

# janata

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The Congress party's professed commitment to secularism and its frequent breach of that commitment stand well and truly exposed. Senior Congressman A. K. Antony may well have done a signal service to his party by being the author of this exposure. Significantly, Antony happens to be the chairman of a group of Congress stalwarts mandated to probe the causes for the party's humiliating decimation in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

It is no secret that despite its professed loyalty to secularism, the Congress has been consistently dishonest, insincere and self-centred in its practice of day-to-day and electoral politics. Opportunism in elections and encouragement of vote bank politics have been the party hallmark. The party's double-speak and double-conduct began from Day one of the post-independence decades. The Congress dubbed the Muslim League as a communal party but had no qualms in aligning with it in Kerala since it suited its larger political purposes. Jawaharlal Nehru was a supporter of the Kerala Congress' behavior at that time. At the height of the campaign during April-May this year, Sonia Gandhi

called on the Imam of Jama Masjid, New Delhi to canvass Muslim support for the party. Even more recently, there has been much debate over the party's suggestion ahead of state assembly polls for a special quota in job reservation for Marathas and Muslims in Maharashtra. The Muslim disenchantment with the Congress brand of secularism was reflected in the 2014 verdict: the solid consolidation of Hindu votes behind the BJP and the Congress' dismal performance in states with high Muslim population, like UP and Bihar. The disenchantment with the Congress is not confined to the Muslims. According to published reports, some senior Congressmen told the Working Committee on May 20 that the party's secular pitch was seen by Hindus as blatantly pro-minorities (read Muslims) and that such a perception had cost it votes in the Lok Sabha polls. The *Economic Times* quoted Digvijay Singh as saying that large sections of Hindus felt that they were getting a raw deal and that they must unite to defeat all the secular parties. "The word secularism is, unfortunately, being identified with Muslim appeasement," he is quoted saying. Antony kicked off a big debate

*Between the lines*

## India too passive on Iraq

**Kuldip Nayar**

by seeking some answers from the leadership on Congress' commitment to secularism. He said that Congress policy is equal justice to all but doubts exist on whether that policy is implemented or not. Doubts are created by the party's proximity to minorities. Such a situation would open the door for entry of communal forces into Kerala. Implied in his remark was the fear that Hindus felt that Congress was pampering Muslims at the cost of Hindu interests. To no one's surprise, the BJP senior leader Lal Krishna Advani jumped into the fray. What Antony said was grist to the BJP mill. The BJP has long been questioning the Congress brand of secularism and describing it as pseudo-secularism. Antony's statement was music to Advani's ears." "We have always said," Advani said, "that secularism should mean justice for all, appeasement of none. I hope more and more Congress leaders endorse what Antony has said."

Again, according to published reports, the Congress strategy of quota politics ahead of elections is of no help at all. Special quotas for Muslims in UP and Jats in Rajasthan turned counter-productive. Unfortunately, the Congress has no uniform policy or approach to secular politics. It is still experimenting. Other parties have no inhibitions. They do not feel the need to prove their adherence to secularism whereas the Congress feels it is morally obliged to do since it is the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The Congress plays politics with everything. So, it wants to wear its secularism on its sleeves. But its actions do not conform to its professed policies. This is gravamen of the charge of

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Only the Holy Koran joins them. Otherwise Shias and Sunnis, the two sects of Muslims, are poles apart. Their estrangement towards each other is as entrenched as is the caste system among the Hindus. What is happening in Iraq today is the fallout of an antagonism that stretches back many centuries. Regretfully, there has never been any serious attempt for the leaders of the two sects to sit across the table and sort out their differences which have given a bad name to Islam.

Left to the radical Sunnis, Shias would have been declared as non-Muslim as was done in the case of Ahmediyas in Pakistan. But the superiority of Shias in letters, arts and culture is a reality that cannot be clouded by prejudice or reproach.

India, a pluralistic society, could have tried to cite the example of its own tradition of tolerance to bring about reconciliation. But it has preferred to stay distant lest it should be blamed for fanning the flames of enmity. It has witnessed clashes between Shias and Sunnis in Lucknow and elsewhere. Even though the government has been scrupulously neutral, both Shias and Sunnis have tended to blame it for taking sides.

I wish New Delhi had done more in West Asia to bring about conciliation for two reasons—one, because it has a large Shia community and, two, because hostility between Shia and Sunni has grave repercussions for India.

There was a time when New Delhi was a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) due to a large Muslim population in the country. But it apparently withdrew because a secular India did not fit the mould.

Washington could not hide its responsibility of pushing New Delhi out of the OIC. The Americans did not want a parallel organization to influence events in West Asia in which they did not have a dominant role, albeit behind the scenes. Moscow has been lately taking sides openly and supporting the "progressive territories" it perceives.

What New Delhi does not realize is that if Iraq is not sorted out amicably, it can set into motion an unending battle between Shias and Sunnis at different places. And India will be sucked into a battle of attrition without it ever wanting to do so. That necessitates a more active role than the government's stock statement that New Delhi is watching the situation, whether by front door, back door or trap door (secret activity).

Whatever the quantum of democracy, it has been introduced mainly by India not only to give voice to millions of Muslims in the area, but also to rebuff the West's propaganda that Islam and democracy were not compatible. Iraq's Saddam Hussein, even though a dictator, was influenced by New Delhi in giving limited rights to people. But for some

reason, President Bush Senior had developed hatred against Saddam. The US was convinced that the Iraqi President was intent on developing nuclear weapons which, when happened, would make Saddam unassailable.

Poor Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Pakistan Peoples Party President who became the country's Prime Minister, had to pay the price for completing the same ambition of developing the world's first Islamic bomb. Today, the West is trying to placate Islamabad by giving it both military and economic aids. But Islamabad's suspicion that it has some ulterior motive to serve is responsible for anti-US sentiments in the country. Had India and Pakistan been on better terms they could have jointly influenced the events in West Asia and thwarted Washington's ambition to be an arbiter.

In politics or in other fields the vacuum is filled sooner than later. Al Qaida guiding the Taliban movement has plugged the gap. The whole region faces the danger of fundamentalism spreading and even influencing the youth as is happening in Pakistan where young boys are growing beard to confirm their Islamic identity.

This poses a threat to India in the sense that 15-16 crore Muslims in the country are beginning to draw their inspiration from what is happening to Afghanistan and northern parts of Pakistan. And since India has taken a turn ideologically to the right, as the parliamentary elections have shown, the distance between democratic India and the Al Qaida-inspired areas to its north will look unbridgeable as the days go by. Not only that, Hindu

fundamentalism will become more assertive than it is today.

The idea of India, a democratic, pluralistic and egalitarian society, will be endangered. Leaders and governments will mix religion with politics, something which it has successfully resisted all these years since independence, even though Partition was on the basis of religion.

That necessitates greater strengthening of secularism to stall fundamentalism, however limited it may be at this time. New Delhi's lack of initiative in West Asia to ensure better and democratic governance has weakened the movements like the Arab Spring, which were against autocratic rule in most West Asian countries.

The call by Anjuman-e-Haideri for volunteers to help defend the centres of Shia Islam in Iraq may invite a similar response among the Sunnis to get together to fight against the Shia consolidation. That may come later, but in the meanwhile the Shias assertiveness for identity will set into motion a process which may strengthen religious appeals and their leaders.

It is ironical that even the radical Hindus are volunteering themselves to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Shias who say they want to form a human chain to protect the holy shrines of Karbala and Najaf in Iraq. The Shias, always feeling as if they were the underdog, should take heart from the example of such Hindus and try to influence New Delhi to take more interest in the problem than it has done so far.

New Delhi's say will help the Indians economically. There are two

million of them occupying different jobs in the area. Any tension may jeopardize their future. This has happened before when Israel was resisting pressure of the US and the UK not to settle the Jews at Golden Heights or such other areas. This is the time when India can become proactive and send a special envoy to bring about rapprochement among the different leaders of both Shias and Sunnis. Otherwise, the radicals may win.

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***(Continued from Page 2)***

other parties against the Congress. What was the immediate provocation for Antony's comment? According to newspaper reports, the BJP, which had no presence so far in Kerala polled ten per cent of votes in the state. They attribute this to the ambivalent electoral politics of the Congress which allies off and on with communal parties, always claiming that the alliance is only for the duration of elections. But this strategy has only helped Hindus gravitate to the BJP. People do not appreciate constantly shifting politics. However, Antony has only opened the door for introspection in the party. The Congress urgently needs to shed its ambivalence and practice secularism in the fullest terms of its definition. It is *sarva dharma samabhava* and keeping the church (religion) and politics separate. Also, going out of the way to bring benefits to Muslims without any corresponding benefits to the Hindus leads to misunderstanding. That is why neither Hindus nor Muslims appreciated Manmohan Singh's comment that the minorities had the first claim on the government's resources. This was a far-fetched definition of secularism, which has nothing to do with favouring one group at the cost of the interests of the other.

## Ominous ‘mess’

**Bapu Heddurshetti**

The ‘strong leader’ that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is, has started the process of taming of the Supreme Court. In the episode leading to the withdrawal of Gopal Subramaniam from being considered for the office of the Judge of the Supreme Court, there is more than meets the eye.

The Collegium of the Supreme Court had recommended the names of four persons, namely, Arun Mishra, the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, Adarsh Kumar Goel, the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Rinton Nariman, and Gopal Subramaniam, the former Solicitors-General of India, to be elevated as the Judges of the Supreme Court. However, the Government sent only the first three names to the President of India for appointment and returned the last one, that of Gopal Subramaniam to the Collegium of the Supreme Court for reconsideration. The grounds mentioned appear to be adverse comments on Gopal Subramaniam by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Intelligence Bureau. However the Government has chosen to be silent on what those adverse comments are. Did the role of the government in this episode have anything to do with the role played by Gopal Subramaniam as an *amicus curie* in Sohrabuddin case due to which ultimately the ‘blue eyed boy’ of Shri Modi, Amit Shah was charge sheeted? Your guess is as good as mine.

In the meanwhile, while the President has gone ahead with the appointment of the first three

persons, resenting the treatment meted out to him by the Modi Government, Gopal Subramaniam has, gracefully, withdrawn his name from being considered for the office. This has not only led to a controversy but to what M. N. Venkatachalaiah, a very respected former Chief Justice of India has called, a ‘mess’. He has said that the Government ought to have sent back the entire recommendation consisting of all the four names with a request to reconsider one of them. He has taken umbrage at the Government segregating one name out of the four.

However, this has happened not for the first time. Earlier also, the names of Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court Chandamauli Kumar Prasad and Chief Justice of Bombay High Court Swatantar Kumar had been recommended by the Collegium of the Supreme Court for appointment as Judges of the Supreme Court. However, the then Government of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had returned the name of Shri Prasad to the Collegium to reconsider as the seniority of the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court, Gyan Sudha Misra had been overlooked. However, while Swatantar Kumar was elevated to the Supreme Court on 18.12.2009, Shri Prasad was elevated on 08.02.2010. Later Gyan Sudha Misra was also elevated on 30.04.2010. So Modi Government cannot be faulted for segregating one name from the list of four.

However, M. N. Venkatachalaiah has gone far ahead and said that

the appointments are contrary to the Memorandum of Procedure for the appointment of Judges. This statement has far reaching consequences. Since the Supreme Court says that the system of Collegium is part of the Constitution, will the Supreme Court have the courage to take a suo motu notice of the ‘mess’ and assert itself and declare the appointments of the three Judges ‘unconstitutional’? Gopal Subramaniam has said the same thing in so many words.

The ‘mess’ has thrown up many more questions. Was not the Collegium aware of the CBI report or the Intelligence Report on Gopal Subramaniam when it recommended him? If no, then it means that the Collegium appoints Judges to the Supreme Court without doing its ‘home-work’ which is a very dangerous trend. Did the reports come into existence between the day the Collegium recommended the names and the day the Government returned the name? If so, does the Supreme Court rely on the reports of the ‘caged parrot’ with ‘many masters’ and deny the office to Gopal Subramaniam? If the Collegium was aware of the reports, and had even then recommended the name, will it have the courage to stand up to the Modi Government and say that its recommendations are binding on the President?

Once during the time, Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister, when three Judges were to be appointed to the Supreme Court the Chief Justice of India



had sent the names of three persons to the President to be appointed as judges. The President of India had, on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, returned the recommendation stating that many senior judges had been overlooked in selecting the recommended persons. The Chief Justice had then sent back the same names stating that the 'recommendation' of the Chief Justice was 'binding' on the President.

The Chief Justice of India had felt bold enough to do so because, by a series of judgements, the Supreme Court had wrested from the President of India acting on the advice of his Council of Ministers, the power of appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court and the various High Courts. But it would now appear that the judiciary was asserting itself not because it had wrested power from the President but because it perceived the Prime Minister as a **weak** Prime Minister.

Gopal Subramaniam has, by withdrawing his candidature baled out the Judiciary. Why did he do so? One obvious reason is that he was not sure if the Chief Justice of India would stand by him and assert himself and send back his name for appointment. Did the Chief Justice of India not assure of his support to Shri Subramaniam because he was now confronted with a 'strong prime minister'? The implications of this are ominous.

In this episode the Judiciary has shown the first signs that it will bend before a strong political leader. It had done so in the heydays of Indira Gandhi when it had legitimised the imposition of Emergency and even upheld the constitutional amendment

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## Four- pillar State

**Rajindar Sachar**

It has been suggested that the Planning Commission should be abolished. The suggestion on increased autonomy for the States is welcome. These neoliberal economists may be justified in their criticism of the Planning Commission; but the alternative is not market economy, but to implement the mandate of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments which envisage the planning process from the village level upwards.

Article 280 of the Constitution authorises the President to constitute a Finance Commission whose duty is to advance recommendations on the division of taxes between the Union and the States. The other suggestions pertain to grants- in- aid and the distribution of revenue to the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India.

The Finance Commission, which is appointed for a certain period, formulates the guiding principle. But there is no other effective mechanism to work out the details should there be differences or a conflict of interest between the Centre and States over fiscal rights. This task is now performed by the Planning Commission. The question survives: Does the Planning Commission have the legal authority to assume such powers? The answer is 'No' from the legal and Constitutional perspective.

Ravi Kiran Jain, vice- president of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, has criticised the Planning

Commission thus: "Within seven weeks of the adoption of the Constitution, the government had set up the Planning Commission of India. This resolution specifically refers to the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy. It was specifically mentioned in the government resolution that its success will depend on the extent to which it enlists the association and cooperation of the people at all levels." Despite this caveat, the Planning Commission, which was supposed to formulate plans in association with the people at all levels, developed a unilateral approach. This had once provoked K Santhanam, member of the Constituent Assembly, to remark that the Planning Commission's undefined position and wide terms of reference had transformed it to an "economic cabinet", not merely for the Union but also for the States.

Centralised planning might have been initially plausible. But before long, distortions had crept into the process. And now that the States are ruled by different political parties, resentment and distortions are growing.

The reality was succinctly expressed by the 14th Finance Commission member, Gounda Rao: "Centralised planning is a negation of federalism; nor does it make any sense for approving the plans of the States". Actually, after the 73rd and 74th Amendments Constitution (1993), which by Part IX and IXA inserted Articles 243A to 243ZG, continuance of

the Planning Commission has become untenable, if not illegal. These provisions mandate the state legislatures to empower panchayats to formulate plans for economic development and social justice and also to impose taxes.

A similar provision for municipalities is provided in Part IXA of the Constitution, specifically in Article 243ZG. Article 243D mandates the formation of District Planning Committees to consolidate the plans of panchayats and municipalities in the district and to prepare development plan for the district as a whole.

Article 243( I) provides for a State Finance Commission within one year of the introduction of the Act and thereafter on the expiry of every fifth year, to make recommendations on the principles which should govern distribution of revenue between the State and the panchayats in terms of the net proceeds of taxes and toll fees the State.

A brief look at the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments would show the directive on a four-pillar State - Chaukhota Raj, as Dr Rammanohar Lohia once described it - read along with the 11th and 12th Schedules the State to devolve powers and responsibilities upon panchayats and municipalities. Such powers could cover housing, drinking water, markets, secondary education panchayat areas, planning for economic and social development, roads, bridges, urban and town planning.

Unfortunately, directives of the 74th Amendments were ignored. The Constitutional provisions do envisage democracy, but the parties

pursue a different game plan. They are loath to relax their stranglehold over the system. The people have been denied the real power to manage their own affairs through panchayats and municipalities and are being deprived of political power. This can be countered with strong action and mass programmes. During the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, Socialist Party(India) other parties raised the question of a four-pillar state as envisaged in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

At present, the States are treated as supplicants... waiting with begging bowls before the Planning Commission.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the States, particularly non- BJP governments, to demand the earnest implementation of the 73rd and 74th Amendments. This would reinforce their right to obtain revenue from the Consolidated Fund of India. But for this to attain fruition, they must also shed their quasi-imperial attitude and share power and revenue with municipalities and panchayats, as mandated by Article 243 ZD. The states have a constitutional mandate and power which is not subject to the the Planning Commission - an entity that does not possess statutory authority.

In the present set-up, the Central Government is to concentrate all power in its hands. It intends to undertake huge industrial ventures in cooperation with the corporate sector. The states under the control of non-BJP parties should try and preserve their resources by honestly implementing the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which empower panchayats and municipalities.

### ***(Continued from Page 5)***

conferring immunity on the Prime Minister from prosecution. This time it is showing the signs of bending before Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Is Shri Modi sending a message to the Judges that they cannot look forward to post-retirement appointments to various bodies like the National Consumers Forum etc., unless they bend before him? Former Chief Justice Hidayatullah had once said that if sops are given to the retired judges, then instead of becoming 'forward looking' they will start 'looking forward'. Arun Jaitly, when he was the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha had once said that there should be a 'cooling off' period of two years after the retirement of the Judges before they are appointed to other offices.

While it may be the right thing to do, the purpose for which it may be used may be questionable. Narendra Modi, having reduced his ministers to mere formalities by asking the bureaucrats to directly approach him, and having made his Ministers to submit even the list of their personal staff for approval to the Prime Minister, India is in for a taste of a 'single power centre' after endlessly and mindlessly criticising the Congress for 'dual power centres'.

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# Partisan coverage in media during recent general elections

**Bobby Ramakant  
Sandeep Pandey**

A survey was recently carried out by a student of IIM, Indore, Shrey Singh of the front pages of five newspapers of Lucknow – two English and three Hindi – to see the nature of coverage during the recent poll campaign for general elections. The newspapers studied were *Dainik Jagran*, *Amar Ujala*, *Hindustan*, *Times of India* and *Hindustan Times*. Five political parties were picked up for study – BJP, Congress, Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Aam Aadmi Party. The period covered was from 16 April to 30 April, 2014, essentially the period before the polling, after the candidates were finalized and symbols allotted. The points which were looked into included the number of times the name of a lead campaigner of party was printed in titles, number of times name of a party was printed in titles, area covered by advertisements put in by a party, number of times photos of lead campaigner were published, number of news of a political party were published, etc.

The results of the survey were not very surprising. There was a general feeling even during the campaign that media was giving BJP disproportionate coverage and this was probably happening because the Corporate India was backing the party or more specifically its Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi.

The most startling finding of the survey is that 98.06% advertisement space on front pages was occupied

by BJP. The rest was taken up by Congress while the remaining three parties chose not to put in any front page advertisements. BJP covered more than half the space of news coverage on the front page with 51.54% followed by Congress, SP, AAP and BSP with 28.50%, 11.62%, 5.24% and 3.09%, respectively. Number of Narendra Modi's photos appeared 38.42% times, of Rahul Gandhi 32.02%, Mulayam Singh Yadav 18.72%, Arvind Kejriwal 6.90% and Mayawati 3.94% times. BJP's name appeared in titles 57.14% times, Congress's 25.51%, SP 8.16%, AAP 5.10% and BSP 4.08%. Narendra Modi's name appeared in titles 44.48% times, Rahul Gandhi's 33.14%, Mulayam Singh Yadav's 13.08%, Arvind Kejriwal's 6.98% and Mayawati's 2.33% times. The number of advertisements published by BJP were 91.43% while that of Congress were 8.57%. Number of news related to BJP were 42.52%, that of Congress were 30.21%, SP 16.13%, AAP 6.45% and BSP 4.69%.

While disproportionate coverage of BJP in comparison with other parties raises serious questions about the neutrality of media it also requires investigation to find out the reason for this. It doesn't appear to be merely a case of paid news. It looks as if things have gone much beyond that. Was it only the power of corporates that influenced the coverage or was there something else working behind the scene?

Between AAP and BSP, whereas AAP clearly got more coverage in media, BSP got twice the number of votes than AAP, even though it may not have won any seat at all and AAP got four. Hence, the media appears to be biased against BSP, which has been its long standing complaint.

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has recently come out with a report on donations received by six national parties based on the Income Tax returns filed by them for the financial year 2012-13. Indian National Congress has received the largest donation of Rs. 425.69 crores, followed by BJP with Rs. 324.16 crores. Given the stupendous performance of BJP in the just concluded elections it is quite likely that BJP may have surpassed Congress in terms of total donations received during the last financial year or the current one. But there would not be a large difference between the donations received by two big parties. The BSP received Rs. 87.63 crores in 2012-13. This implies that all these parties had money to put in front page advertisements. Among all, the Congress was in a position to easily compete with the BJP in terms of spending money. The question then arises how did BJP manage to corner 98.60% space and Congress got merely 1.40%. Were the remaining parties denied space on front page? In terms of number of advertisements BJP put in 91.43% whereas Congress had 8.57%. This implies that BJP got more space in proportion to

the number of advertisements put in by them. Was all this done in a planned manner? If yes, then which other forces were at work in addition to the capitalists?

The ADR report also reveals that the parties received a total of Rs. 99.14 crores in the form of donations greater than Rs. 20,000. Of this 72% or Rs. 70.97 was contributed by private corporations. Hence the influence of capitalists over political parties is obvious and this was probably India's first election in which the corporates moulded public opinion to get a PM of their choice elected by the people.

It is interesting to note that Election Commission had constituted Media Certification and Monitoring Committees to check the cases of paid news at district and state levels. 74 complaints were received during the election campaigning by the UP state committee. However, no meeting of this committee took place to look into the complaints. This shows that EC did not take the role of media seriously so far as violations of code of conduct were concerned.

While Election Commission has enforced its code of conduct very strictly elsewhere, when it comes to media it simply chooses to ignore it. We need guidelines from Election Commission for media coverage during elections so that powerful parties are not able to influence it the way BJP was able to do in the last elections. There is a Press Council guideline for media for election coverage but quite obviously none of the newspapers or channels take it seriously.

## Lumpenisation of rural youth

**K. S. Chalam**

India is eulogised by many as a nation endowed with demographic dividend from its major segment of youth population. The so-called demographic dividend seen in urban areas however, has not affected the economic conditions of the people in states like Bihar and Odisha. Even in backward regions of combined state of Andhra Pradesh that dividend led to the bifurcation of the state with their active participation. Young people in the age group of 15-29 constituting 27.5 per cent of our population are reported to have contributed 34 per cent of GDP after 2011. The significant change or impact that they have made in recent times relate to their active participation in polls and help decimate the ruling dispensation. The young people in urban areas had their lively interaction on the social media. It is reported that the PM Modi has around 43 million followers on the net and became the most popular personality after Obama. This would not have been possible without the active involvement of motivated youth. It is reported by Govil, a functionary of RSS, that students with a background of RSS family are selectively given a task of sending 1000 emails each in favour of Modi with fictitious names as executives. It is not only due to their participation, but as a result of the anger against the Congress' economic policies and bureaucratic and short sighted civil society orientation, the youth have silently turned the tides. This is a dividend was realized by Modi.

Political pundits have started their analyses by attributing the

success of Modi to his ability of reaching the youth in urban areas. Realising the potential of the youth, international funding agencies have been providing hints that India could become a vibrant democracy if the youth are captured. It was the AAP (and the Maratha gentleman Hazare, not seen at all now) which tried to experiment with the youth in Delhi and successfully captured power. But, the formal marketing techniques used by BJP, branding Modi and capturing the imagination of the youth has ultimately brought them absolute majority in the Parliament. Interestingly, there are very few comments on the internal differentiation of the youth that is really an exasperating issue that bothers those who wish to see an egalitarian society. The characteristics and the dynamics of rural youth missing in most of our mainstream media reports are actually undergoing a great transformation. Do the recent election results mirror this?

Indian ethos is mostly characterised in the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata or vice versa. Krishna in the original epic appears as a grown up man and therefore, we had a separate Bhagavata to understand his youthful activities, but was always on his own. Rama is captured by the Arya rishis at a young age and his personality was moulded by them. In fact, the Hindu epics are the great classics of the world that describe the power of media in shaping the thoughts and actions of people from time immemorial. The vitality of the



epics is further strengthened in the electronic age with its inherent malleability and effective symbols in the social media. In the modern period, this seems to be regulated by a central authority replacing the Rishis.

While the youth is not confined only to chronological age but related broadly to the spirit of enquiry, vigour, temper, militancy, experiments with risk and so on, are not uniform across socio-cultural groups and urban and rural setting. This is also true in the US where the African American, Hispanic, Indian (US) and White do not share the same characters. There are studies to show how the African Americans are thrown into ghettos and from there into Jails. It seems the conditions have been prevailing from the very beginning but, more focussed after 1964, after Martin Luther Jr. movement. The militancy is suppressed and the Black youth energy is channelized into dirty business and dissipated. It is reported that at the age 25, 14.4 per cent of blacks are high school drop outs and 40 per cent of them live in poverty and exactly the same percentage of them are inmates of US prisons. One out of nine in the age group of 20-34 is incarcerated/imprisoned today. This is how according to some commentators, US is buying peace and continuity in the system. Are we different from the USA in this respect?

There seems to be some dissimilarity between Indian and the US youth particularly with reference to their social background. The African Americans have a very short history in the country, were brought from Africa and treated as untouchables, while India had inherited a structured system where some groups are condemned by birth

as untouchables or ex-untouchables by law. The youth in India had some differentiation across rural and urban, the former being rude and the latter as sophisticated is seen increasingly lessening the difference in recent times. Rural youth therefore is the real force that has the muscle to change the present impasse in our socio-economic situation. This is brought out by several studies including the ones sponsored by international agencies that have hidden motives. The character of the youth in developing societies like India is undergoing change with commoditisation of culture and excessive use of TV and social media. Added to this, some religious organisations are diverting the attention of the youth from their usual attributes of challenging the established norms and are co-opted into run of the mill functions. They are now drawn in to purposeless pursuits with hedonism as a goal. They lost the youthful characters and end up with self-indulgence, lavish lifestyles, sexual freedom, market liberty, profligacy, co-habitation and remarriage, etc. The role of consumer electronics and mobile culture are so engrained in the UK that a scholar has worked on a theme "consuming talk" for his Ph.D. India is more vulnerable due to the so-called communication revolution, but may not be different from others.

The characters narrated above make the youth to get easily absorbed as lumpen proletariat. "The word "lumpen-proletariat" is a German word, which literally means "rag proletariat". The term was originally coined by Marx to describe that segment of the working class that would never achieve class consciousness, and was therefore worthless in the context of the revolutionary struggle to achieve

the dictatorship of the proletariat. A Western scholar described them as follows. "1. A lumpen-proletariat is the lowest, most degraded stratum of the proletariat. It was used originally in Marxist theory to describe those members of the proletariat, especially criminals, vagrants, and the unemployed, who lacked class consciousness. 2. A lumpen-proletariat is the underclass of a human population. In India, this class is referred to as the untouchables. In the developed world we are creating an untouchable class of the new lumpen-proletariat".

The lumpen proletariat of the kind described above is more pronounced in the rural areas, particularly among the Dalit and artisan communities. It is noticed that the rural development schemes like NAREGA has further strengthened the situation where the aimless youth getting Rs 150 wage per day becoming prey to the corporate commoditization. The school drop outs from among the Dalits, it was alleged were responsible for Chundurur type incidents in Andhra. Though, the youth of other castes do also indulge in such incidents as in Tenali recently, Dalits are easily targeted. Easy money and easily accessible alcohol-IMFI, talk time, TV, cinema, cyber cafes, games, etc make them alienated and socially excluded. They are becoming a positive nuisance in the villages. It is reported that 83 per cent of the convicts are from this group consisting of 30 per cent OBC, 22 per cent S.C, 13 per cent ST and 18 per cent Muslims. Interestingly, the proportion of rural youth is 25 per cent from S.C category indicating higher representation that worries the activists of social reform. Is it not a simple solution to restrain militancy rather than using police or military?

## How GM crops harm farmers- II scientific evidence grows

**Bharat Dogra**

In his widely acclaimed book 'Genetic Roulette' Jeffrey M. Smith has summarised the results of a lot of research on the health hazards of GM crops/food, "Lab animals tested with GM foods had stunted growth, impaired immune systems, bleeding stomachs, abnormal and potentially precancerous cell growth in the intestines, impaired blood cell development, misshapen cell structures in the liver, pancreas, and testicles, altered gene expression and cell metabolism, liver and kidney lesions, partially atrophied livers, inflamed kidneys, less developed brains and testicles, enlarged livers, pancreases, and intestines, reduced digestive enzymes, higher blood sugar, inflamed lung tissue, increased death rates, and higher offspring mortality."

Michael Antoniou, molecular geneticist, King's College, London, says, "If the kind of detrimental effects seen in animals fed GM food were observed in a clinical setting, the use of the product would have been halted and further research instigated to determine the cause and find possible solutions. However, what we find repeatedly in the case of GM food is that both governments and industry plough on ahead with the development, endorsement, and marketing [of] GM foods despite the warnings of potential ill health from animal feeding studies, as if nothing has happened. This is to the point where governments and industry even seem to ignore the results of their own research!"

The extent to which genetic engineering is playing havoc with

nature is evident from this quote from 'Genetic Roulette', "Spider genes were inserted into goat DNA, in hopes that the goat milk would contain spider web protein for use in bullet-proof vests. Cow genes turned pig skin into cowhides. Jellyfish genes lit up pigs' noses in the dark. Arctic fish genes gave tomatoes and strawberries tolerance to frost."

When there are important safety risks, high yields by themselves will not work. But it should be emphasised that claims of high yields on behalf of GM crops are false.

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has published a report "Failure to Yield" confirming that "after 20 years of research and 13 years of commercialisation, GM crops have failed to increase yields" and that "traditional breeding outperforms genetic engineering hands down".

In some cases the yields for a short initial period were indeed high, creating a rush for the new seeds, but after some time such expectations could not be maintained. On the other hand, there are many examples of farmers who invested their meagre resources and borrowed heavily to buy expensive GM seeds and other supporting inputs (for example herbicides linked to these seeds) but later felt betrayed as the low yield left them indebted and saddled with debts. There were reports of many suicides by these farmers.

In the context of Bt cotton Dr. Jack a Heinemann writes, "the "Bt"

trait does not increase yield, it just is becoming nearly impossible to source the best varieties without the Bt transgenes."

Why is this so? Dr. Heinemann answers, "The yield benefit (in Bt cotton) comes from the use of high yielding hybrids that are only available as GM varieties because genetic engineering companies like Monsanto control a large proportion of the seed supply and only offer them as GM cotton varieties."

This is confirmed by P V Sathesh, Convener of South Against Genetic Engineering, "The final nail in the coffin of non Bt cotton cultivation was hammered in 2006 when the industry - by forming a corporate seed cartel - successfully threw out all non-Bt cotton seeds from the market firmly shutting out all options for farmers except the cultivation of Bt cotton."

Jack A. Heinemann asks, "Where is the data that these same high yield varieties lacking the Bt trait and grown using sustainable techniques such as integrated pest management and agroecology perform less than GM varieties," He answers, "There is none at all to my knowledge, while there is evidence that GM varieties undermine sustainable agriculture."

In Gujarat while yields of cotton have increased significantly in earlier years this was mainly due to the impact of good weather and improvements in water and moisture conservation and irrigation. What is more, as already pointed out, the increase in yield based on the control

of high yielding seeds by a few companies should not be confused with any claims of yields relating to Bt trait or genetic engineering.

In a letter written to the Prime Minister of India 2009 by 17 distinguished scientists quoted above they stated, "...The basic problem is that GM as employed in agriculture is conceptually flawed, crude, imprecise and poorly controlled technology, that is incapable of generating plants that contain the required multiple, co-ordinately regulated genes that work in an integrated way to respond to environmental challenges.

"...GM has not increased yield potential. Yields from GM crops to date have been no better and in the case of GM soya have been consistently lower. A 2009 report reviewing more than 20 academic studies clearly shows that the cultivation of GM herbicide-tolerant soybeans has not increased yields. Insect-resistant corn, meanwhile, has at best only improved yields marginally. This report found that increase in yields for both crops over the last 13 years was due to traditional breeding or improvements in agricultural practices.

"...GM crops have led to vast increases in pesticide use, not decreases and therefore reduction of agricultural pollution cannot be claimed

"...Climate change brings sudden, extreme, and unpredictable changes in weather, which requires that a cropping system be flexible, resilient and as genetically diverse as possible. GM technology offers just the opposite.

"...Stability of productivity and production is much lower with many of the GM crops commercialised today. Herbicide tolerant GM soya is

far more sensitive to heat or drought stress than conventional soya.

"The unique risks (of GM crops) to food security, farming systems and bio-safety impacts which are ultimately irreversible."

The USA is the leading country growing GM crops. From here also several alarming stories of the distress and harassment farmers have suffered due to GM crops and the companies promoting these crops have been pouring in. Words like 'Franken seeds' are being used to describe the harmful unpredictable crops while 'seed police' denotes the aggressive men sent to regulate family farmers.

