that "there is no automatic indexation of these pensions to inflation." The beneficiaries under NSAP are restricted to BPL households while BPL lists are very unreliable. Only a few states pay pension on a monthly basis.

Keeping in view this dismal state of old age pensions there is a strongly felt need for reforming Pensions.

Pension Parishad is an effort of social activists and representatives

AAP has tied itself in knots The Congress too is playing a devious game

Rajindar Sachar

of elderly people all over the country to campaign for adequate, justice-based universal pensions in the country. The lead for initiating this campaign was taken in 2011-12 by some prominent social activists like Baba Adhav and Aruna Roy. As a result of this campaign elderly people from several parts of the country have come together at Jantar Mantar in Delhi in every session of Parliament since May 2012 to draw attention to their plight. Each time, the demands have received unanimous support from both within, and outside Parliament. On November 27, 2013 elderly people gathered at Jantar Mantar once again (for the 6th time) for an indefinite dharna which demanded that the government honour the assurances made to them during the budget session of Parliament.

The Pension Parishad demands that - 1. Pensions must be universal. 2. The minimum monthly pension should be Rs. 2000 or half the minimum wage, whichever is higher. 3. The pension amount should be indexed to inflation. 4. The pension amount must be paid to the recipient on a fixed date each month. 5. The pension delivery system should be transparent and the list of recipients in each state must be displayed on the website. 6. The government must put in place a system for grievance redress.

A political debate can be, and should be, sharp, divisive and even personal. But none should deliberately try to vilify the personal character of the opponent unless the facts are unimpeachable. Most of the newspapers, including some of the reputedly sober ones, recently flashed the news about a list circulated by Arvind Kejriwal describing Central ministers and other leaders of the Congress and the BJP as “corrupt”.

No, I am not against publicising acts of corruption. But I would have expected some small factual details of the corruption charges just as those made public about the coal and telecom scams. AAP’s naming of certain leaders as corrupt and criminal who are playing dynastic politics is an act of provocation. Notwithstanding the slander, the Congress has continued to give outside support to the AAP government.

Kejriwal took the rash step in the hope that, stung by this, the Congress would withdraw its support. As a result, the AAP government would resign and go to the people as a wronged party, conveniently trying to cover up AAP members’ misbehaviour with African and other women which had led certain women’s organisations and others to criticise AAP for its insensitivity in these delicate matters.

On top of this came the “enlightened” Kejriwal’s statement that Khap Panchayats are only

cultural organizations. At the same time he said, rather with tongue in cheek, that if they did something illegal, action would be taken. What a convoluted explanation by the Chief Minister of Delhi! Surely, he is aware that Khap Panchayats in Haryana and Rajasthan have been responsible for harassing young couples by questioning their marriage. Khap Panchayats have exiled such couples from villages — and even ordered their killings. The Punjab and Haryana High Court and the Supreme Court have in many cases directed the prosecution of members of Khap Panchayats and many of them have even been convicted.

One of the founding members of AAP, Madhu Bhaduri, has resigned, saying publicly that “she has nothing to do with a party which humiliates women.....and that she wanted to distance herself from AAP”. Maybe the compulsion of Kejriwal is that his next target of election is Haryana. If AAP, which calls itself a different kind of political party, courts organizations like Khap Panchayats which violate every human right, how can youth, especially young women, trust it with their vote?

Such being the compulsions of Kejriwal, he is looking for an excuse to quit the government and give a make-believe impression to the public that the dishonest Congress was afraid of his steps against corruption and, therefore, has withdrawn the support. When

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the Congress did not swallow the bait of withdrawing support even after its leaders were called corrupt, AAP in order to further provoke the Congress publicly included the name of Sonia Gandhi in the list of corrupt leaders. The Congress seems to have seen through his strategy and has not reacted. AAP is now cornered into fulfilling its commitment to supply water and electricity as promised in better ways than the previous government did. Thus the reality is that AAP has tied itself in knots of its own making. So we have a game of chess being played between the Congress and AAP. People of Delhi are suffering, in the meanwhile. The public wants concrete action and not an exchange of allegations between politicians.

AAP should also realise that running a government is a serious business. It had announced before elections that it would pass the Lokayukta Bill at the Ramlila Ground. But the venue is being abandoned because of the cost of over Rs 2 crore estimated by the police, apart from security reasons. A switchover to Indira Gandhi Stadium looks easy because being a Delhi Government property, it will only require certain book entries and no cash payment. A more serious question has to be answered. Legislation in a democracy is not passed at rallies. There has to be a serious deliberation on each part of the legislation. If the AAP members' plea of involvement of the public is so genuine, what stops them from holding even corner meetings or bigger public meetings where Kejriwal and his Cabinet colleagues can easily mingle with people and have a discussion on each aspect of the Lokpal Bill? And thereafter the matter can be taken up in the legislative assembly hall, debated

and finally passed. That would be both democratic and people-friendly. As for watching debates, TV channels can cover each angle of the debate. AAP can even install big TV screens throughout Delhi during the debate and passing of the legislation and thus satisfy the test of involving people in legislation. But if AAP is interested only in cheap gimmicks, then this latest action of holding a public meeting in I.G. Stadium is on a par with that of the Roman Empire, which used to hold gladiators' fights and killings in public. But that is not how democracies function.

Of course, the Congress is also playing its devious game. I am referring to NTPC, a Central undertaking, putting pressure on the Delhi electric supply companies

(Continued from Page 3)

hiding corruption of their respective party. The difference between the two is on secularism. Modi avoids discussions on the subject and says that the development is inclusive. Rahul Gandhi, on the other hand, underlines that secularism is the country's ethos.

Modi is invoking the name of Sardar Patel and Rahul is invoking both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, staying within the dynasty. If he was serious on corruption he should have taken up some of the scams with the Prime Minister. Coming back to Patel, he was a strong personality but his image was that of being anti-Muslim. By installing a tall statue of Sardar Patel in Ahmedabad, Modi is only playing the communal card. Both Nehru and Patel were Mahatama Gandhi's lieutenants and the picture of those days shows them on either side of the Mahatama.

to pay up their arrears or the supply would be stopped. NTPC is under the Central government and it is hard to believe that the threat could have been given without having cleared it first with the Central government, more so when a CAG audit is going to be held to look into the allegation made by Kejriwal that there is a big tax evasion by the local power companies.

Unfortunately, this devious game between AAP and the Congress can only bring misery to the average person in Delhi. The political scene is not encouraging. I feel that the movements by people who wish to bring about social change and fight gross inequalities in our country should combine and play an effective role in parliamentary elections.

Why the Mahatama named Nehru as his successor was the image the latter projected of being a national and international figure. Nehru never deviated from the path of secularism which the Mahatama infused in the nation. Patel did say during the migration following partition that the Muslims will be pushed out of India in proportion to the Hindus ousted from Pakistan.

There is no doubt that the BJP will emerge as the single largest party. Even then Modi's ambition to become the prime minister may elude him. Imagining that his party, on its own gets 200 seats in the Lok Sabha, he still will have to muster another 72 more to give the BJP an absolute majority. Then a more acceptable face to placate the supporting parties may become inevitable. The federal front which is being revived by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar may become relevant at that time.

The Gender Insensitive Leadership

Sandeep Pandey

The comment made by Kumar Vishwas on nurses from Kerala and the Delhi Law Minister's insistence that Delhi police raid a place which he alleged was being used to run a sex and drug racket have exposed certain weakness of the AAP. Since it is a party created in a hurry obviously its cadres have not received any kind of training, leave aside ideological training. Unfortunately the top leadership of AAP is bereft of any prominent female member or anybody with feminist outlook. Otherwise such things would not have happened. Madhu Bhaduri's (who has been Arvind's colleague since the days he started his work on RTI about ten years back) resignation from the party shows the gender insensitivity among top AAP leadership. She has gone to the extent to say that this party of men (*aadmi*) doesn't respect women and behaves like a Khap panchayat. These are serious allegations.

Kumar Vishwas was also making casteist comments in his first appearance in the anti-corruption movement during Anna Hazare's fast at Jantar Mantar in April 2011. He had to be told to not make such statements. He is a professional entertainer with little social understanding who has been propelled into national leadership of AAP because of the success of the movement.

Now the Delhi police certainly seem to be protecting the sex and drug mafia when they refuse to take an action upon instructions from a Delhi minister, but the minister must also realize that he cannot interfere

into the privacy of women in the middle of night without women police. The policemen who were targeted are both men. In the end no proof of drug was found on the body of Ugandan women. It is really a shame that when police refused to arrest the women, which they could not have done legally, the AAP workers manhandled the women and forced them to go to AIIMS for check-up. How is this display of muscle power any different from what other politicians do, though may be not inspired by the zeal to punish the wrong doers. But this moral policing could be very dangerous like we have seen some right wing Hindutva organisations doing it. It is also a matter of curiosity that among all places the minister chose to target this particular place where Ugandan women lived. This incident reeks of racism and the act of the minister borders on fascism. The attempt by Delhi government to take control of Delhi police is a valid one but police cannot be used to wreak havoc by unnecessarily harassing the citizens. The sensitivity especially expected when women are involved was not shown in this matter.

Imagine that AAP government was given control of police. Now, if every minister and MLA of the ruling party decided to use Delhi police to carry out raids in their enthusiasm to check corruption and irregularities they could create chaos. Since the time of Anna Hazare there is a streak of fascism in the movement which wants to publicly hang the corrupt on street crossings. If they decided to extend this thinking to people involved in sex and drug rackets and other such

illegal activities, they could throw the society into anarchy. Rather than taking the law into their own hands it would be better if they allowed the law and order machinery to function independently with them playing the role of watchdog. Otherwise, they would be accused of the same charge as every other political party in power – of abusing the police to serve their own ends even though it may be for a public cause. The cause has to be right and even the method has to be correct.

It would do AAP party good if Arvind Kejriwal got all his volunteers, especially the ones in responsible positions, oriented towards gender sensitivity, right to choice, gay-lesbian rights and other such issues.

Somnath Bharti's early morning raid at Ugandan women's place and Arvind Kejriwal's dharna on street to defend Bharti have seriously dented AAP's image. People who were looking up to AAP as a viable national alternative have started having doubts. AAP has set out to redefine the way politics is done in India. The prevalent culture of mainstream political parties is that they defend the wrongdoing of their party workers. AAP is not expected to emulate other political parties in this matter. In fact, it is hoped that they would take action against their own workers if they commit a wrong. Somnath Bharti must pay a price for his intemperate ways and AAP should force him to resign. He is a lawyer and he has exhibited ignorance of basic law relating to women and acted in a highhanded manner. His action deserves to

be condemned like we condemn the obnoxious behavior of other politicians.

One or two more mistakes like this and the AAP popularity can really take a dive. The danger is that when the damage reaches out of control then Arvind Kejriwal may just wind up the experiment. The party is in danger of frittering away the gains it has made so rapidly. The growth of the party has not been accompanied by an evolutionary process and it may end up paying a heavy price for it.

One hopes that AAP will learn from its mistakes and not put inexperienced people in important positions. His argument that if it is after all ordinary people who do various kinds of jobs then why can't they become MLAs and ministers is flawed? Every job requires some training or experience. He is able to aptly handle the job of CM because of his experience as an administrative officer. He can't expect newcomers in his party to function at his level of expertise and understanding.

(Continued from Page 4)

but a sinew of political war in modern times. It cannot be left to the whimsies and fancies of the market players. There is no doubt it would facilitate the big corporate players to transact and stimulate capital markets. But, they are only aspirations of a few private individuals and the country with 30 crore poor people cannot afford this at this stage. After all, RBI or any Central Bank of a country has the responsibility in providing the direction and correction to the economy with monetary and fiscal (taxes) policy. How is it possible to regulate the market economy without CRR, SLR, subsidies, taxes, loans and other instruments?

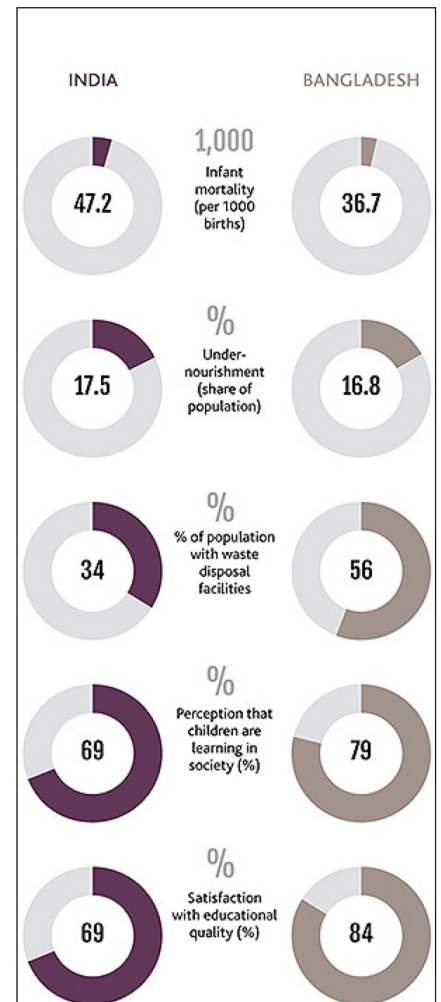
A Case for Swaraj

Uday Dandavate

Sixty-six years after independence India has a long distance to travel in building a path to prosperity for all of its citizens. A recent survey by Legatum Institute has profiled 142 countries along a prosperity index. The countries have been ranked along eight high level criteria (see the methodology used at <http://www.prosperity.com/#!/methodology>), Economy, Entrepreneurship and Opportunity, Governance, Education, Health, Safety and Security, Personal Freedom and Social Capital. Majority of the top ten countries featured in the results are primarily social democracies (the United States features as 11th and UK at the 16th positions). Norway ranks no. 1 in prosperity followed by Switzerland (2), Canada (3), Sweden (4), New Zealand (5), Denmark (6), Australia (7), Finland (8), Netherlands (9) and Luxembourg (10). India ranks at 106th position even behind some of our neighbors, such as Singapore (at 18), Hong Kong (at 19), Japan (at 21), Taiwan (at 22), South Korea (at 26), Malaysia (at 44), China (at 51), Thailand (at 52), Sri Lanka (at 52), Philippines (at 66), Indonesia (at 66), Nepal (at 102) and Bangladesh (at 103).

Even more alarming aspect of the findings of the Legatum Institute's research is that in 2013 Bangladesh has overtaken India on the Prosperity Index for the first time. The report concludes, "Over the past five years, India has slid down the rankings in seven of the eight sub-indices and in overall Prosperity, while Bangladesh's performance over this period is the complete opposite—rising

in seven sub-indices and overall Prosperity." The report suggests that development and progress are not solely reliant on rapid economic growth". It attributes performance of Bangladesh to its success in poverty management through effective implementation of micro financing. It also points out that relative to Bangladesh overall loan portfolios for microfinance institutions across India shrank by 33 per cent, from \$5.25 billion to \$3.52 billion, between March and December, 2011. The report concludes,



“India’s economic problems have been compounded by governance failures. Since 2009, India has fallen 18 places on the Governance sub-index to 54th. Over this period, faith in the country’s political class has been shaken by high-profile corruption scandals, including the selling of mobile phone spectrum at below market rates and the numerous instances of bribery and incompetence associated with the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Events like these—and the fact that 14 per cent of the current Indian parliament is accused of criminal activity, including murder, kidnapping, extortion and rape—may have contributed to declining standards of governance as well as the largest anti-government protests on record, led by India’s middle class.”

Another source of information to consider in this context is a report produced by, Transparency International which has developed a corruption perception index through results of a global survey

of 177 countries, Incidentally there is a significant overlap between the countries identified as high on prosperity index by Legatum Institute and those identified as least corrupt by the Transparency International. The top ten ranked countries (least corrupt) include Denmark (1), New Zealand (1), Finland (3), Sweden (3), Norway (5), Singapore (5), Switzerland (7), Netherlands (8), Australia (9) and Canada (9).

India ranks 94th in this ranking, behind Sri Lanka (91), China (80) Malaysia (53), Mauritius (52), Taiwan (36), Israel (36), Bhutan (31), UAE (26) Japan (18), and Hong Kong ((15). The countries ranked more corrupt than India in the region include Thailand (102), Indonesia (114), Vietnam (116), Pakistan (127), Russia (127), Bangladesh (136), Iraq (171), Afghanistan (175) and North Korea (175).

Review of the data provided by the two research agencies led to creation of a model that allows

mapping of countries with different levels of prosperity and corruption. I have also placed the ideal concept of Swaraj in this model.

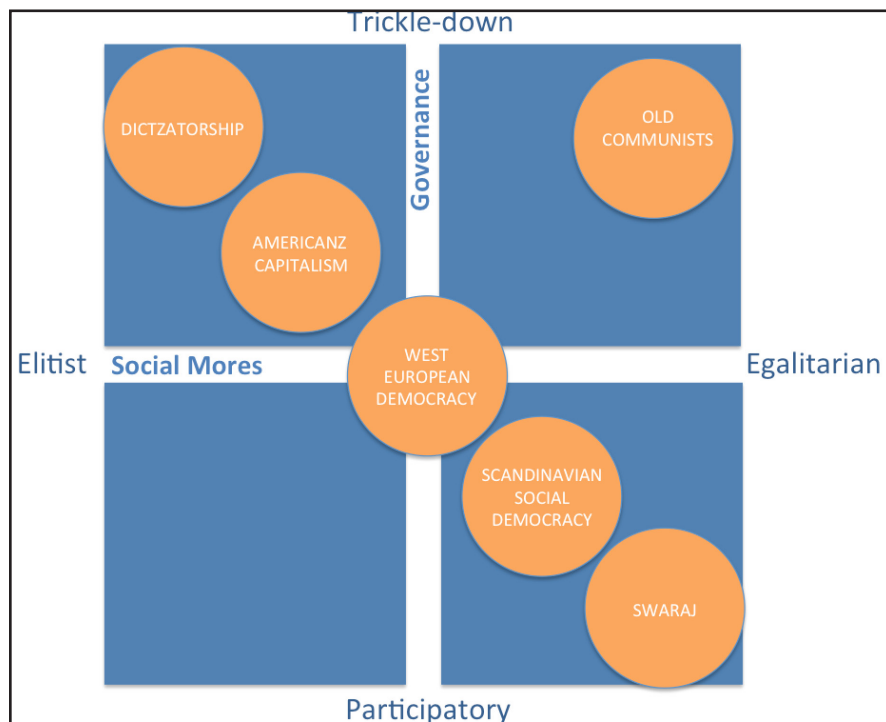
The framework consists of two dimensions - dimension of governance (Trickle down versus Participatory) and Dimension of Social Mores (Elitist versus Egalitarian).

A majority of countries with highest prosperity and lowest corruption fall in the quadrant that shows participatory governance and egalitarian social mores. Through clustering of countries based on their governance and social mores, it became obvious that the lowest prosperity and highest corruption is found in dictatorships that practice top-down approach to governance and the rulers are prone to indulge in elitism.

The concept of Swaraj, which is essentially based on participatory method of governance and aimed at establishing an egalitarian society, will alone provide a perfect path to ensuring prosperity and reducing corruption. Egalitarianism does not mean redistribution of wealth within a stagnant economy. Cultivating egalitarian social mores and building citizens’ interface with the government through innovative participatory approaches will help cultivate people’s capacities and harness their imagination. Such an approach alone will help build a sustainable infrastructure for a prosperous and egalitarian society.

The example of Scandinavian countries stands as an initial proof for this hypothesis. For those who make excuses that small size has made it easier for Scandinavian countries to manage growth and contain corruption, the concept of

(Continued on Page 13)



Give them a fighting chance

Kalpana Sharma

In the midst of the raging debate over the Aam Aadmi Party's actions, inaction and reaction to various events, some fundamentals are getting buried. Some of these fundamentals have a direct relationship to questions of women's safety and their status. The intense media scrutiny to which AAP has been subjected, and which some would argue is unfair and excessive, has raised many issues that go beyond the future of this one fledgling party.

What is the basic premise that is now being challenged? AAP has campaigned for putting power in the hands of "people". It holds that the governance deficit can be overcome if people are empowered, if decision-making moves from government offices to neighbourhoods; it believes that everyone has a right to know and to have a say in how government should run and what it should do.

Within days of AAP coming to power in Delhi, we have witnessed some aspects of this being played out. And those used to a different way of business being conducted are legitimately uncomfortable. This is disorder, not order, they say. Who are "the people"? How can you let them decide?

The most unsavoury aspect of this, of course, was what happened in Khirkee village in Delhi, where "the people" chased and caught women who they had decided, without any evidence, were soliciting and therefore had to be punished for

introducing "immorality" into their neighbourhood. When power to the people is interpreted as this kind of vigilante justice, not just women but any minority group will feel unsafe.

There are hundreds of incidents across India of precisely this type of lawlessness that cannot be justified in the name of democracy or "empowering" the "people". Surely, when members of Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) decide that "the people" are fed up of north Indians in Mumbai, and go about demonstrating this by roughing up poor street vendors, it is not an action that anyone who believes in democracy can support. Unfortunately, so far, AAP has failed to put in place processes that check vigilantism while still allowing a space for ordinary people to express their grievances and seek redress.

What would be the fallout of this for women? As Pratiksha Baxi points out in a prescient piece on the website Kafila (<http://kafila.org/2014/01/25/the-politics-of-raid-governance-aam-aurat-v-khas-aurat-pratiksha-baxi/>), AAP's formulation of constantly referring to the women in Delhi as "ma, behen, beti" actually lays the grounds for problems for all women because whether they mean it or not, they are saying that as long as you are "their" women you are safe, but if you are not, you are on your own. That is not the kind of assurance of safety that any woman wants. In fact, even the safety guaranteed if you "belong" to a group of men is hardly something to celebrate given the insecurities

that women face when surrounded by the men tasked to "protect" them.

The deeper problem, however, with the debates in the media and elsewhere is the issue of whether "the people" can really participate in governance. By focusing on an individual, in this case the actions of Delhi's Law Minister Somnath Bharti, and one incident, the vigilantism displayed in Khirkee, there is a real danger that the baby will be thrown out with the bath water, so to speak.

For there is no question that AAP's attempt at being inclusive, by involving ordinary people in decision-making and in politics, is something that is essential to strengthen democracy.

The panchayati raj system, with all its shortcomings, has been an outstanding example of how this has worked, and women have been the principal beneficiaries of this. Of course, there are problems. Of course, it is not perfect. But it is far better than top down governance. It is far better than excluding women from institutions of governance. It is far better than concentrating powers in the hands of a few.

Even in the panchayati raj system, it has not been easy to ensure that the powerless, including poor women, actually have their say. In too many instances, the powerful find proxies who run the show.

There is also the very real danger, especially in our cities, of "people's power" being distorted into moral

policing, or into attacks against “outsiders”, whoever they are.

What AAP is attempting, much like earlier such experiments as part of the Jayaprakash Narayan-led movement did in the 1970s, is complex and not just a convenient slogan. It is something that should not be dismissed lightly or disparaged to the point that even the kernel of good it represents is crushed.

The danger of pulling this sapling up from the roots before it has had a chance to establish itself is that it will lay the grounds for the demand for strong, centralised leadership, one strong individual who will sort everything out. India has gone through that phase once. We do not need it repeated.

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Swaraj provides a befitting response. Swaraj envisions delegation of governance to the smallest unit of governance- the Panchayat. The Panchayati Raj envisioned in the concept of Swaraj has not been successfully implemented in India only because the rulers in Delhi have been averse to giving up their control over resources.

Gandhi explained his vision of Swaraj in 1946, “What we mean and want through Poorna Swaraj is an awakening among the masses, a knowledge among them of their true interest and ability to serve that interest against the whole world... Harmony, freedom from aggression from within or without, and a progressive improvement in the economic condition of the masses.”

Recently Aam Aadmi Party’s decision to seek citizens’ approval for forming a government with support of the Congress party through Muhalla meetings was

severely criticized by some in the media and ridiculed by most of the traditional political parties. Those who are used to centralized decision-making process; the concept of citizens’ referendum appears as a threat to the authority at the top and to the integrity of the republic.

India needs to follow a participatory development path that would involve grass root level development models on the lines of some of the social democracies that feature high on prosperity index and low on corruption index. Key to achieving prosperity lies in encouraging and cultivating in every citizen a capacity for pursuing his/her curiosity, for engaging in critical thinking and for innovative problem solving. Every citizen must have the opportunity to prosper irrespective of his/her caste, religion, gender, or economic status. The socialism India practiced under the Congress rule was pseudo socialism - hollow promises of equality were made only to capture vote banks. After the collapse of Soviet Union the Indian government moved closer to the United States. Under the garb of liberalization the Congress party switched gears from pseudo

socialism to pseudo capitalism. True intentions were always to keep the levers of power and wealth concentrated in the hands of a small coterie of rulers. The ruling elite managed to switch public mores from socialist era focus on equality and social justice to capitalist era obsession with conspicuous consumption.

The advent of AAP on the political horizon of India provides an opportunity for ordinary citizens to replace the rulers who have never cared for a participatory democracy with empathic, intelligent and creative problem solvers. We need to put AAM Aadmi (not the party) in the legislatures with a mandate to implement the concept of Swaraj. The goal should not be to reverse people’s aspirations for prosperity, but to help them pursue their aspirations with egalitarian values. We need to create abundant opportunities for all, so we don’t have to fight for a piece of a small pie.

In Gandhiji’s words: *The call for Swaraj represents a genuine attempt to regain control of the self - our self-respect, self-responsibility and capacities for self-realization*

In 2004, a group of political scientists, under the auspices of CSDS-Lokniti, assessed the quality and texture of India’s democracy (along with that of other South Asian countries — the study was subsequently published as *State of Democracy in South Asia*). This year, that same exercise is being repeated. Initial findings suggest that satisfaction with the working of democracy in our country has declined from 55 per cent to 46 per cent. Support for democracy (as the only way of organising politics) has also declined from 49 per cent to 46 per cent. What is perhaps more worrisome is that from 6 per cent in 2004, the proportion of those who do not mind non-democratic solutions in certain circumstances has risen to 11 per cent now. The craving for a strong leader has also increased. These initial findings need to be situated in the context of the political economy of chaos, uncertainty and unresponsiveness that we have witnessed over the past few years. A robustly democratic society appears to have been losing that robustness over a period of 10 years.

—**Suhas Palshikar**, *The Indian Express*

Report of fact finding and assessment – Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts

1. From December 23-25, 2013, a team of 11 persons from Aman Biradari, visited 8 camps of persons displaced by the recent violence in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts. The main goal of the mission was to understand the experiences and every day conditions of the survivors of violence and those who have fled their villages in fear, so as to map humanitarian needs. The team spoke with women and men, children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disability, and witnessed first-hand, the situation of abject need and neglect. For those who have suffered violence – physical and/or mental – living in the camps in such difficult conditions is a continuance of that trauma. A related goal was an attempt to understand the possibilities and challenges of long term justice and reconciliation.

2. The study team heard from survivors that after much delay, some government assistance reached them, but this was a case of too little too late. In the absence of adequate government interventions, NGOs and civil society organisations have been trying to intervene, but their limited resources are a constraint

3. Main findings: The majority of camps visited were unofficial camps located near Muslim-majority host villages. State government has not officially recognised the majority of these camps and claims it is not in any way accountable to the people there. Consequently, survivors are on their own and have faced neglect with respect to accessing basic necessities. They have done so during the harshest weather conditions including scorching heat, heavy monsoon rains and harsh winter. The numbers of those

who have died in these camps are comparable to official statistics of the government on the number killed during the riots, including mostly children as well as older women and men. Acute needs include access to weather-proof shelter and sufficient bedding and clothing; healthcare, particularly for pregnant and lactating women, children, the elderly, the disabled; food security including proper nutrition and drinking water; sanitation needs; employment opportunities; education needs including remedial learning; financial security; and addressing needs of those who have suffered sexual violence.

4. Below are some specific and actionable recommendations made by the report:

A. The State must officially recognise all camps that are functioning, in order to adequately provide for the rights of affected persons and ensure that the suffering is ended.

B. It must stop all forced evictions from relief camps, as most people have nowhere else to go. Indeed Government must establish its own camps, to house shelterless victims, and provide the full range of services there.

C. Immediately, in all camps, the range of entitlements under various provisions of law as well different services be ensured, whilst prioritising the most vulnerable. Specific interventions should include:

- i. Adequate shelter in the form of weather proof tents, and pucca housing.

- ii. Special ration cards for victims to access entitlements under PDS.

- iii. Special old-age pension cards, disability pension cards and widow pension cards

- iv. Identification documents that include voter ID cards

- v. Camps must have community run anganwadis serving hot-cooked meals, childcare support, mobile health clinics, and on-site doctors, prioritising needs of women.

- vi. Long-term psychosocial care and counselling for survivors

- vii. Provide on-camp educational facilities (books, notebooks, stationery, bags etc.); remedial classes for children taking their board examinations, admission in schools in the neighbourhood of camps. Accompany this with awareness and advocacy drives around education for girl child and against early marriage of girls.

- viii. Need and skill based employment assistance and material aid to riot-affected men and women at the earliest, to enable them to earn their living.

- ix. State should make provision for emergency cash for work to provide for the loss of livelihoods suffered by people living in camps.

D. Alongside, the following measures are required, for all victims:

- i. Clear and transparent

guidelines on compensation for loss of property. Little clarity exists on what the criteria are in deciding eligibility of beneficiaries. The list of victims too is contested. Victims need to be helped in securing compensation.

- ii. Sustained effort by the administration to create a secure environment, the absence of which is compelling people to not go back to their home villages. This includes speedy arrest of the accused named in FIRs, irrespective of community or social standing. This is imperative in order to create an environment of greater security and to prevent further outbreak of hostilities. Legal aid must be provided to assist people in filing FIRs and following those up.
- iii. Security arrangements should be made at victims; home-village and survivors should be assisted in rescuing/securing items they left behind. Also parents need to be encouraged to follow-up on the whereabouts of their missing daughters.
- iv. Efforts need to be made the district administration for long-term reconciliation by facilitating meetings between leaders of the Jat and Muslim community must be restarted and continued.

Aman Biradari and MAJMA Muzaffarnagar Adhikaar Jan Manch (formed as an alliance of civil society and aid agencies, for a collective and coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis in Muzaffarnagar) would welcome the opportunity to assist state government in this effort.

- F. To maximise administration-civil society partnership to ensure effective delivery of relief and entitlements to victims, establish a system of periodic (weekly) coordination meetings at the DM level, both in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli, with MAJMA and other like-minded civil society partners.
- G. The violence and its aftermath in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli, resulting in continuing suffering of thousands of victims, is a huge blot on our common humanity. State government must send a

clear signal to all, public officials as well as society at large, that continuing exclusion of the victims already suffering much, will not be tolerated and redress must be provided urgently and effectively. Given this scenario we appeal for volunteers from all over India to undertake the survey, relief and reconciliation efforts in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli.

We request people – both students from universities and working people from across India – of all faiths and communities to kindly volunteer for periods ranging from ten days to one month in End February and March, 2014, starting after the 25th of Feb onwards. Those who wish to volunteer kindly send a message to Amin Khan : <aminrezakhan@gmail.com> and amanbiradari.delhi@gmail.com

Harsh Mander, Admiral Tahaliani, Sharmila Tagore, Jazur Bandukwala, Ram Punyani, Navsharan Singh, Vijay Pratap, Sister Cyril, K. Anuradha,
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 Opposite Cafe Coffee Day, New Delhi - 110017
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- E. Going forward, state government must conduct an assessment of numbers of displaced persons, losses they have suffered and what relief and services they have been provided, to act as the basis for planning a comprehensive response.

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Kejriwal plays politics

S. Viswam

The speed and dedication with which the Delhi Chief Minister is pushing through his anti-corruption agenda while using it as a vote-getting instrument makes us caution him: hasten slowly, Arvind! One can only speculate on how he would have behaved if the 2014 Lok Sabha polls were not imminent. Kejriwal's current strategies are centred on those polls, particularly as his Aam Aadmi Party wants to convert itself from a purely Delhi party into an all-India one by winning representation for the Union Territory in parliament. Since the parliamentary polls are on the threshold, Arvind is attempting some multi-tasking political gimmicks which would make his party more popular and voter-friendly.

Although Kejriwal proclaims that he is not planning to provoke the Congress into withdrawing its support to his government, his actions belie him. He won 28 seats in the 70-member Delhi assembly on an anti-corruption platform and is currently sustained in power by the eight Congress MLAs. In fact, after the resignation of one AAP legislator and another elected as speaker the AAP government has been reduced to a minority one, but this development

has not plunged it into a political crisis. Kejriwal is surely spoiling for a fight, with the Congress, with the UPA and with the BJP. The message he is sending forth to one and all is that he is ready to sacrifice power in order to confirm his and his party's image as crusaders against corruption. Indeed, it would almost seem that his every step is aimed at goading the Congress into withdrawing its support to his government. The Congress, for its own reasons, is not ready to oblige him, but that day may come, sooner rather than later!

Since Kejriwal is also out to prove that he is not the run-of-the-mill politician and that his party is one of its kind, he feels he is not politically or morally beholden to Congress for its support. He keeps reminding the Congress that the said support was given without the AAP asking for it. To demonstrate this, he lodged an FIR against former Chief Minister Sheila Dixit in connection with a street light project implemented ahead of the Commonwealth Games. Since the Delhi police is not under the control of the state government, Kejriwal had the FIR filed by the anti-corruption branch under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the

Between the lines

Bus they missed

Kuldip Nayar

Indian Penal Code. He deliberately ran the risk of being accused of political vendetta and proceeded on the assumption that the erstwhile government was not serious about combating corruption.

Now, he has flung yet another challenge against the Centre. Seven months after the Centre has adopted and is under the process of implementing a national pricing policy for supply of gas to the people, Kejriwal has accused a leading corporate and the Union Petroleum Minister of corruption. He has ordered registration by the anti-corruption bureau of an FIR against Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries and the Union Minister Veerappa Moily (and also Moily's predecessor Murli Deora) for colluding to raise gas prices.

Kejriwal told the press that the cost of production of one unit gas was less than one dollar but as the Reliance Industries got the contract for gas production for 17 years, it pressured the government to revise the rate to 2.3 dollars per unit in 2010. The rate was revised again to four dollars per unit and the company proposed to raise it to eight dollars per unit from April 1, 2014. He accused the Congress and opposition parties of favouring the corporate. He also accused the company of creating a false crisis of natural gas supply by suppressing production and blackmailing the government to raise the rates.

The government's latest pricing policy is aimed at introducing market-determined pricing. The adoption of this policy follows, according to government, expert advice and is of benefit to both the producers and consumers. Now that

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Fifteen years ago in February 1999, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister, took a bus to Lahore to normalize relations with Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif was Pakistan's Prime Minister. They jointly issued the Lahore Declaration which adumbrated several steps to overcome the differences that had yawned the distance between the two countries.

I was one of those who rode the bus. It was an exhilarating experience, pregnant with optimism. At least, I felt that the journey of a few kilometers from Attari to Wagah border would not be a long travel to bring New Delhi and Islamabad nearer.

Unfortunately, this did not happen not because the Prime Ministers of the two countries differed but because the military in Pakistan was against the rapprochement. It was apparent when the three service chiefs of Pakistan refused to salute the Indian Prime Minister. General Pervez Musharraf, then the army chief, had different ideas. His subsequent coup to oust the elected Prime Minister bared his ambitions.

The bus journey was a courageous step by Vajpayee because his Bharatiya Janata Party was anti-Pakistan and pursued Hindu nationalism as its sole agenda. Vajpayee went to the extent of having a time frame within which the Kashmir problem was to be solved. He had probably in mind what a chastened Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Prime Minister of

Pakistan, had told me in a recorded interview after the liberation of Bangladesh.

Bhutto said: "We can make the ceasefire line a line of peace and let people come and go between the two Kashmirs. After all, why should they suffer? Let there be some free movement between them. Then one thing can lead to another. After all, simultaneously we hope that there will be exchanges of visits, of officials and non-officials." Bhutto denied having said the "line of peace" when New Delhi took it up with him officially.

I wish that the Lahore Declaration to normalize trade and travel could be implemented even now. What the two Prime Ministers achieved may seem very little in concrete terms, particularly when Pakistan weighed everything on the scales of Kashmir. Even there Vajpayee said, at least three times during his visit, that the problem of Jammu and Kashmir had yet to be settled and that the two sides would continue to have talks until they resolved it. In other words, Vajpayee conceded that it was a dispute. The fact that he did not mention that Kashmir was an integral part of India during his visit was something which the Pakistanis should have noticed.

Coming back to the bus journey, I was one of the 22 "eminent" people travelling to Pakistan on a mission to retrieve soiled relations. Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal joined us at the Amritsar airport. He hugged

me and said: Your efforts are bearing fruit.” Indeed, he was referring to our effort to lighting candles at the Wagah border since 1996 - to send a message of friendship to the other side.

Badal disappeared in the crowd of tall, turbaned Sikhs awaiting Vajpayee’s arrival. But some of us moved towards the bus, standing lonely near the tarmac. Flags of India and Pakistan were painted on its body. Thank God, there was no slogan, which would have spoilt the bluish colour that stood out in the afternoon sunlight. Dancing and singing men and women in colourful costumes provided an ideal backdrop. Policemen looked out of place, even though they were not many.

As soon as Vajpayee sat in the front seat, the bus began its journey to Lahore. A ticket collector first gave me a ticket and then tore half of it, which I retain as a souvenir. Another attendant offered cold drinks. The TV and mobile telephones were there - all part of service as it would be at the time of regular trips. Right up to the border, a distance of 35 kilometres, people were lined up on both

sides. Children waving yellow flags and bands playing loud tunes reflected the enthusiasm that the meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan had generated.

The mood in the bus was relaxed. But very few exchanged words with one another. A feeling of expectancy hung in the air. Some nervousness was visible and it got heightened with every kilometer-stone going past. How will the visit go was the thought writ large on everyone’s

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Consumer Electronics and Human Relations

K. S. Chalam

When Alexander Graham Bell spoke to his Assistant Thomas Watson on 10th March 1876 on phone, the world rejoiced that it would usher in fresh human relations across the globe. Twenty one year’s later in 1897 Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian, showcased the radio with the help of his butler Magnani. The humankind must have celebrated both the occasions as the beginning of a new era of connecting people in different geographical distances. Marconi was given the Nobel in physics for 1909 when he was working in the UK. Scientific innovations were all found to be part of physics and the discipline called electronics had not developed yet. The Second World War provided opportunities to develop several devices and electrical equipments that resulted in the innovation of radar, sonar, radio engineering, etc. A new branch of engineering within electrical engineering and in some places within physics (as in Andhra University) became evident as an independent subject by 1960s. The Institutes of Technology with the support of corporations like the Bell Company have used the electronic circuit to manufacture different products for everyday use. This has revolutionised the communication, information technologies and later ICT in the world of commercial electronics. Computer was designed as a device to perform some statistical and mathematical functions, but got entangled with electronics to become an independent domain by itself.

The commercialisation of scientific innovations and designing of products for everyday use has enabled both the innovators and the business corporations to get mutually benefitted. The competition between two systems of government, the USSR and the USA during the cold war period seems to have helped the free society to spend more resources and energy on expanding production on a large scale. In the USSR, innovations were confined to defence and public sector, appeared to have limited and restricted use of technology. This may be one of the important factors for the USA and its allies to expand the market beyond their boundaries to capture more consumers and pump in additional resources in to the R&D. Though scholars might argue that it has influenced the composition of capital of the corporations, it has not resulted in the collapse of the system as long as it resulted in the expansion of the market and release of the effective consumers from the ‘proletariat’ increased. Along with this, there seem to have been changes in the traditional institutions like family, class, educational institutions, judiciary, faith and so on - entities of the so-called superstructure. This needs to be debated. We are concerned here about the influence of the consumer electronic goods on the human relations, particularly with reference to individuals, family and group.

There seem to be a simultaneous transformation of electronics meeting the growing needs of people and helping individuals to become

independent and autonomous - not to rely on others - with the increase in income. The upshot of this is the death of distance and weightless goods. Some of the models of capitalist development as against the few or none in the opposite camp enabled the earner to become an effective consumer. Economists tell us that a desire would become an effective demand if it is matched with sufficient purchasing power. Therefore, the free market system has developed models to create more consumers in the name of freedom (to consume) and not necessarily to choose a people's government as citizens. The revolution of electronics chip has further facilitated the use of embedded software even in ordinary mechanical devices like washing machines, mixers, etc. In fact, these gadgets have liberated women more, than the social reformers, and gifted them with more leisure and less drudgery in the household. Many had expected gender justice to evolve with this development, but that became elusive when the surplus labour was squeezed in to capitalist expansion.

Technocrats with the support of corporations have devised methods of product differentiation and brought in multiple combinations of functions in the electronic gadgets Computer, TV, mobile, camera and several other permutations and combinations with the help of satellite communications have been introduced and made user friendly with internet. The manufacturing TNCs of the electronic products have influenced the psyche of the consumer in such a way that a new term "nomophobia" (no-mobile-phone phobia) is identified by scholars. The emergence of social media like Facebook, Twitter,

LinkedIn, YouTube, and the like is being used for marketing purposes as 76 percent of ordinary people and 95 percent of community organisers are using these media. The marketing executives and their research output feed the industry with designs and desires that are kept under control with several strategies including sponsorship of programmes, infotainment, research, political parties, etc. In fact, it is a multidisciplinary programme in the academic world now - may be a post-modern academic offshoot.

The positive impact of science on society advocated by Bertrand Russell and several positivist thinkers seem to have not considered the consequences of commercial electronics. May be it is the duty of the state to regulate. But, the impact of the consumer electronics, its overwhelmingly alluring commercial fragment, on the socio-economic consequence is awful. The NSS has found that the per capita expenditure on telephones increased by 28 percent and TV by 141 percent between 2004-5 to 2009-10. Out of the average income of Rs 1000 per year through NAREGA in the rural areas, major amount is spent on mobiles, alcohol, entertainment and other sundry expenditure. It is also noted that women spend three hours more on calls, four times larger on instant messages than men every month in India. We have 90.5 crore mobile users next to China and elbowing out America to third position. The TRAI has indicated that the gross revenue from the mobile operators amounts to Rs 195442 crores from an average of Rs 104 per month per subscriber. TRAI report for 2011 mentioned that the revenue of TV industry was Rs 32000 crores. FM Radio is also generating revenue around half of

that figure. The average time spent per day on social media is estimated at three hours and on TV varies from 7 hours onwards.

The death of Sunanda Pushkar-Tharoor is now attributed (by some) to Twitter, a social media network, apparently like the Princess Diana's demise. It is a very rare sight now to see young people and even daily wagers (like sweepers) using both the hands pleasingly to walk in public, as one hand is spared to hold the mobile. The family members do not have time to entertain visitors and even attend to regular chores as some of them are addicted to TVs and everything is ordered on the net. It is reported that the values disseminated by most of the soaps stereotyping the traditional middle class/caste Sas-Bahu or fundamentalist beliefs are widespread. They are in a way complimenting the dubious bygone values against which our reformers fought. The impact of the internalisation of the values could be seen in terms of the breaking families, old-age homes, family strife, cybercrime and what is called the advent of post-modern family. Here the siblings need not contribute to the family income and are free to choose a partner based on 'love' and need not necessarily grounded on emotional bonds. They are at liberty to part ways. It is very difficult to comment on this trend as some of the values are embedded with corporate capitalism and several activists have written so much on this. But, it seems to be a drifting deconstruction of the family that has evolved over a period of time through different modes of social existence. Is it to liberate the individual to grow as a customer to patronise the charms of the market? Does it really help India to minimise the tyranny of caste?

Reprint

Socialism of the coming age and its foundation – III

Sisir K. Dhar

An important question here relates to the role of the state vis-à-vis socialism, when the economy is getting globalized. Traditionally, nationalization and central planning were regarded as the two major instruments that accorded the state a preponderant role to lead the society in the socialist direction. Some amount of state planning remains desirable so that the society moves in the desired direction. But the central planning must not lead to a 'command economy' over which Gorbachev had to rue much, encroaching on every aspect of life and crippling the initiative of the people, who should be innovative in a climate of freedom.

However, as Hugh Gaitskel asserted, "nationalization is not the socialist First Principle". It seems, public ownership in general has not, for various reasons, produced any remarkable success and has often caused a serious drainage of public funds. Today, nowhere are the socialists much enthusiastic about public ownership. The idea that is gaining currency is that it is not the business of the government to be in business. Hence, as a rule, setting up of PSUs should be selective enough, adhering to the criterion that they should serve some definite purpose not properly shouldered by others. Here the Swedish socialist model is of guiding value. As Andrew Shonfield points out, "The Swedish socialists were among the first to realize that there is no necessary connection between the

exercise of effective control over the pace and direction of a modern economy and the proliferation of public ownership." Similarly, the Austrian socialists, traditionally favouring public ownership realized that "nationalization solves nothing". It is effective control over the pace and direction of the economy that is a strategic value and efficient production and pro-people distribution matter the most. Further, in Swedish socialism cooperatives play an important role and this shows its ability to motivate the people.

Notwithstanding the developments above, there remains an important role for the state, to be emphasized in today's context of liberalization of the economy. The need for public expenditure with a constructive aim of upliftment of the backward sections in society is undeniable. (Despite all their conservative rhetoric, Thatcher and Reagan also did not reduce public expenditure.) As has been explained earlier, building physical and social infrastructure is an important responsibility of the state for development of the economy and enhancement of the capability of the people to stand on their own legs when the private enterprises is shy to venture in these spheres.