Despite serious and irreversible impacts associated with crops, some powerful companies are willing to go to any length - bribery, coercion, lies, manipulations to spread obnoxious technology - because their objective is not food security, their objective is only to tighten their grip on food and farming system.

Genetic engineering is so important in this quest for dominance as this complex and expensive technology is concentrated to a large extent in the hands of a few giant multinational companies and their subsidiaries.

Jeffrey M. Smith write in 'Genetic Roulette', "Five companies comprise the GM seed industry, known as Ag-biotech. Monsanto is the largest, with their GM seed technology and traits accounting for 88 per cent of the GM acreage planted in 2005. Due to its global shopping spree, it is now the largest seed supplier of both GM and conventional seeds. The other companies are DuPont, Syngenta, Bayer CropScience, and Dow. Together, these five companies own more than 35 per cent of the worldwide seed market as well as

59 per cent of the pesticide market".

A crucial thing to understand is that the US Government and the big GMO (Genetically modified organisms) companies there have established close links so that there are unwritten directives from the highest levels not to deny clearance to GMOs on environment, health and related grounds. Henry Miller, who was formerly in charge of biotechnology at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA, USA) said, "In this area, the US government agencies have done exactly what big agribusiness has asked them to do and told them to do."

This support given by the governments further greatly increases the power of MNCs to push their hazardous products and technologies in their quest for dominance.

Corruption also enables MNCs to achieve quick results. People wonder why there has been a rapid spread of GM crops in the USA, even though several scientists (in addition to farmers and activists) have opposed GMOs there as well. An idea of the various forces responsible for this can be had from a complaint the US Securities and Exchange Commission had filed in the US courts stating that a leading GMO company had bribed 140 officials between 1997 and 2000 to obtain environmental clearances for its products. The company admitted this charge and paid a penalty of US \$ 1.5 million.

It is thus clear that strong efforts are needed to protect India's farmers, farming, health and environment from the onslaught of GM crops.

## **Uphold sustainable development! condemn 'foreign funded' destructive development promoted by IB!**

We, the following organizations and individuals are deeply shocked at the dubious methods used by the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Ministry of India, to discredit many important social activists in this country who have committed their lives in social action for years. For a long time, these activists have consistently questioned the destructive path of development India is following and have demanded a model of sustainable and equitable development which does not harm the environment, local communities, culture and the future generations.

For obvious reasons, the IB has selected activists connected with issues like POSCO, genetically modified food, nuclear energy, etc and branded these as 'development for the nation' and those activists who question the un-sustainability, environmental implications, the impact on livelihood of thousands people and other social costs of such 'proven disasters' have been named 'foreign funded' activists trying to block India's development. We condemn the IB report on the following reasons:

1. IB report is a calculated character assassination attempt on a large number of credible activists in this country including Admiral Ramdas, Justice P K Mishra, Medha Patkar, Dr. SP Udayakumar, Achin Vanaik, Praful Bidwai, Prashant Paikray, K. P Sasi, Dr. Surendra Gadekhar, Babloo Loitongbam, Lalita Ramdas, Late Banwarilal Sharma, Late Fr. Tom Kochery, Aarti Chokshi, M G Devasahayam, Aruna Rodrigues, Kavita Kuruganti

and others. We understand that Narendra Modi is planning to execute a major corporate agenda of destroying India's land, water and forests and since thousands of crores of rupees have been used from the corporate sector for his election campaign, there is an urgency to sell off India to the corporate interests. Therefore, this slander campaign is only to clear the ground to benefit the Indian and foreign multinational interests.

2. We strongly oppose the use of the term 'foreign' to describe credible activists of this country. We consider it as only a political gimmick to facilitate the real 'foreign' interests.
3. Among the issues mentioned is POSCO which is already discredited very badly in India and abroad and this multinational company is investing one of the largest 'foreign' investments of Rs. 54,000 Crores, causing large scale livelihood problems and displacement of tens of thousands of fisher folk, farmers, Dalits and Adivasis. This 'foreign funded' project is also violating all norms of existing laws of protection of the forests under the Forest Rights Act and protection of the coastal lands under Coastal Regulation Zone Notification and many rights of women and children. The draconian project is also responsible for throwing over hundred bombs on the struggling villagers and over 100 people have been shot in peaceful protests. We extend our full solidarity and support of the local villagers against this 'mega

foreign funded' project.

4. Among the other issues mentioned, the people's movement against Koodankulam nuclear plant is noteworthy. Perhaps the IB should check the developments of nuclear plants in Japan, Germany, the United States and other countries and explore the reasons for why they are closing down the operations on nuclear energy due to large scale social and environmental disasters followed by large scale protests of people against such destructive developmental projects even in these 'foreign' countries whose nuclear technology is more advanced than what is there in India. IB should also understand that the immediate effects of radiation due to Koodankulam nuclear plants will be on southern Tamil Nadu, Southern Kerala and Northern Kerala and if the IB officers wish to lead a lead life without cancer and genetic disorders for their children and their own future generations, it is most advisable that they remove their officials from this 'foreign' initiated nuclear plant disposing their outdated technologies with the help of politicians. The IB should have the minimum intelligence to understand that if you have cancer and down syndrome due to radiation from any 'foreign' installation like Chernobyl, Fukushima, Three Mile Island or a nuclear plant in Koodankulam, the health effects and the environmental impacts are similar. We hereby extend our full solidarity to the struggle of the brave villagers of Koodankulam under the



leadership of Dr. SP Uday Kumar.

5. The other issue which is mentioned in the report is GM (Genetically Modified) crops. The hazards of such crops are well known in India as well as abroad. The interests of such development is only for the 'foreign' multinationals like Monsanto. While the IB has assumed all these destructive projects as 'national interests', it has conveniently ignored the objections to GM crops by the Moratorium Orders of Shri Jairam Ramesh, the Parliamentary Standing Committee Report and the Supreme Court-appointed Technical Expert Committee Report (TEC) because they have found that GM crops have little to contribute to Indian agriculture, safe food and food security in this country. We bring to your notice that IB has no business to indirectly facilitate a foreign multinational company like Monsanto and malign the credibility of activists who are questioning the large scale potential disaster to this nation due to GM crops.
6. The document of IB report which was classified as a 'secret report' was released by the IB itself to the press with an agenda to malign, scandalize and create a character assassination of credible activists in this country. We strongly condemn such dubious methods.
7. As far as the few NGOs mentioned are concerned, it is clear that the IB has conveniently selected them due to their stands on the above issues and it has

nothing to do with foreign fund. The Intelligence Bureau knows that there are over 40,000 NGOs operating in this country and they never objected to the visit of Narendra Modi for blessings to one of the largest foreign funded NGO under Mata Amritandamayi, a well known hub of RSS activists. IB had no problem when even BBC reported that large scale foreign fund was diverted by the NGO called Vanavasi Kalyan Kendra, another hub of the Sangh Parivar, for the brutal murder of over 2000 innocent Muslims in Gujarat. Therefore, it is obvious that the IB is facilitating a political game rather than serving any national interest.

8. We also would like to bring to your notice that the space for criticisms on any Government is a crucial space which is fundamental to any democracy. What the IB is attempting to do is only to block this important critical space which is against all national interests.
9. We are aware that thousands of crores of rupees are regularly being spent on the intelligence agencies in this country and such financial resources collected from the tax payers' money in this country is ultimately getting used against the rights of the citizens of this country. The present IB report is a classic example. We demand a drastic cut of such financial resources which are regularly used against the rights of the minorities, Dalits, Adivasis, the people's movements and activists in this country for the preservation

and sustenance of democracy. We also demand that all the financial resources used by the intelligence agencies be brought under public audit and be reported to the Indian Parliament so that such institutions also realize that there is a public accountability which rests on them.

10. We demand that immediate action on all those officials be undertaken for executing such criminal behavior and misusing their official powers.

Due to all the above reasons, we are convinced that the IB report is only a politically motivated instrument of the vested interests in this country. We strongly condemn the public use of IB against activists, people's movements and credible journalists.

We appeal to all members of the civil society to condemn the IB report and strengthen the people's movements for they are the only source and hope for the survival of our future, despite the interventions of irresponsible politicians and irresponsible intelligence departments.

We appeal to all members of the civil society to uphold sustainable and equitable development, no matter what the authorities speak of destructive foreign motivated development as 'national interest'!

We appeal to all members of the civil society to speak up against the suppression of critical voices, without which in the final analysis, freedom of all individuals will be at stake very soon.

**– Prof. Romila Thapar, Dr. Mallika Sarabhai, Mahesh bhat, Maj Gen (Retd) S.G.Vombatkere, Vrinda Grover, Anand Patwardhan, Buddhadev Dasgupta, Goutam Ghosh, Prof KN Panikkar, Aruna Roy, Sandeep Pande, Prafulla Samantara, Arundhati Duru, and others**

## Income of national parties during FY 2012-13

1. The total income of political parties is calculated from their IT returns filed with the Income Tax Department annually. The total income of national parties for FY 2012-13 was Rs. 991.20 crores. INC declared the highest total income of Rs. 425.69 crores, followed by BJP with Rs. 324.16 crores and BSP with a declared total income of Rs. 87.63 crores. NCP a declared total income of Rs. 26.56 crores, CPI, Rs. 1.07 crores and CPM declared a total income of Rs. 126.09 crores.

2. The total amount from donations of above Rs 20,000 declared was Rs. 99.14 crores, from 3777 donors.

3. Top corporate donors to national parties -

- INC: Torrent Power Ltd donated the maximum amount (Rs 3.50 crores) followed by Torrent Pharmaceuticals (Rs 1.50 crores) and Hyderabad Industries Ltd (HIL) (Rs 50 lakhs).
- BJP: General Electoral Trust of the Aditya Birla Group donated the maximum amount (Rs 7.50 crores) followed by Lodha Dwellers Pvt Ltd (Rs 6.99 crores) and Torrent Power (Rs 6.57 crores).
- CPI and CPM: CPI received a total of Rs 4.21 lakhs from organizations such as Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Union while CPM received a total of Rs 1.43 crores from 29 corporate/ business houses.

### 4. Undeclared Donors

- The name and address of a total of 43 donors who contributed Rs 29

lakhs to the parties are undeclared in the statements submitted by the parties. Thus, these donations above Rs 20,000 cannot be traced to any individual, organization or a trust.

- Similarly, the addresses of a total of 655 donors contributing Rs 10.84 crores have been left undeclared in the statements submitted by the parties.

### 5. Sector-wise donations

- Corporate/ business sector tops the list of contributions with 72% or Rs 70.97 crores to the national parties followed by individual donations with 17% or Rs 17.01 crores.
- It is to be noted that 11% or Rs 11.14 crores was donated by those donors who cannot be traced by name or address

### 6. Donors who have not declared details of PAN

- A total of 2371 out of 3775 donors (or 63%) contributing Rs 37.64 crores to the national parties have not declared their PAN details in the contribution forms.
- BJP has listed the maximum number of donors (1670) who have not declared their PAN while contributing a maximum of Rs 25.99 crores.

### Recommendations

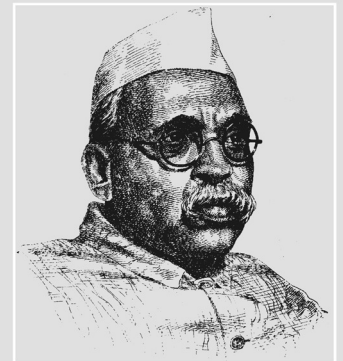
The Supreme Court gave a judgment on September 13, 2013 declaring that no part of a candidate's affidavit should be left blank. Similarly, no part of the Form 24A submitted by political parties providing details of donations above Rs 20,000 should be blank.

Full details of all donors should be made available for public scrutiny under the RTI. Some countries where this is done include Bhutan, Nepal, Germany, France, Italy, Brazil, Bulgaria, the US and Japan. In none of these countries is it possible for 75% of the source of funds to be unknown, but at present it is so in India.

Details of donors who make donations to the electoral trusts should be available in the public domain for increasing transparency in funding of political parties.

– Association for Democratic Reforms

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## Citizens to fight graft

A group of people from various walks of life came together to form Jharkhand Nagrik Prayas (JNP) and held its maiden anti-corruption meeting at XISS in Ranchi on Sunday.

The organisation discussed its future course of action with special focus on improving governance, promoting gram sabhas, developing and protecting tribal culture and languages, and creating employment opportunities for local people.

Describing JNP as a “group of concerned civil society citizens of the state”, P. P. Verma, a social activist and one of the founding members, said people should actively intervene in the affairs of the state. “When Jharkhand was formed, it was expected that the new state would promote unity among diversity and preserve tribal culture and identity. The state was carved out of unified

Bihar to generate jobs for indigenous people through proper utilisation of minerals and other natural resources. But the citizens have been rendered disillusioned,” Verma said. He added that even 14 years after its formation, the state was suffering from rampant corruption and apathetic leadership. “Only a few people have got wealth and comfort, while a large majority do not have access to basic facilities like water, power, roads and education,” he argued.

Speaking at the meeting, over a dozen activists focused on human trafficking, Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, agro-based small-scale industries and the civil society’s role.

“The civil society should play a constructive role so that educated people use their knowledge for the benefit of downtrodden people. It must rise to the occasion and

make the common people aware by protesting against misdeeds,” said C.S. Jha, former CMD of BCCL and a JNP member.

Ahmed Sajjad, a retired professor of Ranchi University, said educated citizens had a moral duty to act with all sincerity to correct this corrupt system and build a strong public opinion. “The common people have become self-centred and do not think about others. A change in this attitude may help bring in positive change in the society,” he added.

RU professor Shanti Khalkho rued that though Jharkhand was known as a tribal state, children still could not receive primary education in their mother tongues.

President of FJCCI Bikash Singh cautioned that public intervention was fine if there was a fruitful outcome.

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## *Abki Bar Manmohar Sarkar*

Last week in Goa PM indicated that people would have to put up with some harsh measures from his government so that economy could be brought back on track. Railway fare hike now announced is in that direction. But strangely Sadananda Gowda defended this hike citing a UPA government’s decision to raise the fare earlier (but was put on hold because of the elections). Let us for a moment forget the then CM of Gujarat’s fierce opposition to UPA government’s decision to hike rail fare just before the general budget in 2012. Change of Governors is also defended by citing UPA’s decision in this regard in 2004.

Railways is saddled with over Rs 26000 crore in the form of passenger subsidies. It also needs a whopping Rs 4 lakh plus crore for modernisation, safety, replacements, new projects etc. But the current hike will offset only Rs 8000 crore. Is this revenue of Rs 8000 crore /365x 20 days such a big amount that it can’t wait up to Railway budget? UPA government in its interim budget for 2013-14 announced a sum of Rs 5.73 lakh crore as “Revenue Foregone” (RE) under corporate IT, Excise and Custom duties. RE is a concealed freebie to Lalas. Modi elsewhere also told that Planning Commission belonged to controlled

economy days and in the present free market era it has to go. Why should corporate sector get this huge subsidy in the free market era where competition is the mantra? By simply scraping this 5.73 lakh crore subsidy, the entire passenger subsidy and the modernization, etc. needed by the Railways can be met out without burdening the common people. Will Modi sarkar again cite UPA’s decision to continue the mega dole to corporate kings? Modi’s harsh pill perhaps is not meant for billionaires. Is Modi sarkar a continuation of Manmohan Government?

–Sankara Narayanan,



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## War of attrition

S. Viswam

**Modi's 50 days in office**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Budget and good governance**  
Pannalal Surana

**India: federation  
of communities**  
Irfan Engineer

**Debating secularism in  
a communalised society**  
Ram Puniyani

**Misleading propaganda on  
Sardar Sarovar Dam height**

**Budget will increase inequality**

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The last word is yet to be said on the raging controversy over the Congress' demand for being assigned the status of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. That last word is with the Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, who has to take the final call on the decision on having or going without an officially-designated LoP. However, while awaiting the verdict, it is legitimate to ask why the Congress is making such a heavy weather of this issue? More so, since the party's case is quite weak, both from the legal and the moral angles, and also the party is inviting more ridicule on itself by drawing pointed attention to the humiliating fact that its numerical strength in a House of 543 is only 44.

Sonia Gandhi is making this LoP issue one of prestige for the party. Apart from issuing a long statement, and writing a longer letter to the Speaker, she is knocking at the doors of Rashtrapati Bhavan. Right from independence till now, the tradition has been that the post goes to a party that commands ten per cent of the total strength of the House. In the present case, the Congress' tally falls 11 members short of the requirement. Desperate to get the post, the Congress argues that the

UPA, of which the Congress is a part, has a total of 60 members and hence the the leader of the alliance be named LoP, an argument whose sole merit is that the UPA is a pre-poll and not post-poll coalition. Even so, the party is still on a weak wicket; it has not adduced a strong enough reason why the Speaker should ignore a rule that has been strictly observed all these decades. Presently, rules and convention rely only on the strength of an individual party and not a group of parties for claiming the post.

Sonia Gandhi is unlikely to feel particularly grateful to the Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad for his (gratuitous) advice that the Congress is free to approach the law court for redress. As Shri Prasad argues, anybody can go to court, and probably, the Congress may as a last resort if others do not deliver. It is worth examining the merits and demerits of the Congress case. It was bad enough for the Congress to muster only 44 seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, but it is worse, even pathetic, for it to appear with a begging bowl for a post to which it is not entitled. Let us take merits first, and see if the demand has a basis. To begin with, democracy makes no sense if there

*Between the lines*

## Modi's 50 days in office

**Kuldip Nayar**

is no opposition. Dissent is one of the gifts of a democratic order, and an opposition to the ruling party in a legislature is a bedrock of democracy. In the new Lok Sabha, the ruling alliance has 335 members which leaves as many as 208 members to sit on the opposition benches. But this number is a sum of the tallies of individual short of the 55 required by the rule, the party has the largest number among the other parties in the opposition, the AIDMK trailing behind with 37 members. The Congress' vote share of 19 per cent is also more than that of other individual parties. This is a strong point in its favour. The second strong point projected by Sonia Gandhi is that the post of LoP has now become a statutory requirement for selection of the Lokpal, the Central Vigilance Commissioner and the Director of the CBI. But this argument is rubbished by the government which says that the LoP's role is there only when there is a formally recognized LoP. If there is no LoP, then the government does not have to create a post only to satisfy requirements of appointments. There is no merit in the Congress argument that the government is evading opposition scrutiny in the appointments. After all, ultimately, all decisions are subjected to scrutiny by the CAG and CVC and concerned parliamentary committees.

The demerits are equally strong. First, there is no statutory law or provision fixing ten per cent of the total Lok Sabha strength as mandatory for appointing a LoP. The rule was first introduced by a former (first) Speaker, the highly respected G.V. Mavlankar who only cited a practice in the British parliament. That was an informal decision which

*(Continued on Page 8)*

If the first 50-odd day rule by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is any guide, it is the rightist government which has taken over India. The Nehruvian ideology which tilts towards left has been jettisoned. Once again, free enterprise and unencumbered trade will motivate people.

This is a turnaround from the policies that has guided the nation so far. The public sector will shrink and the rich will expand their area of influence and operation. This is a logical consequence of a free economy. How far Modi will go to remove limitations on unplanned enterprise is difficult to say, but there is no doubting of governance by the rich and powerful. It is bound to drive the weak to the wall because the capitalist system knows no other way to grow. Yet Modi should be prepared to face stiff opposition from the beneficiaries of the system which is leftist in content.

However, there is nothing dynamic about the programmes and policies which Modi has unfolded. His election campaign promised so much and aroused the aspirations of people to such a length that his budget is considered inadequate to bring about the changes which are necessary to go forward.

Modi's rule so far has been tepid and devoid of any spectacular step to pull India out from the mire of non-development in which it is stuck. The absence of push becomes all the more glaring when there is

no lessening of poverty. Former RBI governor Rangarajan's report released a few days ago finds three out of 10 Indians below the poverty line. This is more than what we inherited when the British left in August 1947.

It is disappointing to see Modi government not taking concrete and immediate steps towards bringing down inflation. After having experienced a long spell of non-governance under the Congress rule, I thought that the BJP government would spell out legal and other measures to set the strangled economy free to grow. The budget has not told us how and when.

Instead, the government looks too timid to take steps which would be considered risky. When the BJP on its own has a majority in the Lok Sabha, it is difficult to make out the reason for its halting approach. During the election campaign Modi had promised to cut red tape to ensure a rapid growth. When it comes to action there is hesitation, if not lethargy, on the part of the government.

The BJP should understand that the development can mitigate the party's parochial image. In an atmosphere where the growth is slow people miss the pluralistic society all the more. The only redeeming factor is that the BJP government has not underlined its communal agenda. Yet who knows whether the Modi government will go back to the policy of dividing people after making them complacent.

In fact, it looks as if Modi is going out of the way to give the impression that after becoming Prime Minister he has changed his stance of promoting Hindu nationalism. His party, the BJP, talks about secularism all the time as if there is no contradiction between a Hindu state and a pluralistic society.

True, this is the line of the RSS which believes that all those born in India are Hindus irrespective of whatever faith they may be pursuing. Yet the BJP has kept a distance from the RSS because it is seen as an advocate of hard line. In fact, the RSS men are joining the BJP to get advantage of comparatively better image it has.

Modi remained within limits when he went to Srinagar a few days ago. He did not say that the state was an integral part of India as he did earlier. He merely remarked that he would pursue former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's line of humanism. Even the hartal in Srinagar on the day of his visit did not provoke him to react differently. Perhaps, he thought that he had already sent a message across by visiting the state of Jammu and Kashmir within days of his taking over.

The problem with Modi is his image. He is considered anti-Muslim in a country which has roughly 18 million Muslims. They, indeed, feel insecure. They still recall his complicity in anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002. Although a special investigation team (SIT) under the supervision of state high court has given him a clean chit, the tag of partisanship still pursues him. As Prime Minister, he should go out of the way to win the  
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## Budget and good governance

**Pannalal Surana**

Budget 2014, first of the Modi Government, has floated a number of new ideas. Allocating ridiculously small amounts on all of them can perhaps please voters belonging to a large number of constituencies. But it renders implementation very difficult. Our democratic polity must behave like a mature entity. To be useful to the people, what is important is not just nominal allocation in the budget but effective implementation of a few good schemes in as short a period of time as possible. As the present incumbent has received unambiguous mandate, it should take a call on this issue and opt for the latter.

Incidentally, it may be suggested that the new Government should formulate its approach and policy about the planning itself and continuation of the Planning Commission. It was Dr. Man Mohan Singh who, on assuming leadership of the UPA-I in 2004, had said that the decisions about economic affairs would, henceforth, be taken, not in the Yojana Bhavan, but in the board rooms of companies and his regime consequently rendered the Planning Commission redundant. Protagonists of the free market have been asking for dissolution of Planning Commission. Modi government got power with full support of the free market supporters. So, it should take a call on this issue urgently. If the planning process is to be given a go-bye, it should be done sooner than later. Supporting white elephant of the Planning Commission is costing a lot. If it is to be done away with, Modi Government should make itself bold enough to disband it and

save valuable money of the Indian people.

Coming back to new ideas, there is a suggestion in the Railway budget, that is to start a Railway University. It sounds attractive. It will immensely help impart useful training to the prospective railway personnel and help improve running of the national network. It may also encourage R&D. Another good suggestion in the general budget is to open a Sports University in the North-East.

If these two projects are to be given fair trial, and substantial funds made available, then ideas about starting so many agricultural and other universities in a number of states may be postponed for the time being. You cannot have all good things in one go.

It is mentioned in the Budget 2014 that a nation-wide mechanism be developed for maintaining soil health card for all farmers. But allocation made is just Rs 100 crores. Number of farmers all over the country is about 13 or 14 crores. If the scheme is to be implemented in a meaningful manner the allocation will have to be increased manifold. That can be done only if allocations on other new ideas are dropped. Good governance calls for it.

How to motivate the vast number of small farmers to adopt scientific methods of cultivation is a gigantic problem. A very large structure of agricultural assistants is in existence in most of the States, entailing huge expenditure. What is needed is to

make all those employees responsive to the needs and requirements of the cultivators. Unless this matter is addressed in right earnest, financial allocations, small or big, would go waste. Financial budget must be accompanied by administrative plan of action. The two are inseparable.

Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister has rightly said that communication and transport network in the Himalayan region, which also happens to be our sensitive national border, should be buttressed. But the nominal allocations he had made on relevant heads are too meager. Almost every new Prime minister alludes to the urgent needs of border areas like J.&K. and the North-east and then forgets about it. That leaves sour taste in the mouths of the inhabitants of those sensitive areas who are the real vanguards of our national defence. A time-bound plan of say ten years for erecting sound infrastructure of roads and railways may be prepared and all required money be made available by keeping many schemes of the mainland areas in abeyance. For ensuring good governance, what is required is not only platitudes but strong political will and involving the whole populace of the country to chart out plan of buttressing border areas.

There is another announcement in the budget speech that FDI cap in Defence, Railways and Pension would be raised from 26 to 49 per cent. A number of commentators, during the last few days, have strongly objected to that. Many feel that allowing FDI in Defence will be hazardous for our national security. Knowledgeable persons also hold that we have financial and technological capacity to be

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## Budget will increase inequality and unemployment

Contrary to the expectations raised by speeches made by Narendra Modi during his election campaign, the annual budget (2014-2015) presented by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is hardly any different from its predecessor - the Congress-led UPA government. The Congress president Sonia Gandhi herself has dubbed the budget as a 'copy of the UPA policies'. Former finance minister P. Chidambaram has made the comment, sarcastically, that "BJP sought a mandate for 'Congress Mukh Bharat'". My friend, Arun Jaitley, would have realized that it is not possible to have even Congress Mukh Budget."

The budget shows explicitly that the BJP follows the neoliberal economic policies similar to that of the Congress, albeit in a more aggressive manner. The government's adherence to neoliberal policies will further increase the gap in the incomes of various social segments in violation of the basic spirit of the Constitution which, through the Directive Principles and centrality of the Public Sector, is committed to the building of a just and egalitarian India.

The few concessions in direct and indirect taxes notwithstanding, the main thrust of the budget is to whip up SEZs, Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor and similar other schemes, enhancing FDI in vital sectors like Defence and Railways and resorting to the disinvestment of profit-making PSUs.

These measures are hardly corrective in view of the ailing manufacturing sector. The sector suffers mainly due to the declining

demand from the USA and the EU. If this sector is to regain its pivotal role in the generation of employment the only way out is enabling the vast agriculture community to increase local demand. However, meager provisions are made for irrigation and other related areas. The announcement about soil testing arrangement is welcome but the design to bring about second agrarian revolution by harnessing high technology is fraught with great danger. The proposal to grant a ten-year tax holiday for foreign investors entering into power generation will prove harmful, taking into consideration the fate of Enron experiment.

The Socialist Party calls upon the Finance Minister to reframe his budget by according high priority to employment generation, accelerating agricultural growth, scrupulously safeguarding panchayats'/municipalities' rights in matters of planning, utilization of natural resources like water, land, and forest, and enhancing provisions for education and health care.

The Socialist Party finds it amusing that the Finance Minister, in his budgetary speech, has proposed a Jai Prakash Narayan National Centre for Excellence in Humanities, to be situated in Madhya Pradesh. It is an intentional attempt on his part to appropriate JP into the RSS's communal fold. The Socialist Party would like to remind the Finance Minister that Jayaprakash Narayan, during the anti-Emergency agitation, had circulated a letter addressed to the RSS cadres advising them to shun the communal ideology and join the

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# India: federation of communities

Irfan Engineer

The Council of Ministers of the State of Maharashtra in its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 (Council Meeting No. 171) gave its approval for 16 per cent reservations for Maratha community (roughly 32% of the state's population and in addition to the Kunbi Marathas, already included in the list of OBCs in Maharashtra) and 5 per cent reservation for 50 backward Muslim communities (roughly 10.6% of the state's population, and in addition to Julahas, Momins, Ansaris, Rangrez, Telis, Nakkashis, Muslim Kakar, Pinjaris, Fakirs, etc. already included in the OBC list in Maharashtra) in jobs and education in the state. With the addition of 21 per cent to the quota, total reservation in the state will go as high as 73 percent. A Writ Petition has been filed in the High Court of Bombay to challenge the 16% reservations to the Marathas on several grounds, the main being that Marathas are not socially or educationally backward. 10 of the 17 Chief Ministers of Maharashtra have been from the Maratha community. Presently, 152 out of 288 MLAs in Maharashtra are from Maratha community which constitutes 32% of the population. They are dominant politically and socially in the rural areas, particularly controlling sugar cooperatives, cooperative banks and several professional educational institutions. This Marathi State has in fact become a Maratha State.

Reservation of appointments or posts can only be in favour of backward class of citizens, who in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State as per

Article 16(4) of the Constitution. Similarly, the State is not prevented from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, SCs and STs, like, reservations of seats for admission in educational institutions under Article 15(4). However, that can only be for socially and educationally backward classes, SCs and STs. The Articles 16(4) and 15(4) emphatically state the principles of equality that are already implicit in the first clauses of both the Articles – that of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. The provision for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens is a matter of policy of the Government, of course subject to the constitutional parameters and well settled principle of judicial review. The provision of reservation under Article 16(4) is for any class of citizens which includes not only Hindus but Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists Jains etc., according to the Supreme Court in Indra Sawhney judgment. The Supreme Court also held, “Reservation being extreme form of protective measure or affirmative action it should be confined to minority of seats. Even though the Constitution does not lay down any specific bar but the constitutional philosophy being against proportional equality the principle of balancing equality ordains reservation, of any manner, not to exceed 50%.”

## The Council of Minister's decision

The moot question is does the Maratha community and 50 Muslim communities constitute socially and

educationally backward classes? The Council of Ministers relied on the Narayan Rane Committee Report in case of Maratha community and Report of the Study Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. M. Rahman (henceforth referred to as “the SG”) in case of 50 Muslim communities while deciding to reserve seats for jobs and in educational institutions. It would be fundamentally wrong to club the conglomerate of sub-castes that go by the name Maratha caste as one class. The Maratha community has two major conglomerates of peasant sub-castes and the warrior sub-castes. The former conglomerate is called *kunbis* while the latter is called *shyannav kulis*. While the warrior conglomerate is more dominant, the peasant conglomerate is less accommodated compared to the former. Both maintain their separate identity through prohibition of inter-caste marriage between the two. To classify both the conglomerates as one class for the purpose of determining backwardness is therefore fundamentally a wrong proposition.

Interestingly, neither the SG identified or named the 50 Muslim communities to be backward nor the decision of the Council of Ministers uploaded on the website names those 50 communities who will be entitled to 5% reservations in jobs and educational institutions. While the entire Maratha community without excluding the creamy layer will be given the benefit whereas the 50 Muslim communities given benefit of 5% reservations will be excluding the creamy layer. The Chief Minister

of Maharashtra, Prithviraj Chavan, in his interview to the media stated that the decision to give reservations is not on the basis of religion but on the criteria of backwardness.

There is no indication who and on what criteria backwardness was judged. The SG merely quotes the figures of 2001 Census and Sachar Committee Report of 2006 and a study carried out by Prof. Abdul Shaban of TISS in 2009. The aforesaid three reports do not classify or name the Muslim communities nor study the communities in a disaggregate manner, that is to say they do not study e.g. the Nakshbandis, Baigs, Mir, Hakeem, Mulla, Hyadri, Noori Usmani etc.. The statistical studies of levels of literacy, educational achievements, livelihood, employment, representation in government posts, incidence of poverty, access to credit, housing loan, employment, health, sex ratios, etc. is for the Muslim community as a whole. The picture that emerges is, no doubt dismal and pathetic with high dropout rates in schools due to poverty and prevalence of child labour. Though literacy in the community is 78.1%, only 2.2% complete graduation, while only 1.4% Muslim women complete their graduation. 59.4% and 59.8% Muslims in urban areas and rural areas respectively live below poverty line. Work participation rate among Muslim is only 32.4% and among women WPR is as low as 12.7%. There are no Muslims in IAS cadres in Maharashtra and only 4.4% Muslims in the police force. How did the Council of Ministers conclude that not the community as a whole but the 50 Muslim communities needed reservations is beyond comprehension. To be fair to the SG, they recommended 8% reservations for the Muslim

community as a whole. Out of the 40 major recommendations of the Mahmudur Rahman Committee, the cabinet decides to accept only one demand – that of reservations and that too partially. The other recommendations include 8% reservations in the housing sector, implementation of cultural diversity index, including Muslim dalits in the SC list, getting vacated waqf properties under illegal possessions, anti-discrimination legislation, inclusion of Muslims in priority sector lending by Banks, development of infrastructure in Minority schools, and many others. Whether such a decision survive judicial review remains to be seen. In this article, we are examining only the desirability of including Muslims as a community for reservations.

#### **Politics of reservations:**

The decision of the Council of Ministers seems to be taken less for fulfilment of Constitutional obligation of State to progressively reduce inequalities by ensuring that the classes of citizens which were historically denied opportunities have a fair opportunity to overcome any disadvantage they may be suffering. Reservations are a political tool in the hands of a ruling party to mobilize a caste or community for electoral advantage. Sharad Pawar told media that there was nothing wrong if a ruling party wanted to exploit the opportunity for electoral gains. Muslims have been demanding reservations in government jobs and seats in educational institutions for over 30 years. However, their pleas went unheeded. After losing 42 of the 48 Lok Sabha constituencies in Maharashtra in the 16th general elections to BJP-SS-RPI alliance, the Congress wants to regain lost ground by wooing the Maratha community with reservations.

Reservation for Muslim community seems less to address the malaise of backwardness among them and more a measure to make wooing Maratha community a little less obvious. Muslim community is a collateral beneficiary of what really is meant for the powerful Maratha community. What else explains gross non-application of mind if they were serious about extending the benefits of reservations to the Muslim community? Reservation for Muslim community through a badly drafted cabinet decision, without proper consideration, without following Constitutional steps and procedures and without seeking proper legal advice in the matter is bound to be struck down by judiciary, but by then the Legislative Assembly elections in Maharashtra would be over. Muslim community will carry the stigma of being appeased and would be even more strident target of hate and prejudice of the Hindu Nationalist constituency. But the Congress and NCP could care less.

#### **Identity politics and secularism**

The Constitution of India did not use the word secularism in its preamble when initially drafted. Yet secularism was in its basic structure. That is because it guaranteed equality under Article 14, 15 and 16 to all *citizens* irrespective of their religion or caste. Similarly, it guaranteed freedoms under Article 19 to all *citizens*. Under Article 25, the Constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion of one's choice to all *persons*. The only rights that religious denominations or any section thereof enjoy is right to manage its own affairs in matters of religion and to maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes under Article 26. Art. 27 prohibits

compulsion on any person to pay taxes, the proceeds of which are appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination. The Constitution also prohibits religious instructions in educational institutions wholly maintained out of state funds (Art. 28).

The rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution vests in individuals and not in communities or castes. Vested with Constitutional rights and freedoms, citizens may chose to come together collectively for their social, cultural and religions needs. However, at no point in time the rights and freedoms of the individual get transferred to the collective howsoever it may be defined – religious, ethnic, caste or linguistic. They are not perceived by the Constitution to be permanent and rigid collectives with barriers that are insurmountable for the members of collective. Of course there are some exceptions to this general rule – women, children, or if a class of citizen is socially and educationally backward or belongs to SC or ST or belong to a class deprived of justice – social, economic political - or weaker do enjoy rights as a collective till they remain weaker sections or socially and educationally backward or victims of discrimination. Such

classes are entitled to affirmative action, which include reservations and other welfare measures.

However, political parties constantly defeat this Constitutional principle for their narrow political gains. Instead of ensuring individual freedoms and ensuring justice – social, economic and political, they chose the easy way out – to become vehicles to promote interests of the elite of assorted collectives either based on caste, community or ethnicity and rally help them construct rigid boundaries and deepen identities. In order to facilitate the elite to construct boundaries and deepen identities based on caste, religion, language, region or ethnicity, the parties misuse or want to misuse authority and institutions for governance to subvert the Constitution and distribute largess based on caste and community. The political parties like the Congress, Samajwadi Party, BSP etc. that prefer to call themselves “secular” parties, want the largess and political posts, and structures of opportunities to be distributed based primarily on caste with their favourite caste getting disproportionate share than due to them based only on their caste, whereas the BJP would want the largess, posts and structures of opportunities and benefits and privileges of citizenship to be

distributed based only on religion.

In the process these parties convert India into a federation of communities based on religion caste, region, language or ethnicity, with different communities enjoying different privileges. Some would demand Marathas should get superior rights and privileges while others would justify other castes are entitled to such a treatment and still others would scream that Muslim community should get better treatment than others and yet others would claim that Hindus being indigenous have a better right. Collectively all of them are making a mockery of our Constitution and subverting rule of law. The rights and entitlement then get negotiated on the basis of numerical strength, muscle power and political clout that a particular collective can muster in an environment of might is right. The prospect of continuous negotiation and re-negotiation of rights and entitlements of assorted collectives as their political clout, numerical strength and muscle power changes produces incessant conflicts and violence. If the politicians and the elite of communities do not see reason and wisdom in justice for citizens as citizens, on the principle of equality and equity, will the other institutions of democracy rise to the occasion to ensure justice for all?

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self-reliant in the matter of defence production. Their voices must be heeded.

Secondly, one fails to understand the logic behind throwing open the field of Pensions (and of insurance for that matter) to FDI. Those are the service sectors which engage in collection of contributions and premium money from the

beneficiaries who would be all Indian citizens. Why is a foreign enterpriser required for performing that duty? It does not call for large amounts of initial capital investment nor high technology. It requires an army of trained actuaries, accountants and administrators. Are they not available in required numbers inside the country? Pensions and insurance service firms collect huge funds of

the local people. It has been the experience of many other countries that such funds, when collected by foreign enterprisers are deployed in their parent countries or some other destinations and it becomes very difficult to call it back when the need arises. Why invite such risk? The Finance Minister may please ponder over this by keeping aside his ideological blinkers.

## Appeal for preservation

The premise no 4, Nityadhan Mukherjee Road (previously Jalkal Ghat Road), Howrah, is a heritage-symbol, a witness to many unforgettable historical events.

It is the place wherefrom the famous novelist, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee used to function as the then president of Howrah District Congress for 16 years.

During the historic Salt Satyagraha. Harendranath Ghosh, a famous educationist and close associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, led the Satyagraha with 19 volunteers from the front of this premise. All of them were arrested and imprisoned. The same premise was the provincial hub of Quit India movement. Atul Krishna Bose, the first secretary of Bengal Provincial Committee of the Congress Socialist Party, had his headquarters here, for a long time albeit intermittently for obvious reasons like compulsion for going underground.

In 1920, Shibnath Banerjee was a leading figure in the freedom struggle, a pioneer socialist and a legendary trade union leader. He was a minister of the emigre

provisional Indian Revolutionary Government in Kabul, led by Raja Mahendra Pratap in the early 1920s. He went to Moscow secretly to meet the great revolutionary, V I Lenin. But Lenin died on the day he reached Moscow. Shibnathbabu was the only Indian present in Lenin's funeral procession.

Shibnath Banerjee was elected to the Bengal Federal Assembly in 1937 from the labour constituency as a nominee of the Indian National Congress. He was a legislator for nine years. Along with the legendary revolutionary K C Mitra (known as Jatadhari Baba), he led the historic Railway Workers' Strike at Liluah, near Howrah station from this premise. C F Andrews and Netaji Bose stood by the striking workers. Internationally known labour leaders such as Philip Spratt and Ben Bradley (both accused in the historic Meerut Conspiracy Case) too supported the strike. Financial assistance through the protracted strike was extended from not only Indian compatriots but also the Red International Workers' Federation of Moscow, Workers' League of Britain and Amsterdam-based International

Workers Federation too. That helped Shibnath establish and maintain contacts with international bodies that helped AIRF struggles that ere to follow in the future.

Furthermore, in 1928, a huge workers rally - one lakh strong - took place in front of the venue of Congress Session at Park Circus Maidan in Calcutta demanding Complete Independence be included in the agenda of freedom movement, led by the INC. It was led by Shibnath Banerjee, K C Mitra, Bankim Mukherjee and Dharani Goswami. Among the famed leaders who visited the premise included Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Sarojini Naidu, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Netaji Bose, JP, Lohia, Kamalaladevi Chattopadhyay and Aruna Asaf Ali.

Even after the Independence, this house was the centre of many political and labour struggles including the famous strike at the Burn Company in Howrah and Calcutta. The struggle for merger of Manbhum (rechristened as Purulia in 1956) was conducted from here.

- *Kashikanta Moitra-Sa  
Shibnath Banerjee*

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can be altered if the present Speaker so wishes. She can lay down a fresh rule to guide members in the future. Second, it is no secret that there was no formally designated LoP during the full Nehru era, between 1971 and 1977, between 1980 and 1989, because no individual party in opposition commanded ten per

cent of the total seats. The ball is therefore strictly in the Speaker's court.

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confidence of the minorities. His accommodative approach towards the SAARC countries—three of them are Muslim—is a step in the right direction. Yet he has to do more to win their trust as Vajpayee did.

I do not see yet any glaring false step in the governance. Elections are such a torrid experience that even the largest political party or a popular leader takes time to get adjusted to the cold reality of failure. This is what has happened to the Congress and its leader, Sonia Gandhi. Both have not yet recovered from the loss in the parliamentary election after ruling the country for a decade.



## n of a glorious heritage

For the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the importance of this premise is great. Shibnath Banerjee became its first President and among participants in the founding conference were JP, Asoka Mehta, Aruna Asaf Ali and other sterling leaders.

Clement Atlee and B P Koirala too visited this house, rendering the heritage has an international tinge. Until the onset of JP Movement, this district head office of Socialist Party was housed here.

Academics and politicians, crossing respective barriers made it to the heritage house. Among them were Dr Asit Bandyopadhyay, Dr Sankari Prasad Bose, Muzaffar Ahmed, Sushil Kar and D H Thakur Chakraborty.

This house was frequently mentioned in newspapers like *Liberty* and *Bangabani*, well-known during the freedom struggle. The archives of British Intelligence have several files, now declassified, mentioning the role of 4 Nityadhan Mukherjee Road. A State Government publication, 'Sarat Chandra and Howrah' mentions this house on several pages.

Several celebrities demanded that the historic house be preserved as a heritage site. Among them were Justice (retd) M M Mukherjee of Supreme Court of India; Rajinder Sachar, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court; Sushanta Chatterjee, Chief Justice of Orissa; Moloy Sengupta, Chief Justice of Sikkim; Somnath Chatterjee, Speaker of Lok Sabha; Dr Nimai Sadhan Bose, Vice Chancellor, Vishwa Bharati University; Dr M M Chakraborty, Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University; Prof Madhu Dandavate, Surendra Mohan, Dr Dwijesh Dutta Majumdar, among others.

The house was recognized as a national heritage in 1985. Ten years thereafter, in 1995, both the Government of West Bengal and the Howrah Municipal Corporation complied with our request to take over the premises. In 2012, the West Bengal Heritage Commission declared it a heritage building (circular no 414/N-1 WBHC 2008-09, dated 2.8.12).

Unfortunately, a business house purchased the house from the original owner in 1993 at a price

of Rs four lakhs. The Howrah Municipal Corporation refused to endorse the deal on transfer of the property, but the purchaser filed a legal suit against the HMC and the West Bengal Heritage Commission. The house now faces the danger of collapse. But the essential repair work could not be taken up.

Some distinguished citizens such as the noted Gandhian Sailesh Bandyopadhyay, Padmabhusan, poet and academic Tarun Sanyal filed an international law suit with the High Court of Calcutta. The Hon'ble CJ of the High Court of Calcutta and Justice Joymalya Bagchi in an interim order permitted the petitioners to take necessary steps for preservation of the house including repairs. Now we shall leave no nerve unstrained to take on the challenge of repairing and preserving the premises.

We appeal to both the State and Central Governments as also political parties, trade unions and the civil society activists as also those who had worked with Shibnath Banerjee to come forward and extend every possible support.

**ndip Das-Nirmal Ghosh**  
**e Institute of Labour.**

The Congress has been reduced to a rump of 44 in a 543-member Lok Sabha. It is time for the party to analyse what went wrong. But the statements by the Congress leaders reflect complacency.

The insistence by the Congress leaders to be recognized as the Leader of the Opposition makes little sense. When the party does

not have the mandatory one-tenth of members, that is 55, in the Lok Sabha it should have accepted the defeat and faced the facts. There have been occasions when the Telugu Desam Party, despite being the single largest outfit, did not get the LoP status some years ago. I can understand the Congress's predicament. But the party should not make it a big issue and instead

leave it at that.

The voters who have returned the BJP want to see the implementation of promises made by Modi. But then these are early days in his governance. We should wait for another 50-odd days to see before assessing his performance since that is the target he has set for himself and his ministers.

## Misleading propaganda on Sardar Sarovar Dam height

Almost three weeks after the decision in the 'Emergency Meeting', by the Narmada Control Authority, under the Ministry of Water Resources permitting further work on the controversial Sardar Sarovar Dam, in utter violation of the Narmada Tribunal Award and Judgements of the Supreme Court, the Press Information Bureau has issued, what we find not just a belated, but a very dubious press release.

The three para release issued on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2014 claims that permission to carry out Phase-I proposal of SSNL, comprising construction of piers, over head bridge and installation of gates in open or raised position at Sardar Sarovar project as per the approved design has been granted by the NCA at the 'behest of the MoWR'.

However, the release goes on to make a completely misleading statement that "In the absence of gates the dam was overflowing for the last two months"! We would like to emphasize and reiterate that that even with gates in raised position - and thereby allowing, instead of preventing, the overflow of water - the submergence behind the dam wall will increase by 1.62 mts. Has the NCA looked into the question of rehabilitating affected families whose land will go under water when the 1.62 mts higher backwater level effect would occur?

A vertical increase of 1.62 mts can cause havoc in the plain areas of Madhya Pradesh where thousands of families continue to reside in the thickly populated village communities; engaged in

farming, fishing, labour work, etc. and awaiting rehabilitation, as per law, to this day. The misleading prediction in the press release that construction of gates will prevent overflow of water" is absolutely unscientific, non-factual and unwarranted propaganda.

The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award's clauses on submergence and rehabilitation unambiguously state that that all the affected families must be rehabilitated six months prior to the decision to start construction work. Shockingly, there is not a word on submergence and rehabilitation in the press release!

One may also recall that very recently, on 21<sup>st</sup> June, newspapers carried the story that low water flow had forced SSNL authorities to shut down River Bed Power House since 7<sup>th</sup> June. That news report quoted dam officials as saying, "the status quo will be maintained until the water level improves from the current 114.46 mtrs". Sardar Sarovar dam currently stands at 121.92 mtrs and the implication of a dam official reporting the water storage level at 114.46 mts would mean that the dam is eight mts empty and not overflowing for last two months!

In the last line, the PIB press release claims that the proposal that was approved thereby paving way to increase the height of the dam to 138.69 mts was "an eight year old proposal". This again is spin doctoring, and the nation distinctly remembers that the decision to raise the dam height from 110 mts to 121.92 metre was

taken in March 2006 - precisely eight years ago.

When that decision was questioned by project affected families and Supreme Court took cognizance of the matter, the construction got stopped due to the onset of monsoon-June 2006, the height was at 119 mts. Construction had begun to raise the height in October 2006 and by December of 2006 only the dam height had reached 121.92 mts. So how can PIB term this proposal as an eight year old one?

Following the mass agitation by hundreds of oustees in the last week of June and our meeting with the Union Water Resources Minister on 24<sup>th</sup> June, who promised of directing NCA officials to verify the rehabilitation, PIB press release should have told us a bit about what was going on with respect to unfinished agenda of Resettlement and Rehabilitation as per NWDTA conditions and Supreme Court directives. Alas, the latest PIB release disappoints and makes us ask the minister: who will inform, when PIB misinforms?

The promises made in 2006 have not been kept. The assurances of the state governments, the conditions of the Rehabilitation and Environment Sub Group and the written committeeman by the Former Prime Minister to the Supreme Court have all been flouted. There is no reason to doubt that history will not repeat itself. We, therefore, continue to challenge the illegal decision making process and demand that the rehabilitation of all the oustee families must be fully ensured and NCA's decision of 12<sup>th</sup> June, be reviewed.

—Medha Patkar, Devram Kanera, Hiradaram, Meera

## Intelligence Bureau (IB) report

The 23-page Intelligence Bureau (IB) report titled Concerted efforts by select foreign-funded NGOs to take down Indian development projects names many eminent Indians who have either wittingly or unwittingly supported these NGOs, with or without financial consideration. While some of these prominent personalities were engaged in a variety of projects in India, others were invited abroad to attend conferences where they were briefed on how and why some kinds of mining and power projects coal-fired and nuclear and the construction of dams must be opposed. Take Swami Agnivesh, for instance. The saffron socialist, IB report says, was invited to Geneva in Switzerland as one of the lead speakers in a side event on how extractive industries interfere with the enjoyment of human rights (14 September, 2012). He was invited by a Netherlands government-funded donor called CORDID. A 'Geneva coalition has begun working on extractive industries which has opposed oil drilling by Jubilant Energy in three districts of Manipur, dam-building in Arunachal Pradesh and mining projects in Meghalaya. Elsewhere, while detailing foreign-funded anti-nuclear power activism, the IB report says that these networks are guided by eminent (often Left-wing) Indians, including Praful Bidwai, Achin Vanaik, Admiral (Retd) Ramdas, Lalitha Ramdas, Medha Patkar, Neeraj Jain, Banwarilal Sharma, Karuna Raina, Fr Thomas Kocherry, Arti Choksey and MG Devasahayam. The IB report has devoted quite a few paragraphs to SP Uday Kumars German contact and Ohio State University funding to the Kudankulam anti-nuclear protests. The report says that there

are territorial networks, which are closely linked and supported by superior networks of the numerous pan-Indian organizations, including Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, National Alliance of Anti Nuclear Movement (NAAM), Peoples Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE), Peoples Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), Greenpeace, Indian Social Action Forum, and the Peoples Education and Action Centre (PEACE). After Greenpeace expanded its activities to oppose coal-fired power plants (CFPP) in 2010-11, it devised a new strategy of engaging reputed institutions and journalists for publishing reports or making documentaries. The report says that to encourage the Indianness of its anti-coal approach, Greenpeace financed the Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to study health, pollution and other aspects at the Mahan coal block and plans to use the Mahan case as ammunition to ban all coal extraction. In April 2013, Greenpeace supported and screened a documentary Coal Curse directed by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta on the harmful consequences of coal-mining in the Singrauli region, Madhya Pradesh. It also funded an IIT, Delhi, study in April 2013 which said that water diversion to CFPP caused a 40 percent reduction in the irrigation potential of Wardha region in Maharashtra. It demanded a ban on water allocation to the planned and existing CFPP. On its part, Greenpeace and Urban Emissions and Conservation Action Trust published a questionable technical report which claimed 100,000 deaths in 2011 and 2012 due to heart problems arising from 111 existing coal-fired plants in India. Starting 2012, Greenpeace activists have

been financed to attend international coal conferences, such as the Istanbul Coal Strategy Conference (July 2012). The conference was held to discuss international funding to encourage people-centric protests in order to stop new coal-build plants and to retire existing coal plants. The guests were accorded lavish five-star treatment for attending the conference. A map of India's coal-fired power projects with basic details was circulated by US-based Climate Works Foundation and World Resources Institute. While its (Greenpeace) efforts to raise obstacles to India's coal-based energy plans are gathering pace, it has also started spawning mass-based movements against developmental projects and is assessed to be posing a threat to national economic security. In India, Greenpeace is growing exponentially in terms of reach, impact, volunteers, movements it supports and media influence, the IB report says, citing specific instances on public protests in Singrauli, the Mahan coal block, and against Sasan ultra mega power project. These activists have mapped out Indian coal mining companies, specifically mentioning Coal India Limited (CIL), Hindalco, Aditya Birla Group and Essar, which have been targeted because they stand in their way. Greenpeace aims to fundamentally change the dynamics of India's energy mix by disrupting and weakening the relationship between the key players, including the CIL, the report said. The report also has a paragraph on Greenpeace's Indian headquarters in Bangalore where it regularly receives foreign experts. Recently a group of cyber security experts upgraded its communication systems and installed sophisticated and encrypted software in its servers

and computers. The IB basically is raising questions as to why an NGO needs to constantly upgrade its communication system and have it encrypted with sophisticated software. If Greenpeace is busy in the mainland, Dutch-funded NGOs are focusing on the north-east. The IB report gives examples of how they lure Indian activists and NGOs to serve their purposes. Interestingly, the Dutch government-funded CORDAID, has slowly shifted its focus from human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir to the north-east. To assess the potential for civil rights activism, senior policy officer CORDAID, Eelco De Groot, earlier associated with the Dutch ministry of economic affairs, had planned a visit to Manipur from March 5-12, 2013, but permission was denied. He had planned the visit through an organisation called the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the report says. To circumvent the visa denial, De Groot invited and funded the trip of 8 North Eastern participants to Bangkok from 28 April to 3 May 2013, for training in extractive activism. The event was formally sponsored by a Manipur-based NGO, rural womens upliftment society. The meeting resolved how future activism is to be organised. De Groot emphasised that instead of fighting the government it was best to make it difficult for companies to meet all the required international standards in oil extraction. This was followed up by an elaborate training session in Shillong from 28 October to 1 November 2013 to equip activists with skills to use GPS tracking to update a GIS platform on extractives in the north-east. CORDAID and three United Kingdom-based organizations, Amnesty International, Action Aid and Survival International, have been campaigning extensively against Vedanta Aluminium Limited.

Around 15 Indian NGOs too are active against Vedanta. There was also an element of inter-corporate and international corporate rivalry. The report quoted the CMD of JSW Steel, Sajjan Jindal, as saying that

some corporates routed around Rs 50 crore per annum in Odisha against Vedanta through American and Canadian organisations and Indian NGOs to stall the project.

-Current Affairs

Not just an Intelligence Bureau blacklist, the government's crackdown on NGOs continues into the Budget.

The Finance Bill, 2014, has brought in a series of amendments in Sections of the Income Tax Act, which cover tax exemption for NGOs, trusts and charitable institutions, that give sweeping powers to the government — from withdrawing tax benefits or cancelling their registrations.

The current provisions, under Section 12AA of the Income Tax Act, for cancellation of registration by a principal commissioner or commissioners of Income Tax were only two: when the department found that the activities of the organisation were “not genuine” or if the “activities were not being carried out in accordance with the objects of the trust or institutions”.

Now the Bill proposes to amend this Section by defining four more grounds for cancellation if the institution's activities are being carried out in such a manner that:

- \* its “income does not enure for the benefit of general public”
- \* “it is for benefit of any particular religious community or caste”
- \* “any income or property of the trust is applied for benefit of specified persons like author of trust...”
- \* its “funds are invested in prohibited modes”

These amendments vastly expand the powers of the income tax authorities to clamp down on activities of NGOs that the government may not wish to see expand its role. The amendment doesn't spell out what “benefit of general public” or “prohibited mode” means. Its interpretation is, possibly, left to the discretion of the principal commissioner or commissioners of income tax.

The Finance Bill has also tightened the rules under which an NGO or a trust can seek tax exemption for money it has received from the sale of a property “held under the trust”. The explanatory memorandum in the Budget document explains that often NGOs ask for such relaxation.

But it has clarified that when an NGO has got a tax exemption under Section 11 of the Income Tax Act which does not allow for such sale or transactions, it cannot ask for a switch over to another section 10(23c) of the Act to claim the tax exemption. Shyamal Mukherjee, Executive Director of Price water house Coopers said the restrictions through these provisions are clearly meant to make it difficult for the NGOs to switch around funds. Activist Harsh Mander said the changes appeared to be “discretionary” in nature. “I have not read the fine print,” he said, “but the changes (in the Finance Bill) do appear to offer immense discretion to the tax authorities for cancelling the registrations (of trusts or NGOs).”

-The Indian Express



# Debating secularism in a communalised society

**Ram Puniyani**

In the aftermath of the recent elections, the Congress, Communist parties, Mulayam's Samajwadi and Lalu's RJD - the parties which can be called secular in some sense - bit the dust. In the review of defeat the major opposition party, the Congress, which has been in power for maximum number of years, one of its top leader, A. K. Antony, came forth to say that the secularism practiced by the Congress was seen more as an appeasement of minorities (read Muslims) and so the large sections turned against it emasculating it to a mere 19 per cent votes with 44 seats in Lok Sabha. In a free for all, different opinions on secularism, and failure of the Congress are coming forth.

BJP, with glee and confident assertion, came to claim that it has the correct opinion of secularism, "we (BJP) have always said secularism should mean justice for all, appeasement of none, discrimination against none" Ironically this assertion, which negates the very concept of a democratic and secular society, has come to be perceived by many as the secularism. Many a commentator opined that Modi could demonstrate the hypocrisy of secularism and went on to take the cake of power. Sometimes victory can be taken as the proof of correctness!

In Indian scenario, secularism has been a much debated word, more so after Independence. At the time of Independence critics went on to say that state is not curbing religious practices in official places and called

it an erosion of secularism. What we see today in most public places, the pantheon of Hindu deities adorning the Government offices and vehicles, and is "passé" was criticized by many earlier. Hindu practices like Bhumi puja (worshipping land) before construction of Government buildings became part of 'normal practice'. Sarswati Puja, Surya Namaskar in some Government outfits by now is becoming a matter of routine. When Nehru was asked by Andre Malraux about such religious practices going around, Nehru did confess that we have a secular constitution but the society is in the grip of religiosity. Today a Prime Minister-elect performing a Ganga Aarti is part of the official menu and the tables are turned on those who question such practice of secularism by state and party.

While the kings and feudal lords were ruling in close alliance with religious clergy, the process of secularization in India began with the coming of industrialization and modern education during the British period. With the rise of newer classes, the industrialists, workers and modern educated classes, the concept of India, 'India as a nation in the making started coming up'. The kings and feudal lords, who were later joined in by a section of elite upper caste/educated section of society came up with communal outfits, Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha-RSS. While the rising classes were all-inclusive, incorporating people of all religions, the latter declining sections - communal formations

were restricted to Muslims or Hindu elite respectively. The triangle of British policy of divide and rule on one hand and Muslim and Hindu communalists on the other led to the formation of Pakistan in the name of Islam and 'India that is Bharat' on the basis of plural, secular values' while Pakistan went through a painfully long trajectory where after the demise of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, a leader with secular soul in the communal body of Muslim League, led to the blunt and assertive upsurge of communalism, Islamic fundamentalism, dominated by Mullahs and military in

the driving seat. It went through different ups and downs; its situation worsened by the us intervention which went on strengthening the communal elements there. Lately the secular elements in Pakistan are trying to come up from the stranglehold of the domination of Islamic fundamentalism.

In India the trajectory had been very different. After Independence the communal outfit Hindu Mahasabha soon went into oblivion; while the progenitor of Hindu nationalism, RSS went on to float different organizations to achieve its goal of Hindu Rashtra. Initially it helped to form Bhartiya Jansangh with elements drawn from Hindu Mahasabha, later RSS was in total command and though it was not in the forefront in electoral arena, it kept spreading 'adverse common sense' against Muslims in the beginning and later against Christians. The communal version of history was

made popular, “Muslims are more loyal to Pakistan” and the atrocities of Muslim kings became the cannon fodder of painting the negative image of today’s Muslim minority.

In this scenario three factors shaped the nature of things to come. One, the wide prevalence of adverse, social common sense’, against Muslims became part of social thinking. Two, the communal violence in which, most of the victims have been Muslims, shook the deeper psyche of the community. This in turn led to strengthening of orthodox elements and dominance of Mullahs and communal politics within Muslim community. The third factor was the marginalization of Muslim community in the economic and social sphere. It is in this backdrop that the Congress tried to walk the talk of secularism and faced severe obstacles. Irrespective of the propaganda that the Congress is responsible for communal violence; those on ground know the reality of the impact of communal politics. The Congress itself had many communal elements within and the leadership at times played an opportunistic role by compromising with communalism on regular basis.

So the Congress did try the things which in a democratic society a secular dispensation should be doing in the matters of communal violence against Muslims and in the matter of economic issues; but its attempts were half-hearted due to the factors outlined above. As an umbrella party with secular ideology and plethora of communal opportunist elements within, it could not go far in taking the affirmative action for the community. So instead it went on appeasing the orthodox elements, as was most visible in Shah Bano case. The community as a whole

remained a victim of violence on one side and discrimination on the other. The statistics about violence data and reports like Gopal Singh Commission, Sachar Committee and Rangnath Mishra Commission tell the story not only of the Muslim community but of the travails through which our democracy had to pass, where a big chunk of population remained neglected.

While all this was on, the communal elements sensing the possibility of coming to power through polarization of society, took up identity issues on regular basis, Ram Temple issue being the major one. They were successful in projecting the Congress as appeasing the Muslims. As a matter of fact the Congress policies have not benefitted the Muslim community in any way. The words and pronouncements of the Congress fell on the hard rock of communalized polity. Making the statements like ‘They have a first right on national resources’ was used to show the partisanship of the Congress. As a matter of fact, seen in the context of a caring state, to say that weaker sections have first right on national resources should be the sign of a state committed to welfare of all. So the Congress dilemma of wanting to implement secular policies, protection of minorities and affirmative action for them, fell flat. At the same time, it did give a handle to the communal opponents to project as if Congress is there only for Muslims. The UPA I and II showed that the caring affirmative action was targeted not only for Muslims but also for other different disadvantaged sections of society as well. Same way the attempt to bring Communal violence prevention bill was nullified through a vicious propaganda.

So Shri Antony may be partly right, but the problem is deeper. It relates to the semi-secularized society, the ascendance of communal politics, majority and minority both, and so finally landing up to mere electoral arithmetic of talking (not implementing) of schemes to win over the minority votes. Congress has not kept up the ideological commitment to secular values. Its workers hardly think differently on the issues related to communal propaganda. Many of its leaders come from communal stock, for many others standing upright for secular values is not important at all. There is a serious need for introspection, not only for Congress but for all those wanting to uphold the values emerging from our national movement for freedom.

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**(Continued from Page 4)**

mainstream by internalizing secular ethos. But the RSS chief, in a quick move, tendered an unconditional apology to Indira Gandhi in order to dispel any possibility of such influence on the RSS cadres. Later, the Janata Party disintegrated on the issue of dual membership insisted upon by the leader of erstwhile Jan Sangh. The minister may name the aforesaid centre after Guru Golwalkar, best suited in the vicinity of RSS ideologues Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, as he has proposed certain schemes after their names.

**Pro-corporate rail budget**

The Rail Budget (2014-2015) presented by the Railway Minister Shadanand Gowda can be described in brief as essentially anti-poor. The unprecedented hike – 14 per cent - in the fares will burden basically the large segment of the poor of the country. There are no concessional provisions for students and unemployed in the budget who are victims of a wrongly planned education and economic system. Secondly, by allowing FDI to facilitate ‘high speed network’ primarily meant for the rich, the budget is an undisguised leap in the direction of the corporatisation of the railways. After Defence the government has opened the Railways to be looted by the profit hungry corporate houses. It is, in fact, a neo-liberal rail budget prepared to fulfil the dreams of corporate houses and the beneficiaries of neo-liberalism.

The Socialist Party strongly opposes this rail budget for its anti-poor ‘vision’. In the considered view of the Socialist Party the rail budget should be prepared in a manner that first and foremost concern is the

poor who do not have alternative choices, except sleeper or general class, in travel mode. The railways should ensure that this large but unprivileged segment can travel within their own country with comfort, dignity and security.

The Socialist Party condemns the practice of dragging the names of our great thinkers and freedom fighters who firmly stood for the

betterment of the deprived hard working masses through a self-reliant system. Invoking names of Gandhi and Vivekananda by the minister in his budgetary speech once again exposes the habitual hypocrisy of the ruling class that caters to the privileged and the powerful while invoking the needs of the ignored and the struggling majority.

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

The IB report demonstrates that its surveillance has been going on for many years. Yet, as some commentators have observed, parts of the report seem to be almost plagiarised from a book that made similar sets of allegations, and was released by the current Prime Minister, when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat.

It is clear that this trend is not new, and the IB has performed this function over years. But the speed with which these issues are now being prioritised shows the urgency to stop all protest immediately. The new government has exposed its intent by not distancing itself from this kind of a report and its unsubstantiated conclusions. The subsequent letters issued by the PMO to different Ministries to start keeping a tab on all NGOs also passes a message down the line. It seems to suggest that this report is part of a larger plan of the government to muzzle dissent and contrary opinion.

The action of the Modi government, while following a

visible trend over the years, can also be traced back to decades of resistance by marginalised people and the cultivated damning of the campaign in Gujarat. This is the tip of the ice berg and is a clear message to other campaigns that no stone will be left unturned to quell any or all protest. The decision to raise the height of the Narmada Dam has been taken without any public consultation, and in an arbitrary manner at a time when there are many claims of already displaced people not being properly rehabilitated.

While villages and entire families will be submerged, their protest will only get louder. To reiterate, there can be no democracy without the right to dissent and express it; and no decision can promote the well-being of a nation, unless it carries its people along. There is logic and wisdom behind the architecture of debate and discussion, and looking for solutions together with the sovereign people who elect representatives to rule them

**- Aruna Roy**



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## Beginning with BRICS

**S. Viswam**

It would seem, thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, that after a lapse of a few years India is again having a close look both at its neighbours and the world at large. Under the UPA dispensation, India had virtually cocooned itself into a thick shell and had allotted only a low priority to foreign policy. True, Dr. Manmohan Singh did a fair bit of travelling to and fro and chalked up a good tally of the countries he visited. But as for new initiatives in foreign policy or innovative and original ideas, there was a blank. Indeed, it would be difficult to recall any specific initiative in the external affairs sphere that can be credited to New Delhi. The last initiative was by P.V.Narasimha Rao who launched the now-well-known “Look East” policy.

To everyone’s (pleasant) surprise Shri. Modi has revived the Indian interest in involvement in global affairs. He took India and the world at large by surprise by inviting the heads of SAARC countries to his swearing-in ceremony, and has since then been seen as being keenly interested in making India an active partner and participant in the ongoing global interaction and

activity. He has already visited Bhutan, a trip that helped revive India-Bhutanese relationship and provide it a broader base. The people of India have been made aware that their Prime Minister is keen on fostering relations with the East Asian world also by announcing that his first major bilateral visit would be to Japan, to be followed soon thereafter to China. These visits ought to signal continuity of the commitment to promote the Look East policy. This would be welcome.

Last week, Shri Modi’s interest in world affairs took him to the Latin American world. After attending the Brics summit at Fortaleza, he paid a bilateral visit to the Brazilian capital Brasilia, and later, he interacted with leaders of some Latin American nations. BRICS is an alliance comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and it is one of the groupings in the Second and Third Worlds that challenge the hegemony of the First World in the West. Virtually, it is a warrior in the East-West confrontation, and the partners aim to be in the forefront in the fight for the rights of the weaker nations in the existing global economic and political order.