We may add here that universal education, preferably with a social and ethical orientation, is the most fruitful single catalyst for social and individual progress. (The existing

system of education, mostly of the brain, leaves a big gap in terms of the major goal of education' i.e. "man making" or "character building", as three great sons of India, Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tagore, felt. It is poor in social and ethical orientation. Of course, even this existing education is better than no education, while people uneducated are mostly uninformed and gullible, prone to be bluffed, and servile to those who have education or power.) In the socialist programme, always of crucial importance is a healthy growth, of democracy. Education and organization of the masses will play a key role in this growth. As democracy grows, masses become more and more mature to shoulder their responsibility themselves, to shape their destiny: they become their own leaders, when outside readership becomes redundant. Democracy has the greatest hurdle in a condition of poverty and lack of education. And education of the people is invaluable both for their intellectual and moral growth and material advancement.

All that has been said above is about the socialist programme in the context of the capitalist system as it has emerged today. It seems, in the coming years, there will be a co-existence of capitalist government in some countries and socialist or social democratic government in some others. The competition between the two systems will, we hope, push both the systems to eliminate

their deficiencies and to improve them. If capitalism has changed for the better, for instance, in terms of a better standard of living, it is much so because of the persistent socialist movement, where it has been strong, pinpointing the evils of capitalism. Thus, the 'limited democracy', with limited franchise in the early days of capitalism becomes 'larger democracy', with a universal franchise, extending itself from political to economic and social spheres. Similarly, the socialist movement has also led to slackening of the hold of the owning class on the economic system in the 'welfare state'. And, however, the globalized economy or the multinational corporations would like to have it, the *laissez-faire* system of the early days will today face a degree of preponderance of the government as erected in a 'larger democracy' in a condition of expanding education and this preponderance will be responsive to the welfare of the people. In this situation, ultimately, a great role devolves on the people: to be educated to have the needed understanding of problems and their solution, and to assert themselves.

Fight against poverty and deprivation and injustice has been the traditional role of the socialist movement. However, because of its humanist-ethical character, the socialist movement of the coming age must, while formulating the programme of action, also look at a larger context created by the modern materialist civilization that hides beneath its hypnotizing glitter of material abundance great evils. This abundance is defective on some very important grounds: (a) it is not for all the people of the world when, after so much of economic growth, only 20 percent of the world's population

consumes 80 percent of the world's resources (and the resources being limited it is impossible to ensure the same degree of abundance to all the people that the 20 percent enjoys); (b) this civilization has an extremely serious degrading impact on the mental health of man (c) the process of creation of abundance is causing a very serious environment pollution, most likely to become more threatening and (d) the process of creation of this abundance is exhausting the limited natural resources, mostly non-renewable.

Of course, the modern industrial civilization has its positive contents, but they need not be re-slanted here, as they are commonly so much publicized and well known. However, the negative contents, much less publicized, are extremely pernicious and may even be ruinous to mankind. These latter are gaining strength today, when it might appear that the civilization is heading towards a 'dark age' if the trend is not arrested. The evils of this civilization, which has a strong materialist bias with a blatant indifference to the question of moral-spiritual elevation of man, are: (a) how the survival of this very civilization is being menaced with deployment of incomparably large resources for creation, backed by scientific research, of destructive arms and weapons, compared to much less resources given for promotion of health and education or for meeting other primary needs of man; (b) how scientific and technological advances have been regularly accentuating, ironically along with an increase in production, inequality in the distribution of wealth (as has been happening since the Industrial Revolution itself); (c) how the 'consumerist culture', a major offspring of this

civilization, promoting growth of large factories for creation of a sort of commodity-dependant happiness, generates a limitless demand for commodities (violating what nature could bear) also promotes simultaneously discontent for insufficient fulfillment of demands. Most important, this civilization creates a shallow and profligate lifestyle, turning it much into a 'greed' garbage and environment pollution producing civilization". To fight all such evils of this civilization is a major task before the socialist movement today.

Never before has the need for moral and spiritual awakening (the friend, philosopher and guide of human life) been so great as it is today, when man is immensely more powerful than his primitive ancestors (and powerless to control himself), with power that is becoming increasingly monstrous, not the power to rouse noble spirits in man. Today, people become more and more utilitarian and less and less idealistic, when success by any means, commonly for trivial material gains, even destroying the grounds on which to stand, becomes the guiding principle.

It is easy to utter the word 'revolution' with every breath, but the most radical revolution, the real one, the ultimate one, and the most difficult one is in the mind of men. Years ago, at a meeting of Calcutta University students, where I could be present, Jayaprakash Narayan said: there is no revolution if the mind refuses to change, to elevate itself. We may build institutions, constitutions, laws, programmes, and what not, for a good social structure. But all these human contrivances, though needed, serve little if the human quality behind

them is not good enough. Thus as Jayaprakash Narayan wrote: "If the poor tried to establish equality by merely distributing wealth of the wealthy among themselves, without accepting the philosophy of life behind it, they would soon recreate different forms of inequality amongst themselves." He is emphatic that "Equality, freedom and fellowship can never become realities unless the moral evolution of the individual has been such that he is voluntarily prepared to limit his wants and his freedom in the interest of his fellow human beings. A socialist society cannot be built up if every individual wants and hankers after more and more for himself. Unless the individual learns the lesson of self-control and adopts a way of life based on such control, strife between man and man and between groups, classes and nations, is bound to continue. An unflinching idealism with a clear vision is the best force of progress"

The evils of this materialist civilization that we have referred to are not just products of capitalism though afflicting the capitalist society: they may afflict a socialist society as well. And if the goal of socialism is not just materialist in character but is, more importantly, the elevation of human mind, deepening and ennobling the mind, it is most appropriate that the socialist programme responds to human needs both on material and mental planes, and it is necessary that the needs on the material plane should be limited to the demands of a simple decent life and the main thrust of the programme should be to empower more and more the nobility of mind. From this point, the material advance is something auxiliary when decent humans are the goal.

As we have already noted, the Swedish Social Democrats have done so much to raise the quality of life of the people. It is one of the five most prosperous countries of the world with the highest standards of living. Yes, these five countries, including Sweden, have the highest suicide rate, the highest combined suicide and homicide rate, the highest alcoholism rate. It is reported that juvenile delinquency, various crimes and violence are on the rise in Sweden. What is the good of prosperity if the people lolling in comfort are inclined to commit suicide? Are these happy societies? There must be something wrong on the mental plane in these countries. May be, the life of the people in such prosperity - it is only a hypothesis - is becoming one of little or no challenge - dull and boring. "Turn the searchlight inwards," Gandhi used to say. People even in prosperous countries should do that: it is 'not by bread alone'.

Rosa Luxemburg had once written to Franz Mehring that socialism was a cultural movement and not a mere plea for bread and butter. Himself an economist, Joseph Schumpeter averred: "socialism aims at higher goals than full bellies." The ultimate goal of socialism is, in short, good humans in a good society - an ethical-spiritual goal. Poverty and deprivation and injustice should be annihilated. But more basic are the maladies of mind. If the mind acts rightly everything valuable will be added unto man and the human society will be a really human, humane society. In the words of Thomas Mann: "The mental state is always primary and ultimately the motivating state. Political action is of second rank, reflex, expression, instrument". The mind is the leader. If the mind is poor, a society cannot

be rich. "A man is but the product of his thoughts, what he thinks he becomes." (Gandhi).

Gandhi was a pronounced idealist, a spiritualist. I believe, Marx was also such, notwithstanding his 'materialist interpretation of history'. Basically, socialism signifies a humanist and ethical-spiritual movement. We have already indicated the opinion of Rosa Luxemburg, a well-known Marxist, on this point. (We need not use the words 'spiritual' and 'spiritualism' in an otherworldly or occult sense. Here, it means the supremacy of the spirit of man or man's striving to overcome the barriers of physical life and of environment with a noble, 'Promethean', urge). Marx's conception of his ideal society in which "the full and free development of each becomes the ruling principle" reflects an ethical-spiritual ideal. He believed that man must be freed from material impediments to develop himself. Thus, Marx was an idealist while his theories - Marxism - were rooted in material grounds. With a spiritual urge, with an unwavering commitment to an ideal, always in view, he courted persecution and privation all along his life, transcending much the claims of the physical self to honour the demand of his heart and his conscience. Great men are great because they are above self-interest (in the usual narrow sense of the term) guided with a larger vision.

Whether or not of material impediments would *ipso facto* change the value system or would build an ideal society, or an additional direct approach would be needed is an important question. It seems, removal of impediments is important but not a sufficient, not a positive inducement. Here, we may recall Jayaprakash Narayan's

views in the article 'Incentive to Goodness'. Significantly, an article in the 'Beijing Review', 2 May 1983, averred : "If we think only of economic reconstruction, forgetting the question of spiritual development, then men get addicted to economic gains only. By this, we will be leading a rich but spiritually meaningless life and, as a result of this we will cheat others, loot and murder them."

All these views holds out the essentiality of the moral-cultural aspects of the socialist programme, and it may be suggested that the traditional socialist programme must enrich itself with the acceptance, for instance, of some invaluable ideas of Gandhi, the 'Mahatma', whose life was his message, and of such other thinkers.

Actually, in a world that we have today, with a phenomenal growth of science and technology not with much concern for elevation of humans (producing enormous power, but not wisdom, when man has conquered Nature but is unable to conquer himself) - a world 'with islands of opulence' in a vast ocean of poverty, ignorance and fatalism', world with hatred, bigotry, intolerance, greed and selfishness, conflict and violence and risks of ruinous wars - extremely relevant and constructive are the ideas propounded by Gandhi and such other farsighted humanists. Lastly, one thing is certain : the socialist path must be harmonious to the values of humanism, ethics, democracy and rationalism. Socialism, by definition is 'value-based socialism'.

The article is adapted from a chapter in the book "A Good Life in a Sane Civilization" authored by late Shri Dhar, who was a frequent contributor to Janata

Communal Violence in 2013 - II

Irfan Engineer

In the previous article (Janata, January 5, 2014), we examined the trends in riots and the all India statistics of communal riots provided by the Union Government. We also described some of the communal riots in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. In this article, we now propose to describe some riots in J&K, UP, MP, Bihar and Assam.

Kishtwar, J&K

On 9th August after the Eid-ul-Fitr prayers, there was sudden stone pelting. There are two versions of the incident. After the Eid prayers, the dispersing gathering was greeted with provocative posters depicting hanging of Afzal Guru and Maqbool Butt. The other version says that the dispersing mob was shouting anti-India slogans, which infuriated the sentiments leading to stone pelting. The latter version seems hardly credible as Muslims in Jammu hardly identify with Kashmir nationalists for self-determination. 3 persons died during the riots and 80 were injured in Hidyál village. Among the dead was Arvind Kumar Bhagat (23 yrs) who succumbed to bullet injuries – Hindus claim in private firing while Muslims claim it to be from police firing. Bashar Ahmad Mochi was beaten by a mob and later burnt alive. Curfew was imposed in 8 districts of Jammu region. Kishtwar has a delicate demography with Hindus constituting 45% and Muslims 55% and known for its saffire mines and saffron. Minister of State for Home Sajjad Kitchloo, who hails from the district alleged that preparations for riots were being done at least since a month and armed mob was planning to attack minorities. Home Minister P. Chidambaram made a statement in Parliament blaming Bajrang Dal

for stoking communal fire. The role of Village Defence Committee members who have been provided with fire arms was also brought into sharp focus during the riots. Most of the VDC members are Hindus.

At the centre of the Kishtwar communal clashes is vote-bank rather than separatist politics, a sustained effort at polarisation that explains how a small fight escalated into a frenzy so suddenly. The BJP tried to politicize the unfortunate incident by sending Arun Jaitley to the spot and chose this incident from among hundreds in Jammu and Kashmir where people have been killed and properties destroyed. The only time when BJP sought to increase the compensation amount paid to riot victims was for the Kishtwar riot victims. Kishtwar was known for cordial relations between the two communities. Two agitations had strengthened the bond – a joint struggle for carving out a separate district for Kishtwar, and one for a separate degree college.

Before the militancy years, the BJP polled a mere 1,066 votes in 1983, and 3,309 in 1987 against Bashir Kitchloo's 18,044. In 1996, when the BJP made militancy a poll issue, its candidate came second with 10,900 votes to the senior Kitchloo's 17,889. But in the last election, in 2008, the BJP's Sunil

Kumar (16,783 votes) ran Kitchloo (19,248) close, while the PDP, contesting for the first time, polled 10,403 votes to be number three. The BJP had managed to consolidate the Hindu vote and Kitchloo would have lost but for the SC votes. Sunil Kumar, incidentally, had been working with security agencies in counter-militancy for almost 10 years before joining politics.

UP

On 12-7-13 the Saffron Brigade objected to Namaz being performed on streets in Meerut during the month of Ramzan. There was tension between both the communities, however, police force was deployed and escalation of the tension into violence was prevented.

On 26/7/13, 1 died and a dozen were injured in Nanglamal village near Meerut in communal violence. The conflict was over use of loudspeaker outside a temple situated near a mosque. However, elders from both the community intervened and sorted out the matter amicably. An Iftaar party was going on when some persons under the influence of liquor started abusing and this escalated into violent clash. During the clashes, bullets were fired and the police had to resort to baton charge. One Sunil died of bullet injury and Shahid was hospitalized. The Muslim residents of the village accused that the police entered their houses and destroyed the furniture and belongings and beat up people (*Sunday Express* 28/7/13).

On 16/8/13, 2 people, including one woman, were injured in stone pelting involving both the communities. The fight was over approach way to Kabristan land in Modi Mira village in Meerut Dist (Sahafat 18/8/3).

Majority of incidents in UP took place on September 7 and 8. Total 128 incidents of communal violence took place between 27th August and 16th September. 50,000 people were displaced and staying in appalling conditions in Muzaffarnagar. The state government did little to provide for relief camps, even though paying lip services. At least 40 kids died in the relief camps for lack of medical facilities, facing severe winter in tents without adequate number of blankets (*Indian Express* dtd. 3/12/13). Till 6th October, 46 Muslims and 16 Hindus were killed. 57 Muslims and 11 Hindus were injured in the Muzaffarnagar Riots, according to the official figures (*Indian Express* 18/10/13). Till October 13, 352 FIRs have been registered and 1,068 persons booked for incidents in 5 districts – Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Meerut, Baghpat and Saharanpur. 243 persons have been arrested, majority being from Hindu community. 17,000 persons are still living in Relief camps. The BJP MLA from Saradha, Meerut – Sangeet Som was booked under the National Security Act, but soon released by the Advisory Board as the case was not made full proof either by collusion or due to negligence. BJP later publicly felicitated the MLAs and other accused from their party after their release on bail encouraging the riot leaders.

The role of police in the Muzaffarnagar riots was one of gross negligence of their duty. Political interference in policing made the situation worst. The Director General of Police admitted to inefficiency of the police force (*TOI* dtd. 25/9/13). The police could have intervened when campaign against “love jihad” was ongoing to stigmatize the Muslim community. Small

incidents were used to create anti-Muslim consciousness. They didn't. Police arrested several Muslims for murder of Sachin and Gaurav. However, sting operations revealed that the accused were released by the police on the Azam Khan's intervention. Then in violation of orders prohibiting assembly, Muslim community was mobilized in which MPs from BSP as well as SP were present and the SP himself received the memorandum from the leaders of unlawful assembly. BJP then found it convenient to mobilize Jats calling for a *mahapanchayat*. The Jats gathered in thousands with arms and some even kidnapped Muslims along the way. The armed participants passed through the police posts and pickets and nobody stopped them, even the *mahapanchayat* even though there were prohibitory orders banning assembly. No attempt was made to enforce the ban, even though the anger of the crowd assembling with arms was not hidden from anybody. Provocative speeches were made and then riots started with the mob attacking Muslim villages as they were returning. Police miserably failed in reaching the trouble spots to control the riots, except in few cases.

Muslim miscreants waylaid a tractor of Jats returning to their village into nearby cane fields and killed them. In other villages where Muslims were in majority, Hindus were attacked. Sarpanch of Kharad village saved lives of 150 Muslims by giving protection to them in his house.

Some riot survivors were offered compensation of Rs. 5 lakhs if they submitted an affidavit to the effect that they would not return to their villages and the state government issued a notification to that effect.

Such a notification was hitherto unheard of, and is unsustainable Constitutionally. Article 19 gives right to settle anywhere and the executive does not have a right to “purchase” from the citizen their right to settle in their villages. The Government finished the unfinished task of the rioters of throwing them out of the villages by ensuring through affidavit that they did not want to return. If anybody wanted proof of collusion between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party, here it was.

The Samajwadi Party seems to be in collusion with the BJP as both the parties calculated their gains in Western UP. However, for the Samajwadi Party, the violence escalated beyond its calculation and now is more likely to harm their interests as Muslims are already moving away from the Samajwadi Party. Western UP and particularly the affected districts is stronghold of Rashtriya Lok Dal headed by Ajit Singh. Charan Singh consolidated Jat and Muslim votes and created a strong base for his party. Communal polarization would weaken Ajit Singh’s party as Jat votes would be chipped away by BJP and by providing some compensation, Samajwadi Party hoped to strengthen its Muslim base. Such cool calculations over human tragedy seems to be unfortunate but a reality. When the SP could prevent 84 *kosi parikrama*, they definitely could have prevented the Jat *mahapanchayat* too! Not doing so was criminal collusion on part of the SP and it must take primary blame for the Muzaffarnagar riots along with the BJP.

MP

On 20/8/13, 45, including 30 policemen were injured in communal violence in stone pelting incident in

Chandan Nagar Thana in Indore. Fight began over the result of a cricket match and carcass of an animal found near a temple, which turned into a slogan shouting by Sangh Parivar connected people. Shops were damaged and 100 vehicles were set to fire and two policemen were critically injured.

On 19/9/13, Communal violence started in Chhipabad of Harda district caused huge losses to several residential properties and injuring 22 people, but the major impact seems to be on the psyche of the victims, especially women and children. Miscreants from Bajrang Dal destroyed even foodgrains inside the homes of Muslims. Several homes were torched using petrol from a nearby pump. 60-70 children stopped going to school and caused psychological problems to a person. A mob had entered school asking children of Muslim community be handed over to them. The authorities had locked these students up safely and told the mob that they had returned home. A fact-finding team led by L S Herdenia demanded immediate arrest of Surendra Rajpurohit alias Tiger, who allegedly was the main inciter of the violence and investigation into the role of the son of a local BJP MLA and to book all those guilty. The violence occurred over a Muslim hitting a cow and the rumours of death of the cow spread like wild fire with active participation of Saffron Brigade. Police were mute spectators to the entire incident. It is ironic that human beings think they should violently attack others in retaliation for death of a cow!

Bihar

On 9th August, a *Nagpanchami* procession in Bettiah turned violent. There was stone pelting and vehicles

of Dist. Magistrate and the SP were burnt. Curfew was imposed. The procession had political sub-text and provocative political slogans were being shouted against political leaders like the Bihar Chief Minister, the Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi. This is aftermath of separation of JD(U) from the NDA. Lathi wielding men of Mahabir Akahada were leading the procession of tractors and carrying political placards (*The Hindu*, 15/8/13).

Nawada witnessed bloody violence for over 48 hours between groups of two communities leading to death of two persons. The communal clashes started here on August 10, a day after Eid, when some Muslim youths objected to the presence of burqa-clad Muslim girls at Baba ka Dhaba, owned by a Hindu, on the outskirts of the Nawada town. The youths attacked the dhaba and damaged the furniture. Some of the youths were captured by the people of the majority community who had gathered there by then. Then a bigger group of minority people reached the dhaba to secure release of the captured youths, and this resulted into clashes and arson at large scale. A big mob of the majority community, armed with firearms, came up from the Bundelkhand locality and attacked on Moghlakhar locality dominated by the minority community. In fierce stone pelting on either side several people were wounded. During the clashes, gunshots were fired from the majority community resulting in the death of one Md. Iqbal. The clashes and gunfire happened in the presence of the police and the site of the violence was at stone’s throw from the police station. Soon after the incident, the district administration clamped curfew in areas that fall under police stations of Nawada

town, Mufassil and Sadar. Five were injured during the riots.

Locals said the curfew has virtually imprisoned the minority areas and taking benefit of that, shops of minority community were looted and burnt in majority areas. Several shops of Muslims were burned down and when the police were trying to control the rampaging mob, one majority youth tried to snatch the gun of a policeman, forcing the police to open fire leading to death of the youth from the majority community. Nawada riots were the sixth communal riot in Bihar since chief minister Nitish Kumar parted ways with the BJP in July.

Assam

On 25th August, meat was discovered near 3 temple areas which sparked off communal violence in Rangpur (Cachar Dist.). 7 policemen were injured and army had to be deployed. The Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi blamed the VHP and the BJP for the riots in which several shops and vehicles were burnt.

Conclusion:

Slightest of provocation like a Muslim beating a cow, meat discovered near temples/mosques, teasing of women belonging to another community, inter communal marriages/love affairs, political processions in religious garb, use of loud speakers, dispute over restaurant bills etc. are used as provocations to spark off riots. Police inaction and often collusion encourages the rioters and anti-social elements and help them acquire religio-political clout making them powerful politicians. While these issues need to be handled sensitively, the real challenge is in de-constructing communal identities in a way that

help realize the diversity that exists within each community and which contributes to enjoyment of our wonderful lives and adds to better understanding of our worlds. The prejudices against the other are the bonds that cement an imagined community and these need to be replaced with bonds of humanity, love, justice and compassion for

(Continued from Page 3)

face. Still they were conscious of the history they were making. "It was a bold step," I remarked when I sat next to the Prime Minister briefly. He only smiled. I persisted with my questions. "What made you respond to Nawaz Sharif's off-the-cuff remark to take a ride on the bus? What about your party, the BJP?" He said: "I thought, let me do something to be remembered. After all, the Prime Ministership does not last long." And then he mentioned the killing of Hindus at Rajori. He was disturbed. "Certain elements always do it to sabotage the talks."

I wanted to talk to him further but there was a long queue. There was the usual guard of honour, a large contingent of policemen on the other side. The guard of honour is a beaten path, covered again and again even after 66 years after the British rule. The mood of abandon on the Indian side

(Continued from Page 2)

an FIR has been filed, the Centre is duty bound to order a thorough probe. Obviously, there is enough evidence of a scam in operation that needs to be exposed. So, Kejriwal's action may result in good, but the nation would be stuck for want of assured supplies at affordable prices. Since those who have complained against the policy include some eminent persons, perhaps the Congress

all. But for that to happen, we need a law that makes state accountable for its acts and omissions and failures in controlling violence - A legislation that provides for effective procedures to punish the guilty and provide entitlements to survivors of communal violence for adequate standards of relief, rehabilitation and reparations.

changed into somberness. Pakistan Rangers stood rows upon rows, to attention. There was silence and the air was heavy. Nawaz Sharif's smiling face broke the monotony. Some of his colleagues, dressed in achkan, too were a relief. "Kush Aamdeen" (welcome) to Pakistan," were the first words Nawaz Sharif spoke before he embraced Vajpayee. Pakistan ministers also lined up to shake hands with Vajpayee. People had lined up both sides of the road leading to Lahore. There were women without veil and many friendly hands waved towards us.

I wish that their expectations had been met. When the two Prime Ministers met I also thought that the impasse between the two countries would be over. But it did not happen. There were too many vested interests and unseen elements coming in the way. No doubt, they have really missed the bus.

should welcome an investigation into the role of Reliance Industries in manipulating gas prices.

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The Pipe Dream of Peace

Khaled Ahmed

The peace pipe Pakistan wished to smoke with the Taliban was turned into a pipe dream after the banned organisation issued, on February 9, the following “to do” list for Islamabad before it could think of a ceasefire: one, stop drone attacks; two, introduce sharia law in courts; three, introduce Islamic system of education in public and private institutions; four, release Pakistani and foreign Taliban prisoners; five, restore property damaged by drone attacks and pay compensation; six, hand over control of tribal areas to local forces; seven, withdraw the army from tribal areas and close down checkposts; eight, drop all criminal charges against the Taliban; nine, release prisoners from both sides; ten, grant equal rights for all, poor and rich; eleven, offer jobs to the families of drone-attack victims; twelve, end interest-based system; thirteen, end support for the US’s “war on terror”; fourteen, replace democratic system of governance with Islamic system; and fifteen, end all relations with the US.

After deciding to talk peace with the Taliban, Pakistan had nominated a four-member “pro-Taliban” negotiating team. The Taliban responded by naming a five-member, equally “pro-Taliban” team, without consultation with them: Maulana Samiul Haq of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Samiul Haq (JUI-S), Imran Khan of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Kifaetullah of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Maulana Abdul Aziz of the Red Mosque of Islamabad and Mohammad Ibrahim of the Jamaat-

e-Islami (JI). None of them is a member of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is a banned organisation. The new Taliban leader, a wanted criminal named Mullah Fazlullah, seemed to thumb his nose at the state of Pakistan by choosing his team from the politico-religious mainstream.

The five members represent a Talibanised section of the country, boasting old connections with the Afghan Taliban and the TTP. The irony was crushing — Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s own team contained people with pro-Taliban and anti-American leanings. The idea was to win the confidence of the Taliban, but Mullah Fazlullah didn’t bite. The talks wouldn’t commit the TTP to anything.

Another irony was that Fazlullah named Imran Khan on his panel, thus creating a situation where the PTI would be talking to itself while pretending to talk to the TTP. Mercifully, Khan begged off from this absurd scenario. After that, Kifaetullah of the JUI-F too bowed out. The JUI-F is more vulnerable to the Taliban because of its location close to North Waziristan than Samiul Haq, whose seminary is close to Peshawar. Fazlur Rehman has escaped attacks from the terrorists, which means North Waziristan thinks him soft on the state of Pakistan.

Maulana Abdul Aziz, frontman of al-Qaeda’s policy of Islamic vigilantism in Islamabad, whom the judiciary is perhaps too scared

to convict in scores of cases of terrorism, held a separate press conference in the capital with scary-looking armed guards to say that “nothing short of [the] removal of democracy and [the] constitution itself would be acceptable as a condition for peace.”

His Red Mosque was attacked by commando troops in 2007, after he staged a number of vigilante incidents to force Islamabad to become an Islamic city the way the TTP thinks it should be. He symbolises Pakistan’s trajectory of Islamisation since 1947 and causes the Pakistani mind to split over what should be the next phase of state identity. By voting rightwing in 2013 against the ever-dwindling liberal elements, the people of Pakistan have joined the issue on the side of the Taliban. Intimidation plays the part of a persuader more than is often realised.

After Imran Khan and the JUI-F opted out, Fazlullah reiterated his disdain towards Islamabad by proposing two replacements: the chief reporter of a leading English-language newspaper, Ansar Abbasi, whose reports read like sermonising opinion pieces; and a serving senior bureaucrat, Oria Maqbul Jan, whose crazy advocacy of the Taliban has upset all kinds of Pakistanis. Both begged off, although their worldview on TV talk shows has presaged the next mutation of the Islamic state.

A debate is raging on TV about sharia. Almost all religious

organisations — most of them with street muscle and some clearly aligned with the TTP — are convinced that sharia is not in force, and therefore the Taliban demand for dismantling the modern state is justified. An important presence on the negotiating panel appointed by the Taliban, the Jamaat-e-Islami, has however decided not to support the Taliban's rejection of the current constitution.

The Jamaat clerics, however, insist that Pakistan's Islamic constitution is not acted upon. They have in the past rejected the modern state's punishment of "bad" conduct (munkirat) under a penal code and neglect of "good" conduct (marufat) as pieties enforceable through punitive legislation. Starting in the post-medieval period in Europe, the modern state stopped punishing the lack of piety and concentrated only on punishing crime. The Muslims of the world, free to choose as in Egypt, want it back. Already, Pakistan is fast losing the distinction between sin and crime.

The drive to get the arrested Taliban out of state custody remains on top of the Taliban agenda. So far, they have broken two big jails under the administered jurisdiction of the state and got their killers out — most of them returning piously to their job of killing innocent people. The Shia remain in their crosshairs and don't mind lying when it suits them to keep the common Pakistani deluded into thinking that the Shia are, in fact, being killed by America and India. They have denied the killing of Shias in a Peshawar restaurant earlier in February.

One reason the TTP has more credibility than the state is the

former's intimidatory hold over the media. Most opinion-makers in Urdu are already on their side because of Urdu's more unbuttoned ideological message against the modern state. But the English-language newspapers are actually threatened into censoring themselves by removing the more convincing liberal-secular voices from their opinion pages.

The "popular consensus" is thus against the state and in favour of the terrorists. Of course, peace has to prevail, but will the state accept its death that easily? Sharif will have to intervene and say enough is enough at some stage of this unfolding farce.

In the first week of February, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar had to go to Dubai to meet the IMF team because the multilateral financial institution is unwilling to come to Islamabad after being painted by the media as an enemy of Islam and as an instrument of America's diabolical plots against Pakistan. Dar

was asking the IMF for another loan of a half a billion dollars while the Taliban had made a billion dollars in 2013 from Karachi alone .

One reason the Taliban can't think of peace is the money it is making in Pakistan with almost zero loss of manpower, setting itself apart from the terror franchises in Yemen, Somalia and Mali — dying states that don't have the financial lucre to attract terrorists. Pakistanis wonder who is financing the Taliban, often blaming Saudi Arabia, America and India.

The fact is that the Taliban is in the process of emptying Karachi of its cash after leaching the city of Peshawar dry. Out of the four billion dollars the Afghan Taliban makes from heroin, at least one billion falls to the TTP's share as the "southern funnel". Moreover, news of shakedowns from Islamabad and Lahore is being suppressed because the well-heeled victims want to keep it hush-hush.

— courtesy: *The Indian Express*

In the last few days Parveen Amanullah, minister for social welfare for three years in the Nitish Kumar led Janata Dal (United) government in Bihar left her position in the Bihar government and Janata Dal (U) and joined the Aam Admi Party. Mrs Amanullah, whose husband is an IAS officer and deputy secretary in the government of India, was a long-time RTI activist before she joined the campaign of Nitish Kumar about four years ago. In leaving her prestigious government position Mrs Parveen has demonstrated not only courage but also dedication to the grassroots concerns of the aam aadmi and the future of the nation. She is now the highest ranking political leader from any party to join AAP.

It is interesting that Mrs Amanullah is the daughter of renowned Indian Muslim leader Syed Shahabuddin. Syed Shahabuddin who was an IFS officer and India's ambassador to Algeria too gave up that prestigious position in 1978 to join the then Janata Party when he was younger than 50.

- **Kaleem Kawaja**

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The 29th state

S. Viswam

A new state is about to be born, but judging by the birth pangs it would seem that things will get worse before they get better in Andhra Pradesh which is to be bifurcated in order to accommodate Telengana, the 29th state-to-be. Messy, clumsy, ham-handed and insensitive are the terms that come to mind for describing the manner in which the UPA government handled the Telengana issue. At the same time, no political party involved in the processing of the issue has come out in flying colours. A painful reminder of how division of a state or formation of a new state should not be done.

Post-independent India is no stranger to the creation of new states. Indeed, the number of states in India has risen in six decades from 14 to 28 and those of Union Territories from three to seven. Telengana too could have been formed without hassles but for the fact that no political party behaved honestly or sincerely or in the larger interest of the nation. Every party, the Congress foremost, indulged in double-speak over Telengana and always acted with an eye on votes. But for the electoral politics getting mixed up with the latest efforts to reorganize Andhra Pradesh, things

could have been smoother. As it is, we have all been shown how not to do things rather than how to do them smoothly.

There has always been a strong case for the creation of Telengana. The ideal way to have brought about its creation would have been to include it as one of the items of reference for a second states reorganization commission to examine all existing demands for new states. The NDA failed to do this when it created three new states carving them out of existing states. The UPA I and the UPA II missed the bus too. However, there is no excuse for the way in which the UPA II dealt with the Telengana demand. It will be no exaggeration to say that the UPA was influenced solely by electoral politics in tackling the issue. It wanted to get the maximum benefit in terms of Lok Sabha seats from both regions of a divided Andhra Pradesh. Its greed made it blind to other realities. Its biggest shortcoming was in the failure to access and address the resentment in the Seemandhra region against creating Telengana. Since the state has been under Congress rule all along, this failure is more pronounced. The Congress failed to take warning from

Between the lines

Emergence of regional identities

Kuldip Nayar

the manifest division among the people on Telengana. Any political action that divides rather than unites the people cannot be acceptable and ought not to have been supported. But the politics of votes and seats tends to make the political class partially blind.

When Telengana actually comes into being the leadership in both the regions will be called upon to bridge the current emotional divide and unify the people again. The messy manner in which the new state was created has divided hearts as well as territories. While the latter will call for some "adjustments" here and there and can be successfully dealt with, the latter is problematic. Wounds will take a long time to heal. Brothers have been fighting brothers, both sides forgetting the basic fact that the fight was for convenience in administering the state and not for the commencement of hostilities! The rest of India would like the brothers to unite as soon as possible and live in their respective regions without hatred for one another.

As for the Centre, it is not too late for the UPA II to set up another states reorganization commission quickly in the wake of the passage of the Andhra Reorganization Bill in the Rajya Sabha. This is a service that the alliance will be rendering to India. If the UPA II fails to do it, the incoming government, whether it is UPA III or the NDA or the Third or Fourth Front, its first priority should be a new states reorganization commission. The incoming government also ought to create whatever new states that are considered administratively and or economically viable with speed and sincerity. The creation of new states should not be vested

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India may not be coming apart at the seams but the polity is. Union Ministers are quarrelling among themselves. Feuds of bureaucrats are coming out in the open. Even intelligence agencies, the Intelligence Bureau and the Central Bureau of Investigation, are at loggerheads. Understanding between bureaucracy and the rulers has been reduced to trivialities. So much so that Finance Minister P. Chidambaram tells a top official to improve his English and the official, in turn, complains to his minister.

On top of it comes the manner in which the bill to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh was passed by the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha television channel, showing the proceedings, was stopped from telecasting live which negates the claim of transparency. MPs in favour of a united Andhra Pradesh were not allowed to participate in the debate because as many as 17 of them had been ousted from the house a couple of days earlier when they, including the Congress ministers, were making the passage of the bill impossible.

I am concerned over the precedent the Congress has set and the way the Speaker went along. Tomorrow if the Bhartiya Janata Party comes to power and decides to have a legislation to put restrictions on the minorities, the party has only to point out that the then ruling Congress had suspended the basic norms of parliamentary democracy.

For nearly 50 days, there was the government of the Aam Aadmi Party exposing the status quo

governance which the two main parties, the Congress and the BJP, had perpetrated in the last three decades. In a way, the AAP too has become a regional party as supreme in Delhi as are Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal in Odisha. Indeed, politics of identity is the biggest danger to the democratic governance.

And this in no way is minimizing the harm the BJP is doing to the pluralistic ethos inherited from the days of freedom struggle. Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi is getting large crowds by appealing to the Hindus to imbibe Hindu nationalism.

Muslims are justifiably feeling insecure because the soft kind of Hinduva is contaminating more and more people. To check this dangerous trend, the Congress is too weak and too clueless to show mirror to the nation. Regional parties feel that they can fill the space vacated by the Congress. Probably, they can but it will be at the expense of India's unity. The Constitution which binds all parts of the country together is being violated by some regional parties both in letter and spirit.

There is no option to the federal structure which the constituent assembly cherished and enshrined in the constitution. Odisha is a typical example of how the Indian polity works. The state is federal in character but dynastic in rule. It seldom defies the central government, however autocratic or arrogant in its posture at times.

But chief minister Naveen Patnaik's rule is personal and he follows the footprints of his father, the late Biju Patnaik who governed in capricious and corrupt manner. He is still remembered because he gave identity to Oriyas who even today are fighting for a place under the sun. Naveen continues to remind people of his father's legacy. I saw during my visit to Bhubaneswar hoardings all over the city with Biju Patnaik's finger pointing towards Naveen as if he was reminding that his successor was his son. (There were also hoardings carrying only the photo of Rahul Gandhi without his mother, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on either side). Just as in case of Sukhbir Singh Badal in Punjab, Akhilesh Yadav in UP or Farooq Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir, Naveen Patnaik's parentage is his asset. The polls in democracy are only up to elections. Subsequently, people cease to count during the five-year tenure of the state assembly. With a clutch of bureaucrats Naveen rules the state, much to the misery and helplessness of the voters. He is worse because he has eliminated leading politicians from his party methodically. He has thus become indispensable. In fact, Naveen's strength is the absence of a leader in his own party and his adversary, the Congress. Former chief minister JB Patnaik preferred governorship of Assam to the ever increasing wrangles in the Congress.

What surprised me was that there was not even a hiss of AAP in the state. I thought that Odisha which has no opposition worth the name would be an ideal place for AAP. The party appears to have not gone beyond Delhi, western UP, Haryana and parts of Rajasthan. No doubt, its birth and success in Delhi evoked a

(Continued on Page 4)

Telangana needs healing touch

Nitish Chakravarty

With both Houses of Parliament passing the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill, the birth of Telangana as India's youngest state is only a few days away. The highly contentious process of splitting up the Andhra people into two states separated by the Telugu language [to paraphrase Churchill's pithy remark, "Britain and America are two countries separated by the English language"] generated much heat and sparked a lot of violence in the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad and elsewhere. The legislative process in the two Houses of Parliament hit the lowest ever level of misconduct and muscle power. Evidently the United Progressive Alliance government, having put so much at stake to push through the bifurcation legislation, much against the wishes of millions in the Andhra region and a sizeable number of people in Telangana too, could not afford to backtrack and lose the game at the penultimate stage.

Not only the UPA but the BJP too has high stakes in Andhra Pradesh; hence the UPA's deal with the BJP to give the legislation the semblance of a joint endeavour. Telangana as well as the rest of Andhra Pradesh stood by Indira Gandhi even in times of her worst misfortune in 1977 when much of northern, western and eastern India rejected her. The 42 MPs elected from Andhra Pradesh have a crucial role to play in government formation after the upcoming general elections. The BJP is trying hard to make a huge dent in the Congress bastion.

Telugu-speaking they all are and yet they have split down the middle

in deference to a multi-decade long movement in the Telangana region for a separate administrative entity. The Telangana region comprises the Telugu speaking princely state of Hyderabad ruled by the Nizam until its integration with the Republic of India. After toying with the idea of joining Pakistan or declaring independence, the Nizam capitulated after a show of force, and signed the treaty of accession in late 1948. Four centuries of the Nizam's *hukumat* brought about changes in the spoken language and other hard-to-define cultural traits of the Hyderabad Telugus. [The spoken dialect of every widely used language varies from region to region; sometimes from village to village, and Telugu is no exception.] So the princely state retained its separate identity even after Rayalaseema and the coastal districts of Madras Presidency were carved out into a separate Andhra state in October 1953.

In spite of recognising linguistic affinity as the *raison d'être* for creating new states, the Nehru Government did not merge Hyderabad with the newly created Andhra state until after three years of agitation. Of course the Hyderabad Telugus did not share the enthusiasm of the Andhra Telugus for Vishalandhra. The States Reorganisation Commission did not recommend a united Andhra Pradesh. "One of the principal causes of opposition of Vishalandhra also seems to be the apprehension felt by the educationally backward people of Telangana that they may be swamped and exploited by the more advanced people of the coastal areas", said the SRC report. Three years later, in November 1956, under

mounting pressure from Andhra leaders, the Nehru Government unified the two Telugu-speaking states into Andhra Pradesh.

In the later phases of the agitation for separating Telangana from Andhra Pradesh the people have suffered a lot. Post-separation, creation of the administrative infrastructure as well a thousand other matters - setting up institutes of higher education, medical and technology institutes, scientific labs, etc. - will have to be dealt with quickly. Given the history of bad blood between the two states, sorting out issues will be ticklish. Even routine matters will cause much heart burning, if not frayed tempers. Attempts to hasten matters will be countered by contrived delays. One would like to hope that the political leadership on both sides of the state boundaries who will shoulder the responsibility of handling post-separation issues would avoid rancour and hostility. Mutual goodwill is the crying need of the hour. The two Telugu states deserve a healing touch.

Linguistic homogeneity as a unifying factor is not a post-independence concept in our country. The Congress used linguistic homogeneity as the criterion for defining the territorial jurisdiction of its provincial units in preference to the administrative boundaries of the British ruled provinces. The Maratha majority areas and the Gujarat region of pre-independence Bombay presidency had separate provincial Congress committees. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee's writ did not run in the Surma Valley, then a part of composite Assam.

The concept of demarcating the borders of India's states in the light of linguistic similarity was one of several criteria the States Reorganisation Commission [the

Fazl Ali Commission] of the 1950s used for their recommendations which empowered the Nehru Government to bring about major changes in India's political map. It is true though that the States Reorganisation Commission did not adopt a uniform criterion and took into account varying circumstances in different regions in making recommendations for redrawing state borders.

More than anything else, the separation of Telangana from the rest of Andhra Pradesh (for the present the state is being bifurcated but the possibility of further splits cannot be ruled out) has dealt a body blow to the concept of linguistic homogeneity as the main basis for drawing state boundaries. The creation of Telangana challenges the concept of a shared language being an enduring glue to keep people together. [Of course in many parts of the world there are borders separating people sharing a common

(Continued from Page 3)

tinge of idealism. But then Arvind Kejriwal became synonymous for the party. He did not allow anyone else to grow. In fact, some of his antics have doused the aspirations of the intelligentsia which saw in him an alternative. Thank god, some other names who will contest the Lok Sabha elections have come out. They should underline the need for a collective leadership. Dozens of NGOs, with more enviable record than Kejriwal, are distant from the AAP. They should be persuaded to join the party which is, in fact, a platform for "thousands of mutinies" raging in the country. The AAP, however, needs to come out with its economic agenda because people have essentially voted against the Congress and the BJP.

tongue.] It has also stoked incipient movements in other parts of the country for carving out new states for minority ethnic or linguistic groups. The much hyped idea of India's unity amidst diversity has suffered a setback.

Many states are under pressure to concede separation to distinct ethnic groups who do not share the culture and language of the majority. Many ethnic groups in Assam and West Bengal will surely use the Telangana example to press their case for separation. In Central India Vidarbha's case for recognition as a self-contained state, a step recommended by the States Reorganisation Commission itself in the 1950s, has every chance of gaining traction. The Gorkhas of Darjeeling will be encouraged to intensify their agitation for raising Gorkhaland to full statehood. It will become more difficult to resist the demand for promoting Bodoland to the status of a state.

The AAP has done well in exposing the central government on the price of natural gas. Even when the private company had signed a contract to purchase gas for \$2.5 Btu till 2017, the price has been raised to \$8 Btu. It is obvious that Petroleum Minister Veerappa Moily, who has defended the increased price, must be mixed up with the scam, another in the Manmohan Singh regime, left with two months in tenure. Corruption looks like becoming the poll issue. The Congress with numerous scams will be the target. Per force, the party has made communalism the main issue. Both corruption and communalism have to be confronted with a plank of cleanliness and pluralism. The AAP can plug these lines, provided it stays together.

Yes, caste does matter in the subcontinent!

K. S. Chalam

As the 2014 elections are fast approaching, several issues that attract the attention of the majority are being stirred up. Last week Janardan Dwivedi provoked the reservation communities with his statement to end caste based reservations. Harish Rao of TRS has categorically taken Jayaprakash Narayana of Lok Satta for voting TDP candidate in Rajya Sabha elections as an issue of caste angle. BSP, SP and other caste and community outfits are active while Modi is entreating for OBC tag. The Parliament has witnessed the unprecedented brawl of MPs from Andhra Pradesh on the vexed issue of bifurcation, which is seen as caste war between dominant castes for control over Hyderabad city. The BCCI President Srinivasan who is going to occupy a premier position in ICC soon is found in an obscure position with the Supreme Court Committee report on the involvement of his son-in-law Meiyappan in betting and passing of information about the team in IPL to others. This is a much stronger relation than social bond of caste that has international implications. The discrimination and killing of the North East Indians in Delhi and other metros is being compared with Dalits of mainland. We may take the above cases for academic reflection here.

Caste has been practiced by everyone in the subcontinent consciously or instinctively as a habit (may be as a technique of humiliation) but, invariably denies it in public. Interestingly, there is very little understanding about the

economic potential of caste though there are hundreds of studies on the history and social context, mostly by the western scholars and their Indian counterparts. In fact, very few knew about the ecology of caste and its changing contours in different parts of India. Perhaps no one is interested to get rid of it as everyone has a stake in the varna system (now caste) a phenomenon of reservation of occupations by birth. Andhras have very little knowledge about the castes in Odisha or Kerala and Punjabis do not have any idea as to what kind of castes exist in Bengal while Maharastrians generalise their experience as universal without understanding its ubiquitous and diverse nature and so on. The Western social anthropologists like Kathleen Gough and Indian scholar Madhav Gadgil have tried to project some castes as ecology dependent, but did not elaborate on the geography of castes. It was only in the modern period that Rajni Kothari and others have examined the political potential of caste. There seems to be very few reflections on how caste was skilfully adopted by British to divide and rule India, and not in other commonwealth countries. Thus, caste is a nasty thing not only in social relations but even to consider it as an academic issue for debate. Yet, our leaders initiate arguments occasionally, may be for political purposes making many of us to react.

Now look at the caste-based reservations. If we can look at the practice of caste related biases in our democratic institutions like

political parties, media, associations, social gathering, etc, we realise how far they are far from reality. Look at Dwivedi's party: who is there to devise policies and influence political manoeuvrings and their share in the population. Is it evenly distributed? BSP, SP and other caste and communal outfits are active before elections. The same is true for other parties including some caste-based and progressive ones who consider class as a criterion for mass mobilisation (not their leaders), started giving reservations in the party after Mandal to counter public criticism and not essentially to make them to participate in decision making. Major share of the Corporate Media is held by few castes while the opinions are voiced by limited traditional castes. Though media delude all of us with the idea of freedom of speech, is it really representative of the castes in the news coverage or importance in proportion to the caste population? How are they biased or involuntarily make stories to represent their community point of view? The Telugu media it is alleged, is controlled by two castes of a region, and have distorted news and compared Lagdapati Rajgopal with Bhagat Singh for his pepper spray. Is there any content analysis as to how the channels in Andhra Pradesh represented the recent bifurcation issue? Will the dispassionate channels be allowed to survive? The public space which should democratically be available to all is ever representative of our diverse caste groups? The answer is obvious.