*Between the lines*

## Defeat Talibanisation

**Kuldip Nayar**

The Cold War marked the surfacing of a bipolar world, the west represented by the US and the east by the erstwhile Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War marked the return of the multipolar world. The core of the emerging multipolar world is not political but economic, and multi-nation cooperation has assumed commercial rather than political hues. There is an universal commitment, presently, to preserve world peace, promote economic cooperation and improve world standards of living, with development acquiring new dimensions through emphasis on health care, education and housing and human welfare. For the time being, the talk of a Third World War is a distant threat.

Now, therefore is a good time for all nations to come together to act speedily to make the world a better place to live in. The non-aligned movement was once described by Indira Gandhi as the world's greatest peace movement, but it has gone the way of all flesh, and its relevance is lost. Even so, the spirit of cooperation has been enshrined in several multi-nation groupings, each and everyone of which is striving to raise individual and global standards. There are a number of such groupings, both global, regional and local. Even then, sources of tension persist, in the strategic, political and commercial spheres, and the present economic order is under constant pressure due to trade wars and differences between the haves and the have-nots are matters of daily contention.

India, with a 1.2 billion strong population has a voice that ought to count in world forums. Among the

I find it strange that New Delhi is not seriously considering the pros and cons of what happens once the American and NATO forces reduce their presence in Afghanistan only in the shape of a few thousand troops. US Secretary of State Kerry has visited Kabul to devise the policy after the withdrawal. But New Delhi is not in the picture.

No doubt, the Afghans have the best goodwill towards India because it has helped them to set up hospitals, schools and build roads. Yet Islamabad, which considers Afghanistan its "strategic depth," wants the country to be its satellite. New Delhi has tried to persuade Islamabad to let Kabul be independent and sovereign, but Pakistan has not bitten the bullet.

It all started when the Soviet Union sent its forces to Afghanistan to impose their ideology on a state which was saturated with Islamic ideas. America used the opportunity to bleed the Soviet Union by training the fundamentalists in Pakistan to make inroads into Afghanistan without considering the long-term repercussions. And once the Soviet Union started retreating from Afghanistan, Washington lost all interests in the territory leaving behind arms and other equipment in the field itself. The fundamentalists used those weapons to propagate their strict and disciplinarian interpretation of Islam.

Islamabad had in its mind the use of the armed and trained Taliban against India and there are numerous examples to testify that insurgency in Kashmir were nothing but a byproduct of a bigoted stance to shut out the participation of non-Muslims in governance, however unwittingly demanded. I recall when I met in Kabul a leader from the Masud group, anti-Taliban in ideology and pro-India in its approach, he told me that the road to Kabul goes through Islamabad and if New Delhi was really interested in stopping the tide of fundamentalists, it should have a serious dialogue with Pakistan.

It is a pity that India refused to have any truck with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar who was Pakistan's confidante. No doubt, he is a nasty person to deal with, but if we had fixed our eyes on the situation a decade later, we should have swallowed some of his anti-India rhetoric. But all this is now history. The two countries, particularly India, should formulate some strategy to thwart the Taliban onslaught, which is bound to take place once they are sure that the Western forces are not in a position to match their weapons.

The most disconcerting aspect is the birth of Tehrik-e-Pakistan Taliban (TTP), an indigenous growth which is in a position to strike wherever it wants and whenever it wants. It has proved it again and again. The recent attack on Karachi airport is an example.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

However, the Karachi happening is only the symptom, not the disease. The disease is fundamentalism which, to the horror of even middle-of-the-road Pakistanis, is spreading rapidly.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has opted for an easy path. He has been negotiating with the Taliban to accommodate their aspirations. The reason why the talks have not gone very far is that the Taliban's insistence on the Government giving proof of their sincerity of taking measures like closing institutions for female literacy and making hijab (veil) as a compulsory outfit for women in Pakistan. No doubt the next step they will demand is a ban on women car drivers, just like in Saudi Arabia. Music has already been sacrificed on the altar of extremism. The old time singers or instrument players have no market in Pakistan. How ironic that they come to India to earn a livelihood.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, otherwise liberal, was the person who began placating the fanatics. He is the one who started a government stipend for the head maulvis in mosques and declared Ahmediyas as non-Muslims. Today the graves of Ahmediyas are being dug and the remains of whatever is left is thrown out. The Pakistan establishment did not think even for a minute in humiliating Sir Zafrullah Khan, a prominent Ahmediya who turned the tables against India at the UN on Kashmir. In fact, the complaint which Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made at the UN about "Pakistan's aggression" in Kashmir went against New Delhi largely because of his efforts, blessed by Britain.

*(Continued on Page 12)*

## Budget and weaker sections

**Bharat Dogra**

Keeping in view the adverse weather conditions this year and the high vulnerability of farmers, farm workers and other vulnerable sections of our rural areas, the Union Budget should have taken significant and bold initiatives to increase the allocations for agriculture, rural employment guarantee scheme, food security and disaster/drought relief.

Apart from increasing the overall allocations, some long overdue reforms could have been undertaken for better utilisation of resource allocations. For example, significant funds could have been devoted to directly helping organic farmers by diverting funds from chemical fertilizer subsidies.

However, any such bold and significant initiatives have not been taken up in the budget. Instead what we see is that the allocations provided earlier for agriculture or rural employment guarantee or food subsidy have been more or less maintained at the same level, while there was a need to raise these significantly in a year of adverse monsoon conditions. Clearly, during a drought year many more villagers will like to work at NREGA work sites, so merely maintaining the earlier budget allocation is very unfair. This will create pressure for denying work or else wages will remain unpaid for a long time, increasing the distress of rural people.

The budget for Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan has been increased somewhat compared to the previous year, but it is still much below the norms decided for these sub-plans. As the National campaign for Dalit Human Rights has pointed

out, "The Union Budget 2014-15 should have allocated Plan funds under the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in proportion to the population shares of SCs (16.8 per cent) and STs (8.7 per cent). However, the allocation is Rs. 50,548.16 crore (8.79 per cent) for SCs and Rs. 32,386.84 crore (5.63 per cent) for STs.

"In terms of concrete actions for the SCs and the STs, the NDA manifesto promised significant boost to education, housing, health, skill development, entrepreneurship, poverty eradication, efficient utilization of development funds with special focus on the girl child. However, the Budget has ignored certain schemes meant for Dalit and Adivasi girls, especially in education. For instance, the National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education, schemes for construction and running of girls' hostels, etc."

On the bright side, the Budget proposes credit enhancement facility of Rs. 200 crore for young start-up SC entrepreneurs. Also a welfare scheme for tribals called the Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojna is being launched with an initial allocation of Rs. 100 crore.

Some other good initiatives have also been started in this budget, but the budget allocation for these has been kept quite low.

It was possible to make a much bigger and stronger effort to raise more resources from direct taxes and indirect taxes on luxury goods. This as well as a strong determined onslaught on black money is needed to raise adequate resources for the poor.

# Fatwas and Muslim women

Irfan Engineer

The Supreme Court on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014 ruled that fatwas had no legal sanctity and the defiance of fatwas would not have civil or criminal consequences as it had no place in independent India under our constitutional scheme. Though the Apex Court did not injunct Islamic religious authorities like the Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, Dar-ul-Qaza or Nizam-e-Qaza from issuing fatwa as issuance of fatwas per se were not illegal in its opinion, it clarified that “it is not a decree, not binding on the court or the state or the individual. It is not sanctioned under our constitutional scheme”.

The Supreme Court seems to have taken balanced view by clarifying that the fatwas may be issued by any religious authority or individual but it cannot be enforced and the courts would disregard it. The Apex Court cannot prevent anybody from expressing her/his religious views as Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of every person to freely profess, practice and propagate religion of her/his choice. Those views however cannot be enforced on a third person through any means. However, given the state of literacy, education and socio-economic backwardness of the community, lack of security, having very limited access to secular institutions, the poor in the community take the opinion of the even improperly trained imams (prayer leaders of the mosque) are prone to accept fatwas as divine law. Religious organizations and institutions play prominent role in their daily lives providing solace and

support. Women are more vulnerable given the patriarchal values and huge gender based inequality within the community. A bizarre fatwa was issued by the imam of a mosque in Assam. A woman shared her husband’s dream in which he pronounced the word talaq (divorce) thrice with her neighbour. Both, husband and wife, had laughed off the dream. The dream was reported by the neighbour to the imam who promptly issued fatwa that such a pronouncement even in a dream amounted to irrevocable divorce and the husband and wife were *haram* (prohibited) to each other and must separate immediately. Such a ridiculous fatwa also carried weight for the community and can cause irreparable damage. There is no homogeneity in fatwas and often contradictory fatwas are issued by muftis and imams based on one of the four school of jurisprudence they belong to - Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi or Maliki - among the Sunnis or a Shia Ulema would follow their respective jurisprudence, viz. Ja’fari, Ismaili or Zaidi.

There is lot of misunderstanding about fatwas. Fatwa and mediation in matrimonial disputes are separate issues. The former is done by Dar-ul Ifta whereas the latter is done by Dar-ul-Qaza or Nizam-e-Qaza and often by biradari based mediations. Mediation by Dar-ul-Qaza is often popularly referred to as shari’ adalat or sharia courts. The petitioner — Adv. Vishwa Lochan Madan had approached Supreme Court with a prayer to ban the shari’a courts,

qazis, naib qazis from functioning and thereby dictating social behaviour of citizens.

## Fatwa

Fatwa in Arabic literally means opinion. Fatwa is opinion of the issuer on some issue of shari’a or the other. As there is no clergy in Islam, the opinion is not binding, howsoever learned and qualified the issuer of the fatwa may have been. A fatwa issued by Dar-ul Ifta normally ends with the words “but Allah knows better” after the opinion is expressed. These words itself show that the issuer accepts the opinion expressed in the fatwa to be his best judgment on the issue, but not binding, as Allah knows better than him.

Fatwa is issued in response to a query about matters relating to everyday life in accordance with shari’a. The query may emanate from any person, even a third person unconcerned with the query. Often journalists approach a local imam of a mosque with minimum training in Islamic religious affairs for his opinion on matter pertaining to a third person. The objective may not be to educate himself with the opinion of the maulvi but to publish the “fatwa” later for TRP of his channel or increase the sale of his paper. Other media then pick up and discuss the “fatwa” for days and weeks if not months. Fatwa on Imrana was sought by a journalist and not by Imrana or her husband or Imrana’s rapist father-in-law.

Fatwa can only be given by



Islamic scholars on the basis of Islamic law. The persons authorised to give fatwas hold position of *mufti*. Person issuing fatwa should have pure intention to guide the seeker of fatwa; he should have deep insight; equanimity and tranquility; he should have a firm religious background and deep knowledge and should be aware of daily life and contemporary issues. Allama Iqbal suggested in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that every generation of Muslims should re-think the issues and legislate according to their own needs. Poorly paid imams of mosques in rural area often do not meet these qualifications. They are not men of vision nor understand the issues involved and follow the rule book mechanically. A fatwa encompasses every aspect of life such as creed, worship, transactions, the economy, family, politics, governance, etc.

A fatwa may relate to an individual's conduct or to the community as a whole. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani collected 100 fatwas issued by Ulemas of various sects against partition of the country and published the compilation. Madani argued that it was sin to call a geographical area as "pak" or holy as the Muslim country was sought to be called Pakistan. Allah's entire creation was holy. He also argued that the first state which the Prophet of Islam built was based on the concept of composite nationalism as in the Madinese covenant, the Muslims, Christians and Jews agreed to jointly defend Madina if attacked by its enemies but at the same time, all were free to follow their faith and religion. Indian nationalism too was

composite with all faiths co-existing and flourishing and Muslims enjoyed freedom of conscience. He toured length and breadth of the country addressing public meetings and educating Muslims that it was their religious duty to oppose creation of Pakistan.

Similarly there have been numerous fatwas to oppose terrorism targeting innocents issued by Ulama in India as well as others in Islamic world. In the Mardin conference 15 leading scholars from countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, Senegal, Kuwait, Iran, Morocco and Indonesia gathered. Among them were Bosnian Grand Mufti Mustafa Ceric, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah of Mauritania and Yemeni Sheikh Habib Ali al-Jifri and rejected the earlier fatwa of Imam Ibn Taimiyyah that was used by Osama bin Laden and his followers in support of their jihad. Imam Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa justified use of violence against an unjust ruler in the circumstances when the only way to address injustice and to bring about regime change was to use counter violence. Imam Hanbal had prohibited rebellion against an unjust ruler as it would promote anarchy and bloodshed. The Mardin conference rejected mindless violence targeting innocents and non-combatants condemned terrorism. In a democracy other means of changing unjust regimes is possible. Such fatwas merit little attention in the media — both, for the lack of knowledge, and because they go against the conventional wisdom that Islam is a backward, violent and aggressive religion. Media also thrives on negative news. Coverage of conflicts rather than events that are conducive to harmony and peace increase the TRPs.

## Women

However, everything is not hunky dory within the community. The Muftis issuing fatwas mechanically follow the rules of their respective jurisprudence without applying their mind to the changed context and circumstances in which the fatwas are sought. To be fair to the Dar 'ul Ifta, the problem lies with the fact that the doors of *ijtihad* (creative interpretation and application of teachings of Islam to changed circumstances) have been closed during the medieval period itself. In India, Islamic jurisprudence was an evolving science till the colonization of the country under British. The Warren Hastings' Plan of 1772 provided for establishment of civil and criminal courts and protected the right of Hindus and Muslims to apply their own personal laws in inheritance, marriage etc. In the year 1791 under directions of Hastings, Charles Hamilton translated from Arabic the *Hedayah* (The Guide) into English. With the reliance of the British courts on written text, the evolution of shari'a came to a halt. Darul Uloom Deoband was established by Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi and others to conserve the faith against the possible western onslaught.

Since then, the fatwas issued by the Darul Ifta established by Darul Uloom have been drawing from wahabi conservative Islam and Hanafi School of jurisprudence. Muslim women have been worst sufferers as the conservative fatwas restrict their freedom and liberties. Women in the fatwas are conceived as duty bearers towards their husbands having little rights. Moreover, the fatwas enable men to exercise considerable control over the bodies of their wives and control

their movement reducing them to object for sexual gratification for their husbands, bearing them children and carrying out domestic chores. Needless to say this does not necessarily reflect the true spirit of Islam. Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer would argue that Holy Quran gives equal rights to Muslim women and complete freedom to earn their livelihood, right to manage their earnings and use it as they please without any obligation, right to maintenance from their husbands, wear clothes they liked except they were required not to display their *zeenah* (bodily charms and adornments), right to unilaterally divorce their husbands (*khula*), right (nay, duty) to acquire knowledge, right to pray in mosque and even lead mix group of namazis in mosque, liberty to act and officiate as Qazis, etc. For lack of space, we are not giving references.

Recently a fatwa was issued which called women working in establishments with other male colleagues to be haram if their earnings were not necessary to maintain the family, and if it was, they should be covered from head to toe during their working hours! A fatwa was issued banning a popular all-girls Kashmiri band leading to its disbanding. Viewing of most TV channels, listening to Music, etc have been prohibited by fatwas. What was most disturbing was the fatwa that restricted women from entering even sufi dargahs — a most inclusive space. In August 2005, Darul Uloom issued a fatwa forbidding women from voting, and if they must, they should wear a veil. This would of course prohibit them from contesting elections. Thankfully, the community does not always subject themselves to these fatwas.

### What should we do?

First of all, we must welcome the Supreme Court judgment which reminds the Muslim community that though it is not unconstitutional to issue fatwas, they are merely opinions of the issuer and not binding on anybody. The Apex Court has also advised the institutions and persons inclined to issue fatwas, not to do so at the instance of a third person or party unconnected with the opinion to be expressed as there is ample scope for mischief.

We must particularly educate the women in particular and the community in general, particularly

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Third World countries, India is perhaps the most developed or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it is developing fast and trying to catch up with strong first world countries. In this endeavour, it needs to be backed and bolstered by an innovative foreign policy that promotes India's commercial and political interests without being formally affiliated to any major

in the rural and semi-urban areas, that fawas are not binding, and wherever possible, hold celebratory meetings welcoming the Apex Court judgment on the issue. The courts functioning under the constitutional framework have done far more for Muslim women's rights and entitlements and without deviating from Islamic principles — be it on the issue of granting maintenance to divorced Muslim women, holding oral pronouncement of divorce in one sitting illegal, custody of children, right of inheritance, protection of Muslim women facing domestic violence etc. Muslim women should utilize all spaces where they get better rights.

power. The Prime Minister's coming trip to the US, and his visits to China, Japan and Russia, will be a balancing factor in the evolution of a broad-minded, broad-based and flexible foreign policy. It is to be welcomed that foreign policy is coming into its own again and India is all set to play its due role in the comity of nations.

## Footprints of A Crusader

(The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

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## “Give Modi a Chance”

**Uday Dandavate**

This comment did not come from a Modi supporter nor from a recent convert to his agenda of development. A friend of mine, who shares with me liberal values provoked me with a further nudge, “How long should we just keep judging him only on the basis of his role in Gujarat riots? Maybe he does want to make a difference. There is no doubt that his personal charisma and his strong leadership earned him a solid mandate and we need to let him govern.”

My response to the provocation was balanced - not quite typical of a staunch Modi skeptic that I am. “Well, Modi has a mandate and he is in the government. It would be foolish of me to even think that I could let him govern or not let him govern”. The reality is - India’s politics is changing. The Congress party has been dismissed with contempt. Political discourse in coming days is more likely to be dominated by sound bytes from the BJP and Modi. I fear that parliamentary democracy would be compromised without vibrant clash of ideas and a vigilant citizenry eager to present, challenge and build on each other’s ideas.

Sitting in the visitors’ gallery of Lok Sabha for several years, I have witnessed historical speeches and invaluable ideas being presented by leaders of the opposition. I have also seen Ministers and Prime Ministers taking down copious notes during these speeches. Both Indira Gandhi and Rajeev Gandhi have acknowledged publicly that they

made it a point to listen to the speeches made by veteran Parliamentarians for refining their own thinking on public policies. In this background, I feel a need for a strong voice of dissent and a strong mobilization of vigilance to keep the ideas of the ruling party challenged every step along the way. Unfortunately over the past several years a new idea is being promoted, primarily by parties and leaders who prescribe to authoritarian methods of managing their own parties, that voice of dissent is meant to be muzzled and challenging atrocities committed by the state is akin to treason. I do not subscribe to the idea that Modi will only bring harm to India - I do believe he would want to leave an imprint on the history by translating his beliefs into fundamental shifts in governance. The point is - we don’t have to grant him a free reign to impose his beliefs.

A big weakness in authoritarian mode of governance is that it relies on the knowledge, intelligence and authority of a single individual and his/her coterie of advisers. Authoritarian mode of governance promotes sycophants, eliminates dissent, and confines innovation within the ivory towers of a small coterie. Authoritarian model turns government administration at lower level into perpetrator of violence and corruption against the powerless commoners. On the other hand, there is clear evidence in the success of open source models of development that when a leader assumes the role of a catalyst and a cultivator of ideas

present in the wisdom of larger population, more robust, relevant, refined and sustainable solutions to pressing problems emerge. A culture of accommodating diverse viewpoints is central to open source development.

Authoritarian leaders tend to pursue their own social affiliates and listen to their biases when building power structures. They tend to consolidate their power by exploiting superstitious, and fueling communal and cultural chauvinism. Every authoritarian leader in a democracy sees himself/herself as a benevolent dictator. That is why popular doling outs are commonplace in authoritarian governance.

Therefore, I say to my friend, who wants to give Modi some time to prove himself, “Modi has the next five years to prove himself. However, the responsibility of progressive Indians, who are skeptical of his belief system and the intentions of the Sangh Parivar, there is an urgent need to build a strong counter-point that can alert the masses to the need for cultivation of discourse and dissent as a foundation of innovative change. Let the Congress party languish in an exposed state. The only way to build a credible alternative to Modi’s style of governance is to help develop participatory tools and methods of governance that can provide evidence of the rich potential of the ideas and dissent emanating from common citizens.

## Chirala, 2014

### Pannalal Surana

It is a small town on the east coast in Prakasham (formerly Ongole) district in Andhra Pradesh. A small group of middle-aged men is fighting against a powerful political leader. The fellow has been selling out huge quantities of sand for the last few years. One authority under the Mining Department of the State Government had to demand Rs.5.02 crores as royalty and penalty from his brother. The sand-king, as he is popularly known in the locality, has grabbed large chunks of burial grounds of backward caste people as also a sizable plot from which about seventeen families belonging to one tribe were evicted. Today, there stands a huge commercial complex just opposite the Railway station.

Vikas Babu (name changed), a politically conscious person, had taken lead in exposing the high-handed activities of the man. He approached the district police authorities urging them to take stern action. But, the politician being too powerful, police and revenue officers are siding with him. A false case of rape was lodged against Vikas Babu. After a lengthy proceeding, he was acquitted.

Vikas Babu contacted Jaya Vidiyala, the then president of the A.P. State unit of PUCL, who organized a visit of a study team from Hyderabad. After making public enquiries the team prepared a report enumerating the misdeeds of the said politician and requested

the Chief Minister of A.P. to initiate investigation/legal action, but in vain. PUCL then sent its report to print media which gave some publicity to it. Some portions of the report were put on Facebook.

The said politician lodged complaints with the police who filed FIR against Jaya under Section 66 of Information Technology Act and also under various sections of IPC. Consequently, she was arrested and released on bail. Then one night she was assaulted by unknown persons. A defamation case has been also filed against her in the District Court of Ongole.

To earn his bread, Vikas Babu has been doing some construction projects. The politician, however, pressurized concerned departments to delay payment of the bills for months together. He and his friends are being harassed in many other ways also. But they are in good spirits and would not yield to the autocratic actions of the politician and police authorities.

An interesting episode took place on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Pannalal Surana and Jagdish Tirodkar had occupied a room in one hotel in front the Railway Station. At about 10-30 a.m. one police sub-inspector, along with three constables in uniform and two plainclothes men crashed into the room and asked the visitors to accompany them to the police station.

“Why for?” asked Pannalal.

“We have got information and we have to make enquiries. So, get up and accompany us.”

“But why? Do you take us to be the Naxalites?”

“I cannot tell you anything” Then he called on his inspector on phone and asked Pannalal to speak.

“Why did you come here?” came the voice of the inspector. “I am a citizen of India and I can visit any place in the country.”

“Citizen..” the fellow said disparagingly and shouted back “come here quickly”

The duo prepared to go along with the police. Pannalal said that “we would like to get zerox copies of our identity cards”. The officer asked his man to do so. On getting the photocopies of the IT cards, the officer climbed down and became very polite. Then he asked, “from where do you get the money for your travel, food etc.”

“Jagdish gets monthly pension of about Rs 18,000 from the Central Government as a freedom fighter, and Pannalal gets about Rs 10,000 as interest every three months on the FDs of the purses he received from his friends and well-wishers.”

On listening to all that, the officer and his men quietly filed out.



# Economic and environmental costs of declining governance

V. N. Sharma

For quite some time the people, especially the elder ones including the Freedom Fighters, have been found quite appreciative of the rule of the British Raj in India in comparison to the one handed over to us by the post-independence Governments. The statements, made thus, may be swept under the carpet by some government spokesperson or those from the political class as coming simply out of individual frustration. People in power have a habit of projecting themselves as blind creatures. They fail to see the insincerity of their class in most of the purposes of governance in almost all locations, which speak volumes about the state we are in. Those, of late forties/early fifties generation, had a chance, all through as a toddler to the end of adolescence, to see the governance in India as an extension of the British Rule. The ones from the rural background were more fortunate to see the Government officials from the public dealing departments like land revenue, water tax, health workers, police, electric supply, education, etc. near their doors on different days. It used to be a two-way communication between the villagers and the visiting officials. Results used to be solution to at least some of the grievances right at the spot and positive assurances for the remaining ones. Health workers visited mostly during the monsoon for spreading bleaching powder in rotting garbage locations and treating wells with disinfectant to control spread of cholera or to organize vaccination programmes in the concerned village. The

school located in the village was visited by the Inspector of Schools or his deputies every now and then - almost every quarter without fail. Such visits were a kind of fixed phenomena, though declining in quality and frequency, until mid-sixties. Police is the only government department which continued with its visibility all through to investigate crimes and complaints of different variety though not with fair intentions, lately, in majority of the cases. Being closer to the seat of government officials and agencies, people in the urban areas smelt the government nearby in their breath. This indicated to the urbanites that there was a Government which worked for them.

Post-1960s saw a major and exponential decay in the system of governance. The visits of the government officials, except the police, stopped and for every problem or simple routine issue people were asked to visit concerned offices in the Block or district headquarters and submit formal request. The urban population too sensed, like their rural counterparts, that they were farther from the 'gods of public administration' and almost in the same basket. Inefficient and ineffective functioning by the bureaucracy or delayed response by the Government offices forced people either to compromise with corruption operated through middle men or brokers or take to law courts in search of justice or a decision. Thus was created a heavy demand on travel to long distances

by too many citizens, very often too many times, which caused loss of valuable man-days as also addition to the undesirable consumption of the natural and mineral resources. Quite naturally the productivity per capita decreased. Now even weekly or fortnightly Janata Durbars by the CM or Ministers or bureaucrats in the State or district or block headquarters do not infuse much confidence. But nothing moves, nobody is specifically questioned for inaction. It appears that such announcements are just played to the gallery for public consumption. Till about the end of 1980s an extended courtesy by the Ministers and ministries used to be acknowledgement of letters addressed to them related to personal or social issues.

It is not quite an issue if the history of the civil administration in India is known to individual citizens or not but what they should get, as a matter of right, under a constitution guaranteeing it is a good governance. The citizens are in working mode as long as they deal with each other. The moment a third party called Government enters into the arena it becomes a flop show. There is no fixed time delivery by arms of the Government including judiciary. A delayed supply of material or submission by a citizen is punishable but nobody in the system of governance can be touched even if an individual employee has not done the assigned work. Their pay, perks and life with comfort are not questionable even if hundreds and thousands die outside.

## Role of technology

Availability of efficient information and communication technologies (ICT) like e-mail, mobile, etc. in government offices has not changed the mechanics of administration and its decision-making capabilities. The downward journey of political will and administrative lethargy visible since early 1960s is taking newer and newer dips in larger spectrum of governance and public administration. The officials - big or small - from the Government secretariat located in the capital city to the Block level offices continue to work from their offices from the comfort of their office chamber. The usual comment made by such officials to the media nowadays about a disaster, a scam in road making, money transaction, and corruption in an office, death of a patient in hospital due to absence, negligence or wrong treatment by the doctor is that this would be looked into when the issue comes to him. It is as if none of these happenings belong to his area of job description and for sure he does not have a responsibility to look outside his comfort zone. (Railway Ministers/ officials are the only exception to this rule though in a limited way only.) To add to that, if the sufferer or the relatives or the general populace make disturbing noise they can be put behind bars for 'obstructing the office work' clause of the law. Hiding behind such obnoxious laws and rules of administration the officials desire that the people should take every wrong doing by the Government men silently lying down even if mazdoors under MNREGA are not paid their wages, municipal services are not upto the mark, government or municipal schools do not conduct

classes or educate children, hospitals remain without doctors-on-duty etc. More often than not, it appears that the government is on long leave. The political or administrative officials become visible individually or collectively only in press conferences or on TV screens during exposure of the scams related to them individually or collectively. It is beyond comprehension that the same ICTs incorporated in the Business sector works so well but fails at home in the Government offices. This, in nutshell, tells the story of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, intentionally bad or wrong approach to governance, corruption and inclusion of middle men and commission agents in large numbers in functioning of the Government.

## Environmental damages

At the same time this also puts unnecessary demand on the basic infrastructure like roads, means of communication and transport, power, etc. The rapid development in urban India has also resulted in a tremendous increase in the number of motor vehicles and in some cities this has doubled in the last decade. This is the main source of air pollution and poor ambient air quality impacting millions of dwellers. In 2005-06 there were 8.9M vehicles sold and in five years this number has scaled to 15M (in 2010-11). Cars and trucks are estimated to produce about 314 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in one year, and this number is going up each year. Cars are responsible for 72 per cent of nitrogen oxides and 52 per cent of reactive hydrocarbons in our atmosphere. Vehicles in major metropolitan cities are estimated to account for 70 per cent of CO, 50 per cent of HC, 30-40 per cent of NO<sub>x</sub>, 30 per cent of SPM

and 10 per cent of SO<sub>2</sub> of the total pollution load of these cities, of which two-thirds is contributed by two wheelers alone. These are estimated to raise the earth's temperature over 2 degrees centigrade, unleashing climate catastrophe. Such a working arrangement forced by the declining governance tells negatively upon the socio-economic development, loss of valuable agricultural fields for more and more road making, ever decreasing forest areas, and ultimately upon the deterioration in the quality of environment, increased burden of global warming, climate change and clean air and water availability. Governance in India, thus, is yet to match its steps with the incorporation and assimilation of newer technologies in their routine functions, especially where public related issues - individual or collective - are concerned.

## Road accidents

The frequency of traffic collisions in India is amongst the highest in the world. A National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report revealed that every year, more than 135,000 traffic collision-related deaths occur in India. In New Delhi, the capital of India, the frequency of traffic collisions is 40 times higher than the rate in London, the capital of the United Kingdom. Traffic collision-related deaths increased from 13 per hour in 2008 to 14 per hour in 2009. More than 40 per cent of these casualties are associated with motorcycles and trucks. The most accident-prone time on Indian roads is during the peak hour at afternoon and evening. According to road traffic safety experts, the actual number of casualties may be higher than what is documented, as many traffic accidents go unreported.

Moreover, victims who die some time after the accident, a span of time which may vary from a few hours to several days, are not counted as car accident victims.<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Economic cost**

The Planning Commission in its 2001-2003 research estimated that traffic collision resulted in an annual monetary loss of \$10 billion (INR 550 billion) during the years 1999—2000. In 2012, the International Road Federation (IRF) estimated that traffic collision results in an annual monetary loss of \$20 billion (INR 1 trillion (short scale) in India. This figure includes expenses associated with the accident victim, property damage and administration expenses.

### **Need of a citizens' charter**

A government or its agencies cannot collect taxes and refuse to provide service. It would make an interesting study of why minimum facility like clean drinking water supply, well maintained roads, improved health care service or quality education cannot be provided to the populace by the government. Why all these are not done and responsibility is left with irresponsible non-government agencies and organization remains a mystery. The end effect is public anger and frustration against the system of public and political administration leading to turmoil, and not without reason.

It is clear by now that the major share of the various costs and damages mentioned above are caused by bad and inefficient governance because of increased uncalled for transportation and loss of man days

## **Barbaric attack on Palestinian civilians**

The Socialist Party strongly condemns the recent attacks over the last five days on Palestine's Gaza by Israeli forces killing more than 120 civilians including a large number of small children and women. The party terms the attacks just as barbaric, and a heinous crime against humanity. The excuses propagated by the Israeli authorities are not at all justifiable hence acceptable under the international laws that ensure a right to life for every person. Even before the recent attacks the Israeli forces have kidnapped, jailed, brutalized and killed hundreds of Palestinian youngsters.

Given India's old relationship with Palestine the response of the present Indian government through the MEA spokesperson is not substantial, to say the least. The government through its Minister of External Affairs should have condemned the attacks in unequivocal terms and raised the issue on international fora pressing upon to stop the attacks immediately.

There was a time when the cause of Palestinians happened to be a major concern for India and Yasser Arafat, a symbol of Palestinian struggle, was a well known name in the country. The intelligentsia and civil society were also supportive to the Palestinian cause. But things started changing fast after imposition of US-Britain-directed neoliberal reforms. The BJP-led NDA government of 1998-2004 transformed India's foreign policy tying its knots with the US-Israel nexus. The governments of neoliberal era support Israel and keep mum against the atrocities committed by her on the civilian

population of Palestine in order to appease the US. 'Always part with the powerful' has become motive of the neoliberal India.

The Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan have become a worst kind of battle ground in the hands of neoliberal and authoritarian/fundamentalist powers. They flourish on each other's worms. This civil war like grave situation bears serious ramifications for India. But the Indian ruling class has no role to play in the region except toeing the line of the US. This subordinate role of the Indian governments has endangered country's interests as an independent nation. This is the backdrop in which the present government has not taken a strong stand against Israel's brutal attacks on the Palestinian people.

The Socialist Party opposes the barbaric attacks and extends complete solidarity with the people of Palestine who have been facing Zionist onslaught on their lives and motherland for more than half century. The party appeals to the peace loving citizens of India to raise their voice to stop the attacks immediately. The party further appeals to the world community that it is a high time to insist upon the key-players for a political solution of the prolonged national, ethnic and sectarian problems in this entire region. Lastly, the party would like to press upon the Hamas leadership to deter from violent retaliatory actions in order to save the lives of innocent Palestinians as well as Israelis and to mobilize public opinion in favour of the cause of Palestinians.

(Continued from Page 3)

The past, however bitter, should not now be recalled at a time when both India and Pakistan have a few options except to organize a joint front to defeat the Taliban. New Delhi should not forget that the Taliban would be at the Attari (Amritsar) border if they are not defeated in Afghanistan itself. If it is embarrassing for the two countries to talk about their strategy in the open, they can establish a back channel as they have done in the case of Kashmir.

The repercussions of Taliban gaining an upper hand, first in Afghanistan and then in Pakistan, are so inimical to the defence and development of India that it should go out of the way to befriend Pakistan on a joint approach towards

Afghanistan. Since no serious talk takes place between the two because of Kashmir, they should keep this problem aside and allow the two army chiefs to sit across the table and devise a long-term strategy which would enable Afghanistan to stay independent.