There are serious reflections on caste issues by some academics. The issue is: how is it possible to annihilate caste when the economic opportunities are seized by few castes as against the multitude? Don't we know the economic background of some of the billionaires (particularly in Andhra) about five decades back and how they became super rich now? Is it not due to caste mobilisation or the so-called crony capitalism suited to our conditions? People talk about caste-based reservations of let us say (15 per cent) scheduled castes. There are 175 lakh jobs in government (state, union, local body, public sector) where the caste-based reservations are observed. It means that there will be 26 lakh dalits in all categories to get employment. This is around one per cent (1.3) of the 20 crore dalits in India. Yes, they represent the disadvantaged and may not as Dwivedi remarked, allow the poor among them to occupy the positions. This is what we call as a 'phenomenon of circulation of families'. This is much worse in the case of Adivasis and the OBCs who have just begun. This is also true even among the dwija and shudra castes. This is a systemic dichotomy.

There may be exceptions in the case of select castes that have mobilised and united their own group network for appropriating all that is available for grabbing after liberalisation. How could they do it? Is it not through caste mobilisation or what we call MCCs (multi caste corporations)? While the few who do not have any reservations used their caste seizing all secular opportunities, the reserved groups complain that they are confined to limited openings and stay insecure in a market economy. Some of them might argue that it would provide conditions of possibility to grow

as capitalists as in DICCI. But, the total asset value of all the dalits for instance including the few neo-corporates among them is not equal to one day transactions of share value of some Business Houses. How long does it take to make at least 15 crore dalits (out of 20) and 5 crore Adivasis (out of 8) to become crorepaths, if not billionaires?

Then what is the solution? Are caste-based reservations a solution to ameliorate their conditions? No. Caste is used here as a socio-economic identity to target groups for some development programmes. Is the society, including the mainstream political parties, prepared to face the groups, if they are released from their forced incubation. The politicians more than the beneficiaries of reservations, knew the transforming of the traditional patron-client relations as development messiah and aid recipient. The former being the upper caste person and the latter has always remained a dalit or OBC, etc. This has also facilitated the politics of rural development as the schemes under DRDA, IRDP, NRY, NAREGA, etc., came to the rescue of emerging politician to capitalize his fortunes on the basis of state sponsored aid to the poor particularly, the dalit. The politicians with the nexus of the bureaucrats looked at these opportunities as objects of patronage to develop caste cleavages in the villages. Each politician developed his own constituency, particularly among the poor on the basis of these so called rural aid or reservations, subsidies, poverty alleviation schemes. They never wanted that the poverty of the masses to disappear, lest their vote bank sinks.

In order to understand the poverty in India, the traditional and neo-classical theories may not help the

expert to come to grips with the problem. Several attempts were made in the past to study the reasons behind poverty. Some scholars found that the analytical tools of political economy were found to be very helpful in understanding why some groups still live in substandard living conditions. Political economy is basically concerned about policies that are undertaken by a class state. Goran Djurfeldt and Lindberg in their study on poverty in Chengalput district of Tamil Nadu found that the old caste ideology remained operative even in a new setting of production relations. It was observed that development projects in the village did not bring any change in the fundamental structure of social formation. Though the study was conducted about three decades back, there seems to be no change in what they have observed.

Given the history of poverty alleviation programmes in India, any kind of innovation or restructuring of the schemes would be appropriated by the political elite in the country. But some of the World Bank experts wanted us to believe few decades ago that the restructured safety nets would capture the disadvantaged like the dalits and wipe out their destitution. The WB poverty report on India cites examples from Pakistan and Bangladesh as success stories in such experiments. Further, the PRSP clearly show that the structural adjustment in South Asia continue with the four principles of broad based growth, investment in social capital, good governance and increased safety nets from 1999. But the safety nets prescribed for the vulnerable groups particularly dalits and adivasis in India have failed. There are studies to show that the rate at which poverty was declining among the groups is in anyway no

different from the pre-reform period. In order to address this question they mandated Tendulkar to manipulate the concept and data to show positive results. If the data sets are adjusted for 1750 and 2000 calories for 2004-5, is it not common sense to use the same for pre-reform period forgetting for a moment the unwise assumptions of change in stature of working class. N.C Saxena has used a different method and found that there is little change.

The politicians see an opportunity in the poverty of the dalits as it can be used as an alibi to approach the donor agencies for funds. The leakages from such funds are being used as election money at the time of polls. This would be a political investment of the ruling elite to win the elections without any budgetary process. Perhaps the funding agencies wanted the money to go that way so that the regimes which are favorable to their terms and conditions are reelected irrespective of the political ideology (see the approach of USA towards Gujarat) so that the agenda of SAP can be pushed through. This is a good strategy that helps both the parties. We do not know what is the take on this by the NGOs. In the process, the poor are further marginalized and those who are on the margin like the dalits and service castes are severely threatened. In fact, some politicians complain that the poor voters need money at the time of elections and they invest and recover the same over a period of time. It is also demonstrated that no one bothers, if an oligarchy of castes is formed to gulp and exploit the natural resources, the provident fund of Adivasis. It is seen and proved that few traditional castes are only involved in the lakhs of crores of scams (coal, 3G, mines, Oil etc) and crumbs for others.

The recent events in the Parliament shocked the nation as to how this could happen? But, the fact is that the two or three castes in Andhra have mobilized their resources and captured power irrespective of the political party to harvest economic gains. They play political drama in the name of parties but get united on economic contracts to share the spoils. (This is what was demonstrated in Parliament). Occasionally as in the case of Hyderabad city real estate, due to historical reasons (of huge enemy property), they get divided, but someone would get them to come to their senses and bring about their unity. They have systematically, it is alleged by another group, designed everything particularly the media to façade the reality with myths in the name of freedom of speech. This is how the 21st century Indian democracy dazzled in the Parliament recently. After all, Andhra Pradesh was chosen as the model state for liberalization in 1991. This may be true in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and other states.

There seem to be another angle to this. Were the dynamics of caste any way different in the past or have remained inert or the same? This must have been the longstanding convention in the subcontinent as seen in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, etc. It is alleged by some activists in South Asia that if the political elites are disrobed of their cover-up, their real social background comes out as poor cousins or counterparts of India. Therefore, no one is prepared to sacrifice this privilege of holding power through caste. This appears to be the fact behind the bifurcation politics in Andhra Pradesh that forged alleged unity among different political groups with same caste heads getting united to hoodwink

common man? Is it the same concord that submerged sub-caste differences (started in Andhra) once the issue of abolition of reservations is initiated? That is the power of caste in India known to the ruling castes better than other groups. Yes, caste does matter today in politics and public policy. Is there anyone to reorganise and reform the society before it is solidified once again through economic discrepancies that are alien?

(Continued from Page 2)

with emotional, sub-national or (linguistic) passion overtone and undertones. Small states are in any case better managed, and the case for more (smaller) states remains strong. The first target for division is obviously Uttar Pradesh. Let us hope that the division will be overseen by the 16th Lok Sabha which will come into being end May.

Socialist Party will contest 60 Lok Sabha seats

A meeting of the parliamentary board of the Socialist Party was held at Pune. Pannalal Surana, president, parliamentary board, chaired the meeting. List of the Lok Sabha constituencies, sent by state units, was placed and discussed in the meeting. It was decided that the party would contest 60 Lok Sabha seats in the coming general election. Names of the constituencies and candidates will be declared soon. It was decided in this meeting that the Socialist Party would contest from Ratanagiri Sindhudurg and Shirur constituencies in Maharashtra.

Vasudha Dhagamwar (1940-2014)

Vibhuti Patel

Vasudha Dhagamwar, legal activist and academician, passed away on February 10, in Pune of multiple organ failure. Vasudha's mother Geeta Sane was a well-known Marathi writer and feminist and her father, Advocate Naraimha Dhagamwar was active in the Indian freedom movement. Vasudha studied at the Indian Law Society's Law College in Pune and taught at the Department of Law of University of Pune.

As a young lawyer, she fought case of a teenage tribal girl Mathura who was gang-raped by two policemen in uniform at the police station in 1972. In this case, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court acquitted the accused and stated that the sexual intercourse was voluntary, since the onus of proving that the act was one of coercion, rested on the victim. After eight years of legal battle from 1972 to 1979 when the Supreme Court of India gave misogynist judgment in the year 1979, Vasudha along with three law professors from Delhi University — Prof. Upendra Baxi, Prof. Raghunath Kelkar and Prof. Lotika Sarkar wrote an open letter to the Supreme Court challenging the judgment as well as demanding reopening of Mathura Rape Case and urging the court to bring about a change in the Rape Law. This sparked nationwide anti-rape movement and influenced heated debates and became the rallying point of an active campaign on the issue of gender-based violence.

Vasudha was awarded coveted Ashoka fellowship in 1982 for her

courageous and consistent work for the rights of displaced people.

In 1985, she set up the MARG (Multiple Action Research Group) in Delhi, which took up the most challenging issues of land acquisition and displacement arising out of the Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat. Under her leadership, MARG produced the following valuable publications:

1. The Law of Resettlement of Project Displaced Persons in Madhya Pradesh
2. Land Acquisition Act and You-A Manual
3. Law, Power and Justice: The Protection of Personal Rights in the Indian Penal Code, 1993
4. Our Laws/ *Hamare Kanoon* (a set of 10 manuals in Hindi and English)
5. Industrial Development and Displacement – The People of Korba, 2003
6. Women and Divorce, Somaiya Publications, Delhi, 1987
7. Reading on Uniform Civil Code and Gender and Child Just Laws
8. Role and Image of Law in India – The Tribal Experience, 2006
9. Criminal Justice or Chaos? 1997

Through her activist use of the law, she influenced two generations of feminists and activists of social movements of the marginalised communities. Vasudha's legal activism was tremendous. She demystified draconian Land Acquisition Act.

During the last four decades, innumerable of legal reforms with respect to women's issues were put

in place in India due to pressure from women's movement. Vasudha played important role in this process through her writings, speeches, training programmes and debates on the laws concerning rape, domestic violence, discriminatory family laws with respect to marriage, divorce, maintenance, alimony, custody and guardianship, land and housing rights of women. Vasudha worked closely with the National Commission of Women as a legal expert. She was also a member of the Executive Body of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Delhi NGO working to protect human rights in the Commonwealth countries.

Because of her down to earth approach towards legal matters, practical suggestions and solution seeking approach, Vasudha was a much sought after legal luminary. She was an excellent communicator, spoke logically and convincingly. Her stand on Muslim personal law and Common Civil Code angered many fellow feminists. But no one doubted her integrity as a defender of women's right to dignified life.

From 1980 to 2006, Vasudha worked in Delhi. She moved to Pune in 2007.

Vasudha was suffering from cancer. In spite of painful existence during last couple of years, she was translating the memoirs of her mother, Geeta Sane from Marathi into English. Vasudha was highly respected in Maharashtra. She has left her permanent mark as a sincere, committed, honest and pro-people lawyer of our country.

Bangladesh at Cross Roads – A spirited struggle for Secular Democracy

Sandip Das

To my knowledge Prof. Samar Guha was the only person, who had the privilege of spending considerable time in jails of British India and in-post Independence Pakistan and India, including under MISA during the Emergency. While in Dhaka, besides teaching in a college, he was active in various movements there. Coming to India in the early 1950s, in spite of his involvement in socialist movement here, he remained mentally attached to the events in Pakistan. He began to write books in support of independent East Bengal.

Some of us also had been following the happenings of East Pakistan almost from the early sixties. We had a forum named 'New Left Forum'. Amongst the initiators of the forum, there were late Pradip Bose, late Jatin Ghosh, Dr. Dwijesh Dutta Majumdar, Mrinal Biswas and myself. I was the convener. The forum got involved in the affairs of East Pakistan. Pradip Bose had many contacts in Delhi, both official and non-official. His association with the International Union of Socialist Youth was also very useful. Jatin Ghosh while doing his Bar-at-Law in London, was secretary of the London Majlis. That was very helpful to establish link with Purba Bangla Bhawan in London. Dr. Majumdar, as a scientist of eminence, was known to many activists. In East Bengal, the person who acted as a whole timer for some time was the late Ajit Roy, an associate of Netaji in his INA days. Dr. Jahanara Begum, Sasabindu Chowdhury and some friends were other activists

in our endeavors. Our activities were two-fold. We formed an open organization, named Purba Paschim Sampriti Samiti. Many distinguished academics, writers and cultural activists were associated with it. We also published a fortnightly journal named *Epar Bangla Opar Bangla*. We used to publish writings of distinguished writers and give news of East Pakistan. We had some other activities, which were not open. Prof. Samar Guha was our leader and we were all very close to him. However, we had to maintain a distance from him as far as East Pakistan affairs were concerned. My primary duty was to read most of the Dhaka newspapers, which were not normally available after 1965 war with Pakistan. We had to maintain paper cuttings from Dhaka papers and to preserve them subjectwise and partywise. The publications from London based Purba Bangla Bhawan also came to us. On occasions, we used to brief our senior socialist leaders. Prem Bhasin was one such leader. Premji had written in the Janata in details on happenings in East Bengal (Bangladesh). Along with Prof. Smamar Guha we had occasions to discuss with JP and other leaders including the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi about the events and problems of Bangladesh.

Amongst our underground activities, we could involve many Bangladeshi College Students studying in colleges adjacent to the border of West Bengal. Some of them were engaged in intelligence gathering work and some were

militarily trained, and they played a wonderful role in the liberation of Bangladesh. While the struggle in Bangladesh was going on, I had occasions to move around most of the border areas in West Bengal, Assam (including Meghalaya) and Tripura. We had been working under the banner of 'National Co-ordination Committee for Bangladesh' with M. C. Chagla as President and Prof. Samar Guha as Working President. I was one of the secretaries and convener of field co-ordination sub-committee. I feel I should mention an incident. I along with Jahanara Begum and Abdul Samad entered into Bangladesh through Chougacha border adjacent to Khulna district of East Pakistan. We stayed there for some time and collected all necessary information from the horse's mouth, so to say, about how the Pakistani attack would take place along with samples of bullets of a particular machinegun. We communicated to the persons concerned in India. The result was when the Pakistani attack took place, the attackers were humbled in what is known as Navaran Battle miserably.

It may also be mentioned that in 1968, I had the occasion to visit few South East Asian countries in connection with a three-week workshop in Indonesia. There I met many socialist friends at a meeting with Surendra Mohon's message to them, although socialist parties were not allowed to function till then. I also met socialist friends in Singapore. Wherever I got chance I hinted that big change in East

Pakistan was offing. One gentleman who took me seriously was Late Dr. Herbert Feith, a renowned Australian Professor of Politics who was also a member of Labour Party there. Two years later, as soon as Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman declared independence, he gave a speech from Melbourne Radio in support of Bangladesh's independence. So far as I know, outside our sub-continent his voice was the first of its kind. He sent me the copy of his speech immediately which was broadcast from Akashbani many times.

I remember four political personalities who had come through hill border in Dinajpur immediately after the declaration. Three of them were from Awami League and the other one, an old freedom fighter was a leader of National Awami Party. A senior friend and a veteran freedom fighter late Madhab Chandra Roy escorted them to West Bengal Socialist Party Office in Calcutta. From there I took them to our house. Next morning I took them to Prof. Samar Guha's house, where a Bangladesh's flag was made and with this in Samarda's open jeep we went around in city. I cannot forget the enthusiasm of Calcutta's at seeing them. We had also taken them to the concerned officials.

No doubt Indira Gandhi played a great role at that time. But I can say that preparation had started from the days of Lal Bahadur Shastri. We must not also forget JP's unique role in generating international public opinion in support of Bangladesh. With JP's initiative, many Gandhian and other organizations also arranged relief work for Bangladeshis who took shelter in India.

After the liberation of Bangladesh I visited Bangladesh several times. I feel many *Janata* readers would be happy to know of two incidents. One

was that the Socialist leader Leela Roy's birth centenary was observed in Dhaka with great solemnity. I was invited on the occasion of the release of Leeladi's centenary volume. In that function, the president of the meeting, a very distinguished professor Jiallur Rahaman Siddiquee, while praising Leeladi's role in freedom movement and her unique contribution to spreading women's education, referred to JP's total revolution, as according to him it was very relevant for the sub-continent. Another incident: when myself along with Jahanara Begum and Abdul Samad met Abul Hasim, the general secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League in undivided India, he confessed to us that the "greatest blunder committed in my life was agreeing to the partition. My mistake might be rectified if you make efforts to unite us again".

Unfortunately after the killing of Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman, the fundamentalists began to gain strength. We must keep it in mind that Pakistani fundamentalists could not forget the loss of East Pakistan. Not only Pakistani fundamentalists, but also their counterpart in Bangladesh and also in the Middle East and other countries are making intermittent cries for Islamic solidarity. But we know that even in Pakistan there is no dearth of progressive elements, who had opposed all types of brutality during Bangladesh's liberation movement. Many of them were arrested for this 'crime'. However, many remained undaunted. We met them recently in Dhaka.

The Britishers during the pre-partition days always attempted to divide Hindus and Muslims and to create communal fever. An incident may be mentioned here. Gandhiji from Aga Khan Palace wrote a letter to Jinnah, which was not delivered

to him. They only prepared the gist and informed him about it. Like the Britishers, neo-colonists and international and national corporates somehow think that if the structure of secular democracy from the Third World can be destroyed, they would gain.

Let us also consider the role of Hindu fundamentalists in India. The Hindu fundamentalists claim that they stand for the interests of the Hindus. Are they aware of the aftermath of their "great achievement" of destruction of Babri Masjid? How many Hindu religious temples were destructed in Bangladesh and how many Hindus were killed and how many had suffered and were forced to cross the border? It was the great freedom fighter and Gandhiji's associate in Noakhali, Suhashini Das who, with the help of broad minded Muslims reconstructed many of the temples.

Recently in late March 2103, I had been to Dhaka as a guest of Bangladesh Government, who honoured some of us, including those from Pakistanis and other countries, who had extended support to their liberation movement. Since a month before that occasion, Bangladesh was subjected to septic violence through killing, loot and arson by the fundamentalists. Besides minorities, secular Muslims were also not spared. That the US Government should have a soft corner for the fundamentalists, including war criminals tried by the Bangladesh Government should not shock us, if we do not forget the threatening presence of US 7th fleet in the India Ocean, when the people of Bangladesh were fighting for their liberation and secular democracy

Jamat-e-Islami, which all through had opposed liberation struggle of Bangladeshis, was responsible for killing many scholars, both Muslim and Hindu, who were prides of Bangladesh. Now, the main opposition party, Bangladesh National Party of Khaleda Zia is hand-in-glove with them. It may be recalled that Col. Zia who became General when he captured power had played an important role in the freedom movement of Bangladesh, but turned anti-Mujib later on. However, his wife Khaleda declined support it and she was happy going with the Pakistani military junta. Recently the Bangladesh Supreme Court banned Jamat-e-Islami contesting in the election. The Jamat's fellow traveler, Khaleda declined to contest elections so long as a non-party interim government was not formed to conduct elections. Bangladesh constitution had provided for an all-party interim government to run the election following this, other than Prime Minister Hasina, all the other sixtyfive ministers had resigned. Hasina tried her best to persuade Khaleda Begum to join the ministry. After so many attempts by the Prime Minister Hasina, Khaleda Begum met her only once only to decline her offer.

In 1971, during the liberation struggle a seminar on Bangladesh was organized by the Christian Institute of Religion and Society, Bangalore at VP House in Delhi which was attended by many distinguished persons in India and Bangladesh. Acharya Kripalani inaugurated the seminar. In 1972, the papers were published in the form of a book - 'Profile of Bangladesh'. This writer, in his paper, had stated: "The Emergence of secularism in theocratic and dictatorial state like Pakistan is, from all points of view, no less epoch-making than the

struggle for liberation itself."

The independence of Bangladesh was achieved and the United Nation had recognized 21st February as the International Language Day, the date on which five young men in Dhaka laid their lives in 1952 for the cause of their mother tongue's recognition in Pakistan. It gave boost to secular nationalism in Bangladesh.

Before that Dr. Sahidulla, an outstanding scholar and leading light of Dhaka University, in his Presidential address in East Pakistan Literary Conference had stated (31st December 1948 – 1st January, 1949), "It is true that some of us are Hindus and some are Muslims but it is greater truth that we are Bengalis, But mother nature has given us such permanent stamp in our appearance and language that no rosary or pigtail or marks of sandal paste or cap, lungi, beard can hide them". But West Pakistan leaders and military junta systematically tried to crush the Bengali language and culture. Besides this, West Pakistan rulers began to treat East Pakistan as their colony and tried to crush them economically. All these events ushered in the 6-point programme of Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman for the autonomy of Bangladesh. During the liberation struggle, thirty lakh Bangladeshis sacrificed their lives at the altar of freedom.

It is, therefore, surprising and indeed shocking for persons like me who worked a bit for a secular democratic Bangladesh that a journalist and intellectual of eminence like KuldipNayer could characterize the problem of Bangladesh as the struggle of egos of two Begums. He should have understood that any action in India by the majority community and also such loose talk may endanger the secular democracy and even

the existence of Bangladesh. Any encouragement direct or indirect to the fundamentalists would also endanger the fate of minorities and progressive Muslims and it would open the flood gate of Bangladeshi's influx into India.

Again Shri Nayer has attributed statesmanship of 'visionary' to Jyoti Basu for Farakka agreement. Late Jyoti Basu had played hardly any role in the Bangladesh's liberation struggle. Is Shri Nayer aware of at what cost the agreement was made? Has he studied the reason for the destruction of Calcutta Port and possible destruction of Haldia. The DVC had already created a lot of problems for the lower Damodar Valley and the Ganga itself. The urgent task now is that both India and Bangladesh should ponder upon the river issues not separately about Ganga or Tista but in totality with all the rivers that flow from Himalayas and be prepared to talk with Sikkim of India, Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet, etc. I have observed that situation of the rivers of both Bangladesh and India is far from satisfactory. India should play a pivotal role in this regard. So there is nothing that can be called visionary on the part of Jyoti Basu or the Government of India in this regard.

I should also mention that when President of India Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh recently, he indicated his willingness to meet opposition leader Khaleda Zia. But the lady could not spare time to meet him. This action of Begum Jhia indicates deeper maldy of which Shri Nayer does not appear to be aware of. It is not merely a clash of egos of two Begums but represents two different forces that are in conflict in Bangladesh.

I must say that Shri Nayer's study of Bangladesh is not adequate.

A surge in India's imagination

Uday Dandavate

Turn of events in Delhi continue to be incomprehensible to those who have expert knowledge of how democracy works in India. The Aam Aadami Party has defied expectations of experts on Westminster model of governance, through its unconventional methods of handling important governance issues by crowd sourcing citizen's ideas through Jan Sabhas and Street activism. Rather than exercising his power as the chief executive of the state of Delhi from the chambers within the secretariat, Arwind Kejriwal continued to provoke popular imagination by protesting against the corrupt nexus between the politicians, business and administration, in addition to taking quick decisions on promises made during the campaign. For the political elite, Arwind Kejriwal's behavior smacks of irresponsible behavior of an elected chief executive; whereas to the thousands of young citizens of Delhi, who throng to the streets at the beck and call of AAP leadership, Arwind Kejriwal represents an irrepressible Baagi (revolutionary), who they expect to first demolish the corrupt system and give people the participatory power to rebuild a new approach to governance.

Arwind Kejriwal did not join electoral politics to govern Delhi. Contrary to media campaign, Delhi citizens did not elect him just to govern Delhi, but to start cleansing the system. Delhi citizens did

not respond with overwhelming enthusiasm first to Anna Hazare and then to the AAP's demand for Jan Lok Pal Bill, so they could capture power in Delhi. The genesis of AAP is in India's disenchantment with apathetic, arrogant, and corrupt system that has eroded the dignity of ordinary citizens and turned politicians into pawns in the hands of rich industrialists. Kejriwal entered the swamp of electoral politics, despite advice to the contrary by his mentor Anna Hazare, "So that he could flush the system from inside". The sight of a man flushing the gutter is ugly but the ultimate result promises to be desirable for the health of democracy.

All the three contenders to national imagination today - Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi and Arwind Kejriwal - want to demolish status quo. Narendra Modi wants to demolish, what he calls pseudo secularism and replace it with a Hindu nationalist agenda for corporate sponsored development, Rahul Gandhi wants to demolish the old order in the Congress party (and he is doing a good job of demolishing the Congress itself, in the eyes of people). He has not given a clear picture of what he wants to replace the old order within Congress with, except his recent comment that the Congress party needs to learn from Aam Aadmi Party's methods. Arwind Kejriwal on the other hand wants to demolish the

corrupt political order, challenge the money power, reverse the top down model of governance and replace it with a new model that Gandhi called Swaraj.

Seasoned managers of political campaigns who are used to spending hundreds of crores of rupees on expensive media campaigns, for traveling in helicopters and creating ostentatious displays of gimmicky imageries at public meetings, Arwind Kejriwal's simple and unpaid omnipresence in media is proving to be a massive headache. While the BJP might pat itself on the back over its victories in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh, where BJP was the only challenger to the discredited Congress party, the Delhi election has given the Sangh Pariwar a lot to worry about in private. The BJP candidate lost to the AAP candidate in the constituency where Narendra Modi addressed his first election rally, where crores of rupees were spent in turning it into a mega show. Likewise in majority of constituencies where Narendra Modi campaigned in Delhi, he was unable to catch the imagination of the electorate. As Arwind Kejriwal unshackles himself from the daily grind of governing Delhi, the enthusiasm for participating in a new kind of disruptive innovation in democracy is bound to inspire the 12 crore first time voters who are going to be a decisive voter segment in the next Parliament election.

The road not taken

The stormy government of the Aam Aadmi Party lasted for 49 days. A big question it leaves behind is - was a happier, more constructive alternative path possible, which would have better realised the big hopes reposed in the new party by lakhs of voters, particularly the weaker sections?

The AAP government was all the time taking the path of confrontation and controversy. At least in retrospect, it is possible to visualise a different path which would have given first priority to several non-confrontational issues that were capable of giving significant benefits to weaker sections in Delhi.

It is not adequately realised that the living and working conditions of lakhs of poorest people in Delhi are very bad. They are deprived of very basic needs like clean drinking water, sanitation and sewerage. Displaced people were deprived not just of housing but also of livelihoods near their former homes. Many of them still suffer from hunger and deprivation. The homeless people including women and children have very serious problems.

Apart from problems specifically of weaker sections, Delhi has very serious pollution and other environmental problems which affect all sections of people and pose very serious health hazards.

The right path for the AAP government should have been to first take up very significant but noncontroversial issues which can provide genuine relief as well as stable benefits to lakhs of poorest people. At the same time important steps should have been taken to reduce pollution and solve other serious environmental issues, including taking up water conservation and harvesting works in a big way.

This constructive phase should have lasted at least for six months or so. At least this time was needed for well thought-out decisions and the necessary follow-up actions. Any confrontational measures considered necessary by AAP should have come only after this phase of minimum six months was over.

If this alternative path had been taken then the AAP could've brought genuine benefits to poorest people who voted for it with high hopes.

Unfortunately this golden chance was missed. Any relief which AAP provided was only on the basis of its narrowly conceived election promises. It was not based on proper prioritising of the needs of the poorest people, or the real needs of the city for environment protection.

- Bharat Dogra

PS

As reported in the Indian Express on February 18, Arvind Kejriwal, while addressing the National Council Meet of the Confederation of Indian Industry in Delhi on February 17 said, "Government has no business doing business, it only has to govern. Business should all be held by the private sector."

Am I right in interpreting this to mean very little role for public sector, if any, and huge room for privatisation of essential goods and services?

Also, as the Indian Express reported, "Kejriwal clarified his party is against crony capitalism not capitalism." Kejriwal "praised industrialists as the real engines of growth and appealed to them to become party to the revolution."

Indian election scenario today stands polarized between a fumbling Rahul Gandhi, an entertaining Narendra Modi, and a revolutionary Arvind Kejriwal. The regional parties are getting ready to consolidate their traditional voter base, so that they could emerge as a bargaining power in the eventuality of a hung parliament.

Two weeks before the Delhi elections, I wrote on my Facebook, "Last week opinion polls gave AAP 8 seats, this week it gave it 18 seats, with two weeks to go for the election-day and after witnessing increasing enthusiasm in the street, I believe AAP is bound to increase its tally at the same pace." The same scenario will unfold as AAP begins its campaign for Lok Sabha.

Those who are joining the AAP are not seasoned politicians. They bring with them the same strengths and weaknesses that can be found in an average Indian. It will be the responsibility of the Aam Aadmi Party to organize training for its cadres and its elected representatives, so that the energy unleashed by its promise of destructive innovation of India's democracy is harnessed and managed with the same sensitivity with which nuclear energy is harnessed.

Delhi events are only a spark-the fire is bound to spread nationwide. Arvind Kejriwal's so-called irresponsible behavior can only be understood by those who can sense an irrepressible surge of national enthusiasm for a new future that is free from corruption.

HC cautions govts against privatising drinking water services

Citing example from Bolivia, the Madras High Court has cautioned governments against privatising fundamental sovereign responsibilities including providing drinking water to public.

While passing orders on disputes over restructuring the stake-holding companies recently, Justice V Ramasubramanian narrated the dangers of privatising essential constitutional duties such as providing drinking water to people and wondered how a company, which dragged Bolivia into international arbitration over privatisation of drinking water, was involved in new Tirupur area development scheme.

The state government's ambitious Tirupur development plan envisaged several schemes including treatment and supply of potable water and treatment and disposal of sewage in the city, and it engaged consortium of international companies for the purpose.

"It is an irony of fate that Bechtel, which was a member of Aguas Del Tunari, the multinational consortium of private investors that was driven out of Bolivia, appears to be part of the consortium selected by Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd for funding New Tirupur Area Development Corporation Ltd project.

"I do not know if anyone is aware of this fact and anyone is aware of what happened in Bolivia."

In October 1999, Aguas Del Tunari was awarded 40-year concession rights to provide water

and sanitation services to residents of Cochabamba in Bolivia. It was to generate electrical energy and irrigation water for the region's agricultural sector.

Following public outcry over 200 per cent increase in water rates, the company was thrown out of Bolivia. In November of 2002, Aguas Del Tunari demanded a minimum compensation of USD 50 million from Bolivian government and dragged it to the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), a mechanism of the World Bank.

Nearly four years later in January 2006, Aguas Del Tunari agreed to drop their case in ICSID for a token payment from Bolivia, which had by then spent more than one million dollars on legal fees alone.

Noting that there could be no dispute over the fact that water supply to people was an obligation of the state, Justice Ramasubramanian cited a Supreme Court ruling which said, "The right to life is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution and it includes the right of enjoyment of pollution-free water and air for full enjoyment of life".

"Even internationally the obligation of the states to supply water to its citizens is well recognised," the judge said, adding, "admittedly, no law has been enacted so far (in Tamil Nadu). On the contrary, the enactment that was in force earlier- Tamil Nadu Ground Water (Development and Management) Act, 2003 - has actually been repealed recently".

The judge said the National Water Policy-2012 suggested that water could be priced to fully recover the cost of operation and administration of water resources projects.

Noting that operators in the private sector jumped into the fray to fill up the gap between resources and the unwillingness of the government, he said "None of the states appears to have drawn a lesson from what had happened in Bolivia and in Johannesburg".

The judge said after water supply was privatised in Johannesburg people became unable to pay their water bills.

"The private water supply agencies stopped supply of water, forcing residents to drink water from polluted rivers. This led to an outbreak of cholera claiming hundreds of lives and thousands of people getting hospitalised," the judge said.

—PTI

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Signing for freedom

We, the undersigned, are appalled by the recent settlement reached between Dina Nath Batra for the Shiksha Bachao Andolan and Penguin Books India, to cease the publication of Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History* (Penguin USA 2009; Penguin India 2010), and withdraw and destroy remaining copies of the book on Indian territory.

This case is only the latest in a long series of outrage against freedom of expression. Academic, intellectual and artistic expression of any kind is becoming increasingly hazardous in India. What has happened to Professor Doniger and many other scholars before her can happen to any one of us at any time. Indian laws and legislation governing the freedom of expression not only fail to protect us from harassment and intimidation, but in fact prevent us from doing our work in a respectful, fair and democratic environment.

More worrying, the laws dealing with insult and injury to the sentiments of groups and communities (organised around religion, caste or any other form of identity) are routinely used to curb the freedom of expression, both within the legal justice system and in public discourse more generally.

In our view, the way to respond to ideas one dislikes is not to censor them but to produce better ones. Such was the practice of India's great intellectual traditions in the past. Litigation like this, undertaken in the name of defending those traditions, in fact profoundly demeans them.

We make the following demands:

1. That there be a reform of Sections 153A and 295A of the Indian Penal Code—governing

intellectual and artistic freedoms and the right to self-expression, as well as protecting against insult and injury to communities, and the incitement of communal hatred. We ask that lawmakers, jurists and the legal bureaucracy include necessary provisions in these laws to protect works of serious academic and artistic merit from motivated, malicious and frivolous litigation.

2. That Penguin Random House at the highest levels of management and decision-making continue to contest the Legal Demand # 254/LN/0310 up to the higher courts, so that a good precedent

upholding freedom of expression is established, and in future publishing houses, including Penguin India, are able to publish works and support their authors without the threatening prospect of litigation, fear and censure.

We believe that writers, scholars, artists, and publishers the world over will stand in solidarity with the author Wendy Doniger. To endorse our demands, append your signature to this statement. We intend to send our petition along with all the signatures collected to the appropriate authorities in the Government of India.

Ananya Vajpeyi, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi;

Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University, New York;

Partha Chatterjee, Columbia University, New York;

Patton, Duke University, North Carolina;

Romila Thapar, Jawaharlal Nehru University (Retd.), New Delhi;

David Shulman, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and others.

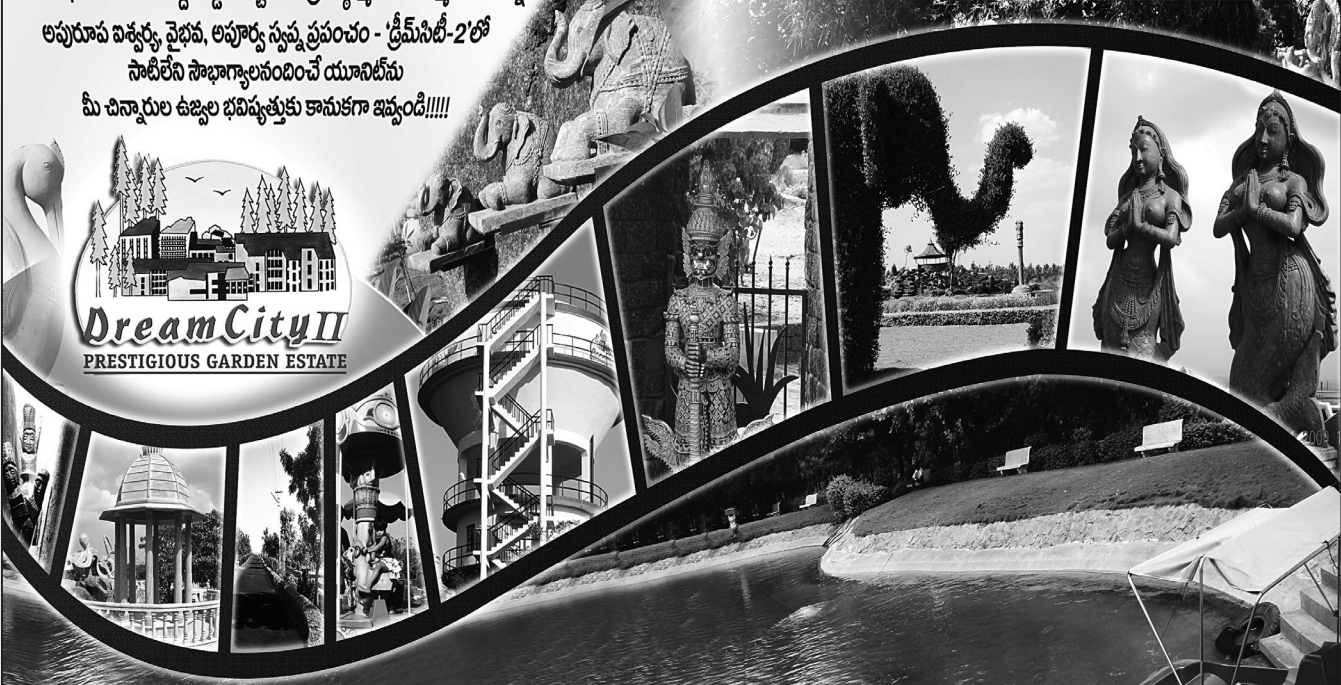
Dr Ashok Khemka has remained dedicated to the task of serving the people of India in line with the ethics of the elite service that he joined. But that does not go down well with our politicians. He was unfazed by 44 transfers in 22 years – and thrice in 2012 alone. Then he did the unthinkable. He dared to question the land deals of Robert Vadra, Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law, with the powerful realty giant DLF, which magically transferred into humungous profits from Mr Vadra.

When that happened, the government did not stop at mere transfer. It wants to crush and victimize him. The Haryana government, under Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda has served him a chargesheet for “having caused damage to the reputation of Robert Vadra and that of DLF,” and also for “illegally” cancelling the land deal. It has also started an investigation into Dr Khemka's role as the MD of Haryana Warehousing Corporation, designed to harass and intimidate him. In an unprecedented move, the state government has ordered an audit by State Auditor General targeted only at him.

–**Sucheta Dalal**

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Alliances and fronts

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**Locating Lohia
in Feminist Theory**
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As the 2014 Lok Sabha polls get closer, it is but natural that there should be a spurt in the attempts to forge electoral alliances and understandings among political parties with a stake in the election outcome. Simultaneously, there has been a fresh momentum given to the attempts to create a front of like-minded parties who are averse to any kind of tie-up with either the Congress or the BJP.

There are not all that many “unattached” parties to choose from for either the Congress or the BJP in order to expand their existing alliances, the UPA in the case of the Congress and the NDA in the case of the BJP. Indeed, it would seem that both the major groupings have reason to be concerned with keeping their existing alliances intact and ensure that none of the constituents leave the alliance. The scope for expansion is fortunately or unfortunately quite limited.

The only development of note in this area of electoral politics is the attempt by Ram Vilas Paswan’s Lok Janshakti Party to seek an entry into the BJP-led NDA. The BJP has good reason to welcome Paswan into the NDA since he can bring a handful of seats from the backward classes sector in UP, Bihar, and to

some extent from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa. However, Paswan has come under pressure from his erstwhile colleague and electoral partner, Lalu Prasad Yadav, to remain in the UPA and not change sides. It remains to be seen what

Paswan will eventually do. His plan to gatecrash into the NDA can be taken to reflect his lack of confidence in the UPA’s ability to retain power for a third time. The UPA is on a shaky wicket as the formation has lost both credibility and popularity along with the decline of the Congress.

One should not be surprised if some of the constituents in the two alliances decide to part company with the main bodies. Electoral politics is currently in a state of flux, with all parties calculating their prospects or otherwise in the coming polls. The BJP has less to worry in regard to keeping the NDA intact. The Congress has reason to be worried. Sharad Pawar, whose party the Nationalist Congress Party(NCP) has remained a steadfast partner spoke suddenly in conciliatory terms about Narendra Modi. His remark that in the absence of court findings Modi should not be blamed for the 2002 anti-Muslim carnage in Gujarat was highly disturbing for the Congress

leadership. Fortunately, Pawar backtracked soon thereafter and the alliance has been saved—for now.

Between the lines

Influence of armed forces

Kuldip Nayar

The process of the creation of the much talked-about Third Front has been quite interesting. Many “opposition” leaders—opposed to both the Congress and the BJP—have been paying lip service to the Third Front for many months now but the idea did not move significantly forward till now. The closest these leaders, acting at the behest of the Left parties, came to a Third Front was to constitute a “group” which would function as a “block” inside the two Houses of Parliament. Last week, there was a new development in that leaders of nine regional parties and the Left Front met together and issued a joint declaration offering the electorate a democratic, secular, federal and pro-people development agenda. This must be taken as the political philosophy of the Third Front when it formally comes into being and offers itself as an alternative to the Congress and the BJP.

Nine of the 11 parties were represented at the meeting. The two absentees were Naveen Patnaik of the BJD and Praful Mahanta of the Asom Gana Parishad. CPM leader Karat said Naveen had a prior commitment and that Mahanta’s mother was ill. However, these two leaders can be expected to join the Front sooner or later. The success of the Front depends on the commitment of its members to promote their objectives with due fervor and zeal. Two of its objectives deserve popular support. The first: throw the Congress out of power. Second, the BJP and the communal forces must be defeated and prevented from coming to power.

Another Lok Sabha, 15th in the series, has concluded its five-year tenure. Whatever business that was transacted in the house was, indeed, exasperating and raucous. Unfortunately the house representing the democratic system has fallen by the wayside practically in all Asian countries.

In another three months, the Indian voters will once again queue up before the polling booths to elect their representatives. Their quality has been wanting. But I am confident that the next house will be better in content because the emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has changed the political scenario in the country to make it cleaner and transparent.

Yet I do not like the increasing influence of the armed forces. Defence Minister A.K. Anthony was correct in saying that there can never be an army coup in the country. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru too had expressed the same thoughts when India opted for the parliamentary way of governance after Independence in August 1947. His argument was that the country was too large and too caste-and-religion-ridden.

My worry, however, is over the say that the armed forces are beginning to have in the affairs of governance. Take the stationing of troops at the Siachin Glacier. Was it necessary to do so, when several retired top brass of the armed forces said that it had no strategic importance? Even otherwise, when an agreement had been initialed

by foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan, our armed forces should have followed the decision but they had it stalled. Instead of it being a no-man territory the soldiers of both countries at the glacier are suffering due to the inclement weather and losing men at regular intervals.

Take another example of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) which empowers the army to detain or even kill a person on suspicion without any legal action. The northeast has been under it for years. A government-appointed committee found it “unnecessary” and recommended its withdrawal. But the armed forces have had their way and the AFSPA continues to be in operation.

Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah has officially asked New Delhi to free the state from the law's application. He has made the appeal even publicly. But the central government has not relented because the armed forces want the AFSPA to continue. Even a marginal concession of releasing the political prisoners as requested by the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister has been denied.

More recent is the inquiry into the “encounter” at Pathribal in Jammu and Kashmir. The army is alleged to have killed five “terrorists” while the local villagers have said that the deceased were innocent. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquired into the matter and has submitted its report before the Supreme Court. According to the report, it was a cold blooded fake encounter.

In fact, breaking his silence after 23 years then Kupwara deputy commissioner S.M. Yasin said recently that he had been threatened and offered promotions to change his report on the alleged mass rapes in Konam Poshpora in February 1991. It is strange that the army has claimed that there was no such incident. The self-acquittal by the top brass has only aggravated the sense of alienation and resentment among the people in Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of India should still set up a judicial inquiry headed by a Supreme Court judge to investigate into what are perceived as fake encounters.

Hardly has the dust settled down on the Pathribal encounters when the story of a possible coup in January 2012 has become public. Two army units - one of which was an armoured battalion - moved to Delhi from Agra. Any movement of troops in the periphery of the capital has to be with the prior permission. Still both units moved and were withdrawn only when the Defence Secretary summoned the Director General of Military Operations, Lt. Gen. A.K. Choudhary, at midnight and conveyed him that the top boss in the government was very unhappy and concerned.

When a daily newspaper broke the story, at that time, Defence Minister A.K. Anthony rubbished it. So did some key army and civilian officials. Now Lt. Gen. A. K. Choudhary, after his retirement, has confirmed the story. More shocking is the confirmation by Air Chief N. A. K. Browne, then heading the Air Force. He has said: "The paratroopers were being moved to check out the possibility of their marrying with the C130 at Hindon air base, near Delhi."

(Continued on Page 5)

Telugu Seema-flanking North East or East Asia?

K.S.Chalam

It is very difficult to reconcile that we are divided now. But, after a moments' reflection, we realise that nothing seems to have changed. We are the same people speaking the same language and maintaining our longstanding relations not only in Hyderabad but in different parts of the World. Yet, boundaries of the new state now changed to have an international border on the East and Telangana on the West. The residual districts of Andhra Pradesh consisting of three regions, Uttarandhra, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema are popularly called as Seemandhra .

We had a longing for a united image for the state that our leaders became unsuccessful to uphold. We must appreciate the Elders House for granting North East status to 13 districts. It is not out of place to say here that the term Andhra Pradesh reminds us about the past. Therefore, we may consider naming the residual part as **Telugu Seema** to give language identity to the people. There were attempts in the past to name the state as Telugunadu. Now we have another Telugu state by name Telangana. We can say that the capability of Telugus to lead the South would improve with adept handling. Nevertheless, the identity of a region should depend ultimately on the people and their ingenuity in the development of the area as part of the nation/country. The people of coastal Andhra as the 'Telugu Biddas' are known throughout the World with their ICT skills and leadership abilities in different knowledge based industries. Now, an opportunity is created to broaden the development with the support of

the natural resources and rewards of the region as a separate state.

The geographical location of Telugu Seema looks like a huge lobster unlike that of Kerala, at present considered as the Gods' own country. The length of coast of Andhra (9 districts) is 972 KMs nearly double the size of Kerala with 580KMs. The comparison is imminent now in terms of the beauty and economic potential of the new state. Telugu people seem to have a historical advantage in the development of agriculture and industrial location of certain public sector units in the region. The entrepreneurial competence of the Telugus is known throughout the World as Infrastructure developers like GMR, GVK, Lanco, Nagarjuna and in Pharmaceuticals, Health etc sectors. They are currently confined to few and limited areas of operation would get plenty of opportunities to develop the region as one of the most advanced states in India competing with Gujarat and may surpass it in few decades. However, this needs to be systematically planned under a democratic environment, without which the people do not tolerate the kind of hegemony of few Business Houses deciding everything as in some industrial states today. Andhra Pradesh had seen several movements and the people are politically and socially advanced to nip any such bravura behaviour to dominate the situation by covetous others. The formation of the state itself was precarious under great emotional and economic constraints. Therefore, keeping the socio-economic and Intellectual

background of the new state, we must encourage a model that is inclusive enough to meet all socio-economic and geographical considerations.

Telugu seema now consists of 4.94 crore inhabitants in a geographical area of 142.5 thousand square kilometres is larger than Telangana both in extent and size of population. It is bigger than about 10 states like Kerala, Odissa, and Punjab. Though the combined state was moderately developed in different parameters of growth, the infrastructure of the coastal region was neglected. Except National Highways 5, 9 and 18 that cover some of the districts, the rural connectivity and the network of roads for economic opportunities are weak. Higher education and the quality institutes are located in Hyderabad and those who migrated to other states for higher studies seem to have moved from there to USA or settled elsewhere. This situation would appear to create some problems for the supply of human resources for the development projects in the state. The amendments to the Bill-2013 incorporating some 50 institutes in Hyderabad for combined admissions would be a short gap arrangement. We need huge investment to develop the infrastructure with financial packages from Union government.

The industrial base of the region was created on the basis of the requirements of the public sector without augmenting the local resources, might raise immediate problems of scarcity of certain factors conducive for growth. The agriculturally advanced 4 coastal districts are well entrenched in farming operations and have not diversified due to several reasons, might display inertia in the beginning. The agricultural surplus of the region had gone out of the region for investment elsewhere as very little was reinvested. The

(Continued on Page 11)

Rendition of Gandhi Katha at the age of 90

Sandeep Pandey

Narayan Desai, at the age of 90 years, gave the 115th rendition of his Gandhi Katha in Varanasi at Kashi Vidyapeeth from 21st to 25th February, 2014. When most people at his age would be counting their last days or would be incapacitated, he is moving around and narrating Gandhi's story in a popular format, usually used by religious people. The narratives are punctuated by songs and bhajans conveying Gandhi's message. In fact he first studied some of the popular saints from Gujarat who deliver sermons and then developed his Gandhi Katha. There could not have been a better service to the Gandhian cause in the last phase of his life.

He is probably among the last few people alive who got an opportunity to live and work with Mahatma Gandhi. His father Mahadev Desai happened to be Gandhi's personal secretary and therefore child Narayan grew up at Gandhi's Ashrams – Sabarmati in Ahmedabad and Sewagram in Wardha. Today he operates from Sampurna Kranti Vidyalya in Vedchi, Surat where he presents model of an alternative life style living with his medical doctor daughter Sanghamitra and IIT Kanpur educated physicist son-in-law Surendra Gadekar. All three of them are dedicated peace activists. They have been educating people about the dangers of nuclear power since much before it became a common knowledge after the accident in Fukushima that it is quite a dangerous thing. They have been part of national and international anti-war and nuclear disarmament campaigns. They pioneered a study to find the effects of radiation from nuclear power plant in Rawatbhata,

Rajasthan on the health of adjacent population. Later they also studied the effects of radiation from Uranium mining sites in Jadugda, Jharkhand on the local, mostly tribal, population.

Gandhi, with his own ideas about education, didn't let Narayan attend a formal school. The man who didn't attend a school is today the Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapeeth located in Ahmedabad. He has also won the Sahitya Academy Award twice. He is a living example of how a self-educated person can be more wise and grounded than highly educated people. The self-propelled man is still motivated to serve humanity at such an advanced age.

In Gandhi Katha he doesn't just narrate Gandhi's story. He tries to convey the values lived by Gandhi. For example, talking of Gandhi's visit to riot affected Noakhali he talked about the quality of fearlessness which was necessary to enter the communally charged atmosphere. Explaining fearlessness he said it is not just being not afraid of anybody but also not creating fear in anybody else's mind. Such a person can only be described as truly brave. Intimidating people is not bravery.

Concluding the Katha he said that the purpose of the exercise was not just to hear the story. The purpose of the Katha would be fulfilled if we imbibed some values of Gandhi and tried to live them. As the humanity plunges into various kinds of crisis, the ways of Gandhi can redeem it.

Gandhi stood for the values of truth and non-violence. When we

are beset by problems of terrorism, Maoism and separatism we are desperately trying to seek peaceful solutions to complex problems. Governments realize that dialogue and not the use of force are intelligent and humane ways of solving these problems. The campaign to uphold truth in the form of anti-corruption movement has caught the attention of people. Anna Hazare in the mould of Gandhi became the symbol of fight against the corrupt and Aam Aadmi Party too upholds the value of truth highly. These movements are trying to establish integrity in public life which had degenerated over years.

Through Satyagraha Gandhi has shown a way to fight against injustice. Today the method of Satyagraha is used by most political organizations when they register their protest against the government policies and actions. Even individuals and other non-political groups use the method of Satyagraha to attract attention of society. It is an effective method adopted by common people against powerful opponents. This is probably Gandhi's single most important contribution to the fight for justice. World over Gandhi is known as a crusader against injustice and has become a hope for all struggling people. Leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela who fought against inequality derived inspiration from Gandhi.

Gandhi had said that there are enough resources in this earth to fulfill everybody's need but not enough to fulfill even a single person's greed. At a time when threat to environment was not perceptible and the phrase 'climate change' was unknown to human beings, Gandhi foresaw the problems of over-exploitation of natural resources.

Gandhi was against the exploitative model of development based on

blind industrialization. Today most of the modern development projects, whether they are big dams, mining projects or nuclear power plants, face local people's opposition as they are perceived as a threat to their life and livelihood. People have also started questioning the promotion of inequity due to this model of development.

Gandhi's best known book is *Hind Swaraj*. Arvind Kejriwal is invoking the same idea to capture people's imagination. Anna Hazare is a votary of the same philosophy. Self-rule is the best rule is an idea whose time has come. Last year Supreme Court allowed a group of tribals in Odisha to have the final decision on whether bauxite mining should be allowed in their area, Niyamgiri, by a MNC, Vedanta. The tribals ruled against the mining project even though the

(Continued from Page 3)

Still the Defence Minister has said that it was "a routine training exercise." When after telling the Director General of Military Operations, the government sends a chopper to check if the troops were on their way back, there is more than what meets the eye. Since the date synchronized with the appeal to the Supreme Court by the then army chief V. K. Singh's on his birth date, the movement of the military units was given importance beyond proportions.

The entire matter has to be examined further by a team of top retired civil and military officials to reach the bottom of the "routine exercise." It cannot be left at the mere denial stage despite Defence Minister Anthony's vehement denial. Even a limited say of the armed forces in civilian matters is ominous.

That the armed forces are apolitical is a tribute to their training

company had already established the processing plant.

Gandhi was an ardent frugalist. He made good use of every resource and tried to use as little resources as possible. The idea of anathema against wastefulness is again gaining popular support. Arvind Kejriwal's rejection of VIP culture is a current example.

Gandhi was against sexual indiscreetness. Today when sexually transmitted diseases have become a major threat to human beings the importance of idea of restraint in sexual relationships is being realized.

Hence we see that the ideas of Gandhi are probably more relevant today than they were in his own time. He was a visionary who could see many things beforehand.

and conviction when both Pakistan and Bangladesh have swerved from the right path. The other two countries in the subcontinent have had a similar training. Still they threw out the elected governments. Even today when the troops have gone back to the barracks, one cannot underestimate the importance of the military.

The Indian military knows and honours its place in a democratic polity. Still the examples I have given should serve as a grim warning. True, the democratic temperament has got implanted on the Indian soil. But this could not be taken for granted. Even a small example of Bonapartism should be probed thoroughly. The armed forces are for the country's defence and the decision to use them rests with the elected governments. This is something basic and no compromise can be made in a democratic structure.

Working with masculinities

Harsh Mander

For the third year in a row, on Valentine's Day when many celebrate romantic love, women and men in more than 160 countries around the world danced, sang and rallied for another kind of love — one based on safety, equality and respect for people of all genders. It is estimated that a billion girls and women face violence at some time or the other during their lives. A global call was therefore made for One Billion to rise, and it caught the imagination of people around the planet.

Last year, the focus of the campaign was to highlight the pervasiveness of many forms of gender violence, and this particularly resonated in an India wounded with the brutal gang-rape of a student in a bus in Delhi. This year the global demand was for justice for survivors. This symbolic global rising of people against violence unites survivors of violence, breaks down their sense of being alone, and heals the battering not just of their bodies but also their spirits.

It is often assumed that gender equality will make the world better, safer, happier and more dignified for girls and women. What is forgotten is that it will also make the world kinder, less violent, and less demanding for men as well. As Nancy Smith writes unforgettably:

For every woman who is tired of acting weak when she knows she is strong, there is a man who is tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable.

If the world is to evolve into a fairer and less threatening place for

all people, women as well as men, it is imperative to work not just with women but also men, not just with girls but also boys. Many fine organisations today are working with masculinities, or the ways that men socially construct the idea of manhood. These include MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women); Forum to Engage Men (FEM); the MenEngage Alliance; and SANAM (South Asian Network to Address Masculinities). They work with boys and men to help them introspect how their socialisation pressurises men to be strong, powerful and potent, and how a more gender-equal world will also set them free.

For every woman who is tired of being called “an emotional female”, there is a man who is denied the right to weep and to be gentle.

Patriarchy is a system of social organisation fundamentally organised around the idea of men's superiority to women, while masculinity is the socially produced but embodied ways of being male. But what happens when men cannot make the grade of socially determined standards of masculinity? Not all men can suppress their soft natures, or be successful in earning money, competing against other men (and increasingly women) and supporting their families. Men can and do fail financially, socially and sexually, but they often lack the emotional resources to cope with these failures.

For every woman who is tired of being a sex object, there is a man who must worry about his potency.

Both the need to dominate and the inability to deal with failures lead men to be violent, and this is why violence across a large majority of cultures is an essential component of masculinity. Scholar Michael Kauffman observes that ‘the imperatives of manhood (as opposed to the simple certainties of biological maleness), seem to require constant vigilance and work, especially for younger men. The personal insecurities conferred by a failure to make the masculine grade, or simply, the threat of failure, is enough to propel many men, particularly when they are young, into a vortex of fear, isolation, anger, self-punishment, self-hatred, and aggression.’

For every woman who is called unfeminine when she competes, there is a man for whom competition is the only way to prove his masculinity.

It has been my consistent experience that only strong men can act with compassion and gentleness. It is weak and insecure men who are violent. Today, many more women are entering the labour market, but on unequal terms of much lower wages, greater exploitation, vulnerability to violence and denial of social protection. Even so, men feel threatened and confused, and violence helps them compensate for their insecurity and low self-esteem and to hold on to the ephemeral idea of power.

For every woman who is denied meaningful employment or equal pay, there is a man who must bear full financial responsibility for another human being.

Successful and powerful men, those wielding power of class, wealth, caste and race, use violence against women as an extension of their overall sense of entitlement. Men seek not only to dominate women but also other men. Suppressed and oppressed men learn socially to reclaim their manhood by violence to women. Violence against women is the last resort of defeated men.

Many women today have imbibed the spirit of equality, and are battling all odds to follow their hearts and achieve their potential, in homes as well as work-places. It is men who still need to learn much better to give up their sense of entitlement, privilege and power, and to recognise that in so doing they are also setting themselves free.

For every woman who takes a step toward her own liberation, there is a man who finds the way to freedom has been made a little easier.

—*Aman Biradari*

EVENUE UP 3 Times BUT Employees Reduced 10% In 5 Years <http://goo.gl/9VUd9A> RIL revenue was up from Rs.118,354 crores 2006-07 to Rs,371,119 crores in 2012-13 but number of Employees declined from 25,487 in 2007-08 to 23,519 in 2012-13.

If people of Gujarat have even 25% equity in Gujarat companies their worth would be Rs.2,50,000 crores assuming their current value at Rs.10,00,000 crores but Companies neither trained YOUTH nor Employed Them.

It is SCANDALOUS to blame GOI for Cut in Social Expenditure – It is entirely States Responsibility to implement Social Programs like Mid Day Meals or ICDS.

Ravinder Singh,
Convener, Mentor & CEO

State of Bihar

The first state convention of the Socialist Party Bihar Pradesh was held in Patna on 1-2 February. 2014. Delegates, largely youth, came from 20 districts of the state to attend the convention. Omkar Singh, national general secretary, inaugurated the convention and Jai Singh Verma, senior party member from UP presided over the inaugural session. Bhai Vaidya, national president, Dr. Prem Singh, national general secretary, Varsha Gupte, president, Socialist Mahila Sabha and Shyam Gambhir, special invitee to the national executive addressed the convention. The following resolution was deliberated upon and passed in the convention:

The Lok Sabha elections are about to be held in three months in the country. All the established political parties are vying with and against each other to grab the political power. All these political parties are trying to draft the poor and hardworking populace by misleading them through false promises, personal accusations/cross accusations, communal frenzy, casteism, language divide, regionalism, family-dynasty rule, money and muscle power while expressing phony sympathy towards them. Serious contemplation about the basic issues like poverty, the deep divide between the poor and the rich, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, suicides by lakhs of farmers, suppression of citizen's rights, increasing insecurity of the tribals, dalits, women and minorities. In reality, all these parties have consensus about the neoliberal economic policies (implemented since the nineties), globalization, market-driven consumerism, centralization of power and blind nationalism. These parties form their policies keeping in mind the interests of the national and international corporate houses following dictates of the apex organizations of corporate capitalism such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization. In this way, most mainstream political parties have been reduced to being mere agents selling the nation's

precious resources – water, forests and land – to the corporate houses.

The source of all poverty and corruption rampant in the system is this very neoliberal system. Poverty and corruption cannot be eradicated without changing it. However, in the name of ridding the society of these evils, some vested interests can be seen indulging in the loot-game of political power with the support of corporate savvy mainstream media and foreign money. This can be seen in some international NGO masterminds starting a political party.

The only way to remove poverty and corruption would be establishing a socialist system based on democracy, decentralization and self-reliance as per the values of our freedom struggle and the Constitution. The Socialist Party with unwavering faith in the fundamental principles of socialism, inspired by the thoughts and legacy of great leaders and thinkers like Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, JP, Dr. Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev, S. M. Joshi, Yusuf Meharry, Achyut Patwardhan, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Sarojini Naidu, Karpuri Thakur and Kishan Patnaik, reiterates its resolve in this convention to continue its total opposition to the neoliberal system.

In the recent months in Bihar, the pell-mell and opportunistic

ruling coalition between the JD (U) and the BJP has broken. This coalition which lasted for 16 years has managed to strengthen and deepen the roots of communalism in the secular land of Bihar. The secular people of Bihar will have to wage a hard and long struggle against this challenge. However, there is no fundamental difference in the policies and actions of the erstwhile coalition government and the current JD (U) government. Instead of trying to solve the actual problems faced by the people of Bihar, this government is implementing the corporate capitalist agenda. The whole administration is riddled with corruption and red-tapism. This means that the people are not able to reap any benefits due to corruption pervading the government schemes. Socialist Party Bihar Pradesh resolves to struggle against the corruption and red-tapism rampant from the block level to the state headquarters.

The land mafia, contractors and the liquor barons are ruining the people of Bihar. Liquor shops have been opened even in the villages as a result of which, the social atmosphere is deteriorating very fast. The youth, women and children are most affected by this evil. The land mafia is buying farmers' land at low prices and reselling it at higher prices, which have led to the creation of artificial inflation in land prices. Socialist Party demands from the state government a complete ban on liquor and check on the land mafia in the Bihar.

The land acquisition carried out by the government under various schemes is also steeped in corruption and red-tapism. The farmers have not been paid the right price of their land even years after the land acquisition carried out by the government. The Socialist party has long been fighting against

the excesses of the government and the corruption in the Biada land acquisition in Bhagalpur. Recently in Bihta, Patna, a sustained movement about these demands of the farmers was organized, where the farmers were on a fast for 10-12 days. The Socialist Party supported this movement. In various regions in Bihar, movements are being organized to address the problems of the farmers, farming and land acquisition. The Socialist Party demands that the farmers be compensated in a just and timely manner for their land. At the same time, the party requests the farmers that they should think long and hard before agreeing to sell their land for either a private or government project.

Under the rule of the current Bihar government, the education system (from primary to higher) is almost in ruins. Parents bear a lot of cost and risk to send their children, even school-going, out of the state for education. The indecent and insensitive treatment with the contracted teachers by the government is often visible. We have seen how the innocent children paid the cost of corruption rampant in the Mid-day Meal scheme. The Socialist Party opposes the appointment of teachers on contract basis and demands that the contracted teachers be made permanent with full salary. The government formed a committee of the famous educationist Prof. Anil Sadgopal and Prof. Muchkund Dube on Common School System (CSS) in

Umraomal Purohit

Comrade Umraomal Purohit, Secretary Staff Side JCM. National Council and President of All India Railwaymen's Federation passed away in Mumbai on February 27, 2014.

Umraomal Purohit had been active in the Indian trade union movement for over five decades. He started his career in Indian Railways and became the General Secretary of the Western Railway Employees' Union in 1958 at the age of 30. In 1962 he was elected as the Assistant General Secretary of the All India Railway Men's Federation (AIRF). Purohit had also been leading the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), a trade union body of socialists, since 1985, and had served as AIRF President since 1980. He had been associated with the ITF for over 40 years and was elected as its President in 1998 at the ITF Congress in New Delhi, and was chosen to serve a second term in Vancouver in 2000.

Comrade Umraomal Purohit had been a special invitee to the National Executive of the Socialist Party (India) (SPI) for two years and was active in the formation the SPI three years ago at Hyderabad. The Socialist Party held a condolence meeting at its Delhi office today to pay tribute to the legendary trade union leader. Socialist comrades assembled at the condolence meeting expressed grief and sorrow on his sad demise remembering his contribution to the trade union/labour movement in India and abroad.

On this occasion Dr. Prem Singh, general secretary, said, since the trade union movement is passing through its most critical times facing the onslaught of corporate capitalism, demise of Comrade Umraomal Purohit is certainly a great loss to the labour fraternity. The Socialist Party pledges to uphold and continue his struggle safeguarding the interest of labourers. Renu Gambhir, president, Delhi state, remembering her association with Umraomal Purohit paid her tribute to him. She said that the fight against corporate forces will continue taking inspiration from the struggle waged by Comrade Umaraomal Purohit

2005-06. This committee submitted its report soon to the government. But far from implementing it, the government did not even deliberate upon it. The Socialist Party demands that the aforementioned report should be deliberated upon and implemented without delay to provide all the students in the state equal, free and quality education.

The government in Bihar has recently enacted a law to start private universities in the state. This is an attempt at privatizing the higher education. This will make higher education costlier and hence out of the reach of the ordinary citizens. The party demands that the government should put an end to these attempts at privatization and instead concentrate on improving existing state universities in the state which are on the brink of disaster. More than half of the teaching positions in the universities of the state are lying vacant which immensely impedes the education. The Socialist Party demands that the government should appoint teachers on permanent basis in the universities without further delay. The government The party appeals to the government to develop Vikramshila University on the pattern of Nalanda University.

The Socialist Party expresses deep concern on the plight of the farmers and agriculture. There is a great dearth of agricultural facilities and the farmers are not able to get the right price for their produce. The farmers are being exploited by the middlemen. The government is indifferent. The Socialist Party demands that the government should make available basic facilities like irrigation, seeds, credit, haulage, markets, storage among others for the farmers and ensure appropriate

price for their produce on a priority basis.

The only road which leads to the prosperity and economic progress of Bihar is through the small and cottage industries. By establishing the agriculture based small industries in the villages of Bihar, the life of rural Bihar can be made prosperous. But because of the indifference of the government, all the small and big industries have been shut down. The Socialist Party demands that the industries of Dalmia Nagar, the jute mills of Katihar, the weavers' industry of Bhagalpur, the Khadi Gramodyogs in various districts of Bihar, especially Madhubani, the sugar mills of Champaran should be reopened without delay. At the same time, party demands that the lichi-based industry in Muzaffarpur, the banana and lichi-based industry in Navgachhiya and Bihpur regions, the fisheries industry, by managing water resources, in Lakhisarai and the banana-based industry in Hajipur should be started. The party will start a movement throughout Bihar to implement the agro- industry based policies.

The Socialist Party had made a demand to the central government to enact 'Full Employment Guarantee Law' to ensure employment to all eligible men and women. The party appeal to the Bihar government should to take initiative in this direction. The government should also give Rs. 5000 per month unemployment allowance to all unemployed citizens and pension to senior citizens of Bihar.

The displaced people of Baghmata dam have been agitating for a long time. The Socialist Party supports their cause and demands from the government to give immediate

justice to the displaced people.

The state of law and order in the state is not good. The party demands that the government should take strong action against the culprits of the Farbisganj shooting incident and the law and order should be strengthened in public interest and to ensure women's safety. The party further demands that the State Roadways Transport Corporation should be strengthened and extended to ensure that the public transportation system is comfortable and effective.

Today the folk-arts and folk-artists of the state are in a dismal state due to the indifference of the government. The folk-arts and folk-artists are not being accorded due honour nationally and internationally. The various dialects and languages of Bihar are also in a bad shape. Various language academies are almost dead and as a result, the litterateurs of these languages and dialects are in danger of being lost in the darkness of anonymity. The Socialist Party is dedicated in the preservation of the cultural glory of Bihar. In this direction, the party demands that the government should take special steps to preserve the folk-arts, to activate and revitalize the language academies and to establish a special academy for Angika language.

There is a great need for a creative youth policy in Bihar. A special committee should be formed to give suggestions to the government so that there is an increase in the interest taken by the youth in ideas, literature, art, culture, theatre and sports. The government should formulate and put into practice youth-oriented policies on the basis of the committee's suggestions for the rural and urban youth.

The BJP hype and the reality check

Faraz Ahmad

My analyst friends and their surveys are giving the BJP, specially on account of Narendra Modi's perceived popularity anywhere between 223 and 285 and in turn the Congress even 50-60 seats. I therefore decided to do some of my calculation, though I concede I am not too good at it.

Let's start with the BJP and see what is the maximum number of seats it can get, in a dream scenario. Let us start with Jammu and Kashmir and accept for argument's sake there is a Modi wave. It is almost impossible, but let us give two out of six seats to the BJP in J&K. These can only be Jammu and Udhampur. Even the die hard saffronised Sanghi can't give more than this to the BJP in J&K. Granted?

Next come to Himachal Pradesh which has four seats. In 2009 BJP won three seats. It is almost impossible for the BJP to improve upon that. But let us assume there is a Modi wave and the BJP then gets all the four. That makes BJP tally go up to seven.

Then in Punjab, the Akali Dal will contest eight and give three to the BJP. Give BJP all three, which is very unlikely. The tally goes upto 10.

In Haryana, Congress won all ten seats. Even if Congress is down and out there is the INLD of Chautala which would be the biggest gainer. Nevertheless we give BJP five seats. That makes 15 for BJP. In Delhi let us give all the seven to BJP taking its tally to 22.

Rajasthan witnessed a wave against the Congress, so give all the 25 to BJP, taking the tally to 47, same for Madhya Pradesh with 29 added

plus all the 11 from Chhatisgarh so add another 40 to BJP kitty taking its tally to 87. Ditto for Gujarat, 26 and 2 from Goa, taking the tally to 115. In Maharashtra they won nine in 2009. In the Modi wave let us assume it will now get 12 (though its Shiv Sena's junior partner there) taking the tally to 127.

In Karnataka despite the return of Yeddyurappa, even the BJP optimist concede they cannot win back the 18 they won in 2009 so a fair figure should be say 10 seats. That makes it 137. This covers almost all the big states where the BJP is in direct fight with the Congress and therefore it could sweep. Conceded?

Now in UP the BJP claims it will get 40, granted taking the tally to 177. The BJP says it will get 20 seats in Bihar, done. The figure goes upto 197. In Jharkhand the BJP won seven in 2009 which was a very high figure. Nevertheless say Modi wave gives it another 10 of the 14 seats. The tally goes upto 207. Again in Uttarakhand there are only five seats. Add all the five to BJP kitty the figure goes upto 212. Then in Andhra Pradesh the BJP may score a duck. But for argument sake give them two. That's 214. In Assam again BJP got four in 2009, give them six. This goes upto 220. Add one each seat from Chandigarh, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. That is another 3 seats, taking the BJP tally to 223. That's it. Even with such a dream run the BJP is stuck at 223. No sane person can argue that the BJP will get a seat from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal or Kerala or the rest of the North-East.

Now the best advocate of the BJP cannot give the BJP more than this!

And everyone knows that this is a dream scenario for the BJP which is not almost but actually impossible to achieve. A more realistic scenario is that it is next to impossible for the BJP to cross 200, even if the Congress is completely liquidated in 2014.

Add to that the AAP factor. In Delhi Assembly elections three months back, AAP completely decimated the Congress party. But if it caused 70 per cent damage to the Congress, BJP admits it dented the BJP base as well though nowhere near what it did to the Congress, if it caused 70 per cent damage to the Congress, it caused 30 per cent damage to the BJP as well. Now of the 200 odd seats the BJP hopes to win in its wave, if the AAP factor works in the urban centres as is being forecast by most of the psephologists then that brings down the BJP tally by 60 seats. Even if the damage is only 15 per cent it means 30 seats less. That brings down the BJP tally to 160-170 and that is the figure the BJP insiders are actually calculating.

In such a scenario, it is well nigh impossible for Narendra Modi to head the next government. A BJP led NDA government is still likely but a Modi-led, unlikely.

Now let us look at the Congress. We all concede that the Congress is in bad shape and may do worse than it ever did in its entire political career.

The Congress was about to get wiped out from Andhra Pradesh where it won 33 seats under the combined leadership of Sonia Gandhi and late Y S Rajasekar Reddy. But with Telangana given, it is now in a

position to reclaim some loss in the 17 seats of Andhra Pradesh and so a fair assessment would be about 10 seats to the Congress from AP. In Arunachal Pradesh there is no opponent so the two seats in 2009 go back to it taking its tally to 12. In Assam Tarun Gogoi has proved quite invincible. In 2009 Congress won seven, let us say this time it will come down to three taking the Congress numbers to 15. In Bihar a tieup with Lalu Yadav will help it improve its tally at least marginally to three seats taking the tally to 18. In a fair assessment it should get at least one in Chhatisgarh, going up to 19; Goa zero and Gujarat where it got 8 in 2009 it may win only two, with the total going upto 20. Himachal Pradesh we can safely assume that Virbhadra Singh or his wife will anyway win their pocket burrough so that makes it 21. In Punjab we give only three seats taking the tally to 24. In Haryana Congress won all ten seats in 2009. We give them only two which makes it 26. J&K zero. Jharkhand this time in alliance with Lalu and JMM they could improve their tally by say two seats thus getting three and taking the tally to 29. There is still no anti incumbency factor against the Congress in Karnataka, so even if it does badly it can get 12 seats taking the tally to 41. Kerala it got 13 in 2009. This time it may get only six jacking the figure to 47. Four from Madhya Pradesh against 11 in 2009 takes it to 51. In Maharashtra it got 17 in 2009. This can come down to 7 totaling upto 58. Plus two from Manipur, making it 60 and one each from Meghalaya and Mizoram, taking it to 62. In Odisha they got six in 2009. There should not be much of a loss in Odisha, but let us give them only four taking the tally to 66. In Rajasthan the BJP won five and Congress 20 in 2009. This time in the reverse scene, Congress may get only five with its overall figure going upto 71.

In UP people may say I am being too optimist but I gave them 14 studying the seats the Congress could still win, for instance Amethi, Rae Bareli, Faizabad, Gonda, Kanpur, Unnao and if Jayaprada joins Congress and Congress decides to replace the no good Azharuddin with Jayaprada the Congress may win both Rampur and Moradabad. Similarly Gonda has Beni Prasad Verma and in Firozabad, post Mzaffarnagar the Muslims may still stick by Raj Babbar. Anyway the figure is disputable. Nevertheless this makes it 85 for the Congress. With a tacit understanding with the CPM to teach Mamata Banerjee a lesson the Congress can expect to still win six seats in West Bengal with its tally going upto 91. Similarly

in Uttarakhand it may retain Harish Rawat's seat taking the tally to 92. In Tamil Nadu it may score a duck. But it may still win its Puducherry seat, going upto 93 and one more from Lakshwadeep taking the finally tally to 94. This is the worst case scenario for the Congress party.

Of the 544 Lok Sabha seats there are only 111 seats in HP, Delhi, Chhatisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, MP, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Andaman, D&N and D&D where there is a direct contest between the BJP and Congress and of that we can safely take out Delhi now for it will be three way here. So that leaves only 106 seats. At best the BJP can win all those 106 seats. What next?

(Continued from Page 4)

haphazard and spurious methods of development that was initiated in the recent past in the coastal region alleged to have led to subsequent litigations. This might create now a diffident atmosphere for new entrepreneurs to come forward to invest. The kind of iniquitous growth that was unleashed in Hyderabad benefitting few should be kept in mind in devising strategies of 'scientific development'. Otherwise, soon they might join the complex North East, being part of East India.

The nine coastal districts and the hard working population of Rayalaseema would create magnificent conditions for the development. One important advantage of the new state is that it has a long coast close to South East and Far eastern countries like Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand and others that have a different development experience. Singapore on the neighbourhood of East Coast has taken the advantage of providing supply chain strategies and transshipment port can be slowly attracted by East Coast with its state

of the art facilities to be developed on the Coastal Corridor. We have direct flights to Singapore from Visakhapatnam to reach in just 3 hours. Thailand is near to our coast via Andamans. There are many Telugus from Prakasam in Sri Lanka. Anantpur and Chittoor close to Bangalore and Chennai. Thus East Coast corridor with its hinterland of Telangana, Chattisgarh, M.P and other land locked states has huge potential for growth. But, it is to be innovatively planned keeping the emerging industrial needs of China and the neighbourhood.

If Mumbai and Gujarat coast are considered as nearby to the West, East coast should be developed as a proximity to the East Asia. Chennai is in fact physically and culturally far off to Eastern countries compared to Telugu East Coast with greater cultural links with the South East, as Buddhism had gone to the East from this part with deep and historical roots and archaeological attractions. Let us hope and wish our Telugu Seema would soon bloom on the horizon of the East like a radiant sun.

Locating Lohia in Feminist Theory

Jaya Shrivastava

Rammanohar Lohia is a noted figure whose thoughts and ideas continue to have a powerful influence on sociopolitical life in India. Though widely known as a socialist, Krishna (1968: 1113) characterizes him as “a romantic who casts himself in the role of a non-violent revolutionary”. The importance of his thought emerges in the continued existence and influence of sociopolitical organisations, at least in some regions, claiming allegiance to his vision of reconstructing India on socialist lines. But his radical and insightful thoughts on the status of Indian women and the path he envisioned for their emancipation are not all that well known in the country’s sociopolitical space. Indian academia has not paid much attention to his thoughts in general and those on the Indian women in particular, which are highly significant given the patriarchal domination of Indian women enmeshed in a pernicious caste system riddled with class divisions. The political formations claiming allegiance to his vision do not seem to reflect much of his radical and liberating thought in their practices. Feminist discourse has at large remained oblivious to Lohia’s rich, insightful, and radical thoughts on the patriarchal domination of Indian women, which he felt was inextricably entangled with the caste system.

Keeping this in view, this article provides a synoptic view of Lohia’s thoughts on the status of Indian women and the way to their emancipation. An

Attempt is made to locate his thoughts on Indian women on the broad canvas of feminist theory. Accordingly, the article first briefly touches on the major strands

Of feminist theory and then discusses Lohia’s thoughts on Indian women and the path desired for their complete liberation from patriarchal domination of all sorts. In this connection, it is noted why he rejected both the liberal modernist Nehruvian method and the Marxist approach, and advocated a historically and culturally rooted socialist path for the emancipation of Indian women. The article closes with some concluding remarks.

It may be noted here that writings on Lohia are meagre. His main writings and speeches have been published but are not easily available. Given this limitation, this article is largely based on his works such as *The Caste System*, *Wheel of History*, and *Saptkranti* (Seven Revolutions), and P S Satoskar’s *Lohia on Hinduism*.

Feminist Theoretical Strands

There are different strands in feminist theory with their respective sets of assumptions about men and women, the causality of male domination over women, and the strategies and measures for women’s emancipation. Liberal feminists view the inequality in opportunities between men and women as the main reason for gender inequality in society. They advocate a gradual introduction of measures, including welfarist preferential policies, for

promoting equality between men and women in different domains, such as education, employment, voting rights, and so on. In contrast, radical feminists essentialise and also glorify the differences between men and women, considering the two biologically and emotionally different. They hold that patriarchy, which has different scales of values for men and women, and its social hierarchies are responsible for male domination of women. They are concerned with women’s rights rather than gender equality. They reject the liberal premise and commitment to sameness between men and women. For them, the abolition of institutions representing patriarchy and women’s complete autonomy from men is essential for ending male domination.

Socialist feminist theory (also called the dual system theory) considers two systems, capitalism and patriarchy, responsible for the subjugation of women and advocates abolishing them through peaceful means for achieving women’s emancipation. But Marxist feminists hold that the capitalist system based on private property and profit maximization is the main cause of women’s subordination, marginalization, and domination. Capitalism exploits the patriarchal structure, uses women as a source of cheap labour, and thus sustains and reinforces itself. It is argued that oppression of women is inextricably linked to the capitalist order as women are excluded from the public sphere and remain unpaid workers in the domestic sphere. Class-divided capitalist society perpetuates gender-based

discriminations and inequalities. It is affirmed that women's emancipation will be possible only through a class struggle, which may involve violence, geared towards establishing a socialist/communist society. As a result of the struggle, patriarchal structures will be destroyed, along with the class-based society resting on the institution of private property. So, overthrowing of the existing inegalitarian capitalist system is considered essential for the establishment of a socialist/communist society where women will live, like men, an emancipated life.

Against this broad theoretical backdrop of the various frames of feminist theory, we now examine Lohia's thoughts on the condition of Indian women, the factors he found responsible for their domination by men in society, and the way to their emancipation from male domination.

Status of Indian Women

In his writings, Lohia delves into the structural, institutional and cultural aspects of patriarchal domination of women, which have pervaded the socio-cultural, economic, and political life of the people in India. He recognises the prevalence of centuries-old patriarchal domination over women in the country. However, his perspective is not essentialist. He considers Indian women as a differentiated and heterogeneous category in social, economic and cultural terms.

We cannot, in his opinion, understand gender – that is, sex-based differential valuation, gender inequalities, and male domination – in isolation in the Indian context, but have to include the dimensions of caste, class, and such other social factors because they all intersect.

Thus, he adopts a perspective of intersectionality while reflecting on Indian women.

To begin with, Lohia notes that Indian women have not always been backward. He refers to the narratives of Gargi, Matireyee, Razia Sultana, Akka Mahadevi, Meera and Rani Laxmibai, who in the past were examples of female excellence in the domains of knowledge, spiritual attainment, leadership, bravery, and creativity. Yet the status of women declined in course of time.

Lohia finds that all Indian women suffer from a set of common deprivations and exclusions. Structurally, Indian women suffer from deprivations in terms of their right to property, their lack of participation in decision-making, and various other discriminations in sociocultural terms. He notes how “her claim to a single standard with men in respect of marriage and property continues to be assailed”

(Satoskar nd: 3). Societal and psychological differences and stereotyping of men and women are socially constructed. Women are commonly viewed as inferior to men. There exists inequality between the sexes, which is the root cause of all types of discrimination against women. Several social customs and taboos are discriminatory towards women, and cultural constraints are imposed on them through institutional mechanisms. These centuries-old customs reduce Indian women to a subordinate second sex.

The inseparability of caste and sex/gender in Lohia's conceptualisation is very important to women's issues in the Indian context. He affirms

that the two

segregations of caste and gender are primarily responsible for the decline of the spirit of India (1979: 1). He finds that Indian women suffer the most due to two

structural formations – patriarchy or male domination, and the caste system. Indian women are doubly deprived, dominated, and marginalised as the caste system and patriarchy are closely interlinked. Norms of purity and pollution form the cultural basis of birth-based differential valuation of different caste groups and their hierarchy in the caste system, which also puts certain castes in the category of untouchables. Similarly women are seen as inferior to men by birth on the basis of their sex and are even treated as untouchables during certain periods of their life, such as menstruation and after pregnancy. They are confined to the kitchen. They do not even have control over their bodies, and they do not have reproductive rights.

Lohia holds that the status of all Indian women has been bad as they are viewed as inferior to men and they have remained backward in social, economic, political, educational, and other attainments. But he does not consider Indian women as one homogeneous category. He emphasizes the class factor because he finds that the condition of poorer/lower caste/class women, who form the large majority, is far worse in terms of material deprivations and the unavailability of even basic facilities. He specifically expresses his deep concern over the sufferings of women in villages. In an important piece on “Two Segregations of Caste and Sex”, he states.

The problem of the majority of Indian women is the lack of water taps and latrines. The Indian woman is condemned to the drudgery of drawing water often muddy and from distant wells or ponds and carries it home every morning and evening. She must also save her modesty only by easing herself in the open fields either before sunrise or after sunset (1979: 59).

Further, he totally rejects the practice of arranged marriages, which affect all women in India. He sheds light on the flourishing marriage market in society and equates arranged marriage with the “cattle trade”. He comments,

To arrange marriages on the sight of a photograph or in the nervous atmosphere of a cup of tea brought by a shrinking phantom is any day more ridiculous than the earlier marriages through the barber or the Brahmin. It is like buying a horse who is indeed brought before the buyer, but whose hoofs one may not touch nor closely examine the teeth (1979: 7).

He holds that if anything can be called a sin, the conditions related to an arranged marriage are sinful. Associated with arranged marriages is the practice of the bride’s family giving a dowry to the groom’s family, something he sharply condemns. Dowry causes suffering to even parents of moderate means. It demeans women in general. His pithy comment on the practice of dowry is, “A girl without a dowry is a person of no consequence, like a cow without her calf” (1979: 6). He shares his experience. “Parents have told me with tear sodden eyes how their daughters are maltreated and sometimes put to death if

there is difficulty in paying out the arranged dowry in full” (1979: 6).

The problem becomes more difficult and complicated if parents educate their daughters. The amount of dowry increases as parents obviously prefer to marry their educated daughter to an educated boy, who commands more money in the dowry market. So, keeping a girl uneducated/less educated, or keeping her backward, proves to be beneficial to parents. He states, “Just as there are agricultural situations in which a person earns more by leasing than by labouring, a less educated girl is superior to a better educated one, for her dowry is smaller” (1979: 6). He also opposes extravagant expenses at marriage ceremonies.

Another condition related to an arranged marriage is that the girl must be a virgin when she marries. A girl must remain celibate, irrespective of her age, protecting her virginity till her marriage is arranged. Or else her chances of being married are jeopardised. This is a highly oppressive norm, which applies to women, but not men, and it clearly reflects a discriminatory patriarchal double standard. In a way, it violates the principles of natural justice. Lohia observes, “Celibacy is generally a prison-house. Who has not met such imprisoned souls, whose virginity shackles them and who eagerly await a liberator?” (1979: 8).

Lohia well recognised that the problem of male domination over women is complex. He refrains from what he calls “the usual feminist passion of piling it on men” (1979: 8). He appreciates Shakuntala Srivastava for writing a series of articles on the position

of Indian women, which held that “both men and women are guilty in varying measure” (1979: 5). He notes how women also become a party to sustaining gender-based discriminatory practices in India. It is evident that most Indian women follow, or are made to follow and support patriarchal values, norms, and practices, such as arranged marriages and dowry. This happens because they are socialised that way since childhood and are thus fixed in the structure of society, which is patriarchal. According to him, society is basically cruel towards women in India, and this turns some women into exceedingly cruel persons. He says, “It is annoying to see how married women behave and gossip about females, particularly if they are unmarried, who go about with different males. With such cruel minds, the segregation of man from women will not end” (1979: 7).

Further, in his schema of “seven revolutions”, Lohia notes that gender inequality has so colonised the consciousness of women that most of them do not want equality, but are satisfied with ornaments and such things. This is like most poor people not demanding equality, but being satisfied with *bakhsis* (gifts) (Lohia nd: 17). Realising the complexity and significance of the gender conundrum, he makes equality between man and woman a very important constituent of the seven revolutions.

Another important complexity he points to is the attitude and behavior of prosperous and sanskritised sudras (lower caste people) in the perpetuation of women’s subordination. In “A Letter to a Sudra”, he observes,

With a little prosperity, the Sudras are inclined to pick up the bad habits

of the Dvijas. No sooner does a Sudra acquire a little wealth, than he tries to force his women behind the purdah. I have always maintained that the Sudra women, who work in the streets and the fields with uncovered faces, are far better than the Dvija women, who keep themselves shut up in homes. The Sudra should give this matter serious thought. The case of Harijans is not so bad, but the backward castes who are not untouchables are gripped by such notions. The educated and well-to-do amongst the Sudras are often motivated by a sense of jealousy and the social atmosphere ... aggravates this feeling (1979: 19).

Rejection of Liberal Modernism and the Marxist Path

Lohia's position on the approach to emancipate Indian women differs from both the liberal modernist and the Marxist paths. He offers a thesis of the "equal irrelevance" of capitalism and communism "in respect of the creation of a new human civilisation" (1963: 486). His rejection of the liberal modernist perspective on women is evident in his criticism of the approach and measures adopted by the then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru for uplifting the status of women. He calls Nehru a "modern Vashishtha" who neither understands nor bothers about the well-being of women belonging to the lower castes but cares only for upper caste women. In "Vashishthas and Valmiki", he observes,

His [Nehru's] concern is limited to the Sitas and Urmilas [upper-caste women]. Five thousand years have brought just one distinction. The Vashishtha of five thousand years ago ordained all possible restraints for Sita and wanted innocence to be proved each time by the ordeal

of fire. The modern Vashishtha, however, wants to remove all the shackles that bind the Sitas, but so far as the Vasantis and Kushikas [lower-caste women] are concerned, their role continues as before to serve the desires and pleasures of Vashishtha. To them the doctrine of equality does not extend (1979: 59).

Lohia takes note of Nehru's liberal ideas and his behaviour towards women, but calls him a "fanatic Brahmin". In "Vashishthas and Valmiki", he says, "If one were to enter the root of this matter, symptoms of orthodoxy may be found"

(1979: 58). Specifically, in the case of Nehru, he comments,

The liberal veneer is only superficial. The prime minister took some sort of a stand on the laws relating to marriage and property right of women. Apparently the

stand was liberal and progressive. In reality however it was an expression of the Western tradition which is a few hundred years old now and is also called the tradition of modernity (1979: 58).

He adds, "This stand of the prime minister was in no way a big step in the direction of equality between man and woman" (1979: 58). The reason for this was,

These laws are not at all relevant for more than 80% of India's women. To the extent that the present social and economic system permits, they enjoy them even now. They have a meaning only for a few high caste women in Brahmin, Bania and Thakur homes. Again, the same group interests, the same hackneyed desire for modernisation. ... The act was good but incomplete and initiated by twice-born self-interest (1979: 58-59).

(to be concluded)

The article was earlier published in Economic & Political Weekly

Understanding the nature and risks of the AAP's decision to quit the Delhi government requires understanding this historical moment. Indian politics is defined by two major narratives: plutocracy and paralysis. As William Bryan Jennings once said in a similar chaotic moment in American history, "Plutocracy is abhorrent to a republic; it is more despotic than a monarchy, more heartless than an aristocracy, more selfish than a bureaucracy."

The AAP is a reaction to plutocracy. The reach of that plutocracy has been corrosive. As Shekhar Gupta reminded us, the pepper spraying of Parliament is such a symbolic manifestation of plutocracy: the rich control politics, they control the banks, and then spray pepper into peoples' eyes. While we protest Penguin withdrawing Wendy Doniger's book as an assault on free speech, let us not forget that it is impossible to publish on companies in India. A book called Polyester Prince on a certain Indian tycoon was "made unavailable" a few years ago; journalists cannot write on Sahara and apparently ministers, to show how cutting-edge Air India is, ensure no analytical book on it is published.

Plutocracy is not just about money. It has corroded free speech and other institutions. It has generated a politics of excess.

– Pratap Bhanu Mehta, *The Indian Express*



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What price democracy?

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Democracy is full of flaws but it is supposed to be the best among available political systems. India chose parliamentary democracy as the political system best suited to the genius of its people. The general consensus, after six decades of freedom and the parliamentary system, is that India has been best served by it. However, it has been an exasperating period of “experimenting” with the system and as the nation is about to elect its 16th Lok Sabha, there will not be many takers for the proposition that the system of parliamentary democracy is the best suited for India.

The 15th Lok Sabha to which we are bidding farewell has been adjudged to be the least productive. Whenever the term of one Lok Sabha ends, a prayer goes up from democracy's well-wishers that the next Lok Sabha would be a better one in all aspects. The same prayer will be expressed as the vast Indian electorate participates in the 2014 general elections. Parliament represents the collective will of the people. But this will be true and valid only if it is allowed to function. What is the use of a forum representative of the people if it has no role in shaping public opinion? Or if its members so act as to

undermine its authority and majesty? Whether parliament is effective or not ultimately depends upon its members and what sincerity and commitment they bring to their responsibilities. In this aspect, we must record that the general perception among the people is that the honourable members of the outgoing Lok Sabha (and the Rajya Sabha) have not discharged their responsibilities fully, fairly and satisfactorily. Indeed, it would be truer to say that they have not added to the glory and majesty of Parliament by their sins of omission and commission within the two Houses.