Of course, this means that Islamabad would have to change its policy and not consider Afghanistan their “strategic depth.” This is in Pakistan’s own interest. The manner in which the Taliban have begun to count in the affairs of Pakistan should be a warning that the Taliban would not allow Pakistan to be a liberal Islamic state.

New Delhi should take the initiative to get America on board

regarding anti-Taliban policy. If and when they are defeated in their designs both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they would cease to be a force which is beginning to loom large in other Islamic countries where the Taliban-like thoughts have begun to assert themselves.

It is a pity that India is not seeing the writing on the wall. At least Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said to be a strong ruler, should pick up the threads with Nawaz Sharif on this matter. Both hit it off well when they met in Delhi. Nawaz Sharif has even said so in a letter to Modi. Can things in the same vein go ahead in the interest of policy to contain the Talibanisation, already quite assertive in Pakistan?

(Continued from Page 11)

to constructive activities. A dynamic society must define the parameters of effective and efficient governance afresh in a citizens’ charter and its frequent evaluation and re-evaluation. The way to tackle the problems arising out of declining governance is to change the service rules and methods of evaluation of the Government employees by incorporating public-on-the-ground-evaluation, increased inclusion of ICT and other technologies and building up of social and political will to make the governance efficient as the task and target number one.

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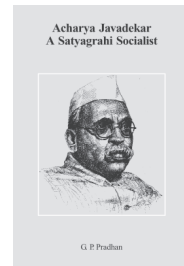
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## Acharya Javadekar

### A Satyagrahi Socialist

by

**G. P. Pradhan**



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# ‘Development’ for the poor—the subaltern perspective

M. G. Devasahayam

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s governance agenda unveiled by the President in his address to Parliament on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 gives prime position to pro-poor development: “My Government is dedicated to the poor. Poverty has no religion, hunger has no creed, and despair has no geography. The greatest challenge before us is to end the curse of poverty in India. My government will not be satisfied with mere ‘poverty alleviation’; and commits itself to the goal of ‘poverty elimination’. With a firm belief that the first claim on development belongs to the poor; the government will focus its attention on those who need the basic necessities of life most urgently. It will take necessary steps to provide security in its entirety to all citizens; through empathy, support and empowerment.” (Para 7)

Subalterns are the poor who are in subordinate positions in society. They are the ones who are deprived of ‘basic necessities and security in its entirety’ by the predatory model of development that is being pursued during the last two decades. A subaltern group is one that is alienated from mainstream social and economic relations based on traditions of caste, creed, community and income levels. Because of their subordinate position, subalterns have fewer opportunities to achieve recognition of their problems whether it is poverty, structural inequality or environmental degradation.

Pro-poor ‘development’ has to be sustainable if it is to have any

meaning. The basic concept of sustainable development is one where livelihood activities can be carried on for any length of time, because no resources are being consumed for life-support systems other than those which can be replaced. Once society perceives that sustainability means conservation of life-support systems, people will demand it on the grounds of welfare, equity or economics. This demand will arise from the poor and the low income groups who suffer the most from pollution and the high costs associated with resource depletion (land, forests, rivers, ocean, lakes, ecosystems, air, water) without in any manner gaining from scarcities created thereof.

Pro-poor based approach to Sustainable Development has five main areas:

- Right to inclusive and equitable economic growth
- Right to a corruption-free society
- Right to a clean, green and safe environment
- Access to information and public participation in decision-making
- Promoting and defending the protection of the environment and human rights

Subaltern perspectives on sustainable development can be wide and varied. And perspectives often transform into struggles. Among the issues first and foremost is the right to forest-land. The most prominent struggle

to protect forest-land is by the tribals of the Dadakaranya region against mindless exploitation by forest officials and government sponsored private mining interests. This struggle emanated from the original subaltern perspective, highlighting the colonial takeover of people’s forests and the overbearing post-colonial state.

India once had a thick forest cover with high biodiversity and a symbiotic relationship among the various living beings such as plants, microorganisms, insects, herbivorous and carnivorous animals, fish and birds. Tribal people forming a part of this complex forest ecosystem, represented the real indigenous population of India. They made a living as hunters, gatherers, trappers, fishers, pastoralists, shifting cultivators and peasant farmers inside the forests. Some of them practiced herbal medicine. They had a good working relationship with the non-tribals living outside the forest areas to barter goods and act as guides to those visiting the forests for hunting and recreation. Dandakaranya region covering the entire states of Jharkand, Chattisgarh and Orissa and portions of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and West Bengal, represents about 25 per cent of India’s forest wealth.

These tribal people acted as the custodians of the forest flora and fauna. The real destruction of the India’s forests and wildlife commenced only during the British rule. They created the Forest

Department first to assess the magnitude of the India's forest wealth and then for its large-scale exploitation for export and local use. While doing so, they never questioned the dependence of the tribal people on forest resources.

In independent India, government, as a part of its socialist policy, made the employees of the Forest Department to be the exclusive owners of the forests ignoring the riparian right of tribals living on forest resources for thousands of years. In the event, tribal dalits (scheduled tribes), constituting around 8 percent of India's total population, lost their independence, became 'subordinates' in their own land and now constitute the most disadvantaged 'subaltern group' in the country.

The stringent forest laws and rules gave so much power to the forest officials that they could successfully harass and prevent tribal people from the age-old practice of living on forest resources. As an alternate way of living, the government assigned wastelands bordering forests for tribals. The tribals who took up agriculture could not do well owing to lack of previous experience, capital and infrastructure. Skewed policies and practices adopted by successive governments created misunderstanding and conflicts between tribals and non-tribals and brought about confrontation between them as well as with the police. While tribals suffered, antisocial elements flourished.

Ironically, the very same Dandakaranya forests have mineral ores in abundance worth billions of dollars. Governments, run by neo-liberals and corrupt elements, have

entered into numerous MoUs for the mining of the ores with multinational, transnational and Indian monopoly companies. Such extractive business ventures faced stiff opposition from the tribals and their aggressive representatives. In response governments unleashed ruthless force to suppress the tribals. Result is that now, with the silent support of the tribal dalits, forests are virtually controlled by Maoists, Naxalites, poachers and activists of extremist organizations. Non-resolution of a conflict in a democratic and pro-people manner has led to the escalation of this silent 'subaltern struggle' into a near-war situation with the state contemplating military intervention which could be disastrous.

Agitations against POSCO-India's project in Orissa is to safeguard subaltern's right to farming land and protection of coastal ecosystem that was being ravaged to "bring prosperity and well-being" to people through industrialization. Project was to build a steel plant yielding 12 million tonnes per year, with a captive port and iron ore mines acclaimed as the single largest infusion of FDI since the Indian economy liberalized in 1991, estimated at \$12 billion.

In league with officials and politicians, POSCO obtained the Environmental and Coastal Regulation Zone clearances in a deceitful manner. To start with, this massive project was deliberately unbundled into its smaller parts and applications moved to secure their clearances as though they were independent projects (4 MTPA steel complexes, 400 MW power plants and captive "minor" port), even though they constituted one project

and were situated within one complex and POSCO had clear intentions of ramping up production to the full capacity of 12 MTPA in just six years (by 2011). These clearances were given on the strength of a single-season rapid Environmental Impact Assessment!

The township project, requiring considerable additional land, as well as huge water requirement was suppressed. The port was designed for Capesize ships—170,000 DTW capacity, each approximately 280 m in length, perhaps the largest built in Asia, to come into the ecologically sensitive Jatadhar creek. This would require 12-km channels and tranquil berthing facilities for which there would be massive sea walls built—one 2 km and another 1.6 km long. The devastation that such massive infrastructure facilities would cause is unimaginable, considering that the Jatadhar creek is an important nesting site for the critically endangered Olive Ridley turtles. This is the region of *paan kethis* (betel vine farms) where sand dunes provide sweet soil and water and also protection during cyclones. Resistance to this project is from common villagers who are apprehensive of losing land and livelihood. Protection of environmentally sensitive coastal ecosystem is a major aspect of this 'Subaltern struggle'.

Poor fisher-folks are the subalterns who protest against Koodukulam Nuclear Power Plant that deprives their right to fishing and also to safeguard coastal ecosystem from 'destructive development'. Subaltern perspective is that radioactivity in the air and water could cause cancer and other major ailments and fisher-folk would lose their livelihood due to sea-water

contamination. Any amount of arguments that the plant would bring about 'development and growth' does not appeal to the local community. For them life and safety of more than 10 lakh people living within 30 km of the plant is more important than the projected prosperity that electricity generated from the plant will usher in. Terrible happenings linked to 2004 Tsunami and 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster have only strengthened the fears that their life and livelihood are under serious threat and one day, very soon, the fishing villages will cease to exist.

The subalterns affected by the 2800 MW Gorakhpur Nuclear Power Plant (GNPP) in Fatehabad district of Haryana are the small and marginal farmers. According to Department of Atomic Energy 1,503 acres of land had been acquired for the project and the setting-up of this plant would accelerate the pace of 'development'.

This water-guzzling plant is located on the fragile Fatehabad Branch of the Bhakra Canal system. For operating this plant Haryana Government has allocated 320 cusecs of water from the state's share under the Bhakra Water Sharing Agreement 1959 between Punjab and Rajasthan, which binds Haryana being successor state. Since the Agreement mandates that Bhakra water can only be used for irrigation and generation of hydel-power this allocation is illegal.

Water-use allotment for irrigation in the culturable command area is 2.25 cusecs per thousand acres. As such 320 cusecs can irrigate about 142, 000 acres and diverting this quantum of water to generate nuclear power will deprive such vast area of irrigation. Even taking into account

30 per cent of water that would be recycled back to the canal, the irrigated area loss would be over 100,000 acres. And the polluted water returned to the canal would slow-poison the downstream agriculture and drinking water for millions of villagers.

This is a semi-arid region and water is the life-line for its economy and sustenance. Power generated in this nuclear plant would no doubt lead to 'development' of MNC/commercial/residential/industrial complexes, malls and theme parks in Delhi, Gurgaon and other places. But in the project affected area agriculture will perish and radiation will cause serious damage to wildlife (deer/blackbuck) in nearby villages.

Economic development without environmental sustainability is a farce, like a roof without foundation. While subaltern groups struggle to retain this 'basic foundation', ruling elites seek to destroy it to build 'fancy roofs' in the name of 'development'. This is the essence of 'subaltern struggle' for sustainable development. At the core of this struggle is land and all the nature's endowments-water, forest, minerals that go with it.

India occupies just two percent of the world's land mass but is home to 17 per cent of its population. According to the Indian Space Research Organisation that prepared a report on desertification in 2007, about 69 per cent of land in the country is dry, making it vulnerable to water and wind erosion, salinization and water logging. New Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has stated that one-third of India's land is turning into desert due to misuse and excessive exploitation. All these have happened in the name of 'development' and subalterns are the worst hit.

Even from early days of Modi Government one could discern contradictions between 'development' for the poor through equitable allocation of land and resources and 'destruction' by the rich for reaping profits. Not resolving this contradiction and instead accelerating it by mortgaging land and resources to the marauding corporates was the downfall of UPA government. NDA should not fall into this trap. Otherwise Modi's 'belief that the first claim on development belongs to the poor' would remain only in the President's address!

*I believe in a truly secular India*

*Where all races, religions, languages and genders are able to exercise their constitutional rights*

*Where women's freedom and rights are respected and not just her 'dignity' protected*

*Where 'development' is inclusive and not at the cost of our precious 'participatory democracy' and*

*Where we are free to dissent and use our right to rebel!*

*And I will not rest until this is a reality!!!*

**—Nandana Reddy**



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## Judicial commission a must

S. Viswam

**Relics of the past**  
Kuldip Nayar

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**Stop grabbing farmers' lands**  
**Declaration on Gaza**

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Out of the blue, the retired Supreme Court judge and currently chairman of the Press Council of India Justice Markandey Katju has created something of a sensation in judicial and political circles by making a disclosure of a decade-old episode surrounding the appointment of a high court judge. His stated reason for taking the world into confidence over the episode is both bizarre and mundane. It would seem that the learned judge chose to bring the matter into the public domain just for a lark. It would seem, again, that he merely posted an article on the Facebook in response to a suggestion on the network that he share his experiences as a judge. Whatever the reason, Justice Katju may well have done a service to the judicial system by indirectly turning the spotlight on the way we select our honourable judges. Thanks to his disclosure, the focus is again on the selection process that obviously calls for a revamp.

Time was when the government appointed judges. That system was in force for decades, till it could not bear the burden of a variety of charges and accusations against both the government and the beneficiaries securing judicial appointments. It was replaced by the collegium mode in which the Chief Justice of India and some colleagues appointed by him

have the main say and the government plays no part. On the face of it, it is a model system, but unfortunately, it also has attracted the charge that the selection process is not transparent enough and that it has not satisfied the judiciary, the political class and the public in general.

The UPA when in power and the NDA now in power have been supportive of the need to bring about a reform that will make the selection process transparent and eliminate the chance of political interference or influence in judicial appointments. The previous government drafted a national judicial appointments and accountability legislation, but despite sincere efforts failed to get it enacted. The new government means well and proposes to get it passed quite soon. One of the reasons why Justice Katju's disclosure has landed like a bombshell is that wittingly or unwittingly it has exposed a shortcoming in the collegium system, namely, that political interference is a reality that needs to be kept in mind while evaluating the merits or demerits of the system. The proposed legislation is meant to tighten up the selection process by eliminating its vulnerabilities.

Predictably, a debate has ensued and many questions have been raised,

*Between the lines***Relics of the past****Kuldip Nayar**

with Justice Katju contributing his little bit to the widening of the debate by raising a few questions himself! Anyway, some good has resulted from his disclosure. The nation has learnt that a system in which the government appoints judges does not work. Also, that a system in which judges appoint judges does not work either. If both are to be avoided, a new system has to be put in place that addresses the shortcomings of both. The government is now committed to hasten the appointments-accountability legislation's enactment.

But for its timing—quite belated—Justice Katju's disclosure is quite interesting and also quite relevant to the larger issue of judicial independence. Through the specific case of an individual judge, the disclosure graphically shows how a judge found corrupt by a CBI inquiry was not only given three extensions of service but also confirmed as a permanent judge of a high court, and that among those that brought pressure on as many as three chief justices of India were the Prime Minister's Office, the law ministry and the then government's alliance partner, a political party that was interested in promoting the career of the said judge. It is also of interest that the law minister of the day has acknowledged that political pressure in appointments is routine but that his government did not succumb to it. The new legislation to reform the selection process is on the table. Justice Katju's article has re-kindled public interest in maintaining judicial independence. The government will be well advised therefore to re-circulate the legislation so that the public can judge for itself how effective the new bill will be in addressing the kind of concerns that the debate has now brought to the fore.

Imagine renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore seeking admission to the Calcutta Club, a preserve of the British, and getting rejected; Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the legendary Urdu poet, receiving a similar treatment at Lahore's Punjab Club in Pakistan and Nazar-ul Islam at the Dhaka Club. In all these cases, the public outrage would have been difficult to assuage.

The white rulers saw to it that the leading clubs in a country where they had ruled remained an exclusive place for them and their elitist friends. Refusal to the non-whites the clubs was part of apartheid. Posh clubs would have a billboard at the entrance saying: Dogs and Indians are not allowed. Shocking it may sound, but the white rulers enjoyed humiliating dark Indians, apart from heaping on them other indignities.

The upper stratum of the society, which rubbed shoulders with the white and lived more or less in the western style was given entry straightway. Therefore, it was not surprising to find the same members of the society replacing the white and making clubs exclusively for their use. The club management prescribed dress code, the western style, essential and banned local dress within the premises.

A club in Chennai went to the extent of banning dhoti consequently. A Madras High Court judge wearing dhoti was refused entry. There was an outcry when this happened. Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa called the act an "insult" to Tamil culture. The AIDMK chief promised see that a

quick law is passed to put an end to such practice. The CM has also promised prompt action against the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) in Chepauk, which had denied admission to Justice D. Hariparanthaman and two other guests, ostensibly for violating the dress code of the club.

Members and their guests are expected to be well-dressed, which for men is usually interpreted as Western attire. "The way of tying the dhoti in Tamil Nadu style may leave it to a number of aspects of exposure. Many clubs cite this as a reason for not allowing guests in dhotis," a member of the Madras Club said. However, in a state where most politicians prefer a dhoti and a white shirt over the Western attire, charges of indecent exposure have backfired. R.Gandhi, 77, a senior advocate who was turned away along with Justice Hariparanthaman, said it was an "arbitrary reaction" by the club's staff against respectable men "in their natural dress".

People in South East Asia, however democratic in their temperament, are enamoured of authority. Clubs may be the relics of the British rule but they represent power. That is the reason why clubs of the past are kept as they were, although they do not fit into India's reality of austere living.

Authoritarian police is another relic, which has been retained, with more powers to silence the opponents. It was an investiture ceremony where top police officials were being honoured for

the outstanding service they had rendered to trace and punish those who had committed excesses during the Emergency. In the midst of the ceremony, the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi got up and ended the ceremony.

Another example is the disdain with which the Police Reforms Commission report was treated by her. It confirms fears that the Shah Commission proceedings may have been destroyed. In fact, even a copy of the report is not available either in market or in government offices. Does the Congress believe that the Emergency would disappear from the history itself? At least, the Police Reforms Commission report exists, although its recommendations have not been implemented because most state chief ministers are not less authoritative than Smt. Gandhi was.

The BJP feels that it can afford to give the impression of being liberal at a time when soft Hindutva has engulfed even the leftist parties. The Congress is seen steadily losing its secular credentials in the past few years despite the fact that Muslims, by and large, voted in favour of Congress. But the biggest dilemma facing the Muslim community today is who among all parties is liberal. The radicalization of the community is not the answer, as it is happening. This would be used as an evidence to stigmatize the community. Muslim terrorism has no chance against Hindu terrorism simply because of the numbers.

I realize that some Muslims out of desperation have taken to violence. But this is the path Hindu militant organizations like the Bajrag Dal, Ram Sena and Vishwa Hindu Parishad want the community to take. The guilt of these organizations has been proved from the bomb

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## What is in store for women in Union Budget 2014-15?

**Vibhuti Patel**

*Union budget 2014-15 offers up old and new schemes but fails to address macro-economic and social causes of exploitation and subordination of women.*

The Union Budget 2014-15 will largely benefit neo-middle class, and offer comfort to middle and upper class women as consumers. The poor women will be crushed due to macro-economic policies that will fuel inflation, land alienation and user fees for education and health facilities. This time even women's groups have not raised their voice against gender non-inclusive aspects of the Union Budget.

After the terms, Gender Budgeting and Gender Mainstreaming, were officially introduced in 2004 by the UPA government, many State Governments like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have adopted Gender Budgeting. Gender Budget Cells were designed to serve as focal points for coordinating gender budgeting initiatives within their Ministries and across departments. 56 Ministries/Department have confirmed setting up of a cell/nominating a nodal person. This could materialize because the previous government's Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with UN Women, had developed a Manual and Handbook for Gender Budgeting for Gender Budget Cells of Central Ministries and Departments. The current Union Budget of 2014-15 has seen the Gender Budget Cells play a major

role in budgetary allocations.

### **What is gender budgeting?**

Gender Budgeting does not relate to a separate budget for women but involves comparative analysis and construction of general budgets from a gender perspective. It helps governments to decide how policies need to be made, adjusted and reprioritized. It is a tool for effective policy implementation where one can check if gender commitments are translated into financial commitments.

The Gender Budget Initiative is a policy framework, methodology and set of tools to assist governments to integrate a gender perspective into the budget as the main national plan of public expenditure. It also aims to facilitate attention to gender analysis in review of macroeconomic performance, ministerial budget preparations, parliamentary debate and mainstream media coverage. Budget impacts women's lives in several ways. It directly promotes women's development through allocation of budgetary funds for women's programmes or reduces opportunities for empowerment of women through budgetary cuts.

The Union Budget 2014-15 has retained all schemes for empowerment of women and girls of the last decade under the Women & Child Development with Rs

18691 crores allocated for Integrated Child Development Services, Rs. 715 crores for National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) and Rs. 400 crores for Integrated Child Protection Scheme. A new scheme was launched also – ‘Beti bachao Beti padhao’ with Rs 100 crore.

The schemes can be classified into four categories:

### **Protective Services**

These include allocations on women’s homes and care institutions, rehabilitation schemes for victims of atrocities, pensions for widows and destitute women, etc. which are aimed at mitigating the consequences of women’s social and economic subordination, rather than addressing the root causes of this subordination.

For example Sabla, Swadhar-scheme for women in Difficult Circumstances, Ujjawala Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Scheme of Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls, Scheme for welfare of Working Children in need of Care and Protection.

### **Social Services**

These include schemes for education and health of women, support services like crèche and hostels and also water supply sanitation and schemes on fuel and fodder, which contribute significantly to women’s empowerment, either directly by building their capacities and ensuring their material well-being, or indirectly through reducing domestic drudgery. For example: the Integrated Child Protection Scheme,

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana, General Grant-in-aid Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Organisations in the field of Women and Child Development, General Grant-in-Aid Scheme in the field of Women and Child Development, Family Counseling Centre Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme For the Children of Working Mothers, Nutrition Education and Training through Community Food & Nutrition Extension Units, Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls .

A sum of 100 crores is provided for “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana”, a focused scheme to generate awareness and help in improving the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for women. This is the first year of the scheme, if funds of Rs. 100 crore are utilized by the state, we can pressure the government to allocate more funds.

New small savings scheme: A special small savings instrument to cater to the requirements of educating and marriage of the girl child to be introduced. This would be in line with schemes like Kisan Vikas Patra or National Saving Certificate.

The budget promises drinking water and sanitation. Government would strive to provide toilets and drinking water in all the girls’ school in first phase.

The budget also promises that School curriculum will have a separate chapter on gender mainstreaming. Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy

for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

### **Economic services**

These includes schemes for training and skill development, and provision for credit, infrastructure, marketing etc. which are critical to women’s economic independence and autonomy.

For example, the STEP Support for Training and Empowerment of Girls, General Grant-in-Aid Scheme for innovative projects, working women’s hostel.

The Union Budget 2014-15 has promised Easy Loan terms where the government will offer concessional loans to women in rural India at 4 per cent in some districts and 7 per cent in others for women self help groups under a scheme called Ajeevika.

### **Regulatory services**

These include institutional mechanisms for women’s empowerment, such as State Commissions for Women, women’s cells in Police Stations, awareness generation programme, etc. which provide institutional spaces and opportunities for women’s empowerment.

For example, International Women's Day - Stree Shakti Puraskar, Childline Services, Grant-in-Aid for Research, Publication and Monitoring.



An Outlay of Rs. 50 crores has been allocated in the current budget for pilot testing a scheme on "Safety for Women on Public Road, Transport". The Union Budget 2014-15 also allocates a sum of Rs. 150 crores on a scheme to increase the safety of women in large cities. Budgetary provision is also made from Nirbhaya Fund for "Crisis Management Centres" in all the districts of NCT of Delhi in government and private hospitals.

After brutal gang rape of a young physiotherapist in Delhi in December, 2012 followed by nationwide outcry, safety of women gained prime importance in the public discourse. As a result, the previous government was forced to announce Nirbhaya Fund of Rs. 1000 crores in the Union Budget 2013-14.

However the track record of outcome is abysmally poor. Official admission of 500 per cent rise in reporting of rape cases has also not galvanized the governance structure to ensure speedy justice to the victims of sexual violence.

The Nirbhaya fund is not used for preventive measures such as construction of night shelters for women, Information Desks for women at railway/bus stations and help-lines connected nation-wide, one-stop crisis centers in the public hospitals and half way homes for elderly women along with pension (Rs. 1000 from Central and Rs. 1000 from state government per single woman) safe public toilets for women, safe public transport, safety on roads, bus stations and railway platforms and trains.

Nor does it address public education campaigns about new

laws such as Amendments in the Indian Evidence Act, Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013 and Protection of Children from Sexual Offense Act, 2012.

### **Women in Science and Technology**

Budgetary allocation Rs. 53 crores under 'Disha Programme for Women in Science' is made to increase the representation of women and girls in Science & Technology fields through conferences, training programmes, networking platforms, etc and to enhance its activities with regard to education, training and empowerment of women.

Women entrepreneurs however had expected an offer of soft loans and subsidies with financial institutions providing more working capital assistance. They felt that the budget should look at policies that will make micro credit system and enterprise credit system available to women entrepreneurs at all levels and help organise training programmes to develop professional competencies in technical, managerial, leadership, marketing, financial, production process and other skills.

### **Tax Relief**

The Union budget 2014-15 does not any offer any relief to women tax payers. The Finance Minister's budget announcement had nothing specific for women.

Middle class will be happy with increase in personal income tax limit from 2 lakhs to 2.5 lakhs. Income tax exemption limit for senior citizen has now been raised from 2.5 lakhs to Rs 3 lakh. The Investment limit under Section 80C has also been hiked to Rs 1.5 lakh from the current Rs 1 lakh, while the Finance Minister increased housing loan interest rate deduction limit to Rs 2 Lakh and the

PPF (Public Provident Fund) deposit ceiling is raised to Rs 1.5 lakh per annum from the existing Rs 1 lakh.

### **Right to Pee**

Women make crucial contribution to the Indian economy through their paid and unpaid care work. Massive allocation from budget on Sanitation must be earmarked for toilets in public places for women and girls in Indian cities as they travel long distance for work and education. Working women need functioning toilets at railway stations and bus depots. Women homemakers have to attend social functions, visit market places, take children to gardens and hospitals. Women from both, slums and non-slum background need public toilets.

The Union Budget needs clear gender commitments for mass of toiling poor women, for then only will financial commitments bring gender responsive outcomes.

### **Other questions**

In the Financial Year 2014-15, an allocation of Rs. 53,706 crore has been made for North Eastern Region for overall economic development.

The government has made an allocation of Rs. 98,030 crore for women and Rs.81, 075 crore for child welfare.

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Barucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

## Assault on Gandhian Institution in Jaipur

In a shocking and arbitrary exercise of power on the 7th June, 2014, the Jaipur Development Authority, directly under the Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, sealed the complete premises of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh which had been in existence on its own land since 1959. They threw out all the residents and their belongings, cancelled the allotment and took over their land. The insensitivity of the JDA team led by JDA official Pawan Arora and Subhash Mahariya, was such that in the scorching heat of 47 degrees, one resident who had recently delivered a baby, was asked to leave the room by evening, locking the kitchen and adjoining rooms so that she could not even be fed. The 80-year old Secretary of the Sangh, Rameshwar Vidyarthi and his wife who were living in one room were thrown out with their belongings. Similarly, the President of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh's, Sawai Singh who had been living with his family for the last thirty years also found himself with his family and their belongings on the road. The Samadhi of Gokul Bhai Bhatt was also treated with disrespect and sealed. It is also important to know that the letter of cancellation of allotment and seizure of property dated 6th June, signed by Shikhar Agarwal, Secretary, JDA, was handed over by the officials when they came at 1 p.m. on the 7th June. It was an order of eviction and they had come to evict. The intention of the JDA was clear. Which was to grab the property of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh, convert it into real estate and grant it to land sharks. The concerned piece of land is in the prime area, next door to the airport and Jawahar Circle on JLN Marg, that it is priceless commercially. The Raje Government in the earlier term

was well known for its support to the real estate business interests but had spared civil society.

This action clearly, sends a message to all, that this Government is merciless and it will get rid of all impediments for its design. Rajasthan has never seen such straight assault on Gandhian institutions and ideology. We all condemn this act of the Government.

The argument used by the JDA is that the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh violated the conditions of the allotment of the land in 2001. They had to get a map passed by the JDA in a year's time of its allotment, they had to take approval for construction activity and the space could not be used for any commercial and residential purpose. Notices were given earlier and JDA not being satisfied with the replies, along with constant notices from the Lok Ayukta to take action for these violations, they were cancelling the allotment.

Countering these lies the President of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh and his team of lawyers gave the following arguments. The Sangh land was in the erstwhile Chainpura village, which was bought from a farmer in 1959 and the registry is in the name of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh. In 1984 when all the land in that area was acquired for the international airport, the Sangh land too was acquired. However, it was never taken possession of. According to the new and old law, when land is not taken possession of in five years of the acquisition, then the land goes back to the original holder. Thus the land was always of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh since 1989. Also there was a Rajasthan High Court stay on the

land since 2004 against the JDA allotment, which had handed over two bighas land of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh to Gokul Vatika Sahakari Samiti. This stay order was violated by the JDA on the 7th when it came to take possession of the land of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh. The JDA has actually committed contempt of court.

However, even if we go by the argument of allotment of 2001, then it is the JDA which has violated the conditions and not the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh.

The condition was also that the JDA would give Rs 40 lacs for the construction of the Gokul Bhai Bhatt memorial, which the JDA never gave since 2001 to the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh. Secondly, the executive of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh was supposed to have two officials of the JDA and one from the Government, the onus of this lapse is on the Government and the JDA and not the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh. The map was supposed to be prepared under the guidance of the JDA, when did the JDA ever come forward and give its guidance?

The place was never used commercially, the so-called use for wedding was limited to the stray two or three weddings of the family members of the staff. The kitchen run at the back of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh was for the participants who came for the constant meetings that took place, as the original objective of the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh was to be a space for reflections and churning of ideas. It was the space in Rajasthan where activists from all over came month after month for such meetings.

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## Socialist Aikyavedi meeting

The Socialist Aikyavedi had organized a meeting of socialists at Kozhikkode during June 28-29, 2014. The Socialist Aikyavedi has been working with the aim of uniting all splinter socialist groups in the state of Kerala for the last seven years. The Socialist Aikyavedi had organized several such meetings in various cities in Kerala with a view to spreading the message of the necessity for the unity among various socialist groups working in the state. After several rounds of such meetings, it has now come out with a document in which the present social and political condition existing in the state has been analyzed thoroughly. This analysis has been performed in the background of the most recent trends of national politics. The document has highlighted the glorious past of the Indian socialist movement. The document has also highlighted the reasons for the failure of the socialist movement after the death of Dr. Lohia. The necessity of a strong Socialist movement in the country has been delineated in the document from the historical perspective. For this purpose the concept of equality has been explained in detail with all its facets. The necessity for taking forward the ideology of equality in the new globalized era has been highlighted. Without the support of a renewed and updated socialist ideology, all attempts to bring in socialist unity will be futile. Fight against caste system cannot go alone without a concomitant fight against the new globalized capitalism and imperialism. This fight will be fruitful only if there is a sustained fight against the onslaught of modern technology. Modern capitalism and imperialism is using the ever renewed technology as their weapon to subjugate the people

of countries like India. Therefore, fight for the annihilation of caste should go hand in hand with the fight against capitalism, imperialism and their imperialist technology. In the absence of such a comprehensive ideology all attempts to rebuild the socialist movement will be futile. It is because of the absence of such a comprehensive socialist ideology, all earlier attempts made in the direction of socialist unity had failed.

With this background the meeting of the Socialist Aikyavedi held at Kozhikkode discussed various strategies to be adopted for rebuilding the socialist movement. It has chalked out a 35-point programme of action encompassing all the realms of social life and in accordance with the seven revolutions propounded by Dr. Lohia. A programme for rebuilding the socialist movement with the support of seven pillar organizations (which are tributaries of the Socialist Aikyavedi) has been evolved. The seven organizations are: 1. Gram Samrakshana Samiti (for the protection of village community life), 2. Janadhipathya Samrakshana Samiti (for the protection of democracy), 3. Organization for the annihilation of castes, 4. Bharatiya Bhasha Mandalam (for the protection and promotion of Indian languages), 5. Bharatiya Mahila Mandalam (for fighting the atrocities against women), 6. Organization for decentralization of power, and 7. Organization for upholding the right to civil disobedience and affirmative action. Towards the end of October, all these seven organizations will become functional. They will start dialogue with Ambedkarites, Gandhians, organizations and groups fighting for justice with a one point programme like those fighting against Coca

Cola Factory at Plachimada, those fighting against Neeta Gelatin Plant near Chalakkudy, those fighting for implementation of Gadgil recommendations regarding granite and sand mining, etc. Attempts will be made to evolve strategies to create new space in realms of art, theatre, cinema and related cultural activities. Without the support of such frontal organizations, the effort to rebuild the socialist movement will not be meaningful. A political party or organization should be capable of representing the aspirations of the majority of population. Eventually the popular support has to be converted into votes. Hence, intervention in electoral politics is also an essential ingredient.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Com. Raghu Thakur (President of Lokthantrik Samajwadi Party). He had emphasized on the need for unity among socialist groups to break the new brand of the fanatic Hindutva ideology proposed by Narendra Modi and the corporate capitalism. The corporate capitalists have found a savior in Modi. Only socialists could fight against this new alliance. Communists have failed miserably. He also narrated the efforts he had made towards uniting the warring socialist groups during the last 20 years. He announced that he was ready to join any such attempts towards unity among socialists. Dr. Prem Singh, General Secretary of Socialist Part (India) narrated the efforts he and Com. Bhai Vaidya had made for unifying socialist groups. He emphasized the need for widening the net of socialist ideology to realms of art and culture. Dr. K. Sreekumar, President of the Socialist Aikyavedi presided over the meeting. Adv. N. M. Varghese, Secretary, Socialist



Aikyavedi explained the process of evolving appropriate strategies for attaining the goal of socialist unity. He emphasized the need for a social engineering for the purpose. Veteran Socialist leaders like N. K. Gangadharan, Thakidi Krishnan Nair (KSRTC Labour Union), Balaraman Nambiar, Adv. S. Rajasekharan Nair (President Socialist Party India), E. K. Sreenivasan (Secretary, Socialist Party India), Vijayaraghavan Chelia, George Jacob (Convener, RSD), Adv. M. K. Premnath (former MLA) etc participated in the discussions. The meeting was attended by representatives from all the districts of Kerala except Pathanamthitta and Wynad. The meeting ended with a positive note towards carrying out the efforts for unifying the socialist groups at the national level. Com. Raghu Thakur and Dr. Prem Singh have assured their cooperation.

—George Jacob

*(Continued from Page 3)*

blasts at Malegaon, Ajmer and Hyderabad. Initially, the suspicion was on Muslims—as is the police practice—and the Muslim youth were picked up.

At Hyderabad, they were beaten by the police. But a detailed investigation revealed a Hindu hand. Had there been accountability, such chauvinist deeds by the police would not have taken place. Young men have been arrested when law courts have found that there is no evidence against them. Who made the mistake? Who is responsible for illegal arrests? He should be punished if the impression that the Muslim youth was picked up without any rhyme or reason is to be removed.

A commission has also been appointed under the chairmanship of former Chief Justice of India J.C. Verma to suggest changes in rape

laws and the quantum of punishment. The students have asked for death penalty or chemical castration. Yet it is strange that the government acted only under pressure. The authorities pressed the panic button because for many days all roads leading to India Gate were closed and even water cannons were used to push back the agitating students behind the barricades the police had erected. The lathi-charge was uncalled for and widely condemned.

*(Continued from Page 6)*

The notices that were given in 2013 November and 2014 February were duly replied too and if there was a dispute then the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Singh, should have been called for a hearing, why was it never given a chance to be heard.

Similarly, if the Lok Ayukta felt that there was an issue, then too they should have sent a notice to the Sangh. The Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh, never heard from the Lok Ayukta. Principles of natural justice seemed to be compromised by both.

As concerned citizens and members of civil society, from whom the space of Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh has been a space for carrying forward Sarvodaya,

Gandhian and JP's ideals, we condemn this act strongly, and request the JDA and the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to restore the land and the premises back to the Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh.

We are:

*Prem Krishan Sharma, PUCL, Rajasthan; Aruna Roy, MKSS; Radha Kant Saxena, PUCL Rajasthan; Nikhil Dey, MKSS; Kavita Srivastava, PUCL Rajasthan; Shankar Singh, MKSS; Renuka Pamecha, WRG; Mamta Jaitly, Vividha; Komal Srivastava, BGVS; Vishwambhar, Digantar; Arvind*

The biggest support to the politicians is the police which are supposed to maintain law and order. The force has to be purged of sycophants and sluggish elements. But for that to happen, the police have to be made independent so that they are free of pressure from politicians. The worst example is in Punjab and Haryana where the police force has become a private army of chief ministers.

*Ojha, Urmul Trust; Narendra Gupta, Prayas,*

*Chittorgarh; Khemraj, Pratirodh, Chittorgarh; Virendra Vidrohi, Matsya Mewat Shiksha Vikas Samiti; Maulana Hanifn MMSVS; Kapil Sankhla, PUCL Jaipur; Kamal Tak, RTI Manch; Mukesh Goswami, RTI Manch; Harkesh Bugalia, RTI Manch; P N Mandola, Lok Sampati Sanrakshan; Rajendra Kumbaj, Nagrik Manch; Nishat Hussein, National Muslim Women's Welfare Society; Nisha Sidhu, NFIW; Sumitra Chopra, AIDWA; Ashok Khandelwal, Rozi Roti Sandharbh Kendra; Vijay Lakshmi Joshi, PUCL, Rajasthan; Pritam Pal, Health Activist; Yogendra Upadhyay, Educationist; Ashok Mathur, Writer; Anant Bhatnagar, UCL, Ajmer; DL Tripathi, PUCL Ajmer; PL Mimroth, Centre for Dalit Rights; Satish, Centre for Dalit Rights; Ajay Kumar Jain; Shyam Menariya, Astha; Bhanwar Singh, Astha; Ramesh Nandwana, PUCL, Rajasthan; Chandra Bhandari, PUCL Rajasthan; Ashwani Paliwal, PUCL, Udaipur; Kailash Meene, PUCL, Sikar; Kailash Kumbhakar, Academy for Socio Legal Studies, Jaipur; Bhanwri Bai, Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti; Richa, Jan Chetna Samiti; Mahesh Bora, Advocate and the PUCL; Usha, Vikalp; Tara Ahluwalia, Mahila evanl Bal Chetna Samiti; Kusum Saiwal, AIDWA.*



# Of human bondage

**Harsh Mander**

In the shadows of Punjab's fabled agricultural prosperity, Jagir Singh has worked as a siri or bonded labourer for most of his life. He was just a child when his father, himself a siri, took a loan and placed his son in bondage with a rich farmer, with whom he worked for 25 years. He never went to school, nor did his three brothers who were also bonded. When his father died, his employer organised his funeral but added the expenses to Jagir's debt. His debt bondage never ends.

Almost nine in 10 workers in India labour in the informal sector — unorganised, poorly paid, without job security, and also unshielded by most labour law protections. This is better known. But what is less acknowledged is that at least one in 10 workers in contemporary India continues to work in conditions of labour un-freedoms, called bonded labour. Bonded workers toil for extremely low wages and exploitatively long hours against usurious debt advances, but are blocked by force from changing their employers in search of better work conditions. Social scientist Jan Breman, who has studied bonded labour in India for many decades, estimates that this system, a form of labour employment akin to modern slavery, is the fate of at least 10 per cent of India's workforce.

The conditions of bonded workers in India today, and the ways in which the new economy has adapted to this essentially feudal form of intense labour oppression, is described in the India Exclusion Report of the Centre

for Equity Studies. Apart from agriculture, bonded labour is found among workers in stone quarries, brick kilns, traditional sex workers, fisher-folk, forest labourers, bidi-makers, carpet makers, weavers, head-loaders and children in matches and fireworks factories.

India enacted a strong and progressive statute outlawing bonded labour in 1976, which provides for discharging the full bonded debt, freeing and rehabilitating the bonded worker, and punishing the employer. But, as with much of India's progressive labour law regime, this law too has been subverted by a corrupt and indifferent bureaucracy; also because the basic cause of bondage located in intense poverty and need for credit among poor rural communities has not changed despite growth in the rest of the economy.

Bondage is primarily the fate of Dalits and Adivasis, who constitute around 85 per cent of all bonded workers. Jagir is also a Mazhabi Dalit Sikh. 'In a typical arrangement', according to the CES report, 'a labourer takes an advance from a farmer and in return becomes bonded to that person for a specified period'. Advances may be for marriages, religious ceremonies or medical emergencies.

'In most cases, the bonded labourer works extremely long hours without any leave for the farmer, performing whatever tasks are required in the fields or at the farmer's home. In case the labourer misses a day of work, the farmer

typically adds a monetary penalty to his loan. Since he or she can't seek work anywhere else, the labourer is also completely dependent on the farmer for any monetary or in-kind assistance, all of which is also added onto the loan. As a result, by the time a labourer finishes with the initial period of bondage, he or she ends up owing a substantial sum to the farmer. In the absence of funds to repay this loan, the labourer is often forced to work for the farmer for an additional year, during which he or she slips even further into debt... Due to the unfavourable conditions of the loan and the opaque way in which it is administered, it is extremely difficult for the labourer to escape from this cycle of bondage. In some cases, bonded labourers may pay off their debt by taking an advance from another farmer and become bonded to him'. This is what Jagir did, but his basic destiny remains unchanged.

The report talks of new forms of bondage, what Breman describes as 'neo-bondage'. This involves shorter periods of bondage, and a person often changes many employers in a lifetime, in contrast to a generation earlier in which bondage was often to a single household for a lifetime. The employer now feels unfettered from even the feudal forms of protection of the bonded worker of the past, such as ensuring that he or his family does not starve. It is, in many ways, the worst of both worlds, of feudal and capitalist relations.

Bonded workers are unable to escape their destinies of lifelong

## Stop grabbing farmers' lands

unfree toil because of feudal subordination, their continued need for further debt, and sometimes physical violence. In December 2013, a labour contractor chopped off the hands of two labourers from Kalhandi district of Orissa, when other members of their group escaped their captors.

As the report observes, India's poorest and socially most vulnerable communities fall into bondage for many reasons. Most are bonded, with little access to formal credit, and when they fall ill or need money for life's passages of marriage and death, they have no option except to turn to scandalously usurious moneylenders. New bondage is further spurred by the desperation of millions of India's footloose distress migrants, engaged in what Breman calls 'circuits of labour'. Employers prefer to employ migrants, because they can be paid less, and are less assertive and organised than local labour.

But ultimately bonded labour survives also because of grim and unconscionable state complicity. Most governments deny the existence of bondage, and hardly a single bonded labour employer has been punished to date. What is needed are much higher levels of public investment in agriculture to spur rural employment, formal rural credit to replace oppressive private moneylenders and reliable implementation of wage-employment guarantees to push this shameful form of slavery into history. Otherwise, Jagir Singh who entered bondage as a young child will die in bondage.

As was expected, the Modi government is going to amend the Land Acquisition Act which was enacted by the UPA government last year only. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill was made an Act after due deliberations in the Parliament and various other fora. The new Act provides at least some safeguards to the land owners/communities and takes care of environment related issues to some extent. The number of amendments proposed by the Rural Development Ministry, if accepted, could dilute the new Land Acquisition Act in more than one way in the favour of the private sector. The government plans the amendments so that corporate houses can acquire farmers' lands easily at a low price with the help of coercive power of the State. One can argue that if the tenets of Free Market Economy are to be faithfully followed, enterprisers should purchase land for their industrial ventures in open market by paying the market price. The corporate houses, however, want unfettered scope for fixing prices of their products or in hiring and firing labour, but they ask for use of coercive power of the State while acquiring natural resources such as land, forests, water, minerals etc. free or at nominal price. They feel that, being industrialists, they are obliging the whole society and hence ask for all such concessions as their right. Such double standards are an in-built part of selfish and profit-mongering class of Businessmen. They don't care for any ethical norm of social behavior.

The point involved is not only protecting the farmers' means of livelihood, but of planning for egalitarian and optimal use of limited natural resource like land. Agriculture is as necessary as industry for meeting basic needs of the people. Supply of land cannot be augmented. So, the lands under cultivation, as far as possible, must not be taken over for other purposes. Fortunately, in our country, about fifteen percent of surface land is such that it cannot be used for cultivation but can be utilized to locate industries or other similar projects. Of course, they are far away from the urban centers enjoying various infrastructure facilities. An enterpriser will have to put in special efforts for erecting such facilities there. The State may extend some help for establishing industrial projects in such areas. But it should not deprive the farmers of their means of livelihood, as also to protect the basic resource for production of food. An enterpriser can very well afford to spend a few more rupees for creating infrastructure facilities.

The Socialist Party (India) has been asking for formulation of a comprehensive 'Land Use Policy' so that best possible use of this rare natural resource can be made for the benefit of whole society and also for the future generations. The Socialist Party strongly opposes the proposed amendments in the Land Acquisition Act. The party appeals to the farmers' unions to come forward in order to abort this anti-farmer move of the government.

## Declaration on Gaza

As recipients of the Right Livelihood Award, popularly known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize“, we strongly condemn the killing of hundreds of children and innocent civilians in Gaza by the Israeli Defence Forces, the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Hamas against Israeli civilians, and we mourn the continued suffering of Gaza’s inhabitants.

Gaza faces shortages of water and electricity supply, of hospitals, physicians and medicine, while bombs and bullets kill and injure both civilian people and health workers in a spiral of violence and hopelessness. Around 24 % of all those who have lost their lives in Gaza, as a result of Israeli bombing and military invasion, are children.

Nevertheless, the responsibility for such deaths lies not only with the joint and manifold accountabilities of Israel’s soldiers, Hamas’ fighters and their governments. Other governments are responsible either directly or indirectly through the transfer of weapons, military advice and silence. Such countries and the United Nations seem not to have learned from the past. Meanwhile, even as the violence

grows rapidly in Gaza, negotiations move at an incredibly slow pace and are hindered by the vested interests of countries that don’t face any bloodshed in this conflict. Dialogue and negotiations cannot be replaced by the use of military force. Revenge solely produces revenge and bloodshed solely produces more bloodshed.

Nobody will forget the recent scenes of broken school books in the streets of Gaza and the broken lives of the children who used them. Their dead bodies splattered near their books, which are never to be used again, paint a tragic picture of unparalleled cruelty. Nobody has the right to end their lives nor to threaten the lives of those children that still survive. They are also our children.

In this context we strongly support the outstanding and courageous work, determination and perseverance - amidst the thunder of bombs - of our fellow recipient Raji Sourani (RLA 2013, Palestine) and his colleagues at the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza, who are denouncing the killings of innocent civilians and the continuity of a dirty non-declared war being waged against the principles of

international humanitarian law. We also want to express our deepest admiration for the work of Israeli peace organisations such as Gush Shalom (RLA 2001), and the incredible work of all medical personnel operating in Gaza right now continuously highlighted by our friends at Physicians For Human Rights-Israel (RLA 2010), who continue to hold up the torch of humanity despite being exposed to the inhumane machines of war.

As recipients of the Right Livelihood Award we urge the United Nations, the European Union and regional bodies, such as the Arab League and the Organization of American States, and countries from all over the world to join their voices, to condemn these unacceptable violations of human rights, to request an immediate ceasefire, lifting of the blockade of Gaza and to ask for the beginning of new peace talks. And to also halt all actions that perpetuate this conflict, hinder a peace settlement and supply the warring parties with arms. If we don’t act urgently, more children and innocent people will be killed in the following days, in the following hours, in the following minutes, in the following seconds.

- **Medha Patkar**, Narmada Bachao Andolan, India (RLA 1991); **P K Ravindran**, Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, India (RLA 1996); **Dr. Vandana Shiva**, Naydanya, India (RLA 1993); **Dr. Hanumappa Sudarshan**, Karuna Trust & VGKK, India (RLA 1994); **Swami Agnivesh**, India (RLA 2004); **Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish**, Founder, SEKEM, Egypt (RLA 2003); **Dr. Martin Almada**, Paraguay (RLA 2002); **Uri Avnery**, Founder, Gush Shalom, Israel (RLA 2001); **Dipal Barua**, Former Managing Director, Grameen Shakti, now at Bright Green Energy Foundation, Bangladesh (RLA 2007); **Nnimmo Bassey**, Health of Mother Earth Foundation, Nigeria (RLA 2010); **Andras Biro**, Hungary (RLA 2005); Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice, South Korea (RLA 2003); **Dr. Tony Clarke**, Executive Director, Polaris Institute, Canada (RLA 2005); Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), Brazil (RLA 1991); **Prof. Dr. Anwar Fazal**, Director, Right Livelihood College, Malaysia (RLA 1982); **Prof. Dr. Johan Galtung**, Norway (RLA 1987); **Dr. Juan E. Garcés**, Spain (RLA 1999); **Dr. Inge Genefke**, Denmark (RLA 1988); **Gush Shalom**, Israel (RLA 2001); **Dr. Monika Hauser**, Founder, Medica Mondiale, Germany (RLA 2008); **Dr. Hans Herren**, Founder of Biovision Foundation, Switzerland (RLA 2013); **Dr. SM Mohamed Idris**, Sahabat Alam Malaysia (RLA 1988), Consumers Association of Penang and the Third World Network, Malaysia; **Bishop Erwin Kräutler**, Brazil (RLA 2010); **Dr. Katarina Kruhonja**, Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights-Osijek, Croatia (RLA 1998); **Birsel Lemke**, Turkey (RLA 2000); **Helen Mack Chang**, Fundación Myrna Mack, Guatemala (RLA 1992); **Dr. Ruchama Marton**, Founder and President, Physicians for Human Rights, Israel (RLA 2010); **Prof. Dr. h.c. (mult.) Manfred Max-Neef**, Director, Economics Institute, Universidad Austral de Chile, Chile (RLA 1983); **Prof. Dr. Raúl A. Montenegro**, President, Fundación para la defensa del ambiente, Argentina (RLA 2004); **Frances Moore Lappé**, Co-Founder, Small Planet Institute, USA (RLA 1987); **Jacqueline Moudeina**, Chad (RLA 2011)

## SLAPP Cases against authors, journalists and publishers

We, the undersigned, condemn the threats of defamation cases served on authors, journalists and now publishers in writing.

We have read the book “Gas Wars: Crony Capitalism and the Ambanis” co-authored and published by Paranjay Guha Thakurta and the review article “‘Ambani ki dukaan?’” by Sucheta Dalal, Managing Editor of Moneylife magazine website and her messages on twitter and we found nothing defamatory either in the book or in the articles and tweets. The impeccable credentials of Paranjay Guha Thakurta and Sucheta Dalal have been exemplary for Indian journalism in the era of paid news, embedded journalism and draconian corporate control over media.

We note that both the book and the article are based on information that is readily available to everybody in the public domain.

We are outraged by the assault on freedom of press and public interest through threatening letters. The attempt by commercial czars to intimidate journalists who report truth is quite reprehensible.

We express our support to the authors and publishers in question who have exercised their right to free expression enshrined in Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. The day such voices are silenced that would be a black day for Indian journalism and democracy.

We have observed that the authors have been fair to Late Dhirubhai Ambani, Mukesh Ambani and Anil Ambani and their companies, by

providing their version of events and circumstances.

Among other issues, the core issue that this scholarly and rigorously referenced book and the articles in question raise is: who all are colluding with whom to deprive present and future generations of Indians of their claims on the natural resources of the country?

We have pondered over the questions like: “If gas price is low as per correct production rate then, why should Indians pay higher price of gas? Who wants Indians to pay price of Indian natural resource as per US price rate?” We observe that the legal notices from Mukesh Ambani and Anil Ambani and their companies through their lawyers will have us accept that raising such questions is defamatory.

While delivering the speech at the award of Nobel Prize for Literature in

- Prof. Jayati Ghosh, Prof Ramsharan Joshi, Githa Hariharan, Garga Chatterjee, Seema Mustafa, Prof. Ayesha Kidwai, Arun Kumar, Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, Siddharth Varadarajan, Prof. Mohan Rao, Wilfred Dcosta and other citizens, activists, academicians, unionists, journalists.

*SLAPP refers to Strategic Litigation Against Public Persons.*

2005, Harold Pinter said, “I believe that despite the enormous odds which exist, unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the real truth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which devolves upon us all. It is in fact mandatory. If such a determination is not embodied in our political vision we have no hope of restoring what is so nearly lost to us - the dignity of man.”

Paranjay Guha Thakurta, his co-authors and Sucheta Dalal and her colleagues have done their duty as citizens, writers and as purveyors of truth.

This undemocratic act by these richest persons of our country and the artificial persons - the companies - they run is totally unacceptable, deplorable and constitutes an illegitimate advance against citizens' rights.

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## The politics of ISIS

The ISIS fighters are present right there in the Golan Heights (Syrian territory occupied by Israel in 1967), in Jordan, have penetrated Lebanon and even in the Sinai-Egypt - that is all around the borders of historic Palestine - and yet leave alone marching across into Israel, they

have not even uttered a single word or given a global call. Such is the new so-called Calipha al-Baghdadi. It is now even more apparent that the ISIS is a Saudi-US-Israeli covert operation meant to destabilise and balkanise the region.

—Feroze Mithiborwala



## Political party crime

An apology will not be sufficient in the matter involving the conduct of a Shiv Sena MP at the Maharashtra Sadan, New Delhi.

It may be recalled that even in the recent Trinamool MP's case an apology was mooted but was obviously not enough given the kind of incitement to crime he had openly and repeatedly made.

There is a disturbing growth in a culture of impunity both among political parties and in society at large. If this could be checked at the

level of political parties, it would have an impact on the social scene as well.

What is required is a High Tribunal to deal with crimes committed by political parties and persons and organisations associated with them. This would help take care of legal redress in respect of 1984, 1992, 2002 and all such similar situations.

The current Houses of Parliament, given their composition with parties implicated in such incidents, are

unlikely to consider, much less, approve such a legislation. Also, as the measure would probably require a Constitutional amendment, we cannot hope for such a High Tribunal in the near future.

The best that may be expected at present is that the Supreme Court sets up a permanent bench attending to monitoring prosecutions in relation to such crimes. Even this small window might be closed if the judiciary ceases to be independent and impartial.

- Anil Nauriya

## Victim of brutal attack; still awaiting justice

It's five years and the victim of brutal attack, Shamim Modi, an assistant professor with TISS, Mumbai, and a known social and political activist, is still awaiting justice from Mumbai High Court. After CB, CID Mumbai Crime Branch failed to solve the conspiracy, as desired by the Mumbai High Court in its earlier order of October 2010, Shamim Modi, through her lawyer, Mihir Desai, approached the Mumbai High Court; but the court is yet to act on her four years old writ petition no 2545/2010, in which she has demanded CBI investigation against the ex-Revenue Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Patel of BJP and his business associates Natwar Pate for hatching the conspiracy and against the involvement of the then Senior Police Inspector of Manikpur Police Station of Vasai, district Thane, Ashok Pawar in the crime, under whose jurisdiction the crime occurred.

She was attacked by the watchman of the building in her flat in Vasai

on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009. She received 118 stitches on all over her body; her skull was fractured at many places; throat was slit - had it been a mm deeper, she would have not survived - said the treating doctor Prakash Shinde of Vasai, in his injury certificate. Yet, the case of attempted murder was registered on the intervention of Mumbai High Court after her petition, in October 2009 and investigation was entrusted to CB CID, Mumbai crime branch. Despite all best efforts, the CB, CID, unit 12, Dahisar, has failed to investigate the case.

During her social and political work back in M. P. - from 1994 to 2009 - she has organized Adivasi and other industrial labour and also exposed the corrupt nexus of the Minister in question. She has also demanded investigating into the involvement of then Senior Police Inspector of Manikpur Police Station, as he has not only motivated, dishonest and deliberate investigation, manipulated evidences; one after

another right from the registration of FIR, but destroyed most vital forensic evidence, and had left no stone unturned in coloring the incident as mere robbery attempt. Like, he has not made the seizure of nightgown which the petitioner was wearing at the time of the attack - which was so much soaked in the blood that it was torn open at the time of her operation in the hospital - instead he has seized a Salwar Kurta on record and had shown her wearing that at the time of attack. The facts and circumstances indicate a larger political conspiracy.

After completing her graduation in psychology from the Jesus and Marry College, Delhi, Master's degree in psychology from Lady Shree Ram College, Delhi, Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in Social Psychology from the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai and L.L.B. from Barkatullah University, Bhopal, had given up her carrier and based on the Gadhian

(Continued on Page 15)

# Grab of Adivasi land in Jharkhand

Stan Swamy

This company is PANEM Coal Company, a joint venture of the Punjab Electricity Board and Kolkata-based EMTA. An investigation by an Assembly-Members Committee of Jharkhand Government revealed that it has been indulging in rampant irregularities since 2006 resulting in financial losses to the govt to the tune of Rs. 10,000 crores. [as reported by *Times of India*, 20-6-2014].

## The history

There is a history behind this company. It had quietly signed an MoU with Jharkhand Government for acquisition of 1151.70 acres of land out of which 674.2 acres was agricultural land in Pakur District for a captive coal mine for the Punjab Electricity Board. Once the Santhal Adivasi people whose life-sustenance was this land came to know about it, they mobilized themselves into a resistance movement under *Rajmahal Pahad Bachao Andolan* (RPBA). The villagers came to realize the legal protective mechanisms like the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, the provisions of the Fifth Schedule, etc. and went to Jharkhand High Court seeking justice. The court gave its verdict against the poorest of the poor, and in favour of the powerful mining company under the '*Law of Eminent Domain*', thus infringing the constitutional and legal provisions meant to safeguard the interests of Adivasi people. The people had no choice except to enter into a mutual agreement with the company, but the company did not fulfill its part of

the agreement adequately. It further divided Adivasi village communities by buying off some of the youngsters with money and liquor and making them its 'dalals'. These dalals were used by the company even to physically eliminate those who were leading and guiding the resistance movement. Such was the starting point of PANEM Co.

Now it has come to light that this company has cheated the Government of the revenue of Rs. 10,000 crores by indulging in rampant irregularities since 2006. How are we to understand this loot by the corporate sector? How are we to look at the local administration and the State Government which have cooperated with the looter all these years?

## Greed

President Evo Morales of Bolivia, the first ever indigenous leader to be elected President of a country through democratic process, in a recent speech, points out how

- acting in the name of the free market and democracy, a handful of imperial powers invade countries, block trade, impose prices on the rest of the world, choke national economies, plot against progressive governments.
- a tiny elite of countries and transnational corporations control the destinies of the world, its economies and its natural resources.
- the economic and social inequality

between regions, between countries, between social classes and between individuals has grown outrageously.

- it has led to a structural crisis affecting international finance, energy, climate, water, food, institutions and values. It is a crisis inherent to capitalist civilization.
- the financial crisis was prompted by the greedy pursuit of profits from financial capital that led to profound international financial speculation, a practice that favored certain groups, transnational corporations or power centers that amassed great wealth.
- the climate crisis is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production, with consumption levels and unharnessed industrialization that have resulted in excessive emissions of polluting gases that in turn have led to global warming and natural disasters affecting the entire world.
- in turn, global warming is generating a water supply crisis that is compounded by privatization, depletion of sources and commercialization of fresh water. As a consequence, the number of people without access to potable water is growing apace.
- the water shortage in many parts of the planet is leading to armed conflicts and wars that further aggravate the lack of availability of this non-renewable resource.

- as a result of all these developments, peoples' social rights are endangered. The promise of equality and justice for the whole world becomes more and more remote and nature itself is threatened with extinction.

We have reached a limit, and global action is urgently needed to save society, humanity and Mother Earth.

[excerpts taken from the talk at the summit of the Group of 77 plus China, meeting in Santa Clara, Bolivia, on June 14, 2014.]

The fact is it is top secret. Nobody except the company owner knows it. Now the media is saying that it has looted the Government of Rs. 10,000 crores. Even after this startling revelation, the Government does not seem to take this company to task.

On the other hand, what is very clear is that the people have lost their land which is the source of their sustenance, they have been displaced, their communities have been scattered, dust-pollution has gone beyond all limits and people are becoming poorer

Mother Earth has given everything free to all human beings. . . but the greedy capitalist appropriates it to himself and deprives everybody else from their rightful enjoyment of nature's bounties. May we say that as long as the greedy capitalist is allowed to exploit Mother Earth for his greed, deprivation of the masses of even their basic needs will continue. The only other human alternative is to work towards a socialist order wherein every person gives to society as per his/her capability and society gives to every person as per his/her needs.

## Fourth largest source of migrants

With the rapid rise of the Chinese economy, buying overseas properties and investment migration have become the latest investment ideas for Chinese. According to a survey, among overseas investment projects buying property accounts for more than 40 percent, ranking first. Resettlement, improving the conditions of children's education, investment, and going on a holiday are the main purposes of overseas investment, while quality of education, environmental pollution and food security are the main drivers behind emigration. As of 2013, China has become the world's fourth largest source of migrants

with 9.3 million emigrants. The United States, Canada and Australia are the three preferred destinations for Chinese people. But the latest trend shows that Europe is gradually become a new favorite.

According to "World Migration Report" released by the United Nations in 2013, the world's migrant population reached 232 million, accounting for 4.2 percent of the total population. In 1990 China's emigration reached 4.1 million, ranking seventh in the world; by 2013 the figure had risen to 9.3 million, behind only India, Mexico and Russia.

-People's Daily Online

*(Continued from Page 13)*

principals initiated a grassroots level work, in M.P., with her husband. The couple along with local tribals of Betul district and with the active support of Tata Institute of Social, in 1996 formed an organization called Shramik Adivasi Sanghathan (SAS), which in last 13 years has spread to Harda and Khandawa Districts of MP. She fought many elections; few against the minister, on the ticket of Samjwadi Jan Parishad.

- Anurag Modi

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# **Anti-Emergency Day**



**Vol. 69 No. 27**  
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## **Anarchy in Uttar Pradesh**

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Kuldip Nayar

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**Coalition adharma**  
Meghnad Desai

The father-son (Mulayam-Akhilesh) duo has converted India's largest state into a lawless one where administrative cohesion, initiative and responsibility have become a farce. Uttar Pradesh is ruled by the Samajwadi Party which has made a mess of things in a state which was once among the better administered provinces of India. Things have gone from bad to worse here. From Muzaffarnagar to Saharanpur, it has been a sad story of total governance and intelligence failure. Both the central and western regions of UP are in turmoil. The price the people have had to pay for the SP government's incompetence is communal polarization, which now finds two minority communities pitted against the majority community, and loss of lives on the sideline. No one is happy, there is only surface calm, and people have stopped trusting one another. Time for President's rule?

occupy their houses. The government has yet to identify all the causes that led to communal violence but has informed the National Human Rights Commission that there was deliberate mobilization (presumably by both the communities) in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts which were economically backward compared to the adjoining Meerut district. Meerut was spared the riots because it is relatively prosperous.

What happened in Saharanpur last week is truly disturbing. The communal virus has spread to the Sikh community also, and for the first time, the Eid festival on Tuesday was a lacklustre one in which the traditional Muslim-Hindu-Sikh bonhomie was sadly missing. Violence had erupted suddenly on Friday between Sikhs and Muslims along Ambala Road over a land dispute near a gurudwara. Both communities claim ownership of the land, but peace was shattered when the local Gurudwara committee began construction at the site. Pitched battles were fought on the streets, with stones, bricks and weapons like daggers and swords in use. Three persons were killed, 34 injured. Shops were looted and set on fire and roadside vehicles destroyed. Typical communal violence story.

Muzaffarnagar lingers in memory and is still the major talking and reference point for a discussion of the state of affairs in UP. Muslims have yet to regain confidence in the capacity and capability, not to mention the will, of the government to protect them. Those Muslims who were sheltered in "temporary camps" refuse to return to the city to re-

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*Between the lines*

## Importance of being an extremist

**Kuldip Nayar**

What is even more disturbing, both in Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, is that not only the minorities but also the people at large believe and have no hesitation in saying so, that Hindus not affected by the land and property dispute between the Sikhs and Muslims, have entered the fray egged on by the local Hindutva leaders. The Hindus have sidestepped the Sikhs in order to fight their (Sikh) battle. This is not surprising. It would seem that in certain areas of UP, the Hindus have suddenly started provoking the minorities and spoiling for a fight. What happened in Kainth in Moradabad district is illustrative: the local Hindutva leaders used loudspeakers and played religious music from a temple when Muslims were at prayers in a nearby mosque. Strangely, the Hindu-Muslim equations, always amicable and mutually tolerant in most areas of the state, as in the country, have come under strain after the B JP won an overwhelmingly large number of seats from the state in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Muzaffarnagar happened during the run-up to the elections, Saharanpur has happened at a time when the BJP is still feeling euphoric over its performance and over the fact that power has passed on from Congress to BJP hands. Small wonder that second rung politicians are advocating the Gujarat model for containing communal violence!

When the nation was bemoaning the happenings in Muzaffarnagar, there were complaints by Congress and Samajwadi Party workers that BJP MPs and MLAs were interfering with the police handling of the riot situation. In Saharanpur similar allegations are being voiced and heard. Unfortunately, such reports always remain speculative and are

Amit Shah is a new word in the Sangh parivar jargon. It means loyalty. Shah is, without any doubt, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Man Friday. But what differentiates him from others is the blind faith he has in his master, Modi. Amit Shah was given the task to polarize the biggest state of Uttar Pradesh. He won the Bhartiya Janata Party 71 seats out of 80 in the Lok Sabha in the recent elections.

Modi has now put Shah at the head of the BJP to spread the same divisive ideas, the Hindutava, all over the country. One thing is clear from his appointment: Resistance to extremists has worn out so much that even a fanatic Hindu like Shah can occupy the highest position in the Sangh parivar. He is openly trying to put RSS and Modi's government on the same page. For example, Kaptan Singh Solanki, appointed as governor of Haryana, is a hardcore RSS member. What it conveys is that the BJP is willing to be used as an instrument of RSS.

By stating that the Sangh would take part in politics Mohan Bhagwat, RSS chief, has only confirmed the perception that the Sangh parivar is dictated by RSS. This may be against the undertaking that RSS had given to Home Minister Sardar Patel that it would not participate in political activities. Then the Sangh had to amend its constitution to re-enunciate that the organization would remain "devoted purely to cultural work." The appointment of Solanki also sends out the message that there is no difference between

BJP and RSS, the liberals and the extremists. Both are two sides of the same coin.

Modi may not have taken any step to accelerate the pace of Hindutava. Yet his prime ministership has emboldened the RSS elements. So much so that one BJP member called Sonia Mirza, India's pride in tennis, a Pakistani. It must be tough for the Muslims who have to prove their loyalty to India all the time. Her husband is, no doubt, a Pakistani. She was naturally hurt for being questioned on her nationality.

The Hindutava of sorts was seen in Haryana where a proposed separate Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) the Haryana will control by all the Gurudawaras in the state and their offerings. It is a serious matter which should have been pondered over seriously to find a formula to allay the fears of Sikhs in Punjab and Haryana. RSS considers the Sikh part of Hindu community. The Sikhs, on the other hand, are against this assumption. The violent reaction of Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal showed that the Punjab Sikhs, a majority in the community, will not tolerate any division in what he describes as panth, the Sikh order.