It will be pertinent to quote here the observation of the Parliamentary Research Service. It confirms that both Houses of Parliament wasted a lot of time in disrupting the proceedings and holding up legitimate business. It says inter alia: The extended winter session of parliament had 12 sittings. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha lost 79 and 73 per cent of the scheduled time to disruption, respectively. Both Houses together were productive for only 24 per cent of the total time. Question hour functioned for 11 per cent of its scheduled time in the Lok Sabha, with only eight of 220 listed questions answered. No questions were orally

answered at all in the Rajya Sabha. Not a flattering account of how the nation's central legislative body functions!

Between the lines

Pot calling kettle black

Kuldip Nayar

A stage has been reached where it becomes news if parliament functions or is allowed to function smoothly. The Telangana debate perhaps brought out the worst in parliament. Unruly scenes are quite commonplace, but during the proceedings on Telangana, the nadir was touched. Pepper spray was used by a member, ostensibly in self-defence, but as a means of terrorizing fellow-members to coerce them into voting for or against the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Hooliganism was on open display. Tempers were frayed and discipline broke down completely. An ugly precedent has been set. Pepper spray! Indeed, what will members think of next?

It is not as if the malady is confined to Parliament alone. State assemblies are, unfortunately, no better. The same kind of unruly scenes prevail there also. Indeed, turbulence is more regular in the assemblies, and there is a similarity to the pattern of (mis)behavior of members. Despite the maximum efforts, presiding officers are unable to enforce discipline.

Does this mean that we abandon the parliamentary system and opt for something else? Certainly not. Jettisoning the system in favour of the presidential or any other system will be like throwing the baby with the bath water. Whether one likes it or not, the system is there and has come to stay. There are many answers to the problem of parliamentary disfunctioning, but perhaps none is more pertinent

Foreign rulers always claim that their regimen is benign and helps the subjects. The British are no exception. They say the same thing about their governance. But if their atrocities were to be enumerated the record would be brutal. The credit for not defaming the British for their 150-year rule goes to the Indians who have taken the past in their stride and have even joined the Commonwealth with the Queen as the symbol of unity.

Still the British have never said or written a good word about India's generosity in not raking up the past. However, the British go on running down the movement for independence and those who participated in it.

The latest barb has come from a British historian who has characterized Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad as "terrorists." Both were hanged for their revolt against the foreign rule. Obviously, the British do not know the difference between a terrorist and a revolutionary. In fact, the British come in the category of terrorists because they killed thousands of people wanting to rule themselves, a hallmark of democracy, which the UK cherishes.

It is heartening to find Pakistan allocating money to preserve the house in which Bhagat Singh lived when he was young. Indeed, all those who suffered at the hands of Britain before partition are heroes in all the three countries, Pakistan,

Bangladesh and India. I wish they would recall their sacrifices to tell their people that they share the same history, the same heritage and the same agony at the hands of the British.

One glaring example of British cruelty is that of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy (April 13, 1919) - a milestone for the nationalists towards the journey to the destination of independence. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, who was given the control of Amritsar by Lt. Governor of Punjab Michael O'Dwyer, chose April 13, the day of harvest festival, Baisakhi, for his revenge. To vent their protest against the Rowlett Act, which gave the rulers the power to detain anyone without trial, some 20,000 people had collected in the garden, called Jallianwala Bagh, a stone's throw from the Golden Temple.

Dyer set the police on the gathering like hunters unchaining their ferocious hounds to bring the pursued animal to bay. He purposely blocked the garden's only gate to prevent anyone from escaping from the place. Targeted by machine guns, men, women and children had no escape or respite from the bullets till the police exhausted their ammunition.

As many as 1,650 rounds were fired. Scores of people jumped into the garden's only well, mute witness to that barbarous massacre. Some 400 people died on the spot and more than 1,500 were injured. London

(Continued on Page 3)

too was horrified. It recalled Dyer who, appearing before an inquiry committee, said that he had done his duty. He expressed no regret. Nor was he admonished. Some in the British political hierarchy rationalized that he had saved Punjab from “anarchy.”

Then a few years later the British hung hundreds in Balia, a town on the border of UP and Bihar, for having declared independence on Quit India day, August 9, 1942. Bodies were dangled on trees for days to teach a lesson to the freedom fighters. The Indian revolutionaries were not deterred and recalled Bhagat Singh’s execution.

The British rulers who considered Mahatma Gandhi “an anarchist” can go to any limit to denigrate the freedom movement. The revolutionaries compared themselves with the insects which burnt themselves to keep the earthen lamps alight. Had they not done so the thousands who went to jail or laid down their lives would not have got the inspiration their martyrdom evoked.

Bhagat Singh, a prolific writer, had explained what did killing mean to them: “We attaching great sanctity to human life, we regard man’s life as sacred...We would sooner lay down our lives in the service of humanity than injure anyone.” There was no revenge, no vendetta. “These actions (killings),” he said, “have their political significance in as much as they serve to create a mentality and an atmosphere which shall be very necessary to the final struggle. That is all.”

Mahatma Gandhi, who was against the violent methods of revolutionaries, admired these

martyrs. He said: “Bhagat Singh and his comrades have been executed and have become martyrs. Their death seems to have been a personal loss to many. I join in the tributes paid to the memory of these young men. And yet I must warn the youth of the country against following their example. We should not utilize our energy, our spirit of sacrifice, our labours and our indomitable courage in the way they have utilized theirs. This country must not be liberated through bloodshed.”

Mahatma Gandhi was against violence in any shape. During the non-cooperation movement in 1920, when more than 30,000 people went to jail, the agitation which looked like defeating the British was withdrawn. Students renounced their studies, lawyers their practice, doctors their clinics and civil servants their jobs and rallied behind the Mahatma from all over the country felt cheated. Foreign goods were boycotted. Piles of textile were burnt in public to protest against imported cloth from Lancashire and Birmingham. Gandhiji wanted the British to “declare in clear terms a policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country.”

Indeed, non-cooperation was the biggest non-violent movement the Indians had ever launched against the British. Gandhiji’s sudden withdrawal of the movement was because he did not approve of villagers from Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur in UP, turning violent. On February 12, 1921, they took out a procession past a local police station to protest against the British rule. Towards the end, the procession was jeered at by the police, provoking the people

to retaliate. Angry policemen then started firing on them and went on doing so till their ammunition was exhausted. Three men were killed and many injured. Gandhiji withdrew the movement but did not utter a word to condemn the police.

The British should not rub salt on our wounds. By denigrating our heroes like Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad they only challenge the heritage of freedom movement. They will be well advised not to do so.

(Continued from Page 3)

than in electing the right type of candidates to the legislative bodies. After the pepper spray drama, one would think that the time has come for a public debate on this issue. There is need for improving the quality of the debates as well as the standards of behavior of honourable members inside the two Houses.

According to reports in two leading Hindi newspapers *Nai Duniya* and *Dainik Jagran* dated February 19, 2014, a Parliamentary committee has found that 800 children in various schools associated with Asaram in Maharashtra died during the 12-year period 2001-2013. This is a very high rate of deaths of school students and should be carefully investigated. Most of these schools are located in tribal areas. Most of these deaths have been attributed earlier to snake and scorpion bites as well as diseases, but need to be probed further to find out the truth.

- Bharat Dogra

Does economic anarchy lead to political chaos?

K. S. Chalam

Anarchy is understood as a state of statelessness or disorder. It, in fact, has a wider meaning and historical background than what is generally conceived by Aam Aadmi or common man. When Aam Aadmi Party Chief Minister of Delhi created flutter through his histrionics at Jantar Mantar a few weeks ago, commentators started projecting him as an anarchist, if not a nihilist, radical and so on. We had also some apprehension about the future of the party as the promise that AAP presented to the nation was really prodigious at that time. Now, AAP is busy with its political strategies like any other Indian party, and one can expect their real blush when they take up fulltime activity of public policy. Till such time we may defer using harsh epithets.

The pepper spray spectacle has diverted the attention from the essential condition of the polity today, otherwise the record of events in the Indian Parliament and state Assemblies for the last few years had already reached a critical phase of eventuality. Unfortunately, the blame is attributed to Telugu politicians. The manifestation of culpability of some in the Parliament may be understood as culmination of deceit, double standards and unethical conduct irrespective of the party. What are the motives behind this trend? Is this an indicator of the prospects for the 21st century?

In fact, the whole drama of fighting corruption both on the social net and media costing crores of rupees appeared to be sponsored by Corporates to divert attention from real issues. For instance, Kejriwal

has challenged some individuals and corporate houses including media on this important issue and opened a new front for his tirade. However, what interests some of us is the issue of economic idiosyncrasies involved in the so-called political anarchy. In the normal philosophical discourse, anarchy looks at the moral legitimacy of state to control or regulate individual freedom. Gandhiji had also questioned the moral authority of the British to rule us and resorted to civil disobedience. This was termed as grammar of anarchy. We are now independent with a Constitution and parliamentary democracy to guide our collective destiny. Is it really happening as envisioned by our founding fathers? Is political democracy adequate for common man to lead comfortable life? Does it include economic and social considerations?

The western scholars and philosophers were involved in passionate debate on the question of freedom and rights in a capitalist system. But, they seem to have not been entangled with the economic basis of freedom, though Rawls and Sen were instrumental in getting the argument stretched to include questions of inequality. However, our issue here is not about ownership of property and distributional justice in which Marxists were interested. "For Marx, only public ownership of the means of production can guarantee distributive justice. Because public ownership of the means of production not only transforms surplus labour from private owners to the state, so that it no longer belongs to individuals

but to the whole society, it also transforms the relationship between employees and employers who then become equal... Both the managers and workers theoretically are owners of the means of production." This objective was never realised anywhere in India. In fact, violence and abuse of power were used in amassing wealth and property by some apparently using democratic process that created disharmony of interests leading to chaos and disorder. This is perhaps echoed in our Legislative bodies as a political manifestation, but the real motive was economic gain. Therefore, it could be brought under the notion of anarchy.

We can go beyond the precincts of Parliament to notice the chaos in public policy. One of the important issues flagged by AAP explicitly, and several others implicitly, are about the pricing of Gas, Oil and other public sector goods or things produced out of common resources. It is noticed that some high profile politicians cum policy makers have voiced their view on pricing of Gas, Oil, etc. in India. Surprisingly, they have questioned marginal cost as the criterion to decide a good/product, may be out of ignorance or arrogance? Economists have been using marginal cost, as an important method of fixing price for public sector goods. Marginal cost is the cost of producing an additional unit of a product, reveals the efficiency at which the firm operates. This is different from average cost that is equal to marginal cost arriving at average revenue in an ideal condition of perfect competition. As far as the issue of using marginal cost

pricing for Gas / Crude of Reliance is concerned, we all know that the situation is neither a condition of perfect competition nor it is the only firm in the oil industry. Therefore, the ideal method of pricing as indicated by some policy makers and experts, taking average cost or some other method seem to be not reasonable. This is not a product produced by the firm on the basis of its own resources but given a contract to supply the product at a price that is reasonable to consumers and profitable to the contractor. Therefore, it should be administered or mark-up price arrived at by the government based on cost of production both variable cost and capital cost. It seems, it is here that several charges of manipulations against Reliance including CAG Report and the disciplinary action initiated against Sibal the then DGHC are cited. This is what Kejriwal and his team including senior bureaucrats who are aware of the facts are contending. In fact, the whole process of open auction, certification by independent agencies about the genuineness of investments involved, etc. are all now debunked due to the manipulation of share market giving fabricated information. Perhaps, Kejriwal being an Income Tax person knew all this or may be some other reason has got genuine issue for wider debate.

It is not only in the case of Reliance, Coal, Spectrum, Power etc. contracts but, in several operations in the private sector involving common properties, frauds are becoming order of the day involving billions of rupees. The argument that ONGC and other public sector units are also going to be benefitted by Gas pricing is not acceptable as the surpluses of the public sector go to the state exchequer while private profits or margins fatten individuals.

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Figures tell a tale

Mallika Sarabhai

Anywhere one turns today, the Gujarat Growth Model is being flaunted. Be it in the print media or on television, in debates or on hoardings, the development of Gujarat is getting five gold stars. So it is time to look a little beyond the hype and into the actual statistics of this model. (All the figures quoted in this piece are from government sources only, and I would be happy to cite them to anyone who wishes to check them.

In the last 10 years, 60,000 small-scale industries have closed down in Gujarat. Counting on an average ten employees per industry, this comes to a staggering six lakh thrown out of jobs.

Gujarat ranks 5th in foreign direct investment and 8th in agricultural production. From 2005-06 to 2010-11, growth in GSDP in agriculture and allied sectors was 3.44 per cent, not the double-digit growth being publicised. At 5 per cent, VAT on fertilisers is the highest in the country.

Of the 225 blocks in Gujarat's 28 districts, 57 are dark, that is, without electricity. As many as 4,55,885 applications for power connections were pending as of 2011.

In 1995, when the BJP came to power, the state's total debt was less than Rs.10,000 crore. When Shri Modi took over in 2001, this figure stood at Rs.45,301 crore. By December 2012, it had risen to Rs.1,38,978 crore, and the government estimates it to cross Rs.2,07,695 crore by 2015-16.

Health expenditure in the state has fallen from 4.25 per cent in 1990-95 to 0.77 per cent in 2005-10. Gujarat comes second from the bottom of all states in terms of expenditure on health. It also comes last in the list of 20 large states in the percentage of women with severe anaemia. It ranks 15th among states in children's malnourishment, and 16th in children's anaemia. Add to this 14th rank in rural infant mortality rates and 10th in urban infant mortality rates.

The Global Hunger Report ranks Gujarat 13th among 17 large states and has declared it an 'alarming state' along with Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

In 2001, 32 per cent of people were poor. This rose to 39.5 per cent in 2011. According to NSSO, the rate of reduction of poverty has been the lowest in the country at 8.6 per cent. The state ranks 10th in latrine use. Twenty-nine per cent households have to drink untreated and unsafe water. That makes about 1.75 crore people drinking dirty water.

Gujarat has organised 3,716 employment melas. But 10 lakh educated youth remain unemployed, with the total registered unemployed at 30 lakh. Growth in employment has dropped to nearly zero in the last 12 years.

A recent CAG report suggests that there are Rs.16,706.99 crore worth of financial and land irregularities leading to a negative impact on delivery on economic and development fronts.

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Contemporary Dalit Politics and Ambedkar's Goal of Caste Annihilation

Ram Puniyani

On 28th February, 2014 Ramvilas Paswan of Loktatantrik Jan Party joined the NDA alliance. Same Paswan had left the NDA twelve years ago with the beginning of Gujarat carnage, saying that with the violence in Gujarat he cannot be part of NDA. This time his son formulated the face saver when he said that Modi has received clean chit in the Gujarat carnage. Few days ago another dalit leader Udit Raj directly joined BJP, with the assurance of being given a ticket for forthcoming elections. In Maharashtra, Ramdas Athwale of Republican Party of India had become part of NDA, and succeeded in being nominated for Rajya Sabha, Upper house of Parliament. There are many others dalits in the fold of BJP directly or in alliance with BJP to be in NDA, for pre-poll alliance. Most of these leaders claim to be working on the path shown by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar was committed to annihilation of caste and was totally opposed to the concept of Hindu nationalism, as propounded by the RSS-BJP.

During the freedom struggle when three types of nationalisms were in vogue: Indian nationalism, Muslim nationalism and Hindu nationalism, majority of the people of India supported and followed the path of Indian nationalism. Majority Hindus were for Indian nationalism, majority of Muslims were also for Indian nationalism. It was the elite, the landlords, kings who began communal streams and were later joined in by a section of affluent upper castes of those religions. The British manipulation kept fuelling the fire of religious

nationalism. Muslim nationalism turned in separatist direction and their demand for Pakistan came to the forefront. Hindu nationalists accepted the religion based nationalism but denied the demand of Pakistan on the ground that this had been a Hindu nation from times immemorial. This whole formulation of Hindu nation from ancient times is an invalid concept, as the very concept of nation or nation-state is a modern concept. So, in the revised edition of his book, 'Partition of India', Dr. Ambedkar opposed the formation of Pakistan on the ground that formation of Pakistan may pave the way for Hindu Raj and "If Hindu Raj becomes a reality then it would be greatest menace to this country. Whatever may Hindus say, actually it does not make a difference that Hinduism is a danger to Independence, Equality and Brotherhood. Thus it is an enemy of democracy. We should make all out efforts to stop Hindu Raj from becoming a reality." (Pakistan or Partition of India, Page 358). Here what Ambedkar is referring to Hinduism is Brahmanical Hinduism, the ideological ground of Hindutva, the agenda of RSS combine.

Ambedkar did lay the foundations of dalit movement, and went on to form Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) in due course; before conceptualizing the Republican Party of India. This SCF in 1951, on the eve of first general elections in 1952; which was to begin the process of adult suffrage, forged an alliance with Praja Socialist Party (PSP) led by Jayaprakash Narayan. The

manifesto of SCF ruled out "alliance with any reactionary party such as Hindu Mahasabha and Jan Sangh (previous avatar of BJP) (quoted from Gopal Guru EPW Feb 16, 1991, citing Ambedkar Letters to Gaikwad, page 280-296). He was the one who could see the long term agenda of Jan Sangh-Hindu Mahasabha of Hindu Rashtra, the concept totally opposed to secular democratic India. His basic motto was 'educate, organize and struggle', for caste annihilation and for the values of substantive Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He was aware that this process: educate and organize to struggle: is possible only in a democratic set up, so alliance with Hindutva political outfits was ruled out of hand.

Today what is happening? Over the last several years a new dalit leadership has emerged, which on one hand represents a faction of this group and on the other has also personal-family electoral ambitions. So in short term they, for their personal benefits, have been sitting in the laps of communal parties. Namdeo Dhasal, the great poet went with Shiv Sena, which had created hell with the publication of Ambedkar's 'Riddles of Hinduism'. Ramdas Athwale is again with the communal forces who have given him the Rajya Sabha seat. Udit Raj has also embraced the party of Hindu raj and Ramvilas Paswan, guided more by personal political ambitions, rather than the long term benefit of the downtrodden, has shamelessly allied with the BJP. In the short term these dalit politicians may benefit but at the same time they will strengthen the politics of Hindutva-Hindu raj, the system of inherent hierarchy of

caste and gender.

A single example will tell us about the approach of BJP towards the dalit question. Recently a book penned by the BJP Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi has been withdrawn - Karma Yoga. Modi in his book wrote "I do not believe that they (Valmikis) have been doing this job just to sustain their livelihood. Had this been so, they would not have continued with this type of job generation after generation...At some point of time, somebody must have got the enlightenment that it is their (Valmikis') duty to work for the happiness of the entire society and the Gods; that they have to do this job bestowed upon them by Gods; and that this job of cleaning

up should continue as an internal spiritual activity for centuries. This should have continued generation after generation. It is impossible to believe that their ancestors did not have the choice of adopting any other work or business."

On the same issue of scavenging, Dr. Ambedkar makes scathing critique of the social order where a section of people have to do such demeaning and humiliating jobs. While claims are made about the development and 'concern for all communities' the conditions of dalits in Gujarat are abysmal: temple entry is opposed at places, there is low rate of conviction for anti-dalit atrocities, there is prevalence of manual scavenging still prevalent and this

receives glorification from Modi. There is denial of access for water to the main pump at places. Cases of intimidation of dalits wanting to convert to Buddhism have been reported from Gujarat. These are few of the phenomena prevalent in the laboratory of Hindu rashtra, Gujarat. What should one say of leadership of dalits who compromise the values of Dr. Ambedkar, the values of long term goals of social justice and annihilation of caste for their short term greed for electoral power for their own self? There is a need for introspection by these leaders and their followers about the opportunism and lack of principles of such people in the positions of leadership of the communities.

(Continued from Page 5)

It is noticed that some of the huge private gains are in areas where state has invested on R&D or society has foregone its present consumption, legitimately possessed by all. The

beneficiary contractors are the ones who contested elections or put their agents in Parliament to sit on judgement on policies. Naturally, they do not tolerate anything that

goes against their private interests and create chaos and confusion either in Parliament or outside. Is it not anarchy as they are insensitive to the social good of majority?

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And there is much more. I knowingly leave out the figures on the glaring neglect of the Muslims, both students and businesses, and on the state of the state-run educational institutions, Adivasis and land rights. My purpose here is to highlight aspects of misgovernment that affect 'people like us'. Because it is 'people like us' that are taken in by the hype and hoopla.

Yes, Shri Modi has made many businesses and individuals much much richer. And yes, he is a brilliant speaker and creator of myths. But his model of development is Darwinian: the government will only support the fittest. Let the others perish. So, will the readers of this column see through this model of lies only if they belong to the 950 million poor, weak, unjustly treated? Is this the model for India?

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Mumbai March 9, 2014	(G.G. Parikh) <i>Signature of Publisher</i>

India's Muslims: Waking up to change?

India is home to the world's third largest population of Muslims.

Muslims, who chose to stay in India in 1947 when the country was partitioned on religious lines, have struggled to keep pace with the majority community.

Making up about 13 percent of the country's total population, they are hugely under-represented in jobs and politics. They allege that they face widespread discrimination.

A government committee in 2005 said that the presence of Muslims in top government jobs was as low as four percent.

The economic reforms and privatisation during 1990s opened some avenues for the youth in the community, as opposed to the previous decades during which government jobs were hard to come by.

Gradually, a small but significant middle class is emerging as new professionals join the fields of media, IT and management.

The recently published book - India's Muslim Spring: Why is Nobody Talking about It? by Hasan Suroor, a London-based veteran Indian journalist, focuses on the positive trends within the community.

Another soon to be published book, Muslim Politics in Bihar: Changing Contours by Mohammed Sajjad, an assistant professor at Aligarh Muslim University's history department, highlights the community's response to challenges in the historical past, particularly during the partition.

Al Jazeera's Saif Khalid in an email interview with Suroor and Sajjad tries to get a sense of the changes happening in India's Muslim community.

How strong is the churning within the Muslim community to join the mainstream? Is the trend big enough to qualify as India's "Muslim Spring"?

Hasan Suroor: It is pretty strong, but as I say in the book it is not an organised movement and people are not going around waving flags or calling for a revolution. It is happening quietly. I have used the term "Muslim spring" metaphorically to stress the fact that finally Muslims are waking up to the need for a change in their thinking. Under-representation of Muslims in education and jobs is a different issue. The churning that I talk about is in fact a reaction to the community's social and economic backwardness which young Muslims blame as much on institutional anti-Muslim bias as on Muslim leadership and previous generations of Muslims. The whole point is that they want the community to take charge of its own affairs and stop looking up to the state and a discredited leadership.

Mohammed Sajjad: I would prefer to use Muslim communities (and not the singular, community). The Muslims include many communities - caste groups, tribes, linguistic and ethnic groups - whose socio-economic location varies quite perceptibly.

This churning is indeed quite visible. The Muslim communities do have a very strong urge to ride up the ladder of socio-economic development and political empowerment. Post-Babri Mosque demolition in 1992, there came a strong realisation within the communities of Muslims that hitherto leadership kept pursuing their politics only around largely emotive issues of communal riots, personal law, linking Urdu with public employment, minority status for the Aligarh Muslim University, etc.

Consequently, in various provinces of India, but more vociferously in Bihar state, historically subordinated communities (biradris) started

organising, mobilising and asserting for their rights in accordance with the Constitution and other institutional practices aimed at minimising inequities and discriminations. Intra-community movements, particularly *pasmanda* in Bihar, despite their own pitfalls, are fighting for democratisation within the community as well as articulating (and asserting for) their grievances of under-representation and exclusion.

What factors are behind the decline of conservatism within the Muslim community?

HS: A sense of being left out because of wrong priorities, and a realisation that if the community wants to move forward it must shed its regressive attitudes.

MS: In post-Independence India, the most prominent factor is the growth, even though too gradual, of educated middle classes among the communities of Muslims. The overall success of India's democracy in terms of land reforms, access to

education, health, social welfare expenditures, as also the 'Open Passport Policy' since 1980s, which opened avenues of employment for Muslims in the West Asian Gulf countries, and the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report in the 1990s, which included many caste-groups of Muslims in public employment. Such developments did enhance a greater sense of inclusion, cohesion, cooperation and trust in the state and in the Constitution.

New generation of Muslims are more religious, but at the same time more secular and cosmopolitan. Why do Muslims' dresses and appearances draw so much attention? How would one address it?

HS: I have said as much in the book. That the trend among young Indian Muslims to flaunt their religious identity is part of the post-9/11 discourse in the West. It is akin to the blacks in America trying to reclaim "blackness" as a badge of honour and say: if we are black so what, we are Americans as well and we are proud of being black and American at the same time. Personally, I do not like wearing one's cultural or religious identity on one's sleeves but so long as it does not come in the way of progressive thinking it is not my business to tell others what or what not to do. My own sense is that it is a fad - a reaction to post-9/11 Islamophobia - and would pass.

MS: Commitment to one's faith and observing certain religious callings should not and cannot be construed necessarily as 'conservatism', 'anti-national', 'unpatriotic'. Religions do not necessarily breed conservatism and not necessarily teach hating other religious communities. In a globalised neo-liberal economy, a

minority are relatively more prone to feel their religio-cultural identity is threatened. It may make a section of the people to become more concerned about their identity. In India, Gandhiji and Maulana Azad displayed all kinds of pluralism, tolerance, forward looking politics despite keeping themselves grounded in/with religious symbolism and practices.

Is using the binary "Mullah versus Marxist" problematic? Are Mullahs only to be blamed for the backwardness of Muslims?

HS: I have not blamed Mullahs alone, and pointedly accused progressive Muslims of not wanting to dirty their hands. By virtually detaching themselves from the community they allowed a vacuum to occur which was filled by Mullahs and petty politicians pretending to represent the community.

MS: Such reductionist binaries are myths sprouting out of misperceptions of less informed or uniformed intelligentsia. And such misperceptions are put to worst political abuse by certain vested interests like majoritarian communal political formations for electoral polarisations. Dogmatism is no monopoly of the Mullahs only. Exclusionary and conservative politics is neither a monopoly of the Mullahs nor an exclusive preserve of the religious minorities.

In fact, and for the truth be told, compared to these modern educated leadership, the Mullahs (contrary to popular perceptions, not necessarily all of them are conservative) were more meaningfully connected with the commoners of the communities sinking and swimming with them from cradle to grave.

Given the fact that resistance to colonialism and to communal

territorial separatism has to be taken as a non-conservative, progressive outlook, then clerics (Mullahs) have better record than the modern educated leadership of colonial India testified by the fact that the Deoband clerics fought both colonialism and separatism whereas the Muslim League had its greater share of leadership among the non-clerics.

The Muslim community's electoral agenda has never really progressed beyond security of life, as opposed to education, jobs and health issues. How have riots limited the aspirations of the community?

MS: I believe that keeping the rioters unpunished has been the biggest failure of the Indian state and of its criminal justice system. Perpetuation of threat to life and properties in the communal-religious strife has made the vulnerable Muslims less of a citizen to assert for all legitimate rights and more a vote bank to be patronised and exploited by all kinds of leadership - the 'progressives', as well as the conservatives. Radicalisation and entry into terroristic activities is no monopoly of the Muslim minorities of India. The majoritarian terrorism of Hindu right wing; and for very different reasons, the far Left radicalism (Maoism/Naxalism) among the poor peasantry and tribal population is also to be found, which is burgeoning due to neo-liberal economy and the resultant Corporate loot of *Jal* (water), *Jungle* (forest), *Zameen* (land and mines), and forced displacement of these hapless populations. Yet the data reveal that among the people booked under the draconian laws such as the TADA, POTA, etc., a disturbingly large proportion of Muslims are the prisoners under trial.

Is comparing Muslims with minority Parsi community flawed

since Muslims face external discrimination?

HS: The point of mentioning Parsis was to argue that if such a small minority group can have enough self-confidence to flourish in the way they have, why can't a 170-million strong community have the same faith in itself.

MS: My own understanding about the Parsis is very limited, so I cannot speak on this.

However, I would like to say that external discriminations become significantly evident with underrepresentation. Muslim localities most likely may not have public sector banks, government schools and hospitals. The overall share of Muslims in loans financed by the public sector banks are very low. The financial and other supports of the state to the unorganised sectors are very poor. The specialised crafts in specific towns such as the silk of Bhagalpur, brass works of Muradabad, Zari of Lucknow, embroidery in Delhi, etc., do suffer from such discriminations where middlemen/merchants (mostly non-Muslims) squeeze away plenty of profits whereas the workforce (overwhelmingly Muslims) and even the manufacturers (mostly Muslims) remain the losers or make marginal gains only.

Will Muslims' acceptance of BJP Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, who has been linked to the deadly 2002 Gujarat riots, mean a sign of pragmatism or a state of acute political marginalisation?

HS: Both. Individual Muslims should be free to decide what is in their best interest instead of being forced to follow the herd. If pragmatism demands voting for

Modi then they should go with their instinct. At the same time voting for Modi does mean that Muslims have no other choice if they want to live and prosper in Gujarat. It is their way of sleeping with the enemy to buy security.

MS: If at all there is really such a situation whereby out of so-called pragmatism, a section of Muslims would be willing to accept Narendra Modi, then, to the best of my understanding, it could be only because of ominous limiting/shrinking of alternatives. In short, it could only be an outcome of utter helplessness in the face of feeble resistance against the majoritarian communalism. Such a high degree of political marginalisation would be fraught with implications.

Has the media's stereotyping of Muslims as "fatwa spewing" and "book burning vandals" missed the larger picture of the community?

HS: Yes, of course. In fact, the first chapter of my book after the prologue is all about emphasising the diversity within the Muslim community. I complain against the Muslim stereotype and argue that it is wrong to see Muslims as clones of each other.

MS: Stereotyping is an outcome either of willful, deep-seated prejudice or of lack of information. Most often media catches the attention only of those events which help them confirm a stereotype as it sells. What to say of media, even the rigours of academia, as in the case of the historiography of partition, largely failed to see the voices of Muslims strongly resisting the politics of partition during 1938-47. Things have hardly changed since then. "Book burning vandals" are there among the Hindus as well, and the

recent case of pulping of a book on Hinduism by the publication house, Penguin, is a case in point.

Is it simplistic to say that the elite section of Muslims had a major role in the creation of Pakistan, as opposed to a number of other factors? What about the role of communalists within the Indian National Congress?

HS: I do not discuss the reasons for Partition in my book. My limited point is that the reason why India was left with the rump of the Muslim community was because the elite migrated to Pakistan.

MS: This is one of the myths of the historiography of India's partition which my two forthcoming books have tried to explore with fairly large quantum of primary/direct evidences. Partition was a result of competitive communalisms aided by the British colonialism. And the communalism was not confined merely to the overtly communal political formations like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha-RSS. The provincial and district level leadership of the Congress had its own share of communalism and this had its own roles in stoking separatism, as they often refused to concede adequate share in the evolving structures of power.

However, the secular pluralist commitment of the Congress' top leadership did not let any communal-divisive agenda be adopted by the Congress nor did it let India become a Hindu fascist state despite having suffered vivisection on those grounds, and it framed its constitution with adequate provisions for the religious minorities and other vulnerable sections.

Locating Lohia in Feminist Theory–II

Jaya Shrivastava

Lohia's approach also differs from the Marxist feminist position. In a speech at the Backward Castes Federation Conference in Rae Bareilly in 1956, he said, "Socialism is a doctrine of equality". But he has serious apprehensions about it and cautions, "Unless we are careful, it may deteriorate into a doctrine of inequality" (1979: 26). His socialist thought differs from other socialists who are concerned with achieving only economic equality, which in their opinion will automatically yield social equality. In "A Letter to a Sudra", he says, "Many Socialists honestly but wrongly think that it is sufficient to strive for economic inequality and caste inequality will vanish of itself as a consequence" (1979: 20). Moreover, unlike Marxists who focus only on class, he holds both caste and class responsible for the oppression of the large mass of Indian people, including women. To end the oppressions, he does not think a class struggle alone is sufficient. He writes, "In a country cursed with the caste system, it is not possible to end feudal and capitalist inequalities through class struggle alone" (1979: 137).

Violence is considered inevitable in a proletarian revolution for establishing a socialist society, which will, it is believed, also be gender-just. Violence occurs because the ruling class does not give up privileges without a bitter class struggle that often turns violent. Lohia does emphasise the need for a struggle to reconstruct society, "Nothing new ever got born without a struggle" (1985: 85). But he is not in favour of a violent struggle. In his view, "Class struggle has been so foully distorted that error can be proved to lead to truth, murder to health, death of democracy to fullness of democracy"

(1985: 73). The struggle "need not necessarily be violent and bloody ... The struggle must necessarily be civil and non-violent" (1985: 85). In place of violent struggle, he suggests civil disobedience as a "permanent attitude" and as the one and only weapon to "enable the individual to maintain his dignity in all circumstances" (1985: 86). He strongly holds that a socialist society can be and should be built through peaceful democratic means. His Socialist Party aimed at "destroying [both] caste and class through non-violent and peaceful means of propaganda, organisation and struggle" (1979: 137).

Way to Women's Emancipation

Lohia suggests a distinct way to end existing gender-based inequality and to achieve equality between men and women in India, a path that has both long-term and short-term implications. In the long term, he stands for transforming India into a casteless, classless, and gender-just society. He makes man-woman equality the foremost goal in his scheme of "Seven Revolutions". And in his essay on Hinduism (Satoskar nd: 7), Lohia emphasizes that caste must be "completely erased from the Hindu mind" and that a woman must be "treated as an equal being with man".

As a long-term strategy, he does not consider the liberal approach of affirmative preferential action enough for promoting gender equality. Moving beyond the liberal frame, he holds that a radical cultural and structural transformation is necessary for enhancing and equalizing women's status with men in Indian society. He firmly holds that the liberal modernist approach of providing equal opportunities for

men and women will not solve the problem of gender inequality. Special measures are needed to uplift the status of women. In Marx, Gandhi and Socialism, Lohia (1963) states, "Providing equal opportunity will not undo the problem of inequality between the sexes which has widened over centuries. The only way to bring the woman into equality with others is through conferment of preferential opportunity." He adds, "Women must be given equal rights with men. Really speaking they must even get more if equality is to be obtained" (1979: 58).

Commenting on the Indian scenario, he notes that the caste system has a 5,000-year history of selecting abilities. As a result, "Certain castes have become especially gifted", such as the Saraswat Brahmin in intellectual pursuits and the Marwari Bania in industry and finance. So, he considers it absurd to talk about competing with these castes unless others are given preferential opportunities and privileges. He affirms, "The narrowing selection of abilities must now be broadened over the whole, and that can only be done if for two or three of four decades backward castes and groups are given preferential opportunities" (1979: 127). Further, at the Third National Conference of the Socialist Party (1959), it was declared, "Until the system of caste is totally destroyed, the reconstruction of India should have, instead of ability, preferential opportunity as its basis" (1979: 135). Lohia supports preferential treatment for all the marginalised. He clubs women with all other marginalized castes and groups, and suggests "Sudras, Harijans and Muslims and women must be placed in high positions even though they may not be fully deserving" (1963).

According to Kumar (2010: 67), Lohia identifies four areas in the lives of Indian women that needed immediate attention to “smash the abominable segregations of caste and sex”. These include (a) slavery of the kitchen, and the lack of drinking water and toilets; (b) the hypocrisy involved in sex and marriage, including dowry, birth control, and motherhood; (c) the need for greater equality between men and women in education and property rights; and (d) preferential opportunities in the field of leadership, in politics, the armed forces, trade, and government jobs. He considers women’s slavery to the kitchen an abomination.

Lohia advocates radical cultural changes to promote gender equality. The system of arranged marriages and dowry has to be rejected. He states, “The giving and taking of dowry must, of course, be penalised, but a change has to take place in the mind and its values” (1979: 7). He adds, “It is no responsibility of a parent to marry his or her daughter; the responsibility ends at providing a good education and good health” (1979: 7). He suggests a halt to extravagant shows at marriage ceremonies, and stands for full freedom for both boys and girls in choosing their life partners, which requires a normative shift. He states, “If a girl knocks around and elopes and mischances into illegitimacy, that is all part of the bargain to achieve normal relationships between man and woman and no stain at all” (1979: 7).

Moreover, the cultural norm requiring girls to protect virginity and remain celibate till marriage has to be discarded. He says, “It is time that young men and women revolted against such puerilities,” and opines, “They should ever remember that there are only two unpardonable crimes in the code of sexual conduct, rape and the telling of lies or breach of promise. There is also a third

offence of causing pain or hurt to another, which they should avoid as far as possible” (1979: 8). Frontally opposing the mindset of blaming the victim in cases of rape, he points out that ancient Indian literature underlines the inherent purity of women. He affirms, “Rape under coercion which could not be fought successfully brings the woman no harm nor dirt, for ... she renews herself every month” (Satoskar nd: 7).

For overcoming caste and genderbased discrimination, he suggests intercaste marriages and providing government jobs to such couples. He favours the right of women to divorce and remarry and their freedom to choose their life partners. Going beyond the institution of marriage, he supports unmarried motherhood and making birth control facilities available to all men and women irrespective of their marital status (cited in Kumar 2010: 67). So, he affirms the free expression of female sexuality and rejects the notion of onesided chastity – a double standard entrenched in Indian culture.

Lohia stresses ending endogamy, which is an integral feature of the caste system. The caste system, including endogamy, prevents men and women from freely interacting across caste boundaries in an intimate manner. To enhance the freedom of both men and women, Lohia emphasises the need to break down caste barriers in personal relations between men and women belonging to different castes. In “A Letter to a Sudra”, he remarks,

I have often felt that, unlike the Dvija women, the Sudra women have an immense aptitude and love for a free atmosphere and innocent pleasure. If the barriers of caste are broken or even loosened, many Dvija young men would be attracted to Sudra women, and bring happiness to themselves and the country. In a like manner, Sudra boys would also

be able freely to enter the world of Dvija women. It is now essential that the Dvijas and the Sudras must not only understand to define caste as comprising of those capable of producing children of one another; but grasp the definition instinctively. Sudras and Dvijas are capable of producing children of one another (1979: 20).

But Lohia did not expect the dvija (upper castes) would be in favour of abolishing caste, as is evident from tradition. In “Vashishthas and Valmiki”, he says, “The Vashishtha Dvijas ... will never like it [abolition of the caste system]. From mother-killer Parasuram to nation-killer Nehru stretches the Vashishtha tradition of fanatical justice” (1979: 56). Also, he did not believe upper caste men would sincerely work for the emancipation of lower caste women. The large majority of women suffer from not having basic amenities. However, he observes, “The modern Vashishtha probably does not know all this hell of water and lavatory. If he does he gives it no thought. Even if he thinks, he does so with the rings of his tobacco smoke” (1979: 59). Upper caste men are concerned with raising the status of upper caste women. As already mentioned, Lohia says that as far as lower caste women are concerned, their role continues as before to serve the desires and pleasures of the upper castes. Hence, the liberal doctrine of equality of opportunity does not help them. He affirms that it is only lower caste people who will uplift lower caste women. “A Valmiki would have thought of the other 80% women [lower- caste women] also. He would have applied himself to find a way to uplift them from their drudgery and privations” (1979: 59). Thus, Lohia believes in a strategy of self-empowerment for the lower castes, not sponsored empowerment in which the lower castes depend on the upper castes for uplifting the status of their women.

Concluding Observations

Lohia stands apart from all the feminist streams of thought in diagnosing the status of Indian women and in his vision for their emancipation. He rejects the liberal modernist approach, which is concerned with providing equal opportunity to both men and women and introducing legal, educational, and other reforms to gradually reduce discrimination and restrictions against women. He holds that the liberal approach is not sufficient to emancipate women and promote gender equality in India, though it can gradually improve their status in society. He appreciates Nehru for his liberal policy approach towards Indian women, but calls him a “fanatic Brahmin” who wears a “superficial liberal façade” while symptoms of orthodoxy still prevail in Indian society.

Lohia also differs from radical feminist thinking, which treats the two sexes as antithetical to each other, rejects patriarchy, and suggests dissociation of women from men for their liberation while leaving the socio-economic structures of dominance intact. He is at variance with Marxist feminism in which the Indian reality of caste does not matter much and a focused struggle against patriarchy remains marginal. He also recognises a class struggle could take violent forms, breeding another kind of discrimination and domination in society.

It is not easy to fully equate Lohia’s thoughts on Indian women with any particular strand of feminist theory and philosophy. Bondurant (1964: 324) describes him as an “irrepressible Indian socialist”, but his thoughts on Indian women are not akin to socialist feminism. Lohia’s larger vision is to establish an egalitarian socialist society that ensures full gender justice and eradicates gender blindness. His

The article was earlier published in Economic & Political Weekly

vision of socialism means not only a classless but also a casteless and gender-just society, implying the complete abolition of gender-based inequalities and discriminations. In Lohia’s thought, there is a clear recognition and affirmation of the identity, autonomy, and dignity of women, and the need for their emancipation in terms of expression of free will and the fulfilment of all their needs and desires – social, physical, psychological and emotional. In this sense, Lohia’s thoughts signify anti-feudalism, anti-capitalism, and anti-patriarchy. On Indian women, he is holistic and intersectional, with a solid understanding of the Indian social setting, especially of the caste system and its nexus with patriarchy, in addition to the class factor. His thought transcends all fixed strands of feminist theory, but would certainly enrich a feminist understanding of the Indian setting.

We can say that Lohia is “a socialist feminist of the Indian variety” because he emphasises ending not only capitalism and patriarchy, but also the pernicious caste system for ensuring full gender justice. Socialism in general is about effecting a speedy reconstruction of society along egalitarian lines. Likewise, Lohia’s vision of (Indian) socialism is not about small gradualist reformist changes, but about a complete transformation of Indian society – from a feudal-capitalist gender-unjust social order to a fully egalitarian and gender-just social order. He is in favour of radical societal reconstruction – both structural and cultural – by virtue of which women will become equal to men in all respects. In sum, it can be said that Lohia is grounded in Indian social reality in diagnosing the multifarious problems of Indian women and in his vision and strategy for their emancipation. He stands for full freedom for women. He

advocates the need for putting an end to the moral/ethical double standards to do with men and women, and thus putting every individual morally and socially at peace with herself or himself and with society. He is far ahead of his time in his thoughts on Indian women. It is observed that the status of a section of women in India has improved after Independence as a result of the liberal modernist approach to uplift their status in a gradualist/reformist manner. But most women still remain oppressed, dominated, poor, and backward in the country. To respond to this, there is an urgent need for Indian feminist discourse to turn towards Lohia’s vision for emancipation of Indian women, which will free them from the bondage of patriarchy, caste, and class. This is a huge challenge not only for feminists and Lohiaite socialists, but also for all others who stand for realizing liberty, equality, and fraternity in India not merely in a legal/formal sense, but in substantive terms in everyday life. The question is whether we are ready to take the plunge to reconstruct Indian society

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Without jobs, India's demographic dividend will be a disaster

Jobs in India grew by just 2.2% between 2010 and 2012. Economist Alakh N Sharma, director of the Institute of Human Development and principal author of India Labour and Employment Report 2014, spoke with Rema Nagarajan about why unemployment is rising, the people it hits hardest, manufacturing as a remedy and how competitiveness goes beyond wages:

How serious is India's unemployment?

Unemployment among the educated is very high. As people get more educated, unemployment's only growing. It's highest among women graduates at about 60%. After 10 years, 40% of all girls will be matriculates — but India has the lowest female employment rate along with Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries.

One-third of our unemployed are graduates and above. If we don't create enough jobs for them, we won't be talking about a demographic dividend — it will be a demographic disaster.

Why aren't enough jobs being created?

There's overemphasis on services and neglect of the manufacturing sector. The service sector provides only 26% employment but contributes 58% of GDP. We need to increase the share of manufacturing in GDP. It's currently 16% — compared to South East Asian countries like China, Korea and Indonesia, where the share is 40%-

50% of GDP.

For the first time, agriculture's share in employment is going down in India. But those moving out of agriculture are migrating to low productivity employment. Ideally, they should move into the manufacturing sector. That's what happened in most countries. But the manufacturing sector in India is just not robust enough to absorb them.

How has growth impacted employment?

Employment growth was just 0.5% per annum from 2004-05 to 2011-12, the period that saw the highest growth of GDP by 8.5% per annum.

But for the first time in 2011-12, we're seeing growth in the organised employment sector. There's also been a rise in wages, even rural casual wages. However, the proportion of informal employment in the organised sector actually increased from 41% in 1999-2000 to 58% in 2011-12. So, there's deterioration in the quality of employment created.

What is the effect of rising informal employment?

About 92% of India's 470 million workers are informal workers. Informal employment is insecure, poorly paid and has no social security. There's also a difference between wages of regular workers and informal or contract workers. The latter constitute one-third of workers in the manufacturing sector.

In China, they've done away with the wage difference, mandating

equal pay for equal work. We should do the same — the difference in wages is one of the main reasons for widespread labour unrest.

But can India afford to increase wages?

India seems to believe in being competitive in the international market by keeping wages low — that is totally wrong.

In China, wages are up to two and a half times those in India. Yet, China is more competitive than India in the international market. How do they do that?

Wage cost is a small share of the total cost of production. Wages as a proportion of the total cost of organised manufacturing is falling, from 47% in 1981-82 to 25% in 2011-12. How you organise production, infrastructural arrangements and technological innovation are factors that give you a competitive edge — we don't become competitive by saving on labour costs and impoverishing workers.

—TNN

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PUCL welcomes the historic and landmark ruling of the Supreme Court of 18th February, 2014 commuting to life sentence the death penalties awarded to Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalan, convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. This judgment of the Supreme Court, and the 21st January, 2014 judgment in '*Shatrugan Chauhan vs Union of India*' marks a watershed in the evolution of death penalty jurisprudence in India and restores the primacy of a constitutional vision imbued with a sense of humanity and compassion. The ruling also emphasizes an appreciation of the right to life in the context of "*[the] brooding horror haunting the prisoner in the condemned cells for years*" as a consequence of prolonged delay in deciding mercy petitions.