Another unfortunate deduction is that the liberal elements in the BJP have dwindled in numbers. They find no option to the RSS leadership. Maybe, the distance between the BJP and RSS was never a reality. It was part of the RSS tactics to make a dent in the general perception that

*(Continued on Page 4)*



the Indian society prefers the liberal BJP to the obdurate RSS.

The perception about tolerance in the Hindu religion is largely true. Had this not been the case, the Constitution would not have said in the preamble that India would be a secular republic. The proof is provided by elections where 80 percent of Hindus, who constitute an overwhelming majority, vote for a liberal India. Another indication is that even the liberal Muslim leaders don't get elected even when their community constitutes 15 to 16 percent of population in the country.

The ominous side is that the bigoted are adopting a still harder line and getting acceptance. Otherwise, Shah's elevation makes little sense. After the BJP victory at the Centre, he has been polarizing the society and ensuring that the party does not snap its ties with RSS or the extremist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

The recent episode of forcible feeding of a fasting Muslim by a Shiv Sena MP is in a bad taste. What is more surprising is the explanation offered by the MP concerned and others. Several Sena members failed to condemn the MP and instead said it was done only to let the authorities know that the food supplied at the Maharashtra Sadan was awfully bad. Though the Sena MP had subsequently apologised, the party had no business to equate it with some Muslim men raping women during Ramzan. The Modi government has at last reacted with Home Minister Rajnath Singh regretting the incident and reiterating that the government was committed to safeguarding the religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## **Dominance of private corporate sector – Unacceptable under the constitution**

**Rajindar Sachar**

Now that the high sounding praise by Corporate sector of Modi Government's maiden budget is less noisy, it is time to look at it impartially. The insidious pro-rich Bullet Train Project is an open declaration of anti-labour and anti-rural bias in the context of about 60 per cent of rural areas being only able to use bullock cart type of transport. As it is, 14 per cent hike in railway fares has already demoralized the poor. The bullet train thinking is similar to cynical remark of Queen Marie Antoinette of France, who asked: why should poor protest if they can't buy bread – let them instead buy cake!

The budget has outdone UPA in its approach to Foreign Direct Investment which has been raised in one sweep from 26 per cent to 49 per cent, which UPA even though it wanted to, could not do ironically because of the protest from, amongst others, the BJP itself. Does it not show double facedness in politics which Dr. Lohia used to lament by emphasizing the morality angle, namely the absence of approximation between words and deeds.

The policy on Public Sector Banks has been left dubious. The market is interpreting it as a gradual device to privatize banks and even reducing public Banks equity to less than 51 per cent. This thinking in BJP Government is bound to lead to massive protest amongst public which still remember the vast damage done by private banks

to serve the need of their private owners in 1969 and were saved since then only by nationalization of banks and prohibiting private banks which were mainly owned by owners of industry. Such a ban is on sound principle of avoiding conflict of private business interests from those of public interest in sound banking.

More surprisingly government is planning to go ahead to offload 5 per cent in ONGC shares for Rs. 17,000 crores notwithstanding the protest by ONGC that the government will suffer loss and will not be able to realize its potential value. That Modi Government considers a policy of disinvestment of public sector almost as a religious compulsion is quite evident when almost within weeks of taking over, the Finance Ministry started exercise to selling residual government stake of 49 per cent in HZL and Balco just as earlier the UPA Government had decided to sell the two PSUs to the common election fund donor of both the parties but because of certain circumstances could not finalize it. There is a real danger of Modi Government going all out to dismantle public sector and hand it over to private oligarchy, even when this action is violative of Article 39 C of our Constitution which mandates "that the operation of economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth....." I feel strongly that unless a determined combined effort by all leftist parties and trade unions as urged by Socialist Party (India) is taken throughout the country, public assets are in danger

of being given almost gratis to the big business lobby which has so liberally contributed to Modi Campaign.

But a more serious attack on the poor farmers has been announced by Modi Government to amend new Land Acquisition Act 2013, which was passed by UPA Government but with full support of BJP. This bill was the result of culminating struggle by scores of trade union and farmer's organization of Narmada Bachao Andolan led by Medha Patkar and legally assisted by Sanjay Parikh. This New Act was a radical change from old Act which permitted land to be acquired for private corporations (a provision not to be found either in USA or UK legislations). Modi government wants to delete the consent clause which requires 70 per cent affected parties' consent if land is required for Private-Public protect and 80 per cent in case of private persons and also the compensation package, which is in accord with international covenants. Such a dilution will be illegal and would be massively resisted.

One would have expected that the misstatement by Minister for Minority affairs that Muslims are not a minority would have been sought to be assuaged in Modi's first Budget by making adequate provision for the development of minorities i.e. Muslims and Christians. But one is disappointed. One would also have expected some special provision for recruitment for minority especially the Muslims in the police. No doubt it is a hangover from the UPA government, but must the minorities continue to suffer intentional neglect both under UPA and now under BJP government. I should have thought that Modi would clutch at this opportunity if he

wanted to show his impartiality. I am referring to the Report "Strategy for making police force more sensitive towards minority sections" prepared by three Director Generals of Maharashtra, U.P. and Tamil Nadu along with Intelligence Bureau, which has concluded that there is a trust deficit amongst Muslims, who see the Police as "communal, biased and insensitive...." The report emphasized that the "poor representation of the minorities in the police forces has contributed to this distrust and suspicion". That the worrisome gap of Muslims in the police force is no conjecture was clear when U.P. Government during Muzaffarnagar killings was asked by PUCL in 2013 (which had sent a team to enquire into killing therein) to post Muslim inspectors in dominant Muslim areas as a reassurance as had been recommended years back by a High Powered Committee set up by Central Government in 2005. Information, however, was given that it was not possible because Muslims were only four per cent in the police and only one per cent as inspectors (as against a population of 18 per cent in U.P. a state -which has been ruled by apparently secular parties - can hypocrisy in politics go any further). The above report had called for urgent action at Director General's conference held in 2013 (during UPA) but no action was taken – sad that the minorities find themselves orphaned both under supposedly secular UPA administration and Modi government which is openly backed by RSS communalism.

FDI in retail is being brought back and such is the unabashed contempt for public opinion that even the mild provision that 30 per cent sourcing should be from within India which is compulsory at present

may be dispensed with – a total surrender to foreign capital by BJP, contrary to its earlier position. If Modi had enquired from President of Brazil, she would have enlightened him about the role played by her predecessor President Lula who boldly fought against "foreign capital" domination and also that one of the fundamental principles of Brazil's constitution is the "Social value of Labour." Will Modi rethink and revise the development model being contemplated for India which can only damage the country ?

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

usually dismissed as unreliable by the authorities. The Muslims say that the Sikhs started it and the Sikhs say that Muslims refused to have a dialogue. It is typical in a communal riot situation in India that matters become worse and go off control before there is improvement. So it will be in Saharanpur. But it is time, is it not, for Akhilesh Yadav and the SP in UP to answer the question bound to be asked all over the country: how long will we have to endure phenomena like Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur in the state? The Centre must seriously examine the case for bringing the troubled state under President's rule till such time as the current anarchic situation turns for the better. The SP can, if it so wishes, "experiment" with another senior leader as chief minister in place of Akhilesh and mandate him to take his responsibilities more seriously.

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# Testing competencies not imparted is unethical

**K. S. Chalam**

The storm over the UPSC screening test known as CSAT (Civil Services Aptitude Test) in the country seems to have not attracted as much attention of the academics as that of a common man in the street. Civil Service recruitment tests are increasingly considered by many as public examinations that reflect very little about the academic components of a discipline and rather rely more on the rote memory. That is why it is said that an engineer trained by an IIT becomes an IAS officer with history or anthropology as subject of public examination. These tests are not directed to examine the achievement (learning measure) of a candidate, but evaluate scholastic capability of the incumbent. Civil services became popular and reached the imagination of ordinary people when D. S. Kothari Committee recommended subtle changes in the method of examination to accommodate all categories of aspirants from 1978. It was also the period that had seen the impact of democratisation of education after independence in the form of excluded social groups entering mainstream public service.

Economic reforms in the year 1991 created many opportunities and shattered existing structures and values. This has also influenced the mode of functioning of civil service system and the civil servants. Bureaucrats or the paid policy makers are seen as facilitators to ease conditions for market players to enter sectors that were once restricted. A new philosophy of NPM was introduced imitating our former colonial masters who since then discontinued it after a

dissolute experience. Yet, the boost given to those elite who never had an experience with the rural life and depraved conditions of people considered it as a boon for the development of an emerging new nation. Some of them even got their grounding prepared elsewhere to implement some of the dictates of funding agencies and started evangelizing it in our system of administration. They did not realise that governance is different from management of economic sectors and we have in India sectors that need empathy, intellectual calibre, social traits and moral integrity to deal with such issues in the day to day functioning. Otherwise, the whole exercise of processing candidates for civil service would be futile and the government can directly recruit MBAs from our IIMs and outsource the process to some HR companies like that of MNCs.

While the discerning exercise over the relevance of the existing system of governance was continuing, the government had appointed Y. K. Alagh committee to review the scheme of civil services examination in 2001. The committee felt that majority of candidates are opting for subjects on the basis of "scorability" and not on the basis of their specialisations. It has recommended replacing the optional subjects with three sets of compulsory papers grouped into different areas of knowledge. It was the Alagh committee that for the first time mooted the idea of 'Civil Services Aptitude Test'. But, the government did not accept the recommendations of the committee and in the meanwhile

the Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its tenth Report in 2008 commented on the civil service recruitment. It has categorically said that "the Commission feels that it cannot be gainsaid that the Combined Admission Test (CAT) which selects entrants to the IIMs fails to provide candidates having a propensity and aptitude for acquiring new knowledge and skills". The Commission, therefore, recommended that "the Preliminary Examination should consist of an objective type test having one or two papers on general studies including the Constitution of India, the Indian Legal system, Indian economy, polity, history and culture. There should be no optional subjects". Confused with too many committees and divergent recommendations, the UPSC seems to have appointed another committee with S. K. Khanna, ex-chairman AICTE, as chairman with engineering and management professors along with Vineeta Rai and bureaucrats as members. The committee has recommended the CSAT outline that was internally discussed by the UPSC and a draft was sent to the government for its approval. The present CSAT was notified in 2012 and the test was conducted to screen candidates for the mains in 2013. Nigvekar committee was appointed to recommend the method of examination for the mains. The plan consisted of general studies - four papers, an optional paper and PT with an overall total of 2075 marks. We may recall that the recommendations of the committee have also provoked resentment on allegation of denial of due weightage to regional languages. However the

results of 2013 are declared and the 2014 CSAT is due in the month of August 2014.

The efficiency of our administrative mechanism and the interest groups involved in the process of decision making and the impromptu nature of our policy makers on issues of grave concern can be seen in the present CSAT uproar. It is unfair to blame UPSC singularly for this mess. It is always the government, may be the bureaucrats in the PMO, DOP&T and others who take the final decisions on issues of policy, though UPSC is an autonomous constitutional body like the Supreme Court. However, the committee appointed to examine the issues of CSAT was initiated by UPSC and therefore the blame implied. It seems the government is looking into the matter and some reasonable order is expected soon. The candidates who are from regional languages and are from Hindi are alleging that their prospects to become civil servants are weakened. The data from the annual reports of UPSC show that there is some reason behind the grumbles of aspirants from Telugu, Hindi and other languages as the number of candidates appearing for the examination with Telugu, Hindi etc. as optional has come down and the number of engineering graduates who qualify for the services has

There are experts who argue that it is not possible to test non-cognitive competencies and therefore analytical and problem solving skills need to be tried for the entrants in to civil services. But the fact of the matter is that civil services are wide open now unlike the pre-Kothari era. It is really an all-India and all pervasive service being the dream career of millions of educated youth cutting across socio-economic and even educational backgrounds. It is

really a formidable task for UPSC to satisfy every group and at the same time to meet the high standards of selection. At the same time test scores are always considered as subjective judgments particularly in a pluralistic society. Even the test scores of SAT in the USA for graduate admissions are indicted by the African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities as biased in favour of whites. It represents an iniquitous society. CSAT comes under this category as of now due to the biases of our education system that is vertically and horizontally divided with several inconsistencies. CAT and CSAT as alleged by the aspirants seem to be elitist and do not provide the level playing field to majority of the aspirants, around 70 percent, who come from rural backgrounds, regional

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

Despite this, Modi's overall say in favour of Hindutva cannot be denied. He is associated with the anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002. He is also known for his strong anti-Pakistan and anti-Bangladesh, the two Muslim republics in India's neighbourhood. Amit Shah was part of Modi's ministry at Ahmedabad at that time.

Fortunately, Modi also realizes that he should have good relations with both the nations. His invitation to the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives, to his oath-taking ceremony says so. For Modi to have good relations with India's neighbours would strengthen the idea of pluralism, something that has helped the country to sustain a liberal atmosphere in the subcontinent.

Both New Delhi and Dhaka are fighting against fundamentalism, represented by the Taliban. Islamabad is used to it because it

language medium and depraved socio-educational backgrounds. Thus, 70 per cent of the aspirants are eliminated from the reckoning at the entry level itself. Further, our education system today is totally paralysed and the urban middle classes and those who could afford to send their children to elite schools are taught the prerequisites of reasoning, analytical skills, interpersonal skills, mental ability and all that is required for management and engineering education. The rural schools and the regional medium instruction do not have academic and financial resources to cater to the needs of things like CSAT. Is it moral and honest to test in a subject that was not taught to qualify candidates not for a degree but for a lifelong service?

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uses fundamentalists for fighting "a battle of independence" in Kashmir. There is also a strong influential lobby within Pakistan to support fundamentalism which is spreading in the entire Muslim world.

I wish New Delhi could act against the Hindu Taliban which is emerging as a serious force. The liberal Muslims, whether living in Pakistan or Bangladesh, cannot afford to be complacent in their resolve to eliminate the Taliban, the fundamentalists. They want the Islam to abandon the efforts at reformation and go back to the type of Islam that they think was at the time of inception 1400 years ago. They too realize that it is not possible to do that. But then their approach is based on the strategy in elections which seem to return a candidate who supports pluralism. Rulers of Pakistan and Bangladesh seem to be realistic enough not to do anything which would scare away the non-Muslim electorate.



# Quenching the Thirst of Parched Land Lessons from Jharkhand

**Bharat Dogra**

What happens if instead of water emerging from a hand-pump or a well, people find gas with flashes of fire?

This was the frightening experience of people of Munidih village, located at a distance of about 14 kms from Dhanbad on Dhanbad-West Bokaro route. When the administration was informed, all hand pumps and wells were immediately sealed with cement.

The most probable reason was that the ground-water was drained out by mining authorities to facilitate coal mining and the empty space was not filled with sand. So the accumulated gases found an outlet in the wells and hand-pumps of this village. The people were starved of water and their fields were deprived of irrigation. In addition there was a lot of repression when people raised the demand for water.

This was one of the tragic incidents which motivated several social activists to go on 'water-journeys' in the various parts of Jharkhand. What they learnt in the course of these yatras was finally brought out as a book. This book titled '*Talaab Jharkhand*' is edited by Hemant and contains reports written by writers having grassroots experience on this important issue.

This book argues that large dams are basically unsuitable for a major part of this region as various villages and their neighbourhoods are full of

natural springs and nullahs (which drain the water from these hills). So there is no need to take water to remote places by a massive artificial source created by a large dam. Secondly the topography of this region is such that various villages exist at uneven heights, so huge funds have to be wasted and the natural landscapes seriously disturbed for canals to succeed in taking water to remote villages. Water frequently never reaches many villages shown to be in the command areas on paper, and even where water reaches the results in terms of more productive agriculture are very unsatisfactory.

On the other hand traditional irrigation practices such as the system of ahaar-pynes can still play a very useful role.

"It is a notable feature of the traditional irrigation system of Chota Nagpur-Santhal Pargana that water was not taken to fields by canals. A ahaar was created by constructing a 8 to 10 feet high bund to store water flowing into a valley. However canal or channel to take this water to fields was not constructed. Water used to seep into land and then irrigate the paddy fields below. There are relatively few examples of taking out canals or channels from these tanks. These were basically small ahaars, less than half-acre in size and 8 to 9 feet in height. One ahaar could irrigate 16 to 33 acres of land."

Ahaars do not involve digging work like ordinary tanks. The technique of ahaar made use of the natural slopes of this region to collect water by bunding on three sides. Often these were created under natural water sources as well as pynes. Pynes were constructed to guide the water of hilly rivulets towards agricultural fields. Water of pynes could help to fill up ahaars, while water of ahaars could also reach fields with the help of pynes.

There are several examples of how experienced British administrators, when asked about their opinion on big versus small irrigation schemes, spoke in favour of the later. For example commissioner F.A. Slack affirmed that the main task should be to increase ahaars with the help of cultivators. Deputy Commissioner F.T. Lyall said that his option is for small irrigation works with a capacity of no more than 50 to 100 bighas (20 to 40 acres).

Haldipokhar village (Potka block) of Singhbhum district has 12 huge tanks within a radius of one km. Nearly 75 per cent people of the village go to these tanks for their bath. In addition people from other villages come here to take water and have a bath. It is apparent that the sites for these tanks were selected with great care, and this is an important reason why these are still playing a useful role after about 200 years.

Burhva Ahaar is a famous historic temple of Giridih district. This hundred year tank has declined to 5 acres from its original area of around 20 acres, yet it continues to play a useful role for many people.

In Sahibganj-Pakur area, tanks constructed by Maheshpur rulers such as Hans Sarovar (constructed about 250 years back in Devinagar village) still continue to serve people very well. These tanks were constructed when employment had to be made available to hungry people during very difficult drought years. Many trees were planted around this tank. There is a strong tradition not to cut or damage these trees. During summer when wells dry up the water of Hans Sarovar becomes invaluable and meets the domestic (including drinking water needs) of over 1000 people. The water of this tank never dries. Natural sources and water springs create beautiful scenery and also meet water needs of tribals but now there are being devastated by mining and crushers.

At one time Bholur talaab (Bhola ka Talab) was at the centre of the life and culture of about 35000 people in Chaas town near Bokaro. But today this a dying water source struggling for its survival. This tank was created on land donated by Bhola Dutta and other local people in a situation of drought and water-shortage. Thanks to the voluntary labour and enthusiasm of people, the over seven acres tank was created very soon. Before independence this water was clean enough to be used for drinking and cooking, but in recent years the administration used this tank to dump the dirty water of drains, thereby making the once-clean water of this tank highly polluted.

## Muslims can easily quit their ghettos

Jawed Naqvi

It is axiomatic, yes. Muslims in India form a substantial chunk of the population — over 15 per cent of one billion. That they are in a bad way is confirmed by official reports and by the findings of commissions set up to investigate their plight. Their known tormentors, chiefly the votaries of Hindutva, will not deny that India's Muslims are sliding steadily to the bottom of the nation's social heap.

There is, however, a nefarious feature stalking the community though it gets less discussed, if at all. It is their remarkable selfishness in projecting grief, an apparent obsession exclusively with their own victimhood, as though their horror is the only horror inflicted on any vulnerable community by a brutally self-serving Indian state and its growing number of armed vigilantes.

Yes, you may be able to detect a tiny crop within the community that shows promise of a cultivated if not spontaneous sense of kinship with other underclass communities. But the leaders, a majority of them religious pontiffs to whom the state has shrewdly surrendered the responsibility and, therefore, the future of 150 million-plus people, have rarely shown interest in, much less offered sympathy for, the other wretched and browbeaten countrymen.

I phoned my friend John Dayal, fellow journalist and a prominent member of the Catholic community in Delhi. He is always ready to lend his strong shoulders when Muslims are in need, be it in Gujarat or

Muzaffarnagar or to celebrate the release of the over-quoted Sachar Committee report that etched out the factors responsible for the backwardness of Muslims.

I asked John if he would canvass wide support for the victims of last week's underreported Hindutva assault on members of the evangelical Nazarene Church in western Uttar Pradesh. This is usually a theatre of Hindu-Muslim stand-off, not far from Muzaffarnagar where a killing frenzy erupted against Muslims during the recent elections. Attacks on Christians in western Uttar Pradesh are not a common occurrence though they are not entirely unknown. The latest attack, therefore, quite possibly represents a new swagger the ruling Hindutva ideologues have found.

John says while he is always there for Muslim victims of injustice it is not necessarily a two-way street in terms of the Muslim leadership's sympathy quotient towards other troubled communities. His lament was instructive. There is indeed almost always a spontaneous outpouring of fellowship and solidarity among groups ranging from Sikhs to dalits, from representatives of the north-eastern tribes to intellectuals among Kashmiri pandits, who rally support and solidarity for the Muslim underclass.

Middle of the road Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, pagans, communists, all form a protective ring around Muslims when they are under attack. But I am scratching

my memory in vain I think to remember when a Muslim body last intervened on behalf of Sikhs or dalits or Christians, let alone remote tribespeople in their hour of need.

The media has for its own purposes indulged and cultivated the Hindu-Muslim paradigm to express the running story of wider social strife in India. It was difficult, naturally, to miss the air of self-congratulation about the newspaper headlines the other day when three top cops admitted unequivocally that India's Muslims distrusted the police, an admission which, the newspapers implied, might lead to corrective measures.

"In what is perhaps the first admission of its kind, the police have concluded that there is a trust deficit among Muslims," said the Indian Express, quoting from "Strategy for making police forces more sensitive towards minority sections", a report prepared by three directors general of police — Sanjeev Dayal of Maharashtra, Devraj Nagar of Uttar Pradesh and K. Ramanujam of Tamil Nadu.

Muslims see the police as "communal, biased and insensitive... ill-informed, corrupt and lacking professionalism", the report says. "Poor representation of the minorities in the police forces has contributed to this distrust and suspicion. It has to be admitted that the conduct of some members of the police forces in various states during communal riots had only served to strengthen and heighten these suspicions and distrust in the minority communities," it says.

Muslims form the largest minority, constituting "a vocal and large

*(Continued on Page 10)*

## On Israel-Palestine

Noam Chomsky

The misery caused by Israel's actions in the occupied territories has elicited serious concern among at least some Israelis. One of the most outspoken, for many years, has been Gideon Levy, a columnist for Haaretz, who writes that "Israel should be condemned and punished for creating insufferable life under occupation, [and] for the fact that a country that claims to be among the enlightened nations continues abusing an entire people, day and night."

He is surely correct, and we should add something more: the United States should also be condemned and punished for providing the decisive military, economic, diplomatic and even ideological support for these crimes. So long as it continues to do so, there is little reason to expect Israel to relent in its brutal policies.

The distinguished Israeli scholar Zeev Sternhell, reviewing the reactionary nationalist tide in his country, writes that "the occupation will continue, land will be confiscated from its owners to expand the settlements, the Jordan Valley will be cleansed of Arabs, Arab Jerusalem will be strangled by Jewish neighborhoods, and any act of robbery and foolishness that serves Jewish expansion in the city will be welcomed by the High Court of Justice. The road to South Africa has been paved and will not be blocked until the Western world presents Israel with an unequivocal choice: Stop the annexation and dismantle most of the colonies and the settler state, or be an outcast."

One crucial question is whether the United States will stop undermining the international consensus, which favors a two-state settlement along the internationally recognized border (the Green Line established in the 1949 ceasefire agreements), with guarantees for "the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." That was the wording of a resolution brought to the UN Security Council in January 1976 by Egypt, Syria and Jordan, supported by the Arab states—and vetoed by the United States.

This was not the first time Washington had barred a peaceful diplomatic settlement. The prize for that goes to Henry Kissinger, who supported Israel's 1971 decision to reject a settlement offered by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, choosing expansion over security—a course that Israel has followed with US support ever since. Sometimes Washington's position becomes almost comical, as in February 2011, when the Obama administration vetoed a UN resolution that supported official US policy: opposition to Israel's settlement expansion, which continues (also with US support) despite some whispers of disapproval.

It is not expansion of the huge settlement and infrastructure program (including the separation wall) that is the issue, but rather its very existence—all of it illegal, as determined by the UN Security

Council and the International Court of Justice, and recognized as such by virtually the entire world apart from Israel and the United States since the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who downgraded “illegal” to “an obstacle to peace.”

One way to punish Israel for its egregious crimes was initiated by the Israeli peace group Gush Shalom in 1997: a boycott of settlement products. Such initiatives have been considerably expanded since then. In June, the Presbyterian Church resolved to divest from three US-based multinationals involved in the occupation. The most far-reaching success is the policy directive of the European Union that forbids funding, cooperation, research awards or any similar relationship with any Israeli entity that has “direct or indirect links” to the occupied territories, where all settlements are illegal, as the EU declaration reiterates. Britain had already directed retailers to “distinguish between goods originating from Palestinian producers and goods originating from illegal Israeli settlements.”

Four years ago, Human Rights Watch called on Israel to abide by “its international legal obligation” to remove the settlements and to end its “blatantly discriminatory practices” in the occupied territories. HRW also called on the United States to suspend financing to Israel “in an amount equivalent to the costs of Israel’s spending in support of settlements,” and to verify that tax exemptions for organizations contributing to Israel “are consistent with U.S. obligations to ensure respect for international law, including prohibitions against discrimination.”

There have been a great many other

boycott and divestment initiatives in the past decade, occasionally—but not sufficiently—reaching to the crucial matter of US support for Israeli crimes. Meanwhile, a BDS movement (calling for “boycott, divestment and sanctions”) has

been formed, often citing South African models; more accurately, the abbreviation should be “BD,” since sanctions, or state actions, are not on the horizon—one of the many significant differences from South Africa.

—The Nation

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*(Continued from Page 9)*

section of the population” in most states, says the report and calls for urgent correction of the perception in the community about the police as it “impinges on the communal situation of the country and thus its internal security”.

Are Muslims alone in mistrusting the police? Are the dalits of small towns and villages or even in a city like Delhi heartened to see a policeman approaching them? Or do they run for cover at the sight of one?

Have the Sikhs regained their faith in Delhi Police after the keepers of law and order abetted the pogroms of the proud community in 1984? And where were the Muslims, what was their stand, if they had one, when the lynching and looting of Sikhs was in full cry in Delhi and elsewhere? I have heard of some outrageous things that Muslim gangs did in 1984 in cahoots with frenzied Hindutva mobs.

Nandita Das made a disturbing movie on anti-Muslim communal violence in Gujarat; Firaq it was called, but Gulzar’s Maachis gave us an even more traumatic view of the pervasive mistrust between the police and the ordinary Sikh people in the 1980s. Yet, the media stays riveted to the Muslims who distrust the police narrative.

A police station official in India’s Jharkhand state this month reviled

Christians who sought protection after Hindu extremists beat and threatened to kill them for refusing to convert to Hinduism. Does the story touch Muslim hearts? For, when it does begin to matter, India’s Muslims will not find themselves in their ghettos any longer. They will be leading a minorities’ collective, in which women and people of different sexual orientation will have a strong voice, too.

The choice is squarely with India’s largest minority community whether they wish to crawl out of the ditch, which they have dug for no good reason or remain tethered to the mullah’s sectarian agenda.

—Dawn’s correspondent in Delhi,  
*The Asian Age*



## Coalition adharmā

Meghnad Desai

The high level of expectations about the government has somewhat subsided. The Budget gave the impression of a government settling down for a Test match, not a T20. The controversies are going to be on peripheral matters where the government may find it hard to keep the same degree of control that it keeps on its ministers and MPs. Justice Markandey Katju has already stirred up a hornet's nest on what happened in the previous regime. The issue of judicial accountability will, no doubt, be raised as much as the culpability of the coalition which governed at the time.

But the troubles looming for the BJP/NDA coalition are already on the surface. The Shiv Sena is itching for a fight. This is no doubt to bargain for a larger share of seats in the forthcoming Maharashtra elections. It has been most vocal in differing from the government on many issues. Even the trivial issue of Ved Pratap Vaidik has been blown up, as is any Pakistan-related matter. The Shiv Sena may yet prove to be what the TMC was for the UPA. Luckily, the BJP has its own majority, so they can stop playing along with such troublesome partners.

But there is also the self-inflicted controversy of celebrating Sanskrit in schools. This raises some serious questions about the ideology of the BJP. Quite clearly, many in the BJP think Sanskrit is the great mother language of Indian culture and of

Hinduism. To announce the arrival of a new regime, the highlighting of Sanskrit seems normal. But as the government has seen, there is unhappiness among its Tamil Nadu allies and erstwhile friends such as the AIADMK. The issue is that Tamil is just as old as Sanskrit and it is the oldest living language in India.

The ideologues of Hindu Rashtra/Hindutva have a very North India-centred vision of India's past. They think that Aryavarta or Bharatvarsha is all India. But that is a sort of Delhi Sultanate view of Indian history. The Prime Minister, in one of his early speeches, had said that India had been enslaved for 1,200 years. At the time, few noticed this, even among the secularist watchmen. The assertion is that India became 'unfree' with Muslim incursions of Mohammad bin Qasim.

But that is what happened in the North, not in South India. Even in the North, the Muslim conquest of North India remained partial until the Mughals came on the scene. Mohammad bin Qasim's incursion into Sindh is hardly an all-India conquest any more than the victory at Plassey is British domination of all India. It took many Muslim kingdoms centuries to capture Punjab and the Doab, while Assam remained forever outside any control from Delhi. The British took at least another 70 years after Plassey to claim a substantial portion of India.

South India has a very different experience of Muslims coming as traders and did not experience Muslim rule till much later. Similarly, any history of Hinduism has to acknowledge that the Bhakti movement began in the South with Tamil poets, and then traversed North. Hinduism is not just a product of Sanskritised knowledge. Classical Tamil also has its contributions. It was also South India under the Cholas that had outgoing kingdoms that built overseas empires while the kingdoms in the North were busy quarrelling with each other.

If there is to be a new idea of India around some sort of Hindu basis, it has to be at the very least inclusive of all parts of India. Much of Indian history, which even the nineteenth century Indian nationalists grew up on, is the British distillation of Muslim chronicles, most of which relate to North India. Thus, the Hindu nationalist branch of Indian nationalism has been fed the simplistic view of India as Delhi. India is, however, a result of years of British rule, united North and South, East and West. This is despite Partition. If we are to have a new idea of India as a nation, it has to, at the very least, rethink and rediscover its own history rather than swallow simplicities fed by British historians via Muslim chroniclers.

Time has come to get serious about the idea of India — if anyone wants to have a new one.

—The Indian Express

## Madhukar Dighe

Veteran socialist leader a close associate of Dr Rammanohar Lohia, former finance minister of Uttar Pradesh and former Governor of Meghalaya and Arunchal Pradesh Madhukar Vinayak Dighe, passed away on 27th July 2014, at a hospital in Gurgaon near New Delhi. He was 94. Later his body was taken to Gorakhpur where he was cremated with full state honour.

A Maharashtrian by birth born on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1920, Madhukar Dighe joined socialist movement during the freedom struggle in which he actively participated. In 1943, he moved to Uttar Pradesh to escape an arrest warrant by Bombay government.

According to him in 1946, at the instance of Jayaprakash Narayan Dighe went to Gorakhpur to organize railwaymen's union in eastern Uttar Pradesh and later on, on the advice of his mentor Dr. Lohia he remained based at Gorakhpur till he was politically active. In 1948-49, he used to live in the office of Socialist Party, Gorakhpur. In 1950s he married to a party comrade Kaushalya Devi from a very poor and down trodden background.

Madhukar Dighe actively participated in almost all the agitations/movements launched by Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist party or BLD in Uttar Pradesh, and was General secretary of UP Socialist Party in 1963-64 and when after the merger of SP and PSP, Samyukta Socialist Party was formed in 1964, he was State secretary of SSP(1964-66).

Madhukar Dighe was elected to UP Vidhan Sabha thrice from

Pipraich assembly constituency in 1967, 1974 and 1977. He was finance minister during the Janata Party government 1977-80 in Uttar Pradesh.

He was very active among labour unions and Kisan movements. He participated in a massive "Kisan March" organized by UP Socialist party on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1949, which was attended by Acharya Narendra Deva and Rammanohar Lohia and also of "Janvani Divas" in Delhi on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1951.

His autobiography "*Meri Lokyatra*" gives vivid and illustrated glimpses of the movements launched by Socialists in Uttar Pradesh. In fact his autobiography is a document of the history of Socialist movement in Uttar Pradesh.

He beautifully narrates how the first state wide movement launched by PSP, against the enhanced irrigation rates by the UP government in May 1954, under the able leadership of Dr Lohia in which more than fifty thousand party workers were arrested all over the state under the special powers act 1932. These arrests were later challenged by Dr Lohia in Allahabad High Court and all the party workers were released by the court.

Madhukar Dighe also participated in various other agitations namely, Lucknow *Kisan March* under Keshav Gore on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1956, May 1957 movement launched by Lohia on the occasion of centenary of 1857 war, '*GHERA DALO*' movement by UP Socialist party from 11<sup>th</sup> June 1958 against state government attitude

towards food scarcity 'REMOVE GOVERNMENT' week from 7<sup>th</sup> September to 14<sup>th</sup> September 1958 and *Janvani Diwas* in Delhi on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1959.

When Socialist Party launched nation wide Satyagrah from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1960, against "*JAATI TODO, (Banish Caste) ANGREZI HATAO (BANISH ENGLISH)*", and for *DAM-BANDHO (fix prices)*, and *HIMALYA BACHAO (save Himalya)* Madhukar Dighe participated in all agitations and got arrested many times.

Madhukar Dighe got arrested when SSP launched a state wide agitation in September 1964 and participated in a protested march on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1966 and again on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1966 respectively when party organized a state *Bandh*.