The unanimous ruling delivered by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, P. Sadasivam and Justices Ranjan Gogoi and

Prabhakar Sinha,
President,

Shiva Kirti Singh built on the principles evolved in '*Shatrugan Chauhan vs Union of India*' saying that the unexplained, undue and inordinate delay of 11 years in rejecting the commutation petitions by the Executive would amount to torture, constituted a violation of Art. 21, the right to life, and is ground enough to commute the death sentences.

The SC also rejected the most preposterous argument of the Attorney General of India, G E Vahnavati, that there was "not a word of remorse" and that the three prisoners were "enjoying life, attending music concerts and were not in any sort of agony". The SC pointedly emphasized that agony did not mean physical torture and that in law, there was no requirement for the prisoners to prove suffering or to demonstrate the specific ill effects of imprisonment or agony in prison.

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expansion of human rights law, the SC also held that it was open to the Tamil Nadu Government to consider exercise of powers under sections 432 and 433 Criminal Procedure Code to grant remission to the three prisoners if they approached the government for premature release or remission, by following the due procedure of law. By doing so, the SC has demonstrated its ability to stand statesmanlike above the blood thirsty demands for retribution and revenge which has occupied public space and media coverage on death penalty cases in recent times.

The SC's ruling is a momentous ruling for asserting that human values and humane justice should ultimately be the cornerstones of modern, constitutional India. We hope this will mark a significant step towards eventually abolishing the death penalty altogether from our law books.

V. Suresh,
General Secretary,

This refers to JD(U) spokesperson KC Tyagi rightly raising concern on Sachin Tendulkar appearing in commercial-advertisements even after being honoured with country's highest civilian honour, this being perhaps the only such case amongst all the awardees of Bharat Ratna so far. There were some unwritten norms, conventions and practices being rightly followed for awarding Bharat Ratna, one of these being to avoid honouring a person with nation's highest honour at a young age. Unfortunately much hurry was shown by political rulers in taking decision to honour Sachin Tendulkar with Bharat Ratna that too by brushing

aside objections against the decision put on file by the bureaucrats. Bharat Ratna conventionally binds an awardee with some saint-like traditions which may not be practically possible to be followed in rest of long span of life of a young awardee.

Now since the honour has been done, it will be better for Sachin Tendulkar if he himself graciously surrenders Bharat Ratna to lead a life without any conventions which should be followed by a Bharat Ratna awardee. Or else, Union government should officially advise Sachin Tendulkar not to appear in commercial advertisements.

- **Subhash Chandra Agrawal**

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basic needs of all without
ecological ruin**
Bharat Dogra

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Third Front collapses

S. Viswam

The run-up to the general elections brings out the worst and best in politicians. And, perhaps for this very reason, the most interesting periods in India's post-independence political history are seen immediately before the voting. Also, the electoral scene changes all too frequently. Last week, we saw the attempts at forging fronts. This week we are witnessing the collapse of fronts and the emergence of a different kind of electoral politics in which old adversaries are becoming friends and new friends are parting company with one another.

The two communist parties are trying to play a role in creating an alternative to the Congress and the BJP. In that quest, they struck an understanding with Jayalalithaa. This was supposed to be the beginning of the birth of a secular Third Front. However, within a week, the understanding faded - what happened to it, pray? - and the two communist parties were holding the corpse of a still-born baby in their hands. An earlier informal get-together of like-minded parties, 11 in number, which was formed in order to function as a separate bloc in parliament has also been quietly dissolved.

There has been a focus-shift in another direction also. The two

communist parties were the first to proclaim that if Jayalalithaa won 40 seats (out of 40 seats) in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, she could become prime minister without challenge. Though Jayalalithaa has jettisoned the communists, she has won an expected ally. Mamata made a statement last week without anybody's prodding or pressure that she did not mind allying with Jayalalithaa and Uttar Pradesh BSP leader Mayawati. Since Mamata had earlier managed to secure the blessings of Anna Hazare, her new stance was noteworthy. How and why Anna chose Mamata to shower his blessings is not known, unless his action was a throwback to his aversion to Arvind Kejriwal's politics and the popularity he is drawing for

We witnessed near fantastical submission before the Supreme Court. Attorney General G. E. Vahanvati and Additional Solicitor-General K. V. Viswanathan maintained that the reason why fresh elections had not been called 8in Delhi "is because it is possible that the Congress and the BJP may come together to form a government."

—A. S. Panneerselvan,
The Hindu

himself. So, now, we have some more candidates projecting their suitability to occupy the prime minister's chair. Modi, Rahul Gandhi, Jayalalithaa and latest, Mamata. But the story does not end there.

Between the lines

A visit to Pakistan

Kuldip Nayar

We have to take note of a few more prime ministerial aspirants. Lalu Prasad again stressed his old ambition to become prime minister. He refused to be put off by the experience he has had in spending time in the state prison for corruption. He is currently on bail. Where his political ambitions are concerned, there are no constraints or restraints apparently. Then, we have Nitish Kumar. In what way, he wants to know, is he any the less suited to be PM? Indeed, compared to the present hopefuls, his record is better, since he has what we may call all-round political experience as MP, Union Minister and Chief Minister, and a senior position in the Janata Dal United. Let us not forget Mulayam Singh Yadav who can claim eligibility on par with Nitish!

Granted that we have prime ministerial talent in abundance, but who is to bell the cat? It is not enough to be suitable. The aspirant has to be backed by a major alliance which controls enough number of seats to dictate terms or apply pressure. Manmohan Singh became PM since he was backed by the UPA. Earlier Vajpayee became PM because he was backed by the NDA. Modi is in the field with the backing of the BJP which expects to be the dominant partner of the NDA. Rahul is the UPA candidate. Is it enough for Jayalalithaa and Mamata to be backed by the Third Front alone? Stalin wanted to know how many divisions did the Pope have! In the case of any regional leader aspiring to be PM, the front

I was at Lahore when Pakistan defeated India in the Asia Cup cricket match. There were celebrations and firings in the air. This is understandable because a country which is one seventh of India feels elated by vanquishing it in some field. Even otherwise, there is no love lost between the two. What surprised me was the running theme in the talks about victory that India has not accepted Pakistan. This is not true and politicians in Pakistan raise this slogan to frighten the voters for their candidature. But why should Pakistan seek recognition from India for its identity is beyond my comprehension.

When Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Lahore he assured Pakistan that it did not have to look for recognition because the country is its own identity. Vajpayee, still the most popular Indian in Pakistan, also went to the Minar-e-Pakistan, the place where the 1940 resolution for the creation of a separate Muslim state was passed in a Muslim League session. I too went there and heard Vajpayee repeating the words that solidarity and integrity of India was dependent on the solidarity and integrity of Pakistan. It is regretful that some extremist groups washed the Minar-e-Pakistan to "purify" it after his visit.

Lahore has expanded eight times since independence. The city is prosperous and shops are full of goods and buyers. Still there are many beggars roaming around. The famous Mall Road is "down town."

The defence area has expanded to accommodate the rich and the upper middle class people. Here the extreme disparities between the rich and the poor are visible like any metro in India.

Punjab—Lahore is its capital—remains the backbone of Pakistan. Sindh is disturbed, primarily because of ever quarrelling Shias and Sunnis. Baluchistan has a national liberation movement demanding autonomy. During my five-day stay, I saw pictures in newspapers and television channels of marchers from Queeta to Islamabad to voice their demand for independence. It had taken them three months to reach Islamabad. India is blamed for supplying money and weapons to sustain insurgency in Baluchistan. The North Western Frontier Province is too engaged in fighting the Taliban from the area adjoining Afghanistan to have respite for development.

I asked a leading lawyer: what kept Pakistan together? He said straightaway: it was the military. This may well be true. Yet I do not think that there can ever be another coup. The process of democratic governing is deepening all the time and it looks impossible to undo it. People would come to the streets to resist a military dictator.

Nonetheless, the military counts in the affairs of Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's repeated calls for talks with India cannot be without the consultation of the military. I believe it has drawn a

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Lakshman rekha beyond which the government cannot go. In fact, if one were to follow the media in Pakistan, one would come to the conclusion that both newspapers and television channels stay away from any mention of the army. Otherwise bold and strident, the media would not cross the Taliban path too. Nawas Sharif favours talks with them.

Pakistan's biggest problem is terrorism. What was created to harass India in Kashmir has become a Frankenstein to trouble the country. Both civil and military authorities are harassed by the Taliban from Afghanistan. Adding to their attacks by the Taliban in Afghanistan is the home-grown group called Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). They can strike at anytime, anywhere and kill the ones they want. Fear of terrorists stalks the land. Lahore or, for that matter Punjab is by and large safe.

It is said that state chief minister Shahbaz Sharif has entered into an understanding with the TTP and "rewards" it for sparing the province. But some Taliban are not bothered about a dialogue with central government. The lower courts at Islamabad were attacked by suicide bombers even when both the government and the Taliban had declared a one-month ceasefire.

Pakistan had once declared Afghanistan to be part of its strategic depth. In a briefing to the press, the army chief has reportedly told the media about the change in the policy. There was no strategic depth, he has conveyed. Maybe, this is because of Pakistan's inward-looking policy. The country faces a host of problems. The lengthening shadow of fundamentalist is only one of them, however important.

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Role of Telanganain

K. S. Chalam

The people of Telangana are celebrating the formation of a new state while the politicians are quarrelling on different tactics of how to capture power. Yet, the whole world is watching what is in store for the people of the state who had a very exciting historical background in the recent past. One need not establish once again that they are a distinct people with a different experience. But, one should not forget that the mother tongue is either Telugu and/or Dakhini. It seems the unique dakhini language is more influenced by the alien or Indo-European group than the Telugu unlike the Andhras or classical Telugu of dominant Seemandhra (it is an unsettled question to be debated). Some of our friends used to contend that the Andhras have taken loan words from Telangana to enrich their lingua franca, without looking at the fact that the court language itself was an offspring of Indo-Iranian. Though, it is the domain of the linguists to talk about it, as social observers it is necessary to know to what extent the new generation would protect the real Telangana people's language or dialect spoken in the rural areas. The Adivasis (tribes) of Telangana like the Gonds and several others have their language identities that had submerged in the dominant court language/Telugu, might get some relieve now.

Though, some government tribal institutes, and departments of languages in universities are doing significant work, the new state would definitely throw some light on this problem. The outcomes

of such efforts would become the common legacy of all of us. One of the important burden of duty or obligation of the Telangana intellectuals and writers appears to be: protecting and enriching the chaste Telugu and the folk (it should be called people's) so rich in this state. They have an advantage now being an independent state to promote the people's culture. Some linguists roughly say that Tamil and Malayalam are the same except that the accent and influence of Sanskrit is more in the latter. Does it result in an analogous situation with the formation of a new Telugu state? Personally I am against such drift.

A distinct identity is ascribed to the state not only due to culture and language, but also of the exuberant role of cultural troupes like Gaddar, Balakishan and others and writers like Kaloji, Jayashanagr in the Telangana movement. Nevertheless, it is beyond that. The recently concluded conference on Socialism and Telangana in Hyderabad brought out new visions before the leaders and builders of modern or new Telangana with social justice as an agenda. The subjects of Socialism, Social Democracy and Democratic Socialism as distinct categories are known to many. But, if the people of the new state wanted to build within the framework of the Constitution sincerely, unlike others, there are sufficient provisions under Articles 38 and 39 and the preamble to guide them. The state had a chequered history with one of the oldest socio-economic revolutions to liberate the people from all kinds of dominance

before and after independence. In fact, the people of the state are well entrenched in the quagmire of several struggles and are aware of the need for a different kind of development model inclusive of all social groups popularly voiced as Samjika Telangana. The role of the left parties in the past and in the recent separate battle is remarkable and that might remain as mainstay of people's emancipation.

The world had witnessed different kinds of experiments with Socialism, Communism, Capitalism, Mixed Economy, and they are sufficiently echoed here. Further, they have also seen the experiments made with the above ideas in different states of India. In fact, one of the reasons that hastened the process of bifurcation according to some is the type of development pursued in the combined state and in Hyderabad city. Neo-liberalism does not care for your internal friction; it aims at surplus and moves on wherever it is possible. If there are any aberrations like poverty, inequality, etc they can be tackled, the protagonists argue, through safety nets. This has created social upheaval; regional tensions and political breakdowns not only in Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, India, but in several third world countries. The creation of three new states often cited in debates is different, as they were small adivasi/ tribal clusters separated from the main states. But, the new state has a historical role to play, given its past history, social composition and resource base to show that it is different. It cannot afford to fail, lest the future record one more betrayal.

The peoples' struggles including the left in Telangana are very significant issues to be reflected as phenomena of 21st century.

The slogans of social justice and economic equity are to be analysed in the context of democracy, socialism and development. The democratic methods used in the movement to achieve separate state by integrating all marginalised groups in a region that has witnessed armed struggles, is not a mean achievement. It is precisely for this reason, the new state has a historical responsibility to make it a success otherwise; the experiment would be looked down as a failed model. The world cannot afford this now.

The population of the state is around four crores . This is much higher than any of the 26 odd Latin American countries (except Brazil and, Mexico) where different kinds of models of development are in vogue now. Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru and few others where the socio-economic conditions required them to adopt a variant of the kind of economy India had about three decades ago. It is called as socialism by some and social democracy by others. But people are interested in Democratic Socialism as in Venezuela where the means of production is under the control of the state and workers are controlling the major chunk of the economy. Is it possible here?

The socio-economic conditions in Telangana in terms of low literacy rate, unique caste groups and Adivasis, who according to some activists, do not own property might pose serious complications. Then who are the owners of land and other assets to mobilise for the development of the state? The existence of natural resources alone is not sufficient to bring in development; we need capital and human resources. It should come either from the state out of its own

surpluses or union government grants or by foreign investments. It is also possible by the voluntary contributions and sacrifices made by the proletariat of the former communist countries. Telangana had hidden treasure in the form of real estate property in Hyderabad city that belonged to the locals. It was alleged to have been slowly appropriated by outsiders, which could now be harnessed, is sufficient to fund reconstruction of Telangana. However, it all depends on how the people look at the situation and the kind of upcoming government that might take reins of power and its ideological commitment.

The investment environment as projected by some is not vitiated and therefore the brand value of Hyderabad is to be marketed not only for the city but also for other districts. The district per capita income of Adilabad (Rs32271), Nizamabad (Rs 30608), Mahabubnagar (Rs29888) and Warangal (Rs28953) is lower than the combined state average. The industrial output is also lower in Warangal, Mahabubnagar and Nizamabad within the Telangana state. The Hyderabad city region has squeezed most of the resources of the neighbouring districts and did not allow any investment to percolate to the backward areas. If the agricultural income of Karimnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Warangal and pockets of other districts is compared with the agricultural output per hectare, it is only Rs.20200 in Telangana compared to Rs. 33000 in coastal Andhra. The cropped area in both the regions is almost the same 50 million Hcs (53 in Coastal). But Telangana has exhausted its ground water through well irrigation. This will be a serious threat to its sustenance

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Common Concerns about the Aam Aadmi Party

Uday Dandavate

In the spirit of addressing concerns of some of the Aam Aadmi Party supporters, I invited people to express their views online. Here are my comments on some of the key points that came up during our interactions.

1. Why is Aam Aadmi Party so impatient in going national? It should have first set example of good governance in Delhi before going national.

Since the beginning of the anti-corruption movement the focus and appeal of AAP has been pan-India. Unlike the All Assam Student Union or Telugu Desam Party, Aam Aadmi party was not formed with a state level mandate to protect local pride. Most AAP supporters voted for the party because they want AAP to change the culture of politics in India.

AAP did not get a mandate to govern Delhi. AAP won 28 seats whereas BJP won 31. Once it became clear that BJP was unable to form a government. AAP took the opportunity to use a brief stint in the government to test its concepts in participatory democracy, despite criticism from both the media and a section of its own supporters. Rather than letting the assembly be dissolved after the BJP declined to form a government, AAP decided to treat Delhi as a laboratory for experimenting the concept of Swaraj, knowing fully well that the experiment would last only as long as the Congress party would allow it to last or until AAP leadership decided it was time to extend the experiment to a larger canvass - India. 49 days was not a long enough time to govern in a traditional sense, but it was enough time to discover the challenges of building an organization and cultivating a disciplined cadre to translate beliefs into action. When AAP gets a clear mandate to govern Delhi, it will be better prepared and wiser because it

is learning from its mistakes and has gained confidence from its successes.

For the Congress party, which is used to propping up minority governments, and arm-twisting them into submission, the experience of supporting a non-submissive AAP government was indeed an unexpected experience. Instead of offering the Congress party protection from their corrupt deeds the AAP government provided the Delhi citizens a quick trailer of their earnest desire to keep the promises made during the campaign and to start the process of punishing the corrupt, howsoever powerful they might be.

2. Supporting the Khap Panchayats and Somnath Bharati's midnight activism have revealed Aam Aadmi party's regressive social outlook.

This controversy surrounding Khap Panchayats was raked up after Yogendra Yadav's statement to the press. It is important to understand what he said. "All castes tend to have their social organizations, which do internal dispute resolution. We certainly acknowledge the right of all such organizations to exist. They have a right to exist and perform a legitimate role because we do not want every social dispute to go to the court of law. The problem arises when the dispute resolution is done through coercion...when the law of land is broken or when killings and murders are defended in the name of some adjectives like honor killing, etc. We are absolutely opposed to compromising any coercion, violation of law or any killing." He clarified that "AAP will not fall before the feet of these community

organizations for the sake of votes". Arvind Kejriwal also clarified, "Khap Panchayats are a group of people who come together. There is no bar on people to assemble in this country ... (But) whenever they take a wrong decision, whenever they take an illegal decision, they ought to be punished."

Banning castist or communal organizations is not a solution to eradicating inequality in Indian society. The difficult path of social reforms chosen by people like Ambedkar, Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule and more recently by Narendra Dabholkar stands greater chance of success in challenging the orthodoxy and rallying progressive forces. A secular democracy must fight regressive ideas through public education. While several progressive minded people were initially alarmed by the reports of AAP support for Khap panchayats, a closer look at what Yogendra Yadav and Arvind Kejriwal actually said clarifies their secular and progressive credentials.

Likewise, midnight activism by Somnath Bharati against alleged sex and drug trade in Delhi created similar outrage amongst progressive Indians. The claims of African women have not been verified yet. The videos from the media and those released by the AAP do not support the claims of the women that Bharati led a mob or an assault on them. The matter has been investigated through independent and impartial judicial inquiry and a report has recently been submitted to the Lt. Governor of Delhi. Most local citizens attribute police's refusal to follow Somnath Bharati's orders to connivance between the police and local drug and sex

trade. If, if the inquiry proves Somnath Bharati or other people guilty, they should face the legal consequences.

3. Recent violent spat between the supporters of AAP and the BJP in Delhi and Lucknow makes people wonder if at all there is any difference between the Congress, the BJP and the AAP with regard to hooliganism in politics.

Indulgence in violence is unacceptable. Keeping the cadres in check is the responsibility of political leaders. The apostle of peace - Mahatma Gandhi also had to suspend his agitation when it took a violent turn. AAP did not sit silently after violence broke out (as Modi did during anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat), nor did AAP justify the violence as Rajeev Gandhi did the massacre of Sikhs in 1984. Kejriwal

quickly apologized for the acts of AAP volunteers. The fact is that Aam Aadmi Party is a product of people's restlessness with the corrupt system and AAP leadership is determined to train its impatient cadres in non-violent Satyagraha.

4. In its ranks Aam Aadmi party has supporters of Naxalite movement. If AAP were to occupy power, naxalism will grow.

On the contrary, if Aam Aadmi Party were to play a key role in shaping public policies, the Naxalite movement will recede. There is a direct link between unchecked exploitation of the poor by the state machinery and growth of Naxalism. When the government machinery failed to serve the weakest sections of the society and instead became an exploitative machine, the poor and the landless were driven to

arms only as a last resort to re-claim their dignity. It is obvious that the same anger against the oppressive state machinery is driving weaker sections of the society to the AAP. They perceive in the AAP a hope for dismantling the corrupt system, which is thriving with the connivance of both the BJP and the Congress.

5. AAP leaders only know how to protest, how will they govern India?

The ruling party and the opposition share equal responsibilities in making a democracy work. Unchecked governance, however efficient, will inevitably lead to unchecked misuse of power. The emergency era during 1975-77 has proved that in the absence of opposition Indira Gandhi's administration committed atrocities that could be compared to atrocities committed by dictators worldwide. Shaping national discourse through dialogue and dissent is a critical aspect of establishing a clear vision and a consensus for national development. The Congress party through its dynastic politics and Narendra Modi through his authoritarian style have only facilitated fast decline of democracy in India. On the other hand, within a very short time of its founding the AAP is already dictating the national discourse for clean politics and setting public policy benchmarks for other state governments to follow.

The AAP represents a true dissenting voice of India and is providing provocation for alternative models of development. Regardless of who will form the government in Delhi, AAP will be in a best position to serve as the major opposition party that can hold the feet of the ruling party and the administration to fire and engage the imagination of everyday people. The AAP is the only party will keep the interest of common citizens at heart. The AAP

Besides, it was clear that the Congress had all but lost the general election. The AAP and its convener needed to revise their strategy, which they did by expanding their field of vision to include the BJP, and especially its prime ministerial candidate. The BJP had reaccommodated B.S. Yeddyurappa, whom the party ousted citing corruption, and, of course, the elephant in the room was Mr. Modi's corporate links.

Mr. Modi's opponents, including the Congress, attacked Mr. Modi relentlessly and yet spat him where he was possibly most vulnerable. Mr. Kejriwal's trademark deredevilyr meant that he would go where the others didn't.

The AAP convener has done the smartest thing he could by bombarding Mr. Modi with daily posers on his alleged Ambani-Adani connection. Mr. Kejriwal has brought in Mukesh Ambani via the KG Basin gas pricing and he has wondered at the meteoric rise of Gautam Adani coinciding with the Chief Ministership of Mr. Modi. And he has done this in NaMo's Gujarat, thereby earning enormous credibility.

Mr. Modi has so far been censured on the 2002 anti-Muslim violence. But this has become an overplayed card, with the BJP being able to cite a favourable Gujarat lower court ruling on Zakia Jafri's complaint against Mr. Modi and 61 others. That the appeal process in the case is still to be exhausted is evident enough. Yet the "clean chit" has become the most potent weapon in the Modi campaign's armoury. The "clean chit" has also been seized by political parties styling themselves as "secular" but nonetheless wanting to keep the door open for future business with Mr. Modi.

Mr. Kejriwal, on the other hand, revels in his isolation. He is who he is because he has the audacity not to want to do political business. If there is an element of exaggeration in what Mr. Kejriwal says, it does not matter because electoral politics is shaped to a great extent by public perception.

—Vidya Subrahmaniam

has made the commitment to engage citizens in dictating public policies and in serving as watchdogs against corruption.

6. With people like Medha Patkar in its ranks AAP comes across as anti-development, whereas Narendra Modi has the ability to cut red tape and implement projects efficiently.

Greed for consuming nature's resources and scant respect for the rights of native population, has led humanity to the brink of ecological disaster. National Alliance for People's Movement (NAPM) an alliance of grass root level organizations who champion the need for a just and sustainable development has been instrumental in ensuring that megalomaniac policy makers are restrained from upsetting ecological balance and forced to respect the human rights of communities being displaced by mega projects. The NAPM has joined the AAP campaign and has offered to serve as the watchdog of AAP's policies to help make India a world leader in sustainable development. Just as without Martin's Luther King Jr. movement it would have been hard to envision African American population of the US getting equal rights, or without Ralf Nadar's activism it would have been difficult to imagine passing of laws for protection of consumer rights, watchful activism of Medha Patkar and her colleagues from NAPM has made India cognizant of the need for environmentally responsible policies. On the other hand Narendra Modi has surrendered his administration to the interests of a small group of industrialists. He has diverted natural resources to help them conduct their business without interruption. A large crowd gathered in Ahmedabad recently to listen to Arvind Kejriwal has made Narendra Modi very nervous. He must be remembering Abraham Lincoln's

famous quote "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

7. AAP is only an urban phenomenon. However compelling its mission of eradication corruption, the rural population has not yet bought into AAP's vision.

The need for a party that will not sell itself out to the corrupt is a pan-India dream. Based on previous experiences - such as the movement for Total Revolution launched by Jayaprakash Narayan in mid-1970s, and the anti-corruption movement led by V.P. Singh, it is clear that when an icon of hope catches the imagination of the masses, craving for getting out of the abyss spreads fast. It is a fact that with the fast declining credibility of the Congress party, Narendra Modi appeared on the political scene of India as an alternative. However, as the anti-corruption movement gained momentum and ordinary citizens, traditionally averse to participating in politics, took to streets to assert their point of view, the Aam Aadmi Party's bold stand against the corrupt establishment began to resonate with people's simmering anger. People realize that both the Congress and the BJP are a part of the same system.

A number of police officers, who traditionally have great respect for a clear line of authority, have begun to flock to the BJP. On the other hand, a number of social workers, representatives of NGOs, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, professionals, academicians and creative people are drawn to the idea of disruptive innovation offered by the AAP. The results of Delhi elections have demonstrated that AAP's appeal cuts across caste and religious divisions. Its message has already reached rural India. As the campaign picks up AAP's prospects will improve just as they did during the campaign for Delhi elections.

8. AAP has a narrow program focused on corruption. Governance is more complex than just blaming the corrupt.

Corruption touches every aspect of life. At the same time the AAP leadership is cognizant of the need for social reforms and sustainable and fair development. A number of professionals who are drawn to the AAP are engaged in studying models of governance that have helped countries around the world bring prosperity to its citizens through participatory democracy. Young volunteers who have taken a break from careers involving state of art knowledge and technologies manage AAP campaign. While focusing on defeating the corrupt Congress and BJP AAP is committed to harnessing leading edge ideas and technologies to establish a new development model.

AAP's support base comes to a large extent from the younger generation. The first time voters in Delhi formed the core constituency of the AAP. This generation is less concerned about pre-conceived models and ideologies and more eager to eradicate corruption and give their imagination a chance. They have access to the Internet and have got accustomed to the Open Source model of contributing their own ideas for a larger good. Crowd sourcing has become a reliable method of finding patterns in people's needs and aspirations, more reliable than any expert opinion. In this background the youth are less loyal to centralized control and delivery mechanism and more tuned into the fuzzy space of collaboration and co-creation. As long as the intent to harness the imagination and energy of youth and wisdom of the honest citizens remains at the heart of AAP's agenda it may be destined for successes beyond anyone's imagination, because the awakening of nation's conscience

will define AAP's future role in serving the nation.

9. Instead of exercising his power as the chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal resorted to street demonstrations in Delhi causing hardships to the citizens of Delhi.

Street demonstrations are a part of Delhi life. Every political party worldwide resorts to mobilizing public opinion through street demonstrations. The position of the Delhi Chief Minister is different from other Chief Ministers in India. The police do not report to the Chief Minister, Delhi Assembly also has to seek permission of the home ministry through the LT. Governor before enacting a law. The Congress chief minister Sheila Dixit campaigned for changing this situation without success through her entire ten year-long tenure as the Chief Minister. Recognizing the strong grass root level support the AAP has generated amongst the people of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal used a public venue to bring focus on an issue that remained a part of futile backroom negotiations during Sheila Dixit's tenure. Rather than becoming a puppet holding a Chief Minister position at the mercy of Congress high command, Arvind Kejriwal demonstrated that he was irrepressible when it comes to exercising his powers as the Chief Minister, to serve his constituents.

10. Arvind Kejriwal is a polarizing figure. He likes to point accusing finger at people, instead of taking everyone along.

India is not in a mood to collaborate with the corrupt. People have lost faith in existing system to deliver justice and want AAP to take a bold stand and demolish the corrupt system mercilessly. People have a real bad attitude about the established political system and Arvind Kejriwal's no nonsense style reflects the mood of the nation.

An economy that will meet basic needs of all without ecological ruin

Bharat Dogra

Keeping in view the perpetuation of large-scale poverty and the colossal ecological ruin wrought by the existing economic system, the creation of an alternative economic system has become one of the most urgent issues of our time.

For all households a basic right and a basic duty should be stressed.

The basic needs of all families should be met. In other words everyone should be able to get clean drinking water, adequate and healthy nutrition, access to basic health and education facilities as well as to such clothing and housing as will at least protect them from weather extremes. Further, to meet these basic needs, the household should not be forced to carry out work which destroys health.

Having met these basic needs, a household should further feel free to add such small and inexpensive items of consumption which will bring some comfort and colour in their life, and satisfy some strongly felt special needs which are not socially harmful.

Having reached this level of basic needs plus small comforts, however, it is equally important for a family to voluntarily and happily stop yearning for more. In particular a family should strive to avoid as much as possible the consumption of those goods whose adverse impact on (individual and social) health and environment is well known.

Any income and wealth that a family may have in excess of

this basic requirement should be voluntarily and happily given up to more needy persons, or else (if it is possible to do this entirely honestly) held as a trusteeship to be used for weaker sections or for other equally worthy causes such as the protection of environment, preventing cruelty to animals et al.

This is the value system that should be spread among as many people as possible to lay the foundations of a good economy. The emphasis on voluntary giving up of excess wealth and income does not mean that the government will not use various levels of force to obtain the excess resources of those who refuse to give it up on their own. However while conceding this right to the government we should nevertheless stress the voluntary aspect so that appropriate values can be created among the people on a large scale.

The propagation of these values should be based on facts and logic, instead of rhetoric and dogma. It is necessary to keep our consumption within limits to save environment, and there is no better gift that we can leave for our children and grandchildren than to give them a clean and safe environment. Aspects such as these which are likely to touch a soft corner of ordinary people should be emphasised.

It is often believed that it will be difficult to convince people to consume less. Actually the desire of many people to lead a simpler, less

consumerist life style is often grossly underrated. *The Times of India* reported on August 13, 1996 that even in that heartland of consumerism, the USA, a lot of people are questioning the values of consumerism- "Last summer, the Merck Family Fund commissioned a nationwide public opinion survey on consumption, materialism and the environment. It found Americans questioning such seemingly entrenched values as financial security and career success. Ninety-one per cent of those interviewed agreed that "the 'buy now, pay later' attitude causes many of us to consume more than we need." More significantly, they were acting on their growing unease with overconsumption. Asked if during the last five years they had voluntarily taken steps to make less money, 28 per cent said yes. "We were shocked at this particular finding", says the fund's executive director, Betsy Taylor "In the focus groups people displayed a real hunger to simplify their lives. Once they started talking, many didn't want to stop." The No. 1 reason they gave was the desire for a more balanced life."

In a survey by the British Social Research Council (during the early 1970s), a good home life and contented outlook were rated as important by more people than the quantity of consumer goods they had.

In fact for quite some time some social critics have been trying to articulate the growing unease of people at having too many consumer items which do not really add to their utility. William Morris, English artist and poet did this as early as 1876 - "Wealth is what Nature gives us and what a reasonable man can make out of the gifts of nature for his

reasonable use... But think, I beseech you, of the produce of England, the workshop of the world, and will you not be bewildered, as I am, at the thought of the mass of things which no sane man could desire, but which our useless toil makes - and sells?"

In a recent article in *The Daily Telegraph* (October 26, 1995) Nicola Tyrer says, "Among the sons and daughters of the war generation, there is a creeping suspicion that many of the inventions acclaimed as lightening life's burdens may not be quite what they seem; that, paradoxically, they could be adding to our workload or subtly destroying things we hold dear. Take the washing machine, now a fixture in more than eight out of 10 British households. How many women find themselves filling and emptying it every day as fashion-conscious children change from one clean outfit into another on a whim? Emptying the dishwasher now falls solely on the woman in most households, while 50 years ago, washing up was a chore shared among the family. Meanwhile, television and the microwave have joined forces in many homes to drive out the family meal as each member eats when he or she likes. Children who have television sets and personal computers in their bedrooms may indeed fight less, but in their isolation are possibly forgoing vital lessons in tolerance and play."

Further this article in the *Daily Telegraph* gives the example of a six-member British family which has nine TV sets and was asked to switch off all televisions for three days. The eldest 17-year old child was so appalled by the suggestion that she simply refused to join the experiment. However, clear behaviour improvements were

noticed in the three remaining children. Far from squabbling, they seemed to seek out and enjoy each other's company - although they clearly believed they were suffering. Their mother Carol said, "All sorts of things we had kept putting off doing, got done. Bikes got mended, book shelves sorted, rooms tidied, hamsters cleaned out. Tanya and Ashley started to play things together, like scrabble and sevens, they even read stories." Their father David was most impressed by the peace. He felt that having to plan their own entertainment did the children good. He said, "If it weren't for the fact that I'd be lynched, I'd throw all the televisions away."

These examples indicate that if an adequate effort is made, it should be possible to convince many people to reduce their consumption voluntarily. Jeremy Seabrook writes, "Politicians in the West insist that the one thing that is sure to guarantee electoral defeat is to talk about radical change, about renunciation, about lowering the standard of living. This is, I believe a mistake."

He explains, "The truth is that human resources are as vital a component of our growth and development as monetary ones; and it is this simple lesson which needs to be relearned by a West which can price everything and know the true value of nothing. If the people of the West were to be awakened to this - to obvious - truth, just imagine how they might become freed from their addictive devotion to the marketed compensations and consolations which they must buy to alleviate their value-added unhappiness! And once this happened, how much more generous they would become in their desire to share with the poor of the earth!"

“They will rediscover all the things that human beings can make and do and create and invent and give freely to each other - things that have been enclosed, marketed and sold back to us in the West. They will learn, not how little you can do without a lot of money, but how much you can do with very little, which is the valuable instruction which the poor of the world can offer them. This does not mean impoverishment in any way : it means a lesser reliance on the market place for the satisfaction of need, thereby releasing material resources for those whose absolute most basic needs go unanswered each day. What a life-giving act of generosity that would be.”

Well-to-do households need to have no fears that a less profligate perception of basic needs will reduce their happiness. Instead it offers them a real chance to increase their happiness as the pretentious, transient happiness of more and more material acquisitions is replaced with the real and lasting happiness of deeply affectionate and caring human relationships.

A reduction of material acquisitions is hence not a time of mortification but instead an opportunity for a more meaningful life of diverse interests. As we move away from the greed for more material acquisitions, we've time, resources and opportunities for more meaningful pursuits - creative work of various kinds and above all improvement of human relationships, with special emphasis on reducing distress all around us.

The role of the government is to extend a helping hand in spreading this value system, ensuring the availability of basic needs to all people and then using its various

powers to restrain individuals from excessive consumption as well as wealth accumulation.

To meet the needs and small comforts of all people, the private and public sector should be combined together in a creative way, providing as much creative space for small scale private entrepreneurs as possible while also maintaining a significant government presence in heavy industries, public health, transport and communication and a few other areas.

However both public and private sector industry have to be responsible towards strong public interest groups representing the interests of consumers and the interests of environment protection. In addition their labour policy should be based on welfare.

Agriculture should be in the hands of small farmers cultivating small plots of land of around 2 to 10 acres each, depending on the productivity and availability of land. If they voluntarily choose to work as a cooperative or collective, they should be free to do so. Or while retaining their individual identity, they can take up cooperative and collective action at various levels.

A creative competition among farming and industrial units should be encouraged regarding energy use efficiency, environmental protection methods, quality of products, etc., and rewards given to those who achieve good results.

Growth should cease to be an essential objective of the economy. The objective is to meet the basic needs (and if possible the small comforts) of all people and also to some extent the materials needed for repairing environmental damage already done. Economic activity

beyond this should be regarded as not only unnecessary but also undesirable.

In particular it should be possible to avoid a lot of unnecessary activity relating to transport and advertising. The base of the economy should be villages which are self-sufficient to a large extent in meeting many of their basic needs. In addition these villages should be able to meet most of the food needs of nearby towns and cities. Hence the transport expenses of basic needs can be reduced very substantially.

William Morris wrote about the prevailing method of distribution that it “is full of waste, for it employs whole armies of clerks, travellers, shopmen, advertisers and what not, merely for the sake of shifting money from one person's pocket to another's; ...” This waste has been noted by many observers, but it has been difficult to curb it. However in an economy where most of the production is confined to basic needs, and most of the basic needs are locally produced, it is clearly possible to make this saving. Let me hasten to add that both large-scale heavy industry and trade across longer distances, including international trade, will continue to exist even in this system but to a much smaller extent.

Similarly advertising will not be needed for a lot of goods, as in a largely self-reliant local economy, consumers and producers know each other. In any case there is a clear need for redefining the role of advertising and sales tactics.

It is important to reconsider what is good salesmanship. Ability to sell even the products of most dubious utility has come to be regarded as good salesmanship. This should be

replaced by a different definition - *good salesmanship means taking a good product wherever it is really needed*. The present-day distorted definition of efficient salesmanship and advertising pushes too many low utility products on consumers who do not really need them. This is bad for environment, equally bad for the objective of meeting the basic needs of all. Advertising has a legitimate role to play in giving easy to read, nice to hear, fun to watch but at the same time also accurate and proper information about products which fulfil real needs. When it crosses this limit and particularly when it uses life-style images to sell a lot of low utility, sometimes even harmful goods as being part of a desirable life-style, then the very success of this advertising is damaging for society as it promotes wasteful affluence.

As far as possible the scale of production should be decided in favour of small scale production and cottage scale production, even though as I've said earlier, the need for large-scale production in a few areas is conceded. For meeting many basic needs small-scale production is capable of providing more colourful diversity, more creativity, more flexibility, more employment, meeting more specific needs, providing more job satisfaction, reducing waste and ecological ruin, strengthening community ties, better utilising existing skills including those of old and infirm people. However small-scale producers will also be required to remain responsible to the consumer and environment movements, and abide by the laws of labour welfare.

In other words our vision of an alternative economy is based

on largely self-sufficient villages which have small-scale farmers and crafts persons supported by a few small industries in nearby small towns and mixed rural-urban areas. Almost all villagers have at least some resource-base, and there is a great deal of equality. Probably the ratio of the income of the lowest 20 per cent to the highest 20 per cent is not more than 1:2 or even less. This is supported by heavy industry and long-distance trade but their role is much smaller than today. The main emphasis is on meeting the basic needs of all people, and a few small comforts as well. This economy is much more capable of

(Continued from Page 3)

What disappointed me most in Lahore was the absence of protests against human rights violations. Liberal voices are hardly heard. Nobody dares mentioning the killing of Punjab governor Salman Taseer who voiced his opposition to the blasphemy laws.

Back home, as many as 69 Kashmiri students at Meerut from the Vivekanand University were suspended for cheering the Pakistani cricket team. They were first booked for sedition. The suspension evoked so much criticism that the students had to be taken back. However, this indicates the mindset on Kashmiris as far as India is concerned.

The authorities which suspended the students were either a bigoted lot or a set of people who believed that they would be applauded for their anti-Pakistani step. Nothing like that happened. There was no reaction and even the media inured to sensationalize, did nothing beyond reporting the university's step.

Both incidents, the celebrations and suspensions, emphasize the

providing creative and satisfactory employment compared to the existing economy. In addition it is also capable of checking ecological ruin, including meeting the most vexing requirement of reducing the greenhouse gases the extent recommended by the International Panel on Climate Change in 1991. It is possible for such an economy to meet these stiff environmental requirements even while meeting the needs of all because most production activity is confined to village units using very low amounts of fossil fuels and conditions are more conducive for decentralised removal of energy sources.

narrative before partition—the Hindu India and the Muslim Pakistan—has not changed. Deep down it is the same thinking that religion identifies the nations.

Even after 67 years since independence India has not been able to implant secularism as firmly as it has done in the case of democracy. Pakistan has little minority problem because the ethnic cleansing in the country has been substantial. Therefore, the quarrels are confined only to the Sunnis and Shias. The Ahmedias, declared non-Muslims, bear the brunt and their graves are being dug to throw out the remains.

As for relations between India and Pakistan, the hostility has worn off, giving way to a desire to befriend India. Were there to be relaxation of visa, the visitors from Pakistan would come in thousands. This holds good for India as well. The problem at this end is that the extremist fringe represented by the Jammat-e-Islami and Hafeez Sayedd is taken as the prevalent mood in Pakistan.

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Killing of security personnel

The PUCL condemns the killing of 16 security personnel, including 11 CRPF personnel, 4 policemen and a civilian, in a land mine blast followed by indiscriminate firing by Maoists at Tongpal village in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on 11.3.2014. PUCL regrets the loss of lives in the latest incident, which is part of a continuing and seemingly endless series of bloody and violent attacks and counter attacks by security forces and Maoists in the state.

The unending spiral of violence is what concerns us most for it has led to the killings and maiming of thousands of tribals who have been caught in the cross fire. We are clear that under no circumstances can violence be justified. But our response cannot stop at mere condemnation.

The PUCL would like to reaffirm its position that the only way out of the present context of vicious violence is for the Government to initiate a process of unconditional ceasefire, which could end hostilities on both sides and create the ground for talks. We appeal to the Maoists also to agree to an unconditional ceasefire and engage in talks.

It is very important that Adivasi groups like the Adivasi Mahasabha, Sarva Samaj and other representative organisations of Adivasis need to be included in the talks to end violence, apart from the two sides, the Maoists and Government.

We would once again like to reiterate that the middle ground in the peace discourse needs to be restored, which also has been a casualty in this war because of the “‘with us’ or ‘against us’” Government policy in the affected area. It is only mediation by a group of concerned and independent citizens which can take the process of peace and justice forward.

The most tragic part of the spirals of violence is that apart from the deaths of scores of security personnel and Maoist cadres in the numerous offensives and counter-offensives, thousands of innocent tribals and villagers have paid a heavy price. They have been subjected to severe human rights violations at the hands of security and police forces, implicated and arrested in false prosecutions and spent years in jails without trial. Hundreds of tribals have been killed, women raped and

houses destroyed due to the violence by Salwa Judum cadres, operating with the support of the state. Despite the Supreme Court’s orders they have not got justice, and the state continues to be in contempt of the orders of the Supreme Court.

We would like to point out that there are sufficient number of studies of the National Planning Commission which have pointed out that the only solution to dealing with the Maoist issue is land distribution, implementation of the Forest Rights Act, acknowledging the rights of the tribals to forest and to stop mindless plundering of the natural resources in the tribal areas which have destroyed the livelihoods and habitats of the tribal people. The best way to restore faith in democracy is by integrating human rights, equity and social justice considerations into all government policies, plans and programmes and abandon militaristic solution.

The PUCL, through this press release appeals to both the security forces as also the Maoist forces to immediately announce an unconditional ceasefire, stop armed engagements and to engage in talks

Dr. V. Suresh, *National General Secretary*,
Prof. Prabhakar Sinha, *National President*,

Dr. Binayak Sen, *National Vice-President and President, Chhattisgarh*
Sudha Bharadwaj, *General Secretary, Chhattisgarh*

(Continued from Page 2)

that can command enough seats to form the government will only be in the position to get him the throne.

Which brings us back to the question we raised at the outset. Where is the Third Front of which

so many are saying so many things? No front has yet taken off and no front shows signs of doing so. Right now, it is a free-for-all in the prime ministerial race. May the best candidate win!

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Landmark ruling

PUCL welcomes the historic and landmark ruling of the Supreme Court of 18th February, 2014 commuting to life sentence the death penalties awarded to Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalan, convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. This judgment of the Supreme Court, and the 21st January, 2014 judgment in 'Shatrugan Chauhan vs Union of India' marks a watershed in the evolution of death penalty jurisprudence in India and restores the primacy of a constitutional vision imbued with a sense of humanity and compassion. The ruling also emphasizes an appreciation of the right to life in the context of "[the] brooding horror haunting the prisoner in the condemned cells for years" as a consequence of prolonged delay in deciding mercy petitions.

The unanimous ruling delivered by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, P. Sadasivam and Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Shiva Kirti Singh built on the principles evolved in 'Shatrugan Chauhan vs Union of India' saying that the unexplained, undue and inordinate delay of 11 years in rejecting the commutation petitions by the Executive would amount to torture, constituted a violation of Art. 21, the right to life, and is ground enough to commute the death sentences.

The SC also rejected the most preposterous argument of the Attorney General of India, G E Vahnavati, that there was "not a word of remorse" and that the three prisoners were "enjoying life, attending music concerts and were not in any sort of agony". The SC pointedly emphasized that agony did

not mean physical torture and that in law, there was no requirement for the prisoners to prove suffering or to demonstrate the specific ill effects of imprisonment or agony in prison.

Continuing the trend of a visionary, path breaking judicial expansion of human rights law, the SC also held that it was open to the Tamil Nadu Government to consider exercise of powers under sections 432 and 433 Criminal Procedure Code to grant remission to the three prisoners if they approached the government for premature release or remission, by following the due

Prabhakar Sinha,
President, General Secretary

procedure of law. By doing so, the SC has demonstrated its ability to stand statesmanlike above the blood thirsty demands for retribution and revenge which has occupied public space and media coverage on death penalty cases in recent times.

The SC's ruling is a momentous ruling for asserting that human values and humane justice should ultimately be the cornerstones of modern, constitutional India. We hope this will mark a significant step towards eventually abolishing the death penalty altogether from our law books.

V. Suresh,
Peoples Union of Civil Liberties

(Continued from Page 4)

in future, if the aquifers are not replenished.

Modernisation and diversification of agriculture seem to hold the key in meeting the immediate demand for jobs. It can be in the form of Operation Barga of Bengal as a transitory solution with the expansion of infrastructure of not only roads, buildings, power, etc, but provision of education and skills to create more jobs. However, this is possible with the commitment of the government and sincerity of the bureaucracy with a socio-economic agenda of equality of opportunity. As the state has long reservoir of ideologically oriented political workers and development activists, it is possible to usher in a socialistic pattern of society with the active involvement of people as partners of development. Let us wish our Telugu brethren a joyful future!