Dighe was an ardent supporter of late Raj Narain in his all political maneuvers. After the merger of SP and PSP in 1971, he was in Socialist party but when party got split he was with Raj Narain in Socialist Party(Lohia) and when this splinter group merged with Charan Singhs BKD, Dighe also joined this party and got elected for the second time to UP assembly on BKD ticket from Pipraich. During the Emergency of 1975-77 he was arrested and put in Jail.

In 1980s and 1990s, Madhukar Dighe was associated with Mulayam Singh Yadav and his Samajwadi Party and during the V. P. Singh's National Front government in 1989-90, was appointed the governor of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

– **Qurban Ali**

The National Executive of All-India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) joined by nearly 400 activists, students and common people from Delhi staged a demonstration at Shastri Bhavan on 18<sup>th</sup> July afternoon to oppose the BJP-led NDA government's pronouncements of aggressively promoting commercialization of education through Public-Private Partnership (PPP); entry of FDI and foreign universities in higher education in pursuance of the agenda of WTO-GATS for making higher education a tradable commodity. This amounts to subjugation of India's sovereignty to World Bank, WTO-GATS and other agencies of global capital. We strongly condemn the present regime's moves to communalise school education by introducing an obscurantist and pseudo-concept like "Vedic values" for induction in the school curriculum. This violates the goals of the Constitutional which lays down values of equality, social justice and civil liberties for all. We condemn the government's appointment of Prof. Y. Sudershan Rao as Chairperson of the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) who had been appointed to the Council by the HRD Minister of the earlier NDA regime. Prof. Rao's 'intellectual' concerns and publications (in popular but not peer-reviewed journals) bear the imprint of Hindutva view of history. So strong is this identification that Prof. Rao found it necessary to claim that he loved his country although he was not a member of the RSS!

AIFRTE unequivocally condemns the tacit support for the RSS-led Vidya Bharati organization which continues to attack academic research and publication through vigilante actions aimed at terrorizing cultural practitioners, academicians, universities and publishers. Government has neither condemned nor taken any corrective action against such conduct.

AIFRTE appealed to all organisations and people of Delhi to join in raising the following demands:

- Ban FDI in higher education – stop entry of foreign universities. Immediately withdraw "offer" made to WTO-GATS which will become an irrevocable commitment with completion of Doha Round of trade negotiations.
- Stop closure/merger/auctioning/leasing/outsourcing of government schools to private bodies, NGOs, corporate houses or religious bodies in different states/UTs.
- Reverse decision of Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation to 'privatize' functioning and management of 1174 primary schools by outsourcing ('adoption') of government schools to corporate houses, religious bodies or NGOs. Stop similar moves in other states and union territories including Delhi, Karnataka and Uttarakhand.
- Ban all forms of PPP through schemes of fee reimbursement (e.g. Right to Education Act, 2009), tax exemptions, free/subsidized land and other hidden subsidies; voucher schools; sale, leasing or renting of government schools/campuses.
- Restore financial support measures (including scholarships etc) for SC/ST/OBC, minorities and disabled students in all Central and State Universities and other educational institutions.
- Immediately withdraw obscurantist, communal, majoritarian and unscientific programs in the curriculum in school or in higher education.
- Ban interference of communal organisations and non-academic bodies in educational institutions at any level. In particular, the activities of RSS and other Sangh-linked organisations like Vidya Bharati which appear to be emboldened by formation of Modi-sarkar must be strictly monitored and firmly disallowed.

Educate all children in common neighbourhood schools and ban child labour

– Madhu Prasad

## Inequality

...*First, economic inequality has worsened significantly* in the United States and some other countries. The richest 1 percent in the United States now own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. Oxfam estimates that the richest 85 people in the world own as much wealth as the bottom half of humanity.

The situation might be tolerable if a rising tide were lifting all boats. But it's lifting mostly the yachts. In 2010, 93 percent of the additional income created in America went to the top 1 percent.

*Second, inequality in America is destabilizing.* Some inequality is essential to create incentives, but we seem to have reached the point where inequality actually becomes an impediment to economic growth.

Certainly, the nation grew more quickly in periods when we were more equal, including in the golden decades after World War II when growth was strong and inequality actually diminished. Likewise, a major research paper from the International Monetary Fund in April found that more equitable societies tend to enjoy more rapid economic growth.

Indeed, even Lloyd Blankfein, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, warns that “too much ... has gone to too few” and that inequality in America is now

“very destabilizing.”

Inequality causes problems by creating fissures in societies, leaving those at the bottom feeling marginalized or disenfranchised. That has been a classic problem in “banana republic” countries in Latin America, and the United States now has a Gini coefficient (a standard measure of inequality) approaching some traditionally poor and dysfunctional Latin countries.

*Third, disparities reflect not just the invisible hand of the market but also manipulation of markets.* Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, wrote a terrific book two years ago, “The Price of Inequality,” which is a shorter and easier read than Piketty’s book. In it, he notes: “Much of America’s inequality is the result of market distortions, with incentives directed not at creating new wealth but at taking it from others.”

For example, financiers are wealthy partly because they’re highly educated and hardworking — and also because they’ve successfully lobbied for the carried interest tax loophole that lets their pay be taxed at much lower rates than other people’s.

Likewise, if you’re a pharmaceutical executive, one way to create profits is to generate new products. Another

is to lobby Congress to bar the government’s Medicare program from bargaining for drug prices. That amounts to a \$50 billion annual gift to pharmaceutical companies.

*Fourth, inequality doesn’t necessarily even benefit the rich as much as we think.* At some point, extra incomes don’t go to sate desires but to attempt to buy status through “positional goods” — like the hottest car on the block.

The problem is that there can only be one hottest car on the block. So the lawyer who buys a Porsche is foiled by the C.E.O. who buys a Ferrari, who in turn is foiled by the hedge fund manager who buys a Lamborghini. This arms race leaves these desires unsated; there’s still only one at the top of the heap.

*Fifth, progressives probably talk too much about “inequality” and not enough about “opportunity.”* Some voters are turned off by tirades about inequality because they say it connotes envy of the rich; there is more consensus on bringing everyone to the same starting line.

Unfortunately, equal opportunity is now a mirage. Indeed, researchers find that there is less economic mobility in America than in class-conscious Europe...

—Nicholas D. Kristof in *New York Times*



## Fourth largest source of migrants

I am astonished to gain knowledge that Union Public Service Commission has engaged advocates at very high Legal Fees, and wasting public money by paying hefty fees to advocates like charity. UPSC has engaged two advocates in SLP No.16870/2012 at fees of Rs. 686310. It is also observed that Rohinton F. Nariman has been paid Rs.550000 in the case but he has never appeared in court in the case as per record.

The public authorities are trustees for the public, and they have no authority to distribute public money like charity. A trustee is a custodian only and he is not owner of custodial money. Moreover no TDS for income tax and service tax has been reported deducted from the amount. I understand that UPSC has not been following any norms or policy in respect of legal fees. While the Supreme Court of India has framed rules for taxing legal fees. SC pays Rs.10000/- to advocates appointed by it in a case. Department of Legal Affairs has also fixed legal fee of Rs.8000/- for filing SLP in SC. All government organs should follow these guidelines while paying fees to advocates and there is no justification for paying hefty and excessive fees. UPSC has paid total fees over Rs. 20 lakh in the FY 2012-13. Central Information Commission has engaged legal retainers @ Rs.20000/p.m. on contractual basis.

Further it has been also observed that the whole fees has been sanctioned and paid in a single installment. However advocate may detach from work during pendency or rendered incapacitated, but UPSC might have to engage

another advocate without getting the refund of fees paid earlier. Therefore the payment of agreed fees should be apportioned in 4 installments, and be paid according the progress of the case as provided in General Rules (Civil ) Rajasthan. The first installment of 25% fees may be paid in advance, second installment on service of notice upon the opposite party, third installment filing counter affidavit or written statement of opponent and the fourth final installment be disbursed after final arguments.

Mani Ram Sharma, *excerpted from a letter addressed to the President of India*

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## **Kathmandu connection**

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**Election Expenditure of MPs**

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First, the expression of interest in promoting India's ties with all the countries of the Saarc region by inviting their participation in his prime ministerial swearing-in ceremony. Then, the visit to Bhutan. Now, the visit to Nepal. The message is loud and clear. India is slowly but surely clearing the decks for increased bilateral and multi-lateral interaction and cooperation with its South Asian neighbours. With the projected visits to Japan and China, the circuit will be complete. India, as a major Asian power, aims to play a substantially meaningful role in the politics and economics of the region that embraces East, South East and South Asian segments. Certainly, the beginnings of a new era in Indo-Asian relations. More important, a vital thrust to India's Look East policy

Not only Bhutan and Nepal, but some of the Saarc and Asean countries look at India with suspicion as a confirmation and demonstration of their affliction with the Big Brother syndrome. Being one of the two Asian giants is both an advantage and a curse. While the other giant does not trust you one hundred percent, smaller nations do not trust one hundred percent either thanks to the Big Brother complex. If you go out of

your way to help, your generosity is misunderstood. If you do not extend a helping hand, you are seen as arrogant and domineering. As the saying goes, you are damned if you do, and you are damned if you don't. Seen against this perspective, we are happy to say that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has played India's cards by trying to demolish Bhutan's and now Nepal's Big Brother syndrome by posing neither as a Big Brother bearing gifts nor as a younger brother seeking special treatment

The fact that Indo-Nepalese relations have remained frosty has not been in dispute. Both have acknowledged it often enough in the past without doing anything imaginative or constructive to restore cordiality and banish distrust. That no Indian Prime Minister has visited Nepal in the last 17 years tells its own story. As Nepal's Prime Minister candidly acknowledged, it is not only India's fault that bilateral relations have stagnated. New Delhi viewed Kathmandu as a whiner always demanding, and Kathmandu viewed India as a tough nut both inside and outside with no soft core within. The blame needs to be shared equally. Nepal distrusts India and India has not gone the extra mile to assure

*Between the lines*

## The idea of partition recedes in shadows

**Kuldip Nayar**

Kathmandu that its concerns will be taken care of. That Nepal is a land-locked country adds to the problems; the fact that India is too big and powerful is in and by itself a problem. Modi's visit has set a new vision for bilateralism. Modi's government apparently wanted the visit to be a great success. It first sent the external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj to test the waters. It is intriguing why Modi does not take his foreign minister along for his bilateral summits, but then, each PM has his own style. It would seem that this prime minister would like to be his own foreign minister! Fair enough

The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in 1950 - 64 years ago. Is it any surprise that it has outlived its purpose and mandate. From Day One, the treaty did everything other than promote peace and friendship. It promoted suspicions and mistrust. The Nepalese Prime Minister was right; both sides did little to narrow down the differences. When India was ready to make changes in the treaty Nepal was unable to pinpoint its demands or identify the points of concern. Nepal suspected that India was playing divide and rule politics by supporting one Nepalese party against another, and India felt that Kathmandu was promoting anti-Indian activities from its soil. India felt Nepal tilting more and more towards Beijing.

All this may be matters of history. Modi seems to have said and done all that was necessary to assure Nepal that India means well by its close neighbour. Modi, said his counterpart in Kathmandu, has touched the hearts and souls of the Nepalese. High praise indeed.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

India's independence or the migration of Hindus and Muslims on the basis of religion is as old as fifty-seven years. I remember leaving my home in Sialkot city on August 14 itself because the new state of Pakistan did not entertain non-Muslims, just as East Punjab did not want any Muslim in their midst. I heard Jawaharlal Nehru's famous 'tryst' speech in Pakistan itself because I was at my home town, Sialkot.

However, I crossed the border only on September 17, thirty two days after independence. By then, the fury of killing and looting had subsided. I did not see Hindus and Muslims quarrelling and actually fighting. But I saw the pain-etched faces of men and women with their meager belongings bundled on their heads and the fear-stricken children following them. Both Hindus and Muslims had left behind their hearth, homes, friends and neighbours. Both had been torn on the rack of history. Both were refugees.

The tragedy of partition is too deep to describe in words. But to convert it into a Hindu-and-Muslim question is politicizing the problem. The riots took the toll of 10 lakh people and uprooted more than two crore Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Some biased elements in Pakistan propose to depict the rioting in reliefs to highlight "the oppression of Muslims". Unfortunately, this will whip up hatred against Hindus, who were as much at the receiving end in Pakistan as were Muslims in India.

Despite the stories of brutal killings there were examples of bravery and courage shown by the Muslims to save Hindus and that of Hindus saving Muslims in India. A study done by Ashish Nandy, a leading intellectual in India, has estimated that both communities saved 50 per cent of the opposite community from the brutality.

Why were the killings of people, when they had lived together for centuries? Nothing would be more futile than the effort to pin down who was responsible for the partitioning of the subcontinent. With the sequence of events stretching back for over six decades, such an exercise can only be an academic sturdy. But it is clear that the differences between Hindus and Muslims had become so acute by the beginning of the forties that something like the partition had become inevitable. Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah went on plugging that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and this made them increasingly distant from each other.

For those who still regret the division, I can only say that the British could have probably kept the subcontinent united if they had been willing to ladle out more power in 1942 when Sir Stafford Cripps tried to reconcile the aspirations of people in India with his limited brief. The Congress could also have done it if it had accepted in 1946 the Cabinet Mission proposals of a centre with three subjects - Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications - and



four states included in the zones.

But the history's ifs are at best hypothetical and at worst subjective. The partition was like the Greek tragedy. All knew what was happening. Still they could do nothing to check it. The climate in the country had become too polluted to escape the carnage and the migration that came in its wake. The speech on August 11, 1947, by Quide Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a title given by Mahatma Gandhi, that you were either Pakistanis or Indians and that religion had nothing to do with politics could not assuage the parochial feelings which had been advanced to justify the constitution of Pakistan. The speech was too late. The mood of fanatics in that country can be judged from the fact that they suppressed the speech itself.

Has partition served the purpose of Muslims? I do not know. During my trips to that country, I have heard people saying that they are happy that at least they have "some place" where they feel secure, free of "Hindu domination" or "Hindu aggression." But I feel that the Muslims as Muslims have been the biggest losers. They are now spread over three countries - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Imagine the influence that their numbers - their votes - could have commanded in the undivided subcontinent! They would have been nearly one-third of the total population.

The happenings at the border would only widen the gulf between the two communities. Instead of blaming each other, it would have been far better to deal with the enmity and hatred that has been the fallout, keeping the two countries on tenterhooks.

I have returned from the Wagha-Amritsar border disheartened, not because there is no lessening of martial posture of soldiers at the sunset parade, but because of a new monstrosity that has come up there. The Pakistan authorities have put up 10 reliefs, projecting figures in carving on boards to show how Hindus and Sikhs had killed and looted Muslims during the partition. The reliefs have been displayed in such a way that they are visible only from the Indian side. They cannot be seen from the Pakistan side because the back of the reliefs are merely large bill boards.

The happenings depicted are offensive in expression and deprave in purport. They have been installed in the last two months, probably because the voice of peace with India is gaining strength in Pakistan and because nearly 50 people came to the border, the zero point, for the first time last year to light the candles since independence six decades ago.

Again, the reliefs put up at the border distort facts. Whatever has been shown happened on both sides. Hindus and Sikhs were victims in Pakistan and Muslims in India. It was the same sordid spectacle in the newly-born countries, neither less in brutality nor more in compassion. Women and children were the main targets.

If someone were to tell me that Hinduism is greater in generosity or that Islam emits more love, I would beg to differ. I saw the followers of the two religions killing in the name of faith. They were raising slogans of Har Har Mahadav or Ya Ali while piercing sword or spear into one another. Some incidents were captured in the books which were published at that time. *Aur*

*Insan mar gaya* is the famous book by Ramanand Sagar and *Peshawar Express* by the eminent Urdu writer, Krishen Chand, to narrate events of how man dies when the Satan in him awakes. Then there are Sadaat Hassan Minto's short stories in Urdu that tell how the two communities touched the depth of crime and callousness.

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

What has apparently appealed to the Nepalese sentiment is Modi's assurance of total non-interference by New Delhi in Nepalese affairs, his commitment to have a good second look at the 1950 treaty and asking for Nepalese suggestions, and his declaration that Delhi has no interest in promoting a particular political party in the kingdom at the cost of another. Plus, of course, a one billion dollar Line of Credit for Nepal's infrastructure development and Indian help in developing Nepal's hydropower amid the hope that Nepal may be able to sell power to India later on. Delhi and Kathmandu are all set to get closer to each other. Which is a good development for the entire region.

**Madhu Dandavate**

By

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# Honoring the Martyrs 157 Years later

Chaman Lal

A terrible happening had taken place near Ajnala in Amritsar district on 31<sup>st</sup> July-1<sup>st</sup> August 1857, as part of India's first war of independence. The incident had remained engraved on the memory of the people and pricking their conscience for long and an historic event is again taking place at that very place where this terrifying event took place 157 years ago. 282 sepoys of Indian army, who rebelled against British colonial occupation of India in May 1857, were massacred here and dumped into a dry well 100 yard away from Ajnala police station. The remains of those martyred in brutish manner on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1857, the day of Bakrid (Id-ul-Fitr), were dug out recently by the town people themselves, without any governmental help and are now being cremated with full religious rituals on same day -1<sup>st</sup> August -157 years later! In spite of that, Government has until date not even allotted them the cremation place, which has to be turned into martyr memorial monument in due time!

This was not the only brutal event in those days. For almost a year or more hundreds of terrible events had taken place all over India - from Calcutta to North India, but excluding South and North East India. Cruelties were part of this war on both sides, innocent women and children had also been victims of this terrifying war, but the rebellious and loosing side's cruelties were nowhere even close to occupying winner colonial side - British cruelties, that too in the name of 'justice'!. Rebellious Indian sepoy's cruelties were result of being pushed to the

wall in compelling circumstances, whereas British colonial cruelties and brutalities were committed massively with vengeance and with a victor's arrogance of teaching a lesson and to instil terror among its colonised subjects.

About this particular incident near Ajnala, two versions are available-colonial version of Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar district of those days- Frederic Cooper, whose book - 'The Crisis in Punjab' - from 10<sup>th</sup> May to the fall of Delhi - was published in 1858 itself from London. The nationalist version is of Giani Hira Singh Dard, a respected Punjabi writer and historian, editor of Punjabi magazine 'Fulwari' from Amritsar in 1920's. His version was carried with photographs in November 1928 'Fansi ank'(Execution issue) from Allahabad, later included in nationalist historian and editor Pt. Sunder Lal's proscribed book -'Bharat Men Angrezi Raj'(British Rule in India). Giani Hira Singh Dard had recorded even the eyewitness account of Baba Jagat Singh, who was nearly 95 years of age in 1928 and was of about 20-25 years in 1857, at the time of the terrible happening! The common factor between both accounts is the facts of the event; however, the same facts have naturally been interpreted from different angles/perspectives!

As per Cooper's account of whole Punjab in 9 chapters of his book, many thousand 'Poorbeah' among different units of Bengal Native Infantry took part in rebellion,

who were disarmed in May 1857 in Meean Meer Cant of Lahore, after rebellion broke out in Meerut on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 21 days in advance of the decided date of 31<sup>st</sup>May. Rebellion spread in different regions of Punjab such as Lahore, Umritsur, Phillour, Jhelum, Sealkote, Jullundur, Ferozepore, Sirsa, Hote Mardan, Peshawur, Loodhianah (as spelled by Cooper), etc. British Government. with support from feudal chieftains of Patiala, Jind, Kapurthla and Kashmir, hundreds of mutineers were 'slaughtered' in the term used by Cooper himself in different areas of Punjab. Cooper proudly and teasingly counts the killings of mutineers in August 1857 in Peshawar area to 659-  
*"Some idea may be gathered of the terrific and swift destruction, when it is remembered that the strength of the regiment before the mutiny amounted to 871. The Punjab Infantry shot and killed 125; Captain James's party killed 40; Lieutenant Gosling's party killed 15. The Peshawur Light Horse, the villagers, and H. M.'s 27th and 70th killed 36. By sentence of drum-head court-martial, on the same day, there were executed by H. M.'s 87th, 187; and by a similar summary tribunal, on the 29th of August, 167; also on the same date, 84; one thanahdar killed five: total, within about 30 hours after the mutiny, no less than 659!(The Crisis in Punjab, Frederic Cooper, Page 177, Elder and Son, Smith, London, 1858) !*

In this particular incident occurred near Ajnala, nearly five hundred disarmed sepoys of 26<sup>th</sup> regiment of

Bengal Native Infantry, as mentioned by Cooper, rebelled on 30<sup>th</sup> July and one Prakash Singh alias Prakash Pandey killed Major Spencer with Major's own sword and they all fled toward south, only to be trapped near Ajnala, by Tehseeldar Dewan Pran Nath's agents, who alerted district administration and which sent armed force, which started shooting them, nearly 150 fell to bullets in river near village Daddian, nearly fifty jumped in river to be drowned. Others were taken to Ajnala police station, which could accommodate 237 only, nearly 66 were confined in newly come up Tehseil building in a dungeon. Deputy Commissioner Cooper had ordered a long rope to execute, but had made simultaneous arrangement of 50 Sikh sepoy to kill them with shooting. They were to be killed on 31<sup>st</sup> July night itself, but due to rains, it was postponed until next morning, which was Bakrid that year. On 1<sup>st</sup> August morning, 237 rebel sepoy were taken out and killed in turns of ten each by shooting in open ground in front of police station. When other 66 dumped in dungeon did not turn up, it was found 45 of them were already dead or half-dead by suffocation. A dry well was there about a hundred yard away from police station. 237+45=282 dead bodies with some not fully dead were thrown into the well, which was filled with sand from above. Cooper called it 'rebel's grave' and wanted to be written in Persian, "Goormookhie" and English. At two places in his book, he refers the Hollwell's controversial Black hole of Calcutta of 1756 and well of Cawnpore of 1857, where rebels had dumped British official's dead bodies and compares them to this place and incident, clearly showing his glee of revenge- *There is a well at Cawnpore, but there is also one at Ajnala!*(Same-page 167).

This ironically reminds Praveen Togadia's recent statement against Muslims-'They may have forgotten 2002 Gujarat, but they may be remembering 2014 Muzaffarnagar!'

The well was in place till 1972 with a writing as 'Kalian Wala Khuh' (The well of Blacks). In 1928, it looked like a raised sand hill. In 1957, centenary celebrations of 1857 were observed here in the presence of then Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon. CPM MLA of earlier days Dalip Singh Tapiala of this region used to hold meetings here. However, in 1972, villagers built a room over the well and turned it into Gurdwara. In 2007, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1857 was observed at Gurdwara site. In 2012, town people formed an 11-member committee of all practising Sikhs, led by trade unionist Amarjit Singh Sarkaria to honour the martyrs by digging out the well and taking out their remains. They built the new Gurdwara very near this place and took up the digging of the well from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Before beginning digging work, they tried their best to involve state and Central Government in this project, but their efforts bore no fruit as none of their agencies like Archaeological survey of India showed any interest. As the well was well known, so within three days of digging on 28<sup>th</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2014, ten feet deep walls came out and nearly hundred human skulls, more than five thousand human teeth and other parts of bones came out. Hundreds of volunteers took part in the digging and thousand gathered to see it. Many medals, jewellery items, coins etc. are also came out. Electronic local media covered it widely, so was regional print media. Officials from administration and Archaeology deptt. did turn up and boxes of human remains were

handed over to them for DNA testing. The managing committee renamed 'Kalian wala Khuh'(Well of Blacks) as 'Shaheedan wala khuh'(Martyrs Well) and appealed to Government of Punjab and India to allot them nearby vacant land under the control of army to cremate the remains of martyrs with full religious rituals and erect a memorial therein afterwards at the same place like Jallianwalabagh memorial in Amritsar, 25 kilometres away, where the mass killings had taken place on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1919 and similar well existed there, where dead bodies were found. Another incident of this kind took place in 1872 at Malerkotla, where then Deputy Commissioner Cowan had got summarily shot dead 66 Kukas in two days, who were followers of Baba Ram Singh.

London based eminent historian of Indian movements - C A Bayly - had a dig at colonial regime on Ajnala discovery as it reminds 'how panic had spread among British officials in Punjab in 1857 and how they were prepared to use extreme violence'(Hindustan Times, Chandigarh-14/3/2014)

No DNA testing of the martyr sepoy had been done until date; neither land has been allotted to Martyrs Memorial committee until now. Committee is going ahead with its plan to cremate the remains of martyrs recovered from the well by organising religious rituals of Hindus, Islamic and Sikhism, as the sepoy could belong to all three religious backgrounds, though large numbers of them could be from Hindu religion. Punjab Government. seems to have been stuck in politicisation of the issue by certain Sikh fundamentalists,  
(Continued on Page 6)

## Freedom Week

Addressing the members of the Constituent Assembly, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had stated: “*The first task of this Assembly is to free India through a new constitution to feed the starving people and clothe the naked masses and to give every Indian fullest opportunity to develop himself according to his capacity.*”

This spirit pervades the Constitution of India. The Preamble to the Constitution of India guarantees and secures to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political. The Fundamental Rights guaranteed to all citizens under Part III of the Constitution, and the Directive Principles incorporated in Part IV of the Constitution, which are fundamental to the governance of the country and the state has to keep them in mind while framing its laws and policies, both enjoin upon the policy makers of the country to guarantee education, health care, food, shelter, clean environment, and other basic essentials to all people of the country. Only if all citizens are guaranteed these essentials of life can they fully develop their inherent potential and live like human beings and truly contribute their best to the development of society.

Unfortunately, more than sixty years after we gave ourselves this Constitution, the country is moving in exactly the opposite direction. For the last two decades, in the name of globalisation, the successive governments that have come to power at the Centre have been solely running the country for the profit maximisation of giant foreign and Indian corporations. They are being allowed to take

over agricultural lands, forests, rivers, coastal lands, driving out the people living there for centuries, to set up their infrastructural projects, special economic zones, etc. As if these public wealth transfers were not enough, the government is giving lakhs of crores of rupees as subsidies / concessions to the rich. Simultaneously, it is reducing its already low expenditures on providing essential welfare services to the poor at affordable rates. These welfare services, including education, health, electricity, transport, the public ration system, even drinking water facilities, are being privatised and handed over to private corporations for their naked loot – putting these facilities beyond the reach of the poor.

These policies have led to a huge increase in poverty, malnutrition, disease, unemployment in the country. They are aggravating every other problem in the country, be it the oppression of dalits, women, adivasis, the communal divide, or the frightening levels of environmental pollution.

Nearly three centuries ago, the East India Company came to India for trade, and then forcibly took over the country and plundered it. Today, there is no need for foreign corporations to colonise us by force – our own rulers are laying out the red carpet for them to enter and loot our country's wealth and resources. Our country's corporations are becoming the collaborators of these foreign corporations in this plunder.

On August 9, our country's freedom fighters gave the epic call for the British colonialists to

'Quit India'. It is time to recall the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters, which ultimately led to India winning freedom on August 15, and the drafting of the Indian Constitution, that gives to all its people the right to education, healthcare, food, security in old age, and other essentials necessary for people to live like human beings and develop their inherent capacity to the fullest extent. These welfare services are our right, let us unite to demand that the government make them accessible for all people of the country.

– Lokayat, Pune

*(Continued from Page 5)*

who wish to ignore the issue ‘as being of Poorbeahs verses Sikhs, Sikhs being on the side of British colonialism then’! Government then formed a committee, which included some Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar scholars too, who never took trouble to visit the site just 25 kilometres away, knowing well the non-interest of the government! But it was only feudal Sikhs like Maharajas of Patiala, Jind and Kapurthala, who were with British colonial regime, not the ordinary Sikhs, many of whom took part in rebellion and even in Delhi, Britishers were afraid of Sikhs, who were considered anti-British in large numbers!

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# Pakistan's shrinking minority space

Farahnaz Ispahani

The desire of Islamist extremists to 'purify' Pakistan has resulted in a major catastrophe for the minorities. The country cannot emerge as a modern pluralist state until the reversal of this culture of intolerance

The murder in Gujranwala of an elderly woman, a seven-year-old girl and an infant in a mob attack on members of the Ahmadi community highlights the continuing deterioration of Pakistan's treatment of its religious minorities. The mob was incited by an Ahmadi youth allegedly sharing blasphemous material on his Facebook page. But the cause of incitement is hardly relevant. Pakistan has been described by several human rights organisations as one of the nations with the least tolerance in religious matters.

The latest incident should be viewed as part of a tragic pattern that has evolved over decades. Ironically, the intolerance that is now widely associated with Pakistan had little to do with its founder's vision of a country where "in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."

The Ahmadis consider themselves Muslim but their beliefs are deemed by the orthodox as falling outside the tenets of Islam. The community recognises Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian as messiah and an emissary from god, a concept that runs

contrary to the Orthodox Muslim notion of Khatm-e-Nabuwat or Finality of the Prophethood. Anti-Ahmadi agitations have often been used by religious-political groups, particularly in the Punjab, as an instrument of polarisation. Violent attacks on Ahmadis in 1953 resulted in Pakistan's first instance of limited martial law being imposed in the city of Lahore.

## Growing discrimination

In 1974, another wave of violence led to Pakistan's Parliament amending the Constitution to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslims for legal purposes. It was argued at the time that once the Ahmadis' apostasy is legally recognised and they are classified legally as non-Muslims, their orthodox Muslim critics would be satisfied and anti-Ahmadi violence would decline. But that has not happened. Instead, attacks on Ahmadis have continued unabated and along with other minority religious communities, there is an effort to marginalise the community, convert them or push them out of Pakistan.

Currently, the Ahmadis are barred by law from calling themselves Muslim or using Islamic terminology like "masjid" to describe their places of worship. Violation of that law entails criminal proceedings and imprisonment. But the community is not afforded any legal protection even as a non-Muslim minority. Over a one-and-a-half year period in 2012-2013, there were 54 recorded mob attacks against Ahmadis.

## Read: The dangers of a non-secular state

The latest incident stands out because of the frivolousness of its ostensible cause and the innocence and helplessness of its victims. A grandmother and her seven-year-old granddaughter or an infant could hardly pose a threat to Islam in Gujranwala, a large city with millions of inhabitants and hundreds of mosques and madrasas.

The desire of Islamist extremists to "purify" Pakistan has resulted in a major catastrophe for the country's minorities. The violence of Partition denuded Pakistan of the majority of its Hindus and Sikhs, who would have otherwise constituted almost 20 per cent of the new country's population based on the 1941 census.

Now that a sizeable swathe of Pakistan's Muslim population has been turned into zealots, communities such as the Ahmadis, who were considered Muslim at independence, have joined the ranks of endangered minorities. Even the Shia, almost 20 per cent of the populace, are being attacked by extremists who do not acknowledge them as being a part of Muslim society. The attempts to describe Shias as non-Muslims are particularly ironic in view of the fact that Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam (the great leader) Muhammad Ali Jinnah was himself a Shia Muslim.

Pakistani laws, especially the one that deals with blasphemy, deny or interfere with the practice of minority faiths. Religious minorities

are targets of legal as well as social discrimination.

Jihadist groups created and trained to fight “infidel” communists in Afghanistan and “Hindu” India have become a threat at home and no one in a position of power seems to have the will or the courage to shut them down. Such is the sway of extremist ideology that the murder in cold blood of Ahmadis, Shias, Christians, Hindus and now increasingly Barelvi or “soft Sunni” Muslims and other religious groups who do not belong to the majority Sunni Muslim interpretation of Islam no longer seems to have any shock value left. According to reports, crowds celebrated all night on July 27 after the bloodshed in Gujranwala.

### **Erosion of diversity**

That this occurred in the month of Ramzan, a month meant to be spent praying and asking for forgiveness of one’s earthly sins, indicates the absence of any connection between violence against minorities and any notion of religious piety among the orthodox Sunnis who victimise them.

More than three days have passed since the Gujranwala attack and most Pakistanis have seen the television images of the crowd who perpetrated this calumny, dancing in the streets all night in celebration. However, there was no condemnation heard from either the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif or his brother, the Chief Minister of Pakistani Punjab.

The utter irrationality of the rejection of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan is encapsulated in the manner in which one of its most famous sons,

Dr. Mohammad Abdus Salam was spurned by his country. The physicist was the first and the only Pakistani as well as the first Muslim to win a Nobel Prize in science. After his death in 1996, Salam’s remains were returned to Pakistan and buried in an Ahmadi cemetery, with his tombstone describing him as the “First Muslim Nobel Laureate.”

A magistrate subsequently ruled that the word “Muslim” on an Ahmadi grave was blasphemous and ordered it to be sanded off. It seems that nobody in Pakistan remembers Jinnah’s comments when confronted with the demand to exclude Ahmadis from the fold of Islam. Jinnah had said, “If someone describes himself as a Muslim, how can I judge him otherwise. Let God decide that matter.”

When Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947, the new country’s capital, Karachi, was home to a religiously diverse community. The city’s architecture, too, reflected the traditions of several religions.

In addition to mosques of various Muslim denominations, there were Catholic and Protestant churches, a Jewish synagogue, Parsi (Zoroastrian) fire temples, as well as Jain and Hindu temples devoted to various deities. The Muslim call to prayer (Azan) was called on loudspeakers by Shias, Sunnis and Ahmadis five times a day. Various religious holidays were observed openly and often across communities.

Sixty seven years later, Karachi is no longer Pakistan’s capital. The country’s federal government now conducts its business from a purpose built capital, Islamabad, whose very name suggests a close

relationship between Pakistan and Islam. Karachi’s synagogue has shut down as have several of its churches. The few remaining churches have a dwindling number of worshippers. Many Pakistani Christians have emigrated to North America or Australia. Most Jain and Hindu temples have either been destroyed or taken over by squatters or land-grabbers and property developers. The Parsi populations have also declined though their temples exist. The