Acharya Javadekar



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The elusive majority

S. Viswam

**Hide and seek over
Brooks' report**
Kuldip Nayar

Rule by ordinance
Rajindar Sachar

AAP like other parties
Sandeep Pandey

**The Search for
a genuine alternative**
Sandeep Pandey

New Class War
Pannalal Surana

**Election Manifesto
of Socialist Party (India)**

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We have had a few opinion polls thus far but none of them project an outright majority for any political grouping. For yet another term, the post-poll government that will succeed the UPDI will necessarily have to be one led by a coalition of "like-minded parties". In fact, the term is a misnomer since no two parties are alike in their political outlook. Indeed, one party which hopes to make a fair showing in the polls, namely, the Aam Aadmi Party, does not even boast of an ideology. Parties are in the fray only to seize power, ideology given only the second place.

No one is surprised, used as the Indians have become to elections, by the fact that there are as many prime ministerial aspirants as there are political formations. Every leader is a potential prime minister, or so he claims. Some like Lalu Yadav and Mulayam Singh give public expression to their aspirations; others less vocally. Today, we have not less than six leaders who have made their prime ministerial hopes public. And, this is something to be welcomed, there are at least three women leaders who are openly in the race. They are Chief Ministers Jayalalitha and Mamata Bannerji and former

Chief Minister Mayawati. They hold between them as many as 80 plus 42 plus 39 plus one (total of 162) Lok Sabha seats, a sizable number to influence government formation.

The three women are more or less of the same age group. Jayalalitha is the most senior in terms of age (she is 66), while Mamata is just behind with 59 and Mayawati trailing with 58. Each of them has administrative experience in varying degrees but will not find the first post in the country too challenging, although in the case of Mayawati, the English language may be a problem. But there are dozens of women prime ministers and ministers and senior administrators in the world who do quite well, thank you, without even a smattering of English. So, language is not really a bar. Then, you talk of political base. You are talking here of each of these women having crushed powerful men political leaders in the polls, all three of them having gained glory by chucking out well-entrenched administrations lock, stock and barrel. Their political base is stronger than those of many senior political stalwarts. There are now good signs that each of these three are all set to play a leading role in the post-poll scenario.

Between the lines

Hide and seek over Brooks' report

Kuldip Nayar

Let us examine Jayalalithaa's chances first. With 39 seats in Tamil Nadu, and one in Pondicherry, Jayalalithaa is playing for high stakes, she has publicly declared that she is hoping to win all the 40 seats and make a bid for the Prime Minister ship. Indeed, if she captures the entire state on her own, her claims for the high office cannot be brushed off lightly. If she cannot form the government on her own, she will play king-maker and have a vital say in government-formation. There is of course no question of whether or not she will fill the bill. She is a good administrator having ruled Tamil Nadu as chief minister for more than one term. Even if she fails to hit the 40 mark, her importance will count even with 25 to 30 seats. No alliance can afford to ignore her in that case. Her equations with the NDA are better than those with the UPA, and hence she will be in a good position even if Narendra Modi were to seize power on behalf of the BJP-led alliance. Her case presents the most interesting study in the coming polls. She has good chances of realizing her aspirations. Her past experience of aligning with the BJP has made her cautious this time. She has also steered clear of the two communist parties and other Dravida outfits.

Mamata is another political leader who has displayed caution in forging alliances for 2014. She has burnt her fingers because of being part of the BJP set-up in 2004 and the Congress in 2009. Single-handedly she threw out the Left and has captured West Bengal on her own. For such a leader it comes but naturally to say she hopes to win all the 42 seats this time in the Lok Sabha. She well might!

Why Anna Hazare decided to sponsor her candidature for

(Continued on Page 4)

I was the correspondent of The Times, published from London, when Neville Maxwell was its South Asia correspondent. He operated from New Delhi and we often discussed matters concerning India and other countries, particularly China.

That he was anti-India would be an understatement. His hatred towards the country was patent in his dispatches. For example, he wrote after second general election in 1957 that it was the last polls of the country because democracy was not suited to India's genius.

I have not seen any of his writings to admit that his reading was incorrect. He reminded me at times of British die hearts who exploited India to make their country rich and indulged in unspeakable atrocities to keep us a colony.

Both Maxwell and I often compared India's development with China's. Otherwise for progressive democracy, he praised China's authoritarian regime. He honestly believed that it was India which attacked China and therefore titled his book as India's war on China.

The utility of the book was the reproduction of certain portions of reports by Henderson Brooks, appointed by the government to probe into the reasons for India's debacle in the 1962 war against China. He reportedly blamed New Delhi, particularly Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, for "shoving" India into a war against China

when the former had not shoes for the soldiers who were moved from Kashmir to face the Chinese.

I was then the press secretary to Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and knew his unhappiness over building up China's Premier Chou En-Lai by Nehru. The latter introduced him to the world figures and took him to Bandung at the first non-alignment conference. Nehru was never the same after the defeat and died early because he felt personally betrayed. Although Sardar Patel had warned him through a letter not to trust China which would one day attack India, Nehru was obsessed by a Socialist country which he, to his grief, could not transform India into that mould.

Maxwell has released part of the report by Henderson Brooks. I am inclined to believe that he has done so to give some mileage to the anti-Congress forces. That Nehru did not prepare the country and misjudged the Chinese designs is an open secret. I have had a long interview with General P.N. Thapar, the then chief of the army staff. He had given in writing that India would face defeat if there was a war between India and China. Thapar submitted a long note for the procurement of weapons and raising up more troops. Nehru told him that the note was never put up to him.

New Delhi went into the disputed areas to establish its claim. I remember the former Home Secretary, B. N. Jha, telling me that it was "a bright idea" of B.N.

Malik, the Director of Intelligence, to establish police posts “wherever we could,” even behind the “Chinese lines”, so as to “register our claim” on the territory. “But,” then he said, “Malik does not realize that these isolated posts with no support from the back will fall like ninepins as soon as the Chinese push forward. We are unnecessarily exposing the policemen to death. Frankly, this is the job of the army, but since they have refused to man the posts until full logistic support is provided, we have placed the policemen.”

The posts ran in a zigzag line; 41 of them were established, a few policemen here and a few of them there, sometimes like islands in the multitude of Chinese predators. The massive Chinese attack and our puny efforts to cope with it were now plain for all to see. The government decided to play down the news of reverses which were pouring in endlessly. It was treating it like the September 8 intrusion in NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency) which was officially described as the “appearance of some Chinese forces in the vicinity of one of our posts.”

I remember the first time I heard of the Sino-Indian border dispute was in the Union Home Ministry in early 1957. I was complaining to a senior official about the East Pakistan border bristling with dangers. He feigned ignorance. But his one remark, even though cryptic, was significant. He said: “Why Pakistan alone? You will have trouble with China very soon.” He did not elucidate but in reply to my insistent queries he did add that there were vague reports of China building a road through Sinkiang. The Ministry of External Affairs had been informed of the reports many times.

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Rule by ordinance undemocratic

Rajindar Sachar

There was recently a frantic race among Congressmen: how to persuade the President of India to issue a couple of ordinances because the young master, Rahul Gandhi, desired it. It is a different matter that none of the proposed laws were opposed by the Opposition. Had the House managers done their homework, Parliament could have passed some of the pending Bills, including the Grievances Redress Bill and the Whistleblowers Bill. The self-flagellation and ego of the Congress combined with antics of the Opposition turned everything topsy-turvy. The Telangana Bill, with both major political parties indulging in political maneuvering, was passed by voice vote, embellished by a peppery spray and a shameless failure of live TV coverage of the proceedings of the House (one does not yet know the villain - the government has not held an inquiry).

And pray, how come Rahul is so insistent on the ordinance route when in the matter of disqualification of convicted legislators, he had publicly shamed the Prime Minister and his government by tearing the ordinance!

Can the President accept an ordinance when both Houses are not going to meet before the general election in May 2014 and there is going to be a new Lok Sabha? It would amount to shredding the Constitution if the President were to approve the ordinances, which in law were never deliberated by the members of the Lok Sabha. Are the newly elected Lok Sabha members expected to initiate their work with old Bills? I have not much objection

to the broad contours of the Bills - I myself have been a public signatory to a statement demanding that before the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, the Bills on public grievances and whistleblowers be passed. But somehow it did not happen. With time having run out, democracies cannot resort to devious methods.

I am aghast at the drama of ordinances for all these weeks in the Press. If the government was genuinely keen on having these Bills passed, what stopped it from extending the session by a few days? Unless the ruling party was maneuvering to acclaim Rahul Gandhi as the sole Mr. Clean of India, in the melodramatic repetition of the 1940 movie of Hollywood decades back, namely “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” and the more recent Bollywood version equally well crafted and starring Amitabh Bachchan, “Main Azad Hoon” — I fail to understand why his followers did not insist on extending the session for a couple of days to pass these Bills which certainly would have received no opposition. Of course, if the real intent was to seek a mileage, then unfortunately the move has backfired.

Even if the President had been persuaded to issue the ordinances, these would have had no validity or life and the new Lok Sabha would have to pass them afresh. Was this fuss worth even a penny?

A vibrant democracy is not governed by ordinances. This provision is an anathema to a democratic republic. I feel that the ordinance issuing power is an

anachronism dating back to the colonial Acts of 1919 and 1935 and it should be deleted from the Constitution. No other parliamentary democracy has such an undemocratic provision.

The Supreme Court has firmly held in the Wadhwa case (1987) that the power conferred on the Governor to issue ordinances is in the nature of an emergency power for taking immediate action when the legislature is not in session. The primary law-making action under the Constitution is with the legislature and not the executive. The power to promulgate an ordinance is essentially a power to be used to meet an extraordinary situation and it cannot be allowed to be **“perverted to serve political ends”** (emphasis supplied). “It is contrary to all democratic norms that the executive should have the power to serve political ends”.

A similar provision empowers the President under Article 123 of the Constitution. This is a hangover from the colonial period but then we have retained gleefully many remnants of the British law like sedition, applicability of which is causing havoc in the lives of young activists, especially those belonging to minorities. This power of issuing an ordinance has no place in a democratic country.

Consider the ground rules of the situation. The general election is to be held in a couple of months. On a conservative estimate a minimum of half the existing members of the Lok Sabha are going to be defeated. Should these rejected politicians forestall the right of the new members either to accept or modify radically the said legislation? It was unseemly for the government to start stray winds of gossip and

news items indirectly to gauge the reaction of the President if the ordinances were sent to him.

We have the answer. Democratic norms and conventions in the country have at last been reiterated eloquently by the quiet, dignified and steadfast stand of President Pranab Mukherjee in refusing to give consent to the ordinances, notwithstanding the frantic legal erudition of P.Chidambaram. The President was not moved by the

(Continued from Page 2)

the Prime Minister ship and then jettisoned her midway is a mystery yet to be solved. But we may learn the reason sooner rather than later as the poll dates in West Bengal approach closer.

Mayawati is the dark horse that can win all 80 seats if luck favours her, but this is unlikely as the competition is rather severe.

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I still cannot understand why the government is keeping the Brooks’ report as classified. The defence ministry’s reasoning that the divulgence of the report would make public certain “tactics” which are still relevant. The tactics and even weapons employed in 1962 have no relevance today. Former chief of army staff General V.P. Malik has said that the 1962 operation is not relevant today. He has asked for the publication of the report. But the Congress-led government is under the wrong perception that Nehru’s image would be damaged and so would be that of the ruling party. Now that the excerpts of the report are already on the Internet, the government sounds churlish and undemocratic when it insists on keeping the report secret. New

almost tearful lament of Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid, saying how the rejection has come in the way of Rahul Gandhi’s vision. Salman Khurshid should not take it to heart because the coming general election will give all the opportunity to Rahul Gandhi to test his vision. Now that the question of ordinances is over, I hope Rahul and his seasoned advisers will remember the old admonition: “Be you ever so high, the law is above you”.

However, on her own, we can credit her with the capability of winning at least 25 seats. With even such a fewer number, she can play a major role in government formation. She can dictate terms to both the NDA and the UPA.

May all the three of them have the best of luck!

Delhi is happy to lock the gate after the animals have bolted.

I vainly tried to get the report made public. First, I approached the Defence Ministry which said no. Ultimately, I tried to seek the report through Right to Information. The matter went up to the top. But it rejected my plea. I have appealed to the High Court which is sitting on the matter. After many years a brief reference came early last year when the judge remarked: “So you want all country’s secret to be made public?” I wish there had been a decision on that. Unfortunately, there is none. The matter rests there and the government doggedly sticks to its archaic stand that the public has no right to know even after 52 years.

AAP becoming like other parties

Sandeep Pandey

When BJP came into existence they used to claim that they were a party with a difference. They meant that they were free of corruption and criminalization. After some time they stopped making that claim. They could not stop their criminalization and take over by corrupt element. Now AAP has arrived on the Indian political scene making a similar claim about being a different kind of party. But in less than a year and half it is struggling against things which it is ideologically opposed to.

The difference between AAP and other political parties is fast disappearing. The grassroots workers are dissatisfied with the leadership. They are unhappy with the fact that intellectuals, journalists, social activists, people who have left corporate jobs are being made candidates for the upcoming general elections whereas people associated with the party since the beginning are being ignored.

The genuine question that the workers raise is if decisions about party candidates were to be taken in Delhi then what was the need for making people fill forms and conducting interviews. In any case, party has now gathered a huge data base of grassroots level potential supporters who could become the voter base. Each candidate coming for an interview was asked to bring endorsements from hundred people from each of the five Vidhan Sabha constituencies falling in their Lok Sabha constituency. AAP and earlier IAC have very effectively utilized the SMS to mobilize their supporters.

Except for few distinguished people like Medha Patkar, Rajmohan Gandhi or Ashish Khetan the party while selecting its candidate is giving more importance to the criterion of winning ability rather than honesty. This has sowed seeds of serious discontent.

Howsoever much Arvind Kejriwal may talk of democratic decision making, the fact of the matter is increasingly becoming transparent that AAP too is bereft of any internal democracy. Recently AAP Political Affairs Committee has taken a decision to empower itself to be able to change any state level or district level office bearers or committees. Now this goes against the philosophy of 'Swarajya' which Arvind Kejriwal has espoused. In fact, who, when becomes part of decision making is a mystery in AAP. Like other parties decisions are first taken and then gotten endorsed by committees. It is also becoming clear that Arvind Kejriwal has no real commitment towards the concept of Swarajya as its values don't reflect in his working style. It is a tool which serves politically expediency.

His latest salvo is against the media. He has accused media of giving more coverage to Narendra Modi in exchange for payment received from him. But Arvind must remember that he too is a creation of media. It is still unclear why when Anna Hazare sat for the first fast in April 2011 at Jantar Mantar the TV channels were there even before the fast started for 24 hours coverage?

So many people's movements take place in this country. Irom Sharmila has been sitting on fast in Imphal for the last over 13 years. Before citizens of the country either haven't heard about her or don't understand her issue very well. Medha Patkar, now in AAP, probably the most recognized social activist of this country before Anna's 24 hour coverage in April 2011, has sat on many long fasts. But the media has never given her space compared to Anna's movement or Arvind's party. Hence Arvind Kejriwal has no right to complain against the media unless this is also part of his strategy. He has put media in a fix by blaming them for accepting money from Narendra Modi for giving him more coverage. Now if the media stop Arvind's coverage then Arvind will be proved right. Hence he has created a situation that media has to cover him even though he may speak out against the media.

Arvind is proving to be a very smart politician. With much less resources and human power he has been able to challenge both the Congress and the BJP. He used his and his colleague Manish Sisodia's NGO funds to build a movement - IAC. Anna was successfully used for this purpose. Then using the funds generated for the movement he built a party. Initially his focus was only against corruption so that he could attract the middle class youth. Many gave up their jobs, some in abroad, to join his movement and party. He used the middle class educated youth to campaign and create a base among

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The search for a genuine alternative

Bharat Dogra

There are a large number of voters who are committed to the values of equality, justice and peace (particularly communal harmony). It is easy for these voters to reject both the big banners of NDA and UPA. However it is not yet clear to them what is the real alternative to these two big political formations.

One possibility has appeared in the form of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). But can this be regarded as a genuine alternative? Its overall ideology is not yet clear, but one aspect which has attracted many people is its emphasis on decentralisation.

This emphasis on decentralisation is certainly welcome, but many questions emerge when AAP's decentralisation agenda is examined in detail. This is available in the form of a book 'Swaraj' written by Arvind Kejriwal which is a highly recommended reading for AAP activists and candidates. This book starts by denying any achievements in the post-independence period. To quote (translated from Hindi), this book says, "During the last 60 years we've tested every party and every leader, but there has been no improvement (*sudhar*).” On the other hand, the USA is presented as an example of real democracy where people's will prevails. Arvind Kejriwal writes, "In America at the local level, at the level of city, municipality and county no decision is taken without the agreement (*marji*) of people.”

Even in India, the author argues, everything was working all right

till 1860. "The people used to take decisions and kings used to follow these decisions. This continued till 1860. Village affairs were directly controlled by people.” The only example to support this sweeping statement on history by the writer is a story that the people of Vaishali wanted their '*nagarvadhu*' to stay in the king's palace and the king accepted their decision! This may have been unethical, the learned writer says, but this reveals the people's power!

It is strange that a book with such sweeping and questionable statements has been widely recommended to AAP's activists and candidates as almost a required reading. On the book's front cover is a strong endorsement by Anna Hazare which says, "This book is our manifesto for changing the system and opposing corruption and this is also our effective model for bringing 'real swaraj'.

While Anna Hazare has now distanced himself from Arvind Kejriwal, nevertheless this strong statement shows the great importance given to this book titled 'Swaraj'.

However the basic message of the book that gram sabhas should be strengthened in villages and mohalla sabhas should be formed in cities is absolutely right. At the same time, there is nothing new about it. Almost all the policy statements on improvement of panchayat raj have stated this.

However the details of this strengthening given by Arvind Kejriwal are open to debate as many

complexities of our villages have been ignored. Some of these ideas can work in those villages where almost all families are those of small farmers. But the complex situation in many villages where inequalities and oppression exist in a big way need more careful planning. The solutions presented in 'Swaraj' suffer mostly from over-simplification of issues.

Decentralisation is emphasised time and again by AAP, and rightly so as properly conceived and implemented decentralisation can play a key role in solving many of our country's serious problems. However often AAP has used these concepts in a very loose sense by saying 'let people decide' without clearly stating the core values which decentralisation should take forward. After all if people in a village (or even in a city ward) are in the grip (even if temporarily) of communal frenzy, or if they support honour killings, no one can say 'let the people decide'.

This is why it is so important to be clear about core values while taking decentralisation forward. This will help to put in place critical safeguards. But this is possible only if there is clarity about ideology and a wide range of mutually consistent policies are in place.

The Times of India (February, 18 2014) reported a recent speech of Arvind Kejriwal, "Mr. Kejriwal said we are not against capitalism, but we are against crony capitalism.... He said it was not the business of government to do business, but rather focus on governance and

create enabling policies. He listed three factors that would encourage business including simplifying taxes and processes, creating an enabling policy environment and reducing litigation... Underlining the “extortionist” attitude of the UPA-led Centre, Kejriwal said government should reduce its role in several sectors but play the role of a regulator to ensure that private companies follow rules.”

In an interview published in *The Economic Times* on the same day (February 18) Shri Kejriwal has said, “The government has no business to be in business. Our job is to provide safety to citizens, a good judicial system and a corruption free environment. After that it is the job of the business community to do business.” On his business related agenda, Shri Kejriwal said, “AAP wants to do two things. One is to visit the entire procedures and administrative laws and remove obstacles in the way of setting up new businesses. And secondly, we want to set up a positive environment so that a trader or industrialist can run his business honestly.”

When asked about his views on taxing the rich, Arvind Kejriwal told the *Economic Times*, ‘Our tax slabs for the rich are one of the lowest in the world, however, I don’t think it needs to be raised. 30% is sufficient, but it needs to be enforced properly. I think we can afford to remove some exemptions, reliefs and rebates, as they are given at the behest of lobbies. If we rationalise this then tax rates for the rich can come down even more.

Summarising these views, Shri Kejriwal clearly says that

in capitalism as such; Capitalist path is OK.

- Role of public sector needs to be curtailed further; almost all industry and business should be in private hands.
- While rationalising tax structure there is a case for further reducing the tax rates for the rich.

Clearly, such view cannot be accepted by those who believe in the path of equality and justice.

The second alternative is presented by the left parties trying to form an alliance or a third front with some regional parties. But some of these regional parties have not performed much better than the NDA and the UPA parties in terms of their violation of the key principles of equality, justice and peace, and hence this alternative also cannot be accepted. At various times these parties have behaved in a very opportunistic way and so this formation also cannot be accepted as an alternative.

The third alternative exists in the form of some political parties known for their commitment to these principles as well as their dedication and honesty. The Samajwadi Jan Parishad and Socialist Party can be included in this category. There are no doubt some other such parties. But all these political formations are still too small to provide an effective alternative on their own. Voters at the national level are looking for effective alternatives.

So the question remains what then is the genuine alternative. Clearly this can be created only by the unity of many left political parties, other left formations and

organisations. They have to end their narrow differences and establish broad unity to contest elections as well as to confront other increasing challenges. As they are likely to retain their separate identity at least for some time, some co-ordinating force or agency has to be created so that this broad unity can be achieved. The first task of such an agency will be the formation of a common programme as the basis of this unity. Then it’ll co-ordinate various efforts for united action, including unitedly contesting elections on the basis of this common programme.

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the poor living in slums. Then he took stand against communalism which some of this middle class upper caste youth may not have been comfortable with. But now it doesn’t matter. Even if people leave, and some have left successively as the movement and party has proceeded, more are willing to join because of the bandwagon effect. The only danger is that there may be no stability in the process since people have not come with an ideological commitment. And neither is Arvind making any effort to ensure that they stick around. The totally centralized decision making and ad hoc party structure is not going to help Arvind Kejriwal take his party too far.

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- There is nothing inherently wrong

New Class War

Pannalal Surana

In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx had visualized a class war between the private owners of factories on the one hand and innumerable proletariat on the other.

In the twenty-first century, it has become moneyed handfuls versus vast multitude of consumers - labourers, peasants, self-employed artisans, vendors and the middle class, all put together.

Corporates who are catching the hold of common natural resources but call themselves service providers are exploiting all the consumers. In the great Britain, six big energy firms, including the giant British Gas, have been put under investigation over their seemingly excessive profit margins. The Government has asked the competition watchdog to investigate their profits, and asked it to consider all possible corrective measures.

The European Union has announced a series of measures to rein in the banking sector, including a cap on bankers' bonuses. Many banks are imposing various exorbitant charges on the account holders. Nearly 6000 bankers, brokers and financial advisers have been sacked or suspended for "rogue" conduct in the past six years in Britain alone—amounting to "three every day", *The Times* pointed out.

The assault on banks is a part of a larger campaign said to be designed to shape a "new economy" aimed at easing the "cost of living crisis" facing millions of common people.

And, mind you, Great Britain, at present, is under the rule of the Conservative party. There are a number of measures under way to protect the ordinary consumers from the machinations of the speculators in the real estate business.

David Cameron, the Prime Minister has asked the industrialists to train the unemployed youths as apprentices and make them capable of standing on their feet within a period of a year and that the government will pay for their subsistence allowance.

The world had witnessed the strange spectacle of "shutting down of the American Government" due to delay in passing the legislation authorising the salary payment of the employees caused by the Tea Party Group within the Republican Party. President refused to be cowed down. The Tea Party was asking reduction in outlay over medical insurance for common citizens to facilitate reduction in taxes on the rich. Public pressure forced the Tea Party to see reason and clear the required legislation. Afterwards, Obama expressed his firm resolve to take measures to reduce inequality in the economy.

In a number of countries, corporates have monopolized supply of water and minerals. Water charges are increased off and on. Great unrest is simmering all over the world.

Nearer home, Reliance has been indulging in increasing electricity charges to consumers

of Delhi and Mumbai. A 54 days old AAP government asked the CAG to audit the accounts of that corporate to which the group had reacted strongly. The same corporate giant had pressurized the Central Government by reducing the production of gas much below the stipulated levels. And the Energy Minister Veerappa Moily meekly submitted, on the spacious ground of facilitating investment in petroleum sector. He agreed to enhance the price of gas from \$ 4 to \$8. Would any sane person agree to double the rate, to be applicable in future? And, why in dollar? The Godavari basin from which the gas is to be extracted is in India. It is to be sold to Indian consumers and payment to be received in rupee. And yet the rate is fixed in dollar currency. Why? - Because dollar is becoming costlier day by day. So, without increasing the price, the company would get the bounty. So very clever on the part of our great energy minister!

Arvind Kejriwal must be congratulated for the FIR being filed against Mukesh Ambani, Veerappa Moily, Murli deora and a few others.

The moneyed class may contribute substantially to election funds of the two main contenders for power in the coming Lok Sabha elections. But it would be for the voters to choose new government. They should gather courage in both hands to defeat both the UPA and NDA alliances. Unseating the corrupt is a most constructive step..

Election Manifesto of Socialist Party (India)

Lok Sabha Elections 2014

Socialist Party (India) appeals to the eighty-crore Indian voters in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections to bring in socialism by defeating capitalism and to uphold secularism against communalism.

Prices of daily use commodities are rising. Unemployment is increasing. Corruption is rampant. Gap between the rich and the poor is widening; as also between cities and villages and between the metro centers and vast rural areas. Environment is being polluted contributing to global warming. Violence of the state as of the criminals and the extremists/terrorists is escalating. Women's lives and honor are not safe. Tension persists on the pretext of caste and communal disputes. Culture is being vulgarized by the corporate controlled media and young minds are being corrupted.

Unbridled capitalism is the root cause of all this malady. To end this all-round misery and exploitation, the voters of India should take courage in both hands and elect representatives who are committed to usher in an era of socialism that ensures equality and prosperity.

Living concept of India

Socialist Party (India), a party with a proud heritage stretching back to establishment of the all India socialist movement culminating in formation of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) on 17 May, 1934, in the midst of national freedom struggle with which it is privileged to have been associated, would like to reaffirm its positive faith in the living concept of India and in the goal of socialism. The Socialist Party believes that nationalism and swaraj are words bereft of meaning unless they entail primacy to the welfare of

the last child, the last woman and the last man as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi and the recognition of equal citizenship of all Indian people as conceived by the makers of Indian Constitution led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The Socialist Party, in its policies, will be informed by the Antyodaya principle that in the progress and well-being of the last person lies the welfare of the country as a whole and be guided by the high ideals that motivated our freedom fighters, socialist thinkers and Constitution makers.

In keeping with the traditions of its early founders, the Socialist Party would be a party of all the Indian people and not merely of sections of it. The Socialist Party will treat as its special trust the need to attend to the problems of the deprived sections of the society, including the dalits, tribals including the nomadic tribes, backward classes and religious/ linguistic minorities. The party will strive to eliminate gender discrimination and will support affirmative action in favour of women in all legislative and other institutions. The party stands for responsible politics and will take steps to ensure that the parliamentarians and legislators do not misuse/subvert the institutions to which they are elected.

Agro-industrial model of development and decentralization

The neo-liberal economic policies which facilitate the capitalist-consumerist model of development

are basically anti-poor and anti-development. The Socialist Party will discard the western capitalist model of development and evolve Indian model with Full Employment as its objective. As two-third of our people are dependent on agriculture and allied occupations, high-speed program of expanding infrastructure of communications, irrigation, electricity, credit supply and marketing in the rural and coastal areas will be done. Interest charge for agriculture loans will not exceed 4 per cent and remunerative prices will be assured to their produce. Cooperative system/management will be promoted in production, marketing and credit supply. The Socialist Party will accord priority to the eradication of hunger and establish proper facilities for storage of food grains in every district of the country and strengthen the Public Distribution System (PDS). Agricultural lands will not be allowed to be taken over for industrial purposes. New ventures should be located in barren and remote areas so that regional imbalance is minimized. Equitable distribution of agricultural lands will be undertaken. Lands of the tribals that had been taken away from them will be restored to them. All-out development plans for forestry, fishery, dairy, poultry will be prepared and implemented with their active participation.

The party will stress the need for development from below according to the agro-economic conditions

prevailing in each region and sub-region of the country. It will ensure equitable management and distribution of water resources. The party will set time-bound goals for the provision of essential needs of the people. It will carry out a massive program for those without adequate roof above their head.

The constitutional rights of the Panchayats and the Municipalities, ensured by the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, to decide about the utilization of natural resources like land, water, minerals, flora and fauna falling in their jurisdiction, will be scrupulously safeguarded from encroachment by the Central and State Governments and the profit-hungry corporate houses. To achieve this goal the constitutional validity of status and role of the Planning Commission will be examined.

Cottage and small scale industries, with adoption of optimum technology, will be allowed to be developed in the rural areas. The party will expand and strengthen banking network in the rural areas and enable women to have easy access to the banking services. Deposits from the rural areas will not be allowed to be transferred to urban areas. Heavy and large scale industries will be run in the public sector.

The party will work towards complete road connectivity for all villages and their electrification. The party will discourage use of fossil fuel and encourage eco-friendly sources like solar and wind power. Natural disasters and their mitigation will be treated as a common burden on all the Indian people and expenses on this account and for relief and rehabilitation will be met mainly through central funds.

The party will formulate comprehensive and time-bound plan for provision of safe drinking water, latrines, housing etc. It will stop privatization of water and ensure equitable distribution of water resources. The Party will work towards making India less dependent on vagaries of the monsoon. It will work towards the establishment of scientific drainage and irrigation canal systems and development of watersheds for conservation of soil and water.

The Party will strive to improve India's urban and rural environment and lay stress on proper sanitation and provision of well-maintained public conveniences with due importance being given to the needs of the individuals and families. Both towns and villages will be greened. The needs of India's cities will be examined from this point of view and provision made for walking areas with construction of foot-paths so that pedestrians have the first priority on the public streets. The party will improve inter-city and intra-city bus systems. Private cars will not be allowed to enter busy areas.

Upholding secularism

The neo-liberal-communal nexus went on strengthening after imposition of the new economic policies and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in the beginning of 1990s. The threat has become catastrophic as the communal fascist forces have overtaken the Constitution. The Socialist Party will uphold the constitutional doctrine of secularism. The party believes that the dignity and security of minorities must be safeguarded as this is basic to a civilized nation. The Socialist Party will combat the efforts by certain groups to divide the Indian

people on religious-sectarian lines and will uphold the secular concept of Indian nation as fostered by our freedom movement.

Annihilation of caste

The Socialist Party believes in the annihilation of caste, an institution which Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of Indian socialist movement, described as anti-democratic. The party believes that such destruction of caste will come about through multiple revolutions that the great socialist thinker, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, envisaged in his pioneering work, 'Saptakranti', and by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book, namely 'Annihilation of Caste.' The party suggests an amendment to the Constitution so that the opening sentence of the Preamble would read as "We, the people of India, resolve to establish Sovereign, Secular, Socialist, Casteless, Democratic Republic of India....."

No to commercialization of education

The Socialist Party will seek educational and particularly schooling reforms that ensure good neighbourliness and a common sense of peoplehood. The party will set to itself the goal of elimination of child labour and the transference of India's labouring children to schools in a time-bound manner and will associate itself with campaigns to achieve that end so as to eliminate all child labour from the country. The Socialist Party will ensure that free, equal and quality education from KG to PG be provided by the state. The party opposes commercialization of education in any form including PPP. The party stands for greater flexibility within the structures of higher education in the country. It would like more attention to be given

to the study of languages, Indian and foreign, applied sciences and mathematics in addition to ongoing natural sciences, social sciences, commerce and humanities subjects. The party believes that Indian education needs to be released from the thralldom of the Anglo-centric countries and made to open itself, in addition to other linguistic and cultural traditions of the world that would pave the way for a greater interaction between India and Asian, African (including Francophone Africa) and Latin American countries. To give concrete shape to its educational vision, the Socialist Party would endeavour to see that in given clusters of every seven contiguous districts in the country there are established in each district in each cluster at least one of the following : (a) university of science (b) university of mathematics (c) university of medicine (d) university of languages (e) university of social sciences/humanities (f) university of commerce (g) university of forestry and agriculture (h) university of sports.

Legitimate rights of the working classes to be safeguarded

The Socialist Party will initiate changes in labour and corporate laws to ensure that the legitimate rights like guarantee and timely payment of minimum wages, safe working conditions, collective functioning and peaceful agitations be safeguarded in all industries and industrial zones including the private sector. The tendency of the employers to dispense with the services of permanent workers and use casual/contract labourers will be dealt with sternly. All such measures will be made applicable to those engaged in construction, transport and other similar activities. Social security measures like life

and medical insurance and old age pension for all men and women workers above 60 years of age, engaged in unorganized sector, will be provided.

Draconian laws to be repealed

The Socialist Party would take strong measures to instill confidence among the citizens that they would be treated fairly by state institutions including the administration, the police, and the judiciary and that such fair and equitable treatment is a right accruing from citizenship. Repressive laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) against which Irom Sharmila of Manipur is holding indefinite fast for the last 14 years, sections in IPC regarding sedition etc. will be repealed. The party will take steps to prevent extra-judicial killings on the part of the police, army and self-styled Khap Panchayats. The party will amend election laws to prevent entry of criminals in politics.

Eradication of corruption

New elements in current day mainstream politics are the new disclosures about corruption, scams and the active or passive involvement of the entire machinery of the government. Parties have busied themselves in the competition to prove each other more corrupt than one-self. The Socialist Party will take stern steps towards eradication of corruption from public life. The party views this objective as part of need to ensure greater accountability not only of the state, including police authorities, but also of the political parties, corporate houses and non-governmental organizations. The party will constitute an independent inquiry commission to look into the wealth of all the main players, be they in the company sector, political parties or bureaucracy. The Socialist

Party will support effective framing and implementation of the much talked Lok Pal as per the spirit of the Constitution.

Defense

The Socialist Party is committed to the territorial security of the country believing that vigilant citizens, particularly in the border areas, are the best defense to any threat posed by any country. The party will try to keep defense expenses to the minimum. The indiscriminate purchases of arms and equipments from foreign countries will be discontinued. Their production will be made in India in the public sector. The country will not enter into arms race, let alone of nuclear arsenal. Colonial practice of treating trained jawans, attached to officers, as menial servants will be discontinued.

Foreign Policy

The Socialist Party will strive for friendly relations with all countries on mutual honorable terms and will continue its tradition of close contacts with India's neighbours. It will further strive for a world sharing for mutual benefit the fruits of international development. It will struggle against anti-humanitarian ideologies and will extend its sympathy to oppressed people everywhere. Maintenance of world peace by honouring everyone's human rights will be the guiding principles of the foreign policy. The party will strive to convert the UNO into a truly representative World Government.

Policy for youth

The Socialist Party feels a great need for a creative youth policy in the country so that there is an increase in the interest taken by the youth in ideas, literature, art, culture, theatre and sports. The party

will formulate and put into practice youth-oriented policies for the rural and urban youth.

Agenda for immediate action

Right to employment be made a Fundamental Right to ensure full employment.

FDI in Retail, Defense, Banking, Insurance and Pension be banned.

Import of gold be barred.

Reduction of disparity be included in the terms of reference of the 7th Pay-Commission.

Recommendations of the Sachar Committee report be implemented.

The Anti-Communal Violence Bill be passed without delay.

All youths, particularly the Muslims, put in jails without trial be released immediately.

The Women's Reservation Bill be passed.

All bills prepared to allow opening of foreign universities be withdrawn.

Four Year Undergraduate Program (FYUP) imposed in Delhi University be scrapped.

Adequate supply of equipment and medicines be made in the PHCs and public hospitals.

PDS be strengthened and run efficiently protecting children and women from malnutrition and providing food security to all.

Political parties be brought under RTI ensuring transparency in their accounts.

Citizens' right for time-bound service in the government offices be assured.

Pension of at least Rs 2,000 p.m. be paid to all female and male workers above 60 years of age in the unorganized sector.

Number of cars allotted to officers of the central and state governments be reduced drastically.

All cars be put off the roads once in a week and public transport be buttressed.

Politicians and government employees found corrupt be punished severely.

**Thus stands the Socialist Party
Upholding brotherhood and equality**

—Dr. Prem Singh, *general secretary, Socialist Party (India)*

Gandhiji's attitude

I refer to "*Between the lines*" by veteran journalist Kuldeep Nayar in the *Janata* dated March 9, 2014.

It was nice to be reminded of our great revolutionaries, once in a way at least, so that the younger generation is informed of the supreme sacrifice (not of Prime Ministership) made by the freedom fighters.

The silence of Gandhiji on Police brutalities in Chauri Chaura was in keeping with his usual stance. He would praise them and extol their sacrifices but would do nothing to help them out of Police brutalities. In the same way he did praise Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Rajguru, but did nothing to

save them from gallows even though so many of the top leaders urged him to intervene.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was another example where Gandhiji's non-violence had overtaken his humanitarian outlook. On 23rd January, 1947, he (Gandhiji) was at Naokhali in East Bengal where thousands of Hindus were massacred after Jinnah's Direct Action Call of 1946. Gandhiji had then said "Subhas has proved to the world that might becomes right" referring to the Hindu-Muslim unity in the Indian National Army. On the same day, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had said "Netaji has single handedly advanced the independence of

the country by at least 10 years". As against these fulsome praises, Gandhiji had opposed Netaji to the utmost, even by putting up Pattabhi Sitaramaya against Netaji for Presidentship of the Congress, when he was in India.

This attitude of Gandhiji therefore, had embolden Shri Nehru (Pt. Nehru, though Nehru himself disliked calling him Pandit), his heir, to say that INA consisted of patriots but "misguided" in the postscript to his *Discovery of India*. I am yet to come across any laudatory statement from Nehru about Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Those in the know, like Kuldeep Nayar, may kindly enlighten me, and I shall be grateful to them.

—B. M. Rao

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Appeal for election fund

Dear friends

The Socialist Party has decided to field candidates from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Assam, Nagaland, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala for the Lok Sabha elections 2014. 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)** or **Socialist Party (India) Delhi** at its Delhi office (11- Raj Pur Road, Delhi - 110054). You may also transfer the amount directly in the account of **Socialist Party (India)**, Allahabad Bank, Ahemdabad, Bank Ac/No. 50065914767, I.F.S. Code Alla 0212227 or in the account of **Socialist Party (India) Delhi**, Nainital Bank, Vikas Marg, Delhi, Bank Ac/No. 1001054, I.F.S. Code NTBL0DEL065. 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 insure 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 becomes 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 Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, S.M. Joshi, Yusuf Meherally, Sane Guruji, Kamaladevi 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 (preisdent), Justice Rajindar Sachar (senior member) Kuldip Nayar (special invitee to national executive), Pannalal Surana (chairman, parliamentary board), Sandeep Pandey, Akhai Achumi, Balwant Singh Kheda, Mohammad Shoab (vice-presidents), Dr. Prem Singh, Omkar Singh, Nurul Ameen (general secretaries), Jayanti Panchal (treasurer), Dr. Abhijit Vaidya (president, Socialist Yuvjan Sabha), Varsha Gupte (president, Socialist Mahila Sabha), Girish Pande (president, Uttar Pradesh), Renu Gambhir (president, Delhi Pradesh), Bala Saheb Patankar (president, Maharashtra), Rajshekharan Nayar (president, Kerala), Dr. Sri Ram Arya (president, Rajasthan)

Liberty, equality, efficiency

Paul Krugman

Most people, if pressed on the subject, would probably agree that extreme income inequality is a bad thing, although a fair number of conservatives believe that the whole subject of income distribution should be banned from public discourse. (Rick Santorum, the former senator and presidential candidate, wants to ban the term “middle class,” which he says is “class-envy, leftist language.” Who knew?) But what can be done about it?

The standard answer in American politics is, “Not much.” Almost 40 years ago Arthur Okun, chief economic adviser to President Lyndon Johnson, published a classic book titled “Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff,” arguing that redistributing income from the rich to the poor takes a toll on economic growth. Okun’s book set the terms for almost all the debate that followed: liberals might argue that the efficiency costs of redistribution were small, while conservatives argued that they were large, but everybody knew that doing anything to reduce inequality would have at least some negative impact on G.D.P.

But it appears that what everyone knew isn’t true. Taking action to reduce the extreme inequality of 21st-century America would probably increase, not reduce, economic growth.

Let’s start with the evidence.

It’s widely known that income inequality varies a great deal among advanced countries. In particular, disposable income in

the United States and Britain is much more unequally distributed than it is in France, Germany or Scandinavia. It’s less well known that this difference is primarily the result of government policies. Data assembled by the Luxembourg Income Study (with which I will be associated starting this summer) show that primary income— income from wages, salaries, assets, and so on — is very unequally distributed in almost all countries. But taxes and transfers (aid in cash or kind) reduce this underlying inequality to varying degrees: some but not a lot in America, much more in many other countries.

So does reducing inequality through redistribution hurt economic growth? Not according to two landmark studies by economists at the International Monetary Fund, which is hardly a leftist organization. The first study looked at the historical relationship between inequality and growth, and found that nations with relatively low income inequality do better at achieving a sustained economic growth as opposed to occasional “spurts.” The second, released last month, looked directly at the effect of income redistribution, and found that “redistribution appears generally benign in terms of its impact on growth.”

In short, Okun’s big trade-off doesn’t seem to be a trade-off at all. Nobody is proposing that we try to be Cuba, but moving American policies part of the way toward European norms would probably increase, not reduce, economic efficiency.

At this point someone is sure to say, “But doesn’t the crisis in Europe show the destructive effects of the welfare state?” No, it doesn’t. Europe is paying a heavy price for creating monetary union without political union. But within the euro area, countries doing a lot of redistribution have, if anything, weathered the crisis better than those that do less.

But how can the effects of redistribution on growth be benign? Doesn’t generous aid to the poor reduce their incentive to work? Don’t taxes on the rich reduce their incentive to get even richer? Yes and yes — but incentives aren’t the only things that matter. Resources matter too — and in a highly unequal society, many people don’t have them.

Think, in particular, about the ever-popular slogan that we should seek equality of opportunity, not equality of outcomes. That may sound good to people with no idea what life is like for tens of millions of Americans; but for those with any reality sense, it’s a cruel joke. Almost 40 percent of American children live in poverty or near-poverty. Do you really think they have the same access to education and jobs as the children of the affluent?

In fact, low-income children are much less likely to complete college than their affluent counterparts, with the gap widening rapidly. And this isn’t just bad for those unlucky enough to be born to the wrong parents; it represents a huge and growing waste of human potential — a waste that surely acts

as a powerful if invisible drag on economic growth.

Now, I don't want to claim that addressing income inequality would help everyone. The very

affluent would lose more from higher taxes than they gained from better economic growth. But it's pretty clear that taking on inequality would be good, not just for the poor, but for the middle class (sorry,

Senator Santorum).

In short, what's good for the 1 percent isn't good for America. And we don't have to keep living in a new Gilded Age if we don't want to.

—*New York Times*

Middle class

If you took a stab at defining the middle class based on durable ownership lifestyle and use TVs, refrigerators and two wheelers ownership as the basis, (table 1), 40 million households or 200 million people, about half in rural India, is the number. If you consider just TV and mobile phone ownership, at least 122 million households qualify, with ownership numbers tipping towards rural India. In the days gone by, we would use watch, bicycle and pressure cooker ownership to determine those who cross the 'baseline' to be counted as consumers. It is interesting to think that now it is the TV and cellphone that define baseline consumption. Refrigerators, two-wheelers and even washing machines define the next higher tier of consumption,

and cars PCs and ACs define 'rich' consumption.

Based on all these, perhaps we should think of the size of "upper class consumers" to be 6 million HH today; "middle class consumers" to be 40 million HH; and "consuming class consumers" to be 125 million HH (all classes include the class higher than them, i.e. are cumulative.).

If we stop obsessing about the label of the middle class, we can see that each consuming group will increase its income substantially in the next decade, with the rich increasing the most.

The magic of rural India is that every 10 percentage points increase in rural HH penetration adds 16

million consuming households. So India added one or more Australia of consumers of packaged biscuits, shampoos, mobile phones in five years.

All this co exists alongside increasing inequality of consumption. The IRS report calculates an ownership and consumption index called HPI based on penetration of a large number of categories.

Between 2005 and 2010, the richest 5% or so of Indian households have increased their HPI (consumption) by a CAGR of about 14%; the next 20% or so by 10%, the next 35% of income by 8% and the last 40% or about 93 million households, mostly rural, by just 3%.

—**Rama Bijapurkar**

Bharat Ratna

This refers to JD(U) spokesperson KC Tyagi rightly raising concern on Sachin Tendulkar appearing in commercial-advertisements even after being honoured with country's highest civilian honour, this being perhaps the only such case amongst all the awardees of Bharat Ratna so far. There were some unwritten norms, conventions and practices being rightly followed for awarding Bharat Ratna, one of these being to avoid honouring a person with nation's highest honour at a young age. Unfortunately much hurry was shown by political rulers in taking decision to honour Sachin Tendulkar with Bharat Ratna that too by brushing aside objections against the decision put on file by the bureaucrats. Bharat Ratna conventionally binds an awardee with some saint-like traditions which may not be practically possible to be followed in rest of long span of life of a young awardee.

Now since the honour has been done, it will be better for Sachin Tendulkar if he himself graciously surrenders Bharat Ratna to lead a life without any conventions which should be followed by a Bharat Ratna awardee. Or else, Union government should officially advise Sachin Tendulkar not to appear in commercial advertisements.

— **Subhash Chandra Agrawal**



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A voter at sea
Kuldip Nayar

M. N. Roy
A Philosopher of
Contemporary Relevance
Rekha Saraswat

Vote for principled politics:
Use NOTA effectively

Education Manifesto
for General Election, 2014

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The Varanasi war

S. Viswam

The coming electoral confrontation between the BJP's Narendra Modi and the Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal has been aptly described in the media as "the mother of all battles". Indeed, the outcome at Varanasi will be politically far more significant for the state of democracy in India than the results in all other constituencies. In Varanasi, Kejriwal is the challenger, and hence the outcome is of crucial importance to his aspirations for humbling the official prime ministerial candidate of one of the two political parties against whom he has been waging a war since the last few years. The other party that is his target is the Congress. He wants both the parties to be defeated so that "there can be a new kind of politics in the country." The two parties, Kejriwal says, are basically the same, the two sides of the same coin, and both needed to be decimated. There must be lakhs of citizens in India who may be sharing Kejriwal's view. Certainly, both the Congress and the BJP have been taking turns at ruling the country since a third alternative is not yet available. Kejriwal feels that the AAP may well fulfil the role of the alternative. For this reason his party is also fielding an AAP candidate, Kumar Vishwas against Rahul Gandhi in Amethi, also in Uttar Pradesh like Varanasi. "If we

defeat the two of them, there will be a political earthquake," says Kejriwal. According to Kejriwal, the defeat of the Congress and the BJP candidates by the AAP might lead to political instability but it would lead to another election within one year when honest Indians would be able to get elected to parliament. Assessed in the background of the kind of politics that the AAP has adopted, Kejriwal's stand makes perfect sense. The AAP, incidentally has yet to adopt an ideology for itself. For the present, its main and only electoral plank is the campaign against all forms of corruption in India's political, social, economic and cultural life. The AAP drew inspiration from Anna Hazare's campaign for political cleanliness and scored its first major and surprise victory by winning a substantial number of seats in Delhi. It also ruled Delhi for 49 days before demitting office on the plea that its government was not able to enact a special Lokpal Bill of its liking. An advantage with which the AAP has started its political career is that unlike the BJP and its allies, Kejriwal's party is secular, and has no racial or communal biases. The sooner it gives unto itself an ideology consistent with the issues it has raised for public debate the better will be its political credibility.

Between the lines

A voter at sea

Kuldip Nayar

Given the media hype surrounding the candidature of Narendra Modi, a great many politicians in many parties might have been tempted to challenge him at Varanasi. We will soon know how many others will dare to bite the bullet as Kejriwal has done. There is still time for filing nominations for the Varanasi poll. The constituency is the BJP's choice for a second contest for Modi, who is also contesting for a Lok Sabha seat from Vadodara in his home state. Varanasi is regarded as the BJP's stronghold in Uttar Pradesh having returned many party stalwarts to the Lok Sabha from there. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi who has held the seat for the BJP from 2009 had to be arm-twisted by the party to vacate the seat for Narendra Modi. Since the decision to field Modi from two constituencies is that of the BJP's, the party is under a moral obligation to get its prime ministerial candidate elected from both. Strictly speaking, even if Modi wins from Vadodara but loses from Varanasi, both he and his party will be under the moral obligation to withdraw from the prime ministerial contest because there is a challenger in Varanasi who can claim the moral victory if he wins the seat. This is why we said at the outset that the outcome in Varanasi is of enormous political significance for the state of democracy in India. The immediate reaction of the BJP, at least its Varanasi unit, was to throw ink and eggs on the challenger. Officially, the party spokesmen have refused to accept responsibility for this outrage, claiming that it is yet to be proved conclusively that it was the BJP ranks that indulged in hooliganism. The incident however shows that the party is insensitive to challenges. It perhaps wants a walkover for its candidate in both the constituencies he is contesting from! The millions of anxious

(Continued on Page 10)

For some years, the activists from India have been trying to persuade Pakistan to pay homage to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev who went to the gallows in the nineteenthirties to strengthen the struggle for freedom. The change has come about in Pakistan. There was a candle light vigil at Lahore on March 23, the day Bhagat Singh was hanged, along with his two comrades. The Pakistan media also devoted programme in the memory of Bhagat Singh.

This is a bold defiance to the Jammāt-e-Islami which considers every non-Muslim a kafir I have no doubt that one day, both India and Pakistan, would jointly celebrate the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

Regretfully, India, which over claims Bhagat Singh, took no notice of the sacrifice by the three. The media was conspicuous by its silence. There was no meeting held in their memory much less lighting candles. True, the Indian society has ousted the value system. But I had never imagined that even the memory of those who made today's democratic polity possible would get no mention.

One other development which is beyond the realm of my conjecture is the bickering in the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), known for its cohesion and solidarity. When even a stalwart like Jaswant Singh, who headed finance and foreign affairs in the BJP government, is denied ticket from his old constituency, Barmer, there is something wrong with the party. Jawant Singh broke down before TV cameras. He has accused

the 'outsiders' without mentioning their names for his humiliation. It is obvious that he is talking about the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) which is directly taking part in politics instead of staying in the background and using the BJP as an instrument.

The RSS reportedly feels that the BJP, particularly its leadership, has compromised with the ideology of Hindutava. This explains why RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat was present at the BJP's central election committee meeting selecting the party's candidates.

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi fits into the framework RSS has in view. He refuses to say 'sorry' for the killing of Muslims in his state in 2002. And he proudly flaunts 'Hindu nationalism' instead of Indian nationalism. Development which Modi emphasizes is a state subject. This is the reason why the Planning Commission calls for the meeting of chief ministers to the National Development Council, which gives approval to the 5-year plan.

There is no Modi wave. People want a change from the Congress, associated with scams and mis-governance. They want an alternative. The BJP is no better and its rule is remembered by the scandals at that time. I feel dismayed when even liberals are taken in by the propaganda that the country needs a national leader to set things right. Indira Gandhi also raised the Garibi Hatao slogan and imposed the Emergency to suspend even the constitution. India is a federal polity and has no place for the presidential system of rule.

(Continued on Page 4)

Vote for principled politics: Use NOTA effectively

As the voting dates for the Lok Sabha election, 2014 come closer, the entire country is witnessing the naked drama of corrupt, caste-communal oriented, immoral, unprincipled alliances amongst and between political parties with the only intention of somehow coming to power. Irrespective of whether it is an alliance led by a national or regional party(ies), alliance logic is based on unprincipled, ethics-less and immoral considerations. **People's Union for Civil Liberties** through this statement, wishes to bring to the attention of the people of India, the serious threat to democracy itself and the human rights challenges posed by the electoral alliances and calls upon the common citizen of India to rise up and challenge all the political parties about their commitment to democracy, rule of law, equitable and sustainable development and the welfare of the common citizen.

1. Challenge to democracy: Threat of Fascism and consolidation of a police state

PUCL is extremely worried that the type of electoral alliances and the total lack of choice to the people of India. The human rights record of none of the major alliances inspires confidence that if they come to power they will respect the rule of law, the Indian Constitution and human rights. In the last 6 months itself, across India, we have witnessed ugly face of violent, communal intolerance, whether it is in the demand to ban history books (as for example Wendy Donniger's books on Hinduism) or the opposition to films or dramas on communal considerations or the murderous rise of Khap Panchayats with all the major political parties remaining collusively silent or the

killing of RTI activists and social workers and others.

The rise of political intolerance is not just a threat to fundamental freedom of right and expression but undermines the very basis of democratic politics – which is the RIGHT TO DISSENT. This is particularly crucial when increasingly corporate interest are controlling policy making and development policies are turning anti-people.

PUCL would like to bring to the attention of citizens of India, that across the country, all governments are using the police as weapons and abusing the law as a means to break down people's struggles by violently suppressing them, arresting them under draconian laws like anti-sedition laws, UAPA and other anti-people laws.

2. Destructive Development and the murder of Directive Principles of State Policy!

Irrespective of whether it is BJP or Congress or regional parties like the SP, BSP, AIADMK or TMC one common factor in all their state policies. It is the open support to a development policy which supports big industrial and mining projects which throws out farmers, tribals and rural and urban poor, enables total capture of all common resources like land, water, minerals and other resources by corrupt and venal industrial interests and criminalises local people who fight against these unjust, unfair laws and policies.

Agitation against Mithi Viridi nuclear plant or the extreme ground water pollution in Baroda, Vapi or Bharuch industrial zones in Gujarat or the POSCO struggle in Odisha

or Koodankulam anti-nuclear plant struggle in Tamil Nadu or anti-Polavaram struggle in AP – the list is endless.

Increasingly it is becoming clear that big corporate lobbies are financing political parties. Many sections of the media are also controlled by corporate interests. All this seriously threatens democracy and democratic way of life.

Development has become destructive, for most ordinary Indians. None of the political parties are worried about or talk about devastation of ground water tables, chemical and air pollution, contamination of water bodies, destruction of eco-systems including fisheries systems and a malnutrition time bomb which is making India a nation of stunted people.

PUCL would like to stress that a close scrutiny of the 'Gujarat development' model or the UPA's growth story both disclose the story of crony capitalism, destructive development and open and collusive looting and plundering of natural resources of the people of India. That both the political formations are no different is revealed by the silence of both the principal national parties – BJP and Congress – and their allies to making public the Justice MB Shah Commission report on coal mining in all the states of India.

3. Development with dignity and democracy: The Promise of the Indian Constitution

PUCL would like to stress to the citizens of India, that the Directive Principles of State Policy demand that state policies do not increase divide between rich and poor and do not increase the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few.

The Indian Constitution repeatedly highlights that the right to life, to live with dignity, right to health, environment and water and other basic rights are fundamental rights not to be mortgaged or sold away by governments to corporate interests.

PUCL calls upon the citizens to be vigilant and to vigorously question all political parties on their support to pro-people, sustainable, equitable development policies. What is at stake is the future of India.

4. NOTA: First step to Recall of

Prabhakar Sinha President, National PUCL

Representatives - Call to the citizen to use widely

PUCL calls upon all citizens to come out and cast their vote and that they are not entirely powerless to counter corrupt political parties who view elections as a once in 5 years gamble. Today the citizen has the right to make known their opposition to unprincipled politics by using NOTA (None of the Above) button in the voting machine.

We would like to point out that wherever citizens do not find candidates who respect human rights

V. Suresh General Secretary, National PUCL

and the Indian constitution or supports a pro-people, pro-environment sustainable development policy, they can express their displeasure through using NOTA.

PUCL was also responsible for the introduction of NOTA. We feel that NOTA is an important right available to the voter from this election. This will eventually lead to the next step of electoral reform – recalling of elected representatives, if they do not live up to their promises, by the voters in their constituencies.

(Continued from Page 2)

I am amused over the remark that the coming Lok Sabha election is a contest between corruption and communalism. Both are evil. How does it matter if a candidate is corrupt or communalist? I believe that the distinction is a brainwave of some candidates who are corrupt and want to hide their sins by mouthing the slogan of pluralism.

However, the entire discussion is of little consequence because the two main parties, the Congress and the BJP have fielded tainted and extremist candidates. (Thirty percent of the candidates have a criminal record). The Congress is more to blame because its ideology is that of secularism. The BJP makes no bones about the pro-Hindu stance since it wants to polarize the society. Congress president Sonia Gandhi is right when she says that the BJP is sowing the seeds of poison.

The Congress, with Rahul Gandhi as its leader, may claim to be pluralist in his outlook. But this does not condone the numerous communal riots during the Congress rule in the country on one hand and the corrupt deals in which the party has been involved in its 10-year rule on the other. Many skeletons have

tumbled out of the cupboard. Many more may come out if and when a non-Congress government assumes power at the centre.

A new phenomenon has emerged in the shape of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which once evoked idealism and provided a non-Congress and non-BJP alternative. But the party is losing sheen because it lacks ideology and projects only its leader Arvind Kejriwal. Too much authority is concentrated in him and he flaunts it.

Which party he/she chooses is a dilemma before an ordinary voter. With Modi, there is every chance of an autocratic country, although the growth oriented India would be more centrally controlled and less democratic. A slight dip in his popularity graph indicates that more and more people are seeing through the façade of progress Modi has created.

When I listen to Rahul Gandhi I vainly seek direction. He has improved in the last few weeks. But the nation cannot be entrusted to him. Perhaps he would have matured by the general election in 2019. At present he is trying to please everybody. He too is lacking

ideological clarity more so, in the foreign policy field.

The challenge before the nation is lack of leadership and governance. The Congress has been found wanting in both. The party has wasted the 10 years of its governance. Even now the Congress is miles away from the leadership it provided till the ninetenseventies. Probably, the initial thrust was because of the people who had gone through the fire of national movement. They followed a value system. What is the Congress today except the people who want power by hook or by crook? Even their body language reflects arrogance.

The party has committed the unpardonable sin of linking politics with the state. When ministers are on the take why shouldn't underpaid government officials do likewise? No doubt, the BJP has come to occupy more space than the Congress. When some top officials join the party after retirement or by resigning from the service, there has to be a serious study to know why it is so. I think such officials were inclined towards the BJP philosophy even when they were in service.

Education Manifesto for General Election, 2014

All-India Forum for Right to Education

In context of the forthcoming General Elections, we “the people of India” belonging to various organizations, groups, unions, associations, professions, religions, castes, gender and physical/mental/visual disabilities hereby endeavour to solicit time-bound commitment of all-India and regional political parties on the below-mentioned pressing educational demands:

1) Withdraw of the policies of commercialization of education, which include privatisation of state educational institutions, self-financing courses, outsourcing, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and profiteering in education, voucher schemes, ‘school choice’ schemes, development grants and tax exemption to both managements and parents of children enrolled in private educational institutions, provision of free or subsidized land, electricity, water, transport and other facilities or services to private educational institutions. Neoliberal policies of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) of all forms, including the provision of ‘reimbursement’ of fees to private schools under RTE Act, should also be immediately withdrawn from education at all levels. Public funds should be used only to strengthen public education system and shall not be siphoned to private agencies under whatever nomenclature;

2) Enact a law prohibiting the transfer of land, building, equipment or any other facility of an educational institution belonging to the government or local authorities to any corporate house, religious body or NGO, irrespective of the circumstances; similar law is also required in the case of private aided or unaided educational institutions

and the Trusts/ Societies operating them since their assets have been created only through student fees and other community resources in the name of education;

3) Withdraw the ‘offers’ made to WTO to make higher education a ‘tradable service’ to be regulated in perpetuity by the GATS regime. These ‘offers’ would become irrevocable ‘commitment’ if not withdrawn before the conclusion of Doha Round of trade negotiations. All the reforms in the field of education that the government intends to bring are merely aimed at establishing a legal and institutional framework for implementation of agreements related to education under WTO-GATS regime;

4) Put a Constitutional bar on any form of commercialisation in education by amending Article 19 (1)(g) to read “All citizens shall have the right to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, provided that the right to carry on an occupation, trade or business does not apply to education, health, water and other fundamental entitlements of the people”;

5) Reverse through judicial process or an appropriate Constitutional amendment the Supreme Court’s TMA Pai Foundation Judgment (2002) which opened a floodgate for commercialisation of education;

6) Redefine ‘free education’ from ‘KG to PG’ to include, apart from tuition-fees, exemption from all other direct or contingent expenses such as miscellaneous fees and charges, cost of text-books and supplementary texts, stationary,

uniform, computer and internet usage, transport, extracurricular activities and hostels;

7) Allocate a minimum of 6% of GNP to education and also provide additional resources to fill up the cumulative gap of public expenditure building up since 1986 due to under-allocation and low spending through Union and State Budgets, and ensure required funding thereafter for continuing improvement of state-funded education system;

8) Immediately provide adequate professional training to all Para-teachers and non-formal teaching personnel (guest teachers/ contract teachers/Shiksha Mitra/ Guruji etc.) and, wherever required, support them to acquire essential eligible qualifications in order to merge them in regular teacher cadre;

9) Provide entirely state-funded and free holistic early childhood care, pre-primary education, elementary education and secondary and senior secondary education to all children up to age of 18 years. Provide all government schools with sufficient number of nursery classes. All habitations and neighborhoods should be provided with full-time crèches and anganwadis;

10) Repeal the farcical Right to Education Act, 2009 by a new Act that (a) unambiguously upholds the Preamble to the Constitution in relation to education; (b) guarantees Fundamental Right to education read with the relevant Directive Principles of State Policy holistically; (c) bans all forms of commercialization of education, including PPP; (d) acknowledges inter-linkages of multiple sources

of bias and discrimination in society with issues such as curriculum, pedagogy, medium of education, teachers & teacher education and negative impact of market on educational quality; (e) excludes disparities and optimizes diversities; (f) binds the state legally to provide adequate resources in order fill up the cumulative gap and meet the new demands; and thereby (g) builds a fully state-funded 'Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools' within a specified time frame. The RTE Act, 2009 has deliberately misconceived Neighbourhood School such that the state is at liberty to provide inferior quality schools in the neighbourhood of the vast majority of the downtrodden and the dispossessed classes and castes, thereby legitimizing discrimination and status quo. In contrast, the Neighbourhood School of the Common School System is a transformative concept since it calls for a legislative provision under which each school - government, local body or private - would have a prescribed constituency and all the families residing within the constituency would be obliged to send their children to the concerned school, irrespective of their class, caste, gender, religion, language, region or disability. In the case of a sizeable concentration of a particular community in an area (e.g. a dalit or tribal locality in villages or urban ghettoisation), it would be obligatory under law for the prescribed authority to draw the constituency such as to optimize diversity;

11) Abolish multi-graded teaching and bring legislation for Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 1:20 at all levels of schooling and ensure one teacher for one class/section and provide a separate room for each class/section in elementary schools and one teacher for one subject

in High Schools with reasonable workload;

12) Recognize mid-day-meal workers and other non-teaching staff in schools as public employees. Pay them statutory wages and offer them full employment for taking up other work in schools if they so desire. Provide them wages for vacations and paid leaves.

13) End the multi-layered school system and replace it with Common School System. Provide equal infrastructural, institutional and academic support to all government schools, minimum on par with present Central Schools to begin. Merge the special categories of schools within government school system at the Centre level (e.g. Central Schools and Navodaya Schools) and at state-level (e.g. Model Schools/Pratibha Schools/Super 30 or whatever names they might bear) in the Common School System;

14) Take over all fee-charging private schools, colleges and universities and place them under democratic, decentralized and participative governance at par with state-funded institutions; in the meantime, strictly regulate private educational institutions;

15) All fresh appointments to be of only qualified and professionally trained teachers on permanent basis only in the regular teacher cadre;

16) Apply all-India pay scale and service conditions equitably for all teachers appointed 'from KG to PG' and also replace the present pension scheme with the old pension scheme;

17) Abolish the practice of burdening government school teachers with non-teaching responsibilities of any kind and

appoint regular employees in requisite numbers for non-teaching work in schools; Recruit 10 percent extra teachers so that students do not suffer academic loss in case of teachers' rightful long-term leaves;

18) All contractual employment be stopped in schools, colleges and universities, whether among teachers or among non-teaching staff as it militates against that sense of social security, bonding and identification with the school which is essential to give the institution a human, personal face, continuity and a feeling of long-term commitment which has been proved by researches to be a great strength for schools as human spaces;

19) Strengthen the academic basis of the inspectorial system, making it more dialogic and interactive between the teachers and officials, by an institutionalized collaboration with SCERTs and University departments. At the same time, decentralize the process of exams, giving more autonomy to teachers and schools in pacing the curricular schedule and evaluation while following a common curriculum;

20) Raise the level of all government schools, to begin with, as per the norms and standards of the Central Schools as a pre-requisite for building a National System of Education. Ensure that all schools provide education in all streams (including arts, science, commerce and others);

21) Every child must have equal opportunities to study music, arts, crafts and other creative streams as well as computer and IT. Facilities for this should be provided in every school. At the same time, keep all schools free from the humiliating and invasive use of surveillance which further degrades children's privacy and trust in teachers;

22) Provide well-equipped libraries and IT-services in all schools, colleges and universities for children and teachers. School teachers should be provided necessary support for academic and intellectual development;

23) Declare a time-bound plan to end the anomalous and educationally unjust and deleterious system of double shift schools;

24) All material, curricular and moral support required by the child, such as note books, work books and along with text books, access to computers and internet, participations in games and sports, learning art, music and performing arts, nutritious food, regular health check-ups and medical support, clothing, gender-sensitive and disabled-friendly resources and facilities, and such other elements must be guaranteed to every child without any distinction in order to enable everyone to study in regular schools as a full-time student up to Class XII and fulfil the required curricular goals. The exclusionary provision of home-based education should be replaced with full support to all children for studying and learning in full-time regular schools;

25) Provide tiffin on arrival, Mid-day Meal (cooked and not pre-packaged) and milk at the end of the school up to senior secondary level and establish a full-fledged independent and transparent procurement, storage, cooking and delivery mechanism for every school such that it does not disturb the teachers at all;

26) Provide secure residence and/or safe transport absolutely free, to all children who require them to enable them to study in regular schools as a full-time student up to Class XII and fulfil the required curricular goals;

27) Guarantee all necessary support including provision of professionally trained teachers for disabled children within the Common School System. Provision for special schools should only be considered in extreme cases with a lot of care and as interim strategy alone;

28) Replacement of multiple Boards of education by a single Board in each State/UT along with a common language education policy founded on mother tongue as medium of education in dynamic interface with multi-linguality;

29) Do not allow the State/UT governments to use the inferior norms and standards of the RTE Act, 2009 to shift teachers and infrastructural facilities from their present location on the ground of these being 'extra' in light of the schedule of the Act;

30) Put an end to the practise of shifting government's responsibilities of providing education and related matters on NGOs of any kind and at any level and in any form whatsoever;

31) Nullify all gender-based streaming in schools whereby girls and boys are pushed and encouraged to take stereotypical courses which reinforces gender inequality and discriminates against girls by affirming violent notions of masculinity and domesticated notions of femininity

32) Put a ban on communal bodies interfering in educational institutions in any form and at any level. Communalisation including dominance of any religion, caste, class, gender, culture, language, region or that of so-called 'normal' body should not have any place in education system in any form whatsoever;

33) Identify and seek expurgation of all communal, fundamentalist, patriarchal, sectarian, superstitious, unscientific and anti-disabled practices from the curriculum and pedagogy of all educational institutions (including those of teacher-training) and their systematic replacement by practices that promote scientific temper, historical consciousness, exploration, reasoning and respect for equality and human dignity;

34) All obscurantist courses like astrology to be replaced at all levels by socially orientated secular and scientific courses. Courses like training in priesthood should not form part of the educational curriculum which should be firmly grounded on the need to promote critical, scientific practices;

35) Undertake programmes for strengthening all state-funded educational institutions in order to restore their credibility in the public mind;

36) Reject the present policy of substituting the Constitutional principle of equality and social justice by the neo-liberal concept of 'inclusion' which is designed to include a handful of children and youth as per the dictates of the market, after having excluded the masses;

37) Reject the Eleventh and Twelfth Five-Year Plans' redefinition of educational goal of designing education (and knowledge) as a means to build 'slavish and skilled' workforce for the global market; and reject the present form of National Skill Development Mission which attempts to reduce education to mere 'skill formation'; and restore the Constitutional vision of education as a means to transform and build a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened society founded on

plurality, fraternity and democratic freedom;

38) Expand the scope for dissent, debate and democratic struggle in all educational institutions;

39) Respect and protect the internal mechanisms of educational institutions essential for maintaining their democratic character, adherence to laws and accountability, such as the Staff-Councils, Faculties, Academic and Executive Councils, students', teachers' and karamcharis unions;

40) Establish at least one Comprehensive (i.e. multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary) Public-funded University, with provision for access to institutions of advanced studies in all areas of knowledge, in all districts throughout the country. Studies rooted in the district's socio-cultural, environmental and developmental context should be encouraged and adequately funded;

41) Hostels, with free boarding and lodging facilities to be provided for all institutes of higher education in order to enable poor, rural, disadvantaged and disabled students to pursue and complete their education;

42) Implement the policies of affirmative action with urgency and full spirit in educational institutions;

43) Scratch the arbitrary imposition of Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) in Delhi University and reverse moves to impose such courses in other universities, reverting back (as an interim strategy) to the earlier course-structure and initiate a proper nation-wide discussion with the view to reconstruct the system of higher education in accordance with the needs of the people and

society. At the same time, it should also be borne in mind that any reform in educational courses will be counterproductive without abolishing commercialisation of education;

44) Stop all Private University Bills in the states and withdraw the Bills on higher education designed to pave the way for WTO-GATS agenda; Six Higher Education Bills were introduced in the Parliament from the year 2010 onwards to commercialize and commoditize higher education. These include, (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. If enacted, these Bills would, (a) open floodgates to FDI 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 in line with WTO guidelines to be called National Council for Higher Education and Research (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;

45) 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 up to age of 18 years and constantly increasing opportunities in higher education to meet the aspirations of the youth and needs of the society, and (f) building an education system in conformity with the basic values of the Constitution;

46) A minimum of 40 percent of the relevant age group (i.e. 18-24 years) should thereby have fully cost-free higher and professional education by the end of the XII Five Year Plan (2012-2017) in full conformity with Constitutional obligation of social justice and money shall not play any role;

47) Enact a law that unambiguously bans all forms of child labour;

48) Initiate the process for a review of 86th Constitutional Amendment Act (2002) and, if required, its repeal followed by a fresh Constitutional amendment to guarantee unconditional Fundamental Right to entirely free education of equitable quality for all children up to 18 years of age (i.e. up to Class XII), including Early Childhood Care and Pre-Primary Education for children below six years of age; the amendment shall trash Article 51A (k) through which the state has managed to shift its Constitutional obligation for provision of elementary education to the parents; the amendment will further place an obligation on the state to provide equitable access

to free higher (including technical) education within ten years of such an amendment. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 debauched the Supreme Court's historic judgment (1993) making education of children up to the age of 14 years a Fundamental Right. This amendment denies 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;

49) Until a consensus is arrived at to restore education to the state list, build public opinion that the concurrent status of education should be utilized to involve all states/UTs in a collective nation-wide plan with a sense of ownership for establishing a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened system of education, rather than to impose the Centre's decision over those of the States/UTs, as is the prevailing practice;

50) Initiate a policy debate on the issue of payment of inadequate wages to the vast majority of parents that prevents them from exercising their Right to Life with dignity as per Article 21 read with Article 43 (living wage, decent standard of life, full enjoyment of leisure, social & cultural opportunities), thereby depriving their children of healthy and secure childhood [Article 39 (e) and (f)] as well as opportunity to devote themselves to pursue education without being compelled to be engaged in child labour and domestic support activities; In the interim period, provide sufficient scholarship to all students from poor, Dalit, OBC, minority communities and to all girls students and physically or mentally disabled students;

51) Mother tongue along with its multi-lingual context as medium of education should be introduced forthwith in all government and private schools across the country. One of the significant commonalities of the Common School System will be the plurality of mother tongues in dynamic interface with multi-linguality of child's neighbourhood. This would duly include Braille and Sign languages as well. According to this radical and dynamic conception of language education, mother tongue with a multi-lingual interface is acknowledged as the most potent medium of education to enable the child to (a) think, analyse and act; (b) acquire, internalize and transform modern knowledge critically; (c) learn other languages, including English, proficiently; (d) catalyse cultural and literary renaissance; (e) negotiate with the dominant process of alienation with advantage, thereby avoiding to be pushed-out; and (e) question and resist oppression and explore the path of emancipation. Since the mother tongue of the child may not be the State/UT language, the language policy of Common School System, keeping in mind Article 350A of the Constitution, requires that the State/UT governments,

- provide all necessary support for equitable development of the languages of the linguistic minorities as curricular languages, at least in the early years of elementary education,
- envisage Braille and Sign languages as 'languages of the linguistic minorities' and provide all necessary support, including IT-related technologies and appropriately trained staff, in order to develop them as curricular languages,
- develop appropriate pedagogy to enable children of linguistic

minorities to have the option of switching to State's language as their medium of education in all subjects until they complete senior secondary education; however, in case of languages of at least the Eighth Schedule, the children must also have the option of continuing education in their mother tongues in all subjects at all levels, including higher education, and

- In light of the perspective on medium of education and language education elaborated above, the State/UT governments may consider, if necessary and appropriate, introducing other languages in schools at pedagogically appropriate stage(s), in accordance with the aspirations and needs of the people to be consulted through debates organized by both the state and non-state bodies.

However, the Central and State/UT governments are required to jointly undertake the following additional and urgent measures with a view to make Indian languages a powerful tool of learning, knowledge generation, cultural advancement and exploring an alternative model of development by:

- Ensuring that a common language education policy, with the inherent diversity as indicated above, is implemented in all schools, government or otherwise, throughout the country and gradually extend the policy in a planned manner to higher education (including technical education) as well,
- Creating a fully empowered and well-resourced National Translation Commission that would have the mandate of identifying and translating the

highest form of literature, texts, documents or research papers in any discipline from each of the Indian languages of at least the Eighth Schedule into the rest of the languages and also doing the same from all major languages of the world and bringing global knowledge into all languages of the Eighth Schedule, to begin with, and later into other languages as well,

- Implement a time-bound programme to ensure use of the Eighth Schedule languages at all levels of legislature, executive, judiciary, science & technology and business,
- Accord political attention and financial resources to make IT friendly to all Indian languages on a priority basis so that the prevailing difficulty and discrimination in using IT for Indian languages, in comparison to English, is eliminated,
- Formulate/ design all required laws, programmes and schemes to ensure that no citizen faces discrimination while her/ his knowledge in mother tongue is evaluated for higher education and/or employment and the same is accessible through one's mother tongue in interface with multi-linguality,
- Based upon the above commitments, a 'Common National Policy on Indian Languages' is formulated and implemented.

AIFRTE and its member- and associate organisations appeal to all political parties affirming faith in the Constitutional vision of making India a democratic, secular, just and egalitarian nation to immediately declare their commitment to fulfil and implement the above approaches

and demands without any delay and by doing so to fulfil the long suppressed aspirations of the people

of our country to achieve egalitarian education paving the path of their emancipation.

Arrest of the alleged IM suspects

The Socialist Party (India) expresses its deep concern about the manner in which the police authorities are creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust among the citizens of a certain community regarding the arrests of the alleged operatives of Indian Mujahideen in Jaipur on 23 March 2014. In this connection, two young men were arrested by the police in Okhla, Delhi, leading to a spontaneous protest by the residents of that area. The arrested youth were released later following the protest but the action of the police has spread a deep sense of insecurity and anguish among the residents.

The police, in its press conference and statements, has presented the arrested persons as if they have been proved guilty already simply because they had been arrested. It seems that the police, by declaring the names of the alleged suspects in the press conference and narrating stories about their unlawful activities, have not kept in mind that it is also the time for the Lok Sabha elections. The Delhi Police Special Cell

should not have mentioned in public that the suspected terrorists were reportedly planning to attack BJP's PM candidate Narendra Modi. The police should have dealt with this alleged threat in a discreet manner.

Such acts of the police could create communal feelings. The Election Commission of India should direct the police authorities, including the National Investigating Agency (NIA) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), not to make 'revelations' which could flare up communal passions during the election times. The provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 applied to the political parties, leaders and candidates must be applicable to the governmental authorities/agencies as well.

The Socialist Party further appeals to the present government to ensure a free and fair atmosphere among the public so that more than 80 crore voters all over India can cast their vote with dignity and responsibility.

Dr. Prem Singh,
General Secretary

(Continued from Page 2)

observers of the Indian political scene these days will wish good luck to both the candidates and appeal to the Varanasi voters to choose the candidate who will serve the nation and its democratic and secular ideals better.

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Medha Patkar for Lok Sabha

Born to a family of socialist activists (Vasant and Indu Khanolkar), Medha Patkar is an alumnus of Ruia College and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), excelling both in academics and co-curricular activities. Upon her post-graduation in Social Work, she joined the faculty of TISS briefly.

Before starting Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) in 1985, she worked with organisations like CASP-PLAN and UNICEF. She led relief activities during the devastating cyclone in Andhra Pradesh (1977) and Gujarat earthquake (2001).

During its nearly three decades of existence, NBA raised issues of displacement without rehabilitation, wastage of public money in mega projects which benefit only the politicians and contractors and not the people, exposed corruption to the tune of crores of rupees, and advocated for a more decentralized, participatory development, where the government is accountable and transparent to the people. Without NBA, fate of lakhs of people would not have been any different from other big projects of the past, where the poor displaced people became destitute. Medha Patkar is also a founding member of National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), comprising of over 250 social movements and trade unions from the length and breadth of the country. These movements and trade unions raised issues of social injustices, labour and women's issues, dalit and tribal rights, and protection of environment.

She was a member of World Commission on Dams. Supported by institutions like World Bank and UNEP, and members from the dam construction industry and civil society, it was a unique attempt

Dear friends,

You must be already aware of Medha Patkar's candidature for the Lok Sabha elections from North East constituency of Mumbai. This is a critical fight since after 38 years of social activism, Medhatai is stepping into electoral politics for the first time. We feel this election is very crucial from the point of view of all people's movements as well as the citizens who wish to change the face and culture of politics in this country.

This Lok Sabha constituency, stretching from Mankhurd to Mulund which includes Govandi, Ghatkopar, Vikroli and Bhandup, consists of six assembly constituencies and 36 Municipal wards, with the voter population about 20 lakhs.

Consistent with Medhatai's simple life style, her emphasis is always on maximum utilization of minimum resources. Her campaign strategy is to cover most of the areas through padyatra and hundreds of self-motivated volunteers are busy with door to door campaign. Handbills are used in large numbers to reach to the voters, social media is also being used.

Effective campaign in a huge constituency with large number of will be possible only if you extend a generous hand. Please send by post/hand/courier your contribution cheques in the name of AAM AADMI PARTY -LS-MUMBAI NORTH EAST along with your name, full address, PAN no., phone no e-mail ID, if available, to the following address.

Medha Patkar,
 'Prasanna' 1st floor,
 11th road, Chembur east, Church road,
 Mumbai
 Phone—022-25212555

*Ramdas Bhatkal, Vidya Bal, Chaya Datar, Sumitra Bhawe,
 Neera Adarkar, Urmila Pawar, Vijaya Chauhan, Suniti S. R., Sanjay
 M. G., Prakash Bandre Sharad Joshi, G. G. Parikh*

to look at the issues around big dams. Then South African Minister for Water Resources, and Nelson Mandela's close colleague Kadar Asmal headed the Commission.

It was due to the intense campaign led by Medha that World Bank reviewed Sardar Sarovar (Narmada) Dam in 1991 – a project they had started financing in 1985. The review confirmed all the concerns raised

by NBA and in 1993 led to the withdrawal of Bank from the project. Both the review and withdrawal was first in the history of World Bank. The review led to the formation of Inspection Panel at the Bank – the first permanent grievance redressal mechanism in any development banks in the world.

Medha took upon the fight against
(Continued on Page 15)

M. N. Roy

A Philosopher of Contemporary Relevance

Rekha Saraswat

A perceptive person, sensitive to his surroundings, when begins to express his disquiet with the inequities around him either becomes a poet, an artist, an author or a philosopher and leaves his deliberations for posterity to assess and acclaim or disgrace.

A philosopher is always the product of his circumstances; his past and his present and Manavendra Nath Roy, the revolutionary philosopher from India, was no exception to it.

We all know his long journey of pursuit for freedom first for his nation and finally for each individual human being. His various transformations from a nationalist revolutionary to a radical humanist with long intervals in the international communist movement and a small stint inside the Indian National Congress, every time had an honesty of curiosity and a sincerity of faith in his endeavours to bring relief and betterment to the existing predicaments of the ailing humanity around him.

Coming from a Brahmin family of hereditary priests in West Bengal (being born on 21st March 1887) Roy underwent a complete metamorphosis in his personality by developing into a rationalist humanist during the final years of his life.

The continuity in the momentum of his thought process, from one conviction to the next, could be possible only because Roy was never

in servitude to any person or idea, and, therefore, never surrendered his own independent thinking and analysis of either of them. Whenever he was introduced to any preset notion of amending the prevalent norms of society and state he applied his own mind and logic before agreeing to its basic concepts and then tried to put it to practice to test and prove its functionality.

He did the same with all sincerity to fulfil his vision of getting rid of the British yoke on Jatindranath Mukherjee's nationalist-revolutionary line of thought and action in 1915-16 and stopped not only when the mission could not progress due to lack of support from without (from the Germans and the Japanese) but when he began to realize that independence of a nation from foreign bondage was not a necessary and natural corollary of the freedom of its citizens from servitude and exploitation.

He then tried all the practical methods of Marxism through the international communist organisations that were set up in his presence in Europe under the general supervision of Lenin and extended to Asia and India with his own specific propositions. He continued to work upon them from 1917 till 1930 with all earnestness till his disenchantment with the undue repression of the vast majority of the downtrodden and deprived people (caused by the practical application of the technique of dictatorship of the proletariat) for whose betterment he

had joined forces with the Marxists, in the first place.

He came to India in December 1930 (where he was imprisoned for six years in 1931 for "conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty in India.") still believing in the socialist objective of Marxism even after his disillusionment with the modes of obtaining it applied by the descendants and successors of Marx and Lenin in the name of Communism. And as it culminated and deteriorated further in the form of a dictatorial regime of one man Stalin, Roy began to further question the basic tenets of Communism, which undermined the very concept of individual freedom of thought and action vis-à-vis the collective entity of a state or nation.

He became equally apprehensive about the success of representative form of parliamentary democracy in which political parties and their leaders at the apex played a decisive role in getting candidates selected and elected from the constituencies to form governments in the Centre and states. He saw the practical outcome of the unfair use of populist methods by established political parties and prominent leaders during his own and his Radical Democratic Party's unsuccessful attempts in contesting elections and dissolved the RDP.

Many scholars accuse him for advocating a party-less form of democracy because of his own failure as a leader of his party in

helping it win elections during the process of Indian independence. The blame may be lessened and our criticism mellowed out if we remember that he was witness to the sincere dreams and truthful efforts of Lenin and other leaders in trying to ameliorate the pitiable state of affairs of the working class and how miserably they failed to do so through the Communist Party and its followers.

He was again seeing history being repeated before his own eyes in the heightened expectations and blind faith of the common men in leaders of Indian political parties who were expected to improve their pathetic living conditions and bring betterment to their lives, as if with a magic wand, without themselves knowing how to go about it. The innocent people had no clues that they were being exploited first in the name of religion and communalism and later in the name of caste and region and these sectarian sympathies and partisan emotions were being used simply as tactics for seeking their votes to win elections and attain political power, creating huge hiatuses between people's expectations from an independent state and the political leaders' ambitions for governance, in the process. (Partition of the country later on and its criminal repercussions were a natural outcome of this egotistic craving for power of the few at the top.)

And when he and his partymen tried to reach out to the masses to counsel them against this impending injustice their views were not accepted by the latter and his whole group failed to identify with the masses' psychology and were alienated from the ensuing historical process of change in the country.

He realised that it was too early for the Indian common men to understand the meaning and value of participatory democracy because they were seeped in the feudal tradition of monarchic hierarchy as well as in the customs of patriarchal society. They were also psychologically accustomed (and considered it their destiny) to being born in higher or lower classes because of their belief in the theory of past life's karmas.

Even Roy's persona, while enigmatic to some, was unapproachable, awesome and alien to most in his native land. He had gone far beyond the cultural and intellectual horizons of the traditional Indian thought process. His writings also, were beyond comprehension for all those who read them with a traditional bias.

The basic purpose of any philosophy or ideology is to find solutions to the contemporary social, political, economic and cultural problems of the society. Roy canvassed for a scientific, democratic egalitarian and above all rationally humanist solution for them. But for the few educated, emancipated minds the country was not open to a cosmopolitan approach towards life. Technology and its dramatic innovations were yet to influence the lives of Indian people.

One wonders, had scientific advancements reduced the distances and narrowed the differences between nations of the world in the 1940s like they have done today would Roy have succeeded in making his points clear to the Indian masses in a better way through means of modern social media? The answer is definitely 'yes'.

One can provide evidence that Roy was a philosopher with contemporary relevance by citing the following two examples, one from the past and the other from the present.

It was in June 1974, twenty years after Roy's death (on 25th January, 1954) when his idea of forming People's Committees at the grass-root level, giving them power to legislate, opine and vote on issues of personal and national importance as well as to recall the erring members of legislatures, thus, rendering political parties useless (all described, in detail, in his Draft Constitution of Free India) was picked up by Jayaprakash Narayan in his concept of Total Revolution and this time the youth rose to the occasion. It was that new generation of Indians which had not been directly reared in the pathos of foreign or inland monarchic slavery. It was that new age group which had gathered self-confidence by learning to exert its political rights in an independent sovereign state and had also begun to compare its own conditions with the political developments in other parts of this world. Rapid growth and advancement in the communication technology also helped them do so. Naturally, when Roy talked of this kind of confidence in the minds of people two decades earlier, people failed to recognize his reason. He was much ahead of his times and because he refused to compromise with the scientifically irrational or ethically unsound tenets of practical politics being practiced then he paid a heavy cost of being neglected by both the political leaders and the common masses. He failed to gain either's attention to become a populist leader of the masses. And honestly therefore, Indian history

had to pay a heavy cost for this disregard of his farsightedness.

Taking the second example from the present, after sixty years of Roy's absence from the scene, a new movement and party AAP has once again, taken refuge in the goodwill and consensus of *mohalla samitees*, a term again being equated with Roy's concept of People's Committees. There are some, from the Radical Humanist group, who are desperate, once again, as they were during JP's movement to claim appreciation and advantage from this new development of the so-called masses' party, AAP.

But, I beg to differ with them. J.P.'s clarion call for a 'total revolution' and AAP's 'mohalla samitees' consensus' both are missing the major basic tenet of Roy's radical humanist party-less democracy: the 'inculcation of values of renaissance and reformation in the citizens' minds'. What to talk of the common man these values were missing even in the leaders of J.P.'s movement. And see to what level they have brought the Indian political scene!

I wrote in my editorial of the January 2014 issue of *The Radical Humanist* and I repeat it here that the 'educators are still not properly educated'. Those who are approaching the people in the *mohallas* are still not clear about the humanist concepts of politics and philosophy. They themselves have, so far, not suggested ways out of sectarian, caste and class based regional and religious politics. They themselves do not seem to have, hitherto, risen above these divisions. They are yet not rational in their approach. But the irony is that they are expecting the voter in the *mohallas* to maintain a scientific

attitude and an enlightened awareness and suggest ways of his amelioration himself. The situation is very grim. It is just like asking a child to take charge of a speeding train in his own hands. Chaos and anarchy will definitely let loose because the traditional feudal government bosses are impatiently waiting for this turn of events to disprove the concept of participatory democracy in India challenging the ability and maturity of the voters to do so.

Roy's expectations of ushering in a scientific renaissance and rational reasoning in the minds of people, as a prerequisite of true democracy of and by the ethically emancipated people, is still nowhere to be seen.

Some may say that Roy would have made improvements and alterations in his own line of thought and action had he been present today because he did not categorically suggest solutions to the problems of corruption in politics and administration. Anyone who would have gone through his vast writings on the ill-effects of communism, parliamentary democracy and the menace of political parties would not blame him for omitting the hazards of corruption in power politics. He wrote ruthlessly and extensively since the beginning of Indian independence struggle on these issues, even at the time when India was basking in the glory of following a Westminster model of representative democracy. He had, in all his manuscripts, published or still waiting in the national archives in New Delhi to be published (the most famous of them – '*Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science*') claimed that political morality is the only solution for the modern human crisis because we live in an age where production

is sumptuous but distribution is still partial; where science has conquered irrationality but religion is still propagating myths and superstitions and where technology has brought humanity closer but nationalism is still instigating wars and terrorism. One may read with benefit M.N. Roy's books like *New Humanism – A Manifesto, Beyond Communism, Politics Power and Parties, New Orientation, Materialism, From Savagery to Revolution, Revolution & Counter revolution in China, Reason, Romanticism and Revolution, Scientific Politics, Science and Superstition, Men I met, his Memoirs and The Historical Role of Islam*.

I may have gone beyond the expected length of my article but I must write its crux in the end that philosophers and thinkers, from the olden days till date, have contributed to the refinement of human knowledge; science and technology, in the modern ages, have given facilities of comfort and ease to human existence but frauds and deceptions have tried to spoil true human progress in all areas of the world's living humanity. I repeat again, that Roy's principle of ethical-politics and rational-social morality is the only everlasting solution for the salvation to human strife.

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(Continued from Page 11)

big corporations and builder lobby long back. In 1997, she filed a case at the Supreme Court against the government giving away Panna and Mukta oil fields to Reliance Industries. She led the protest against the Enron power project in Ratnagiri. She joined the struggles of Bhopal gas victims and the one against Coca Cola companies in Kerala and Varanasi, and Singur and Nandigram struggles in West Bengal. She was instrumental in exposing the Adarsh land scam which revealed the builder-politician nexus.

Medha has been a member many governmental committees. She

has delivered lectures at national and international universities and conferences, and has travelled widely both within and outside the country.

Despite facing police brutality many times in her public life, jailed for different duration for leading protests, she remained a strong advocate of non-violence and peace. Her weapons of protest remained dharnas, fasts, padayatras and mass actions all through her three decades of public life. She was a close associate of Baba Amte, Sunderlal Bahuguna, Mrinal Gore, Kishen Pattanayak, Rajni Kothari and L. C. Jain.

Her contributions were recognized nationally and internationally. She was awarded the Right Livelihood Award (also called the alternative Nobel Prize), Goldman Environment Prize, Green Ribbon Award for Best International Political Campaigner by BBC, Human Rights Defender's Award from Amnesty International, Barrister Nath Pai Award, Basaveshwar Award, Justice K.S. Hegde Foundation Award, Mahatma Phule Award, Deenanath Mangeshkar Award among others.

Medha composes poems, tunes songs of protest and likes to cook whenever time allows.



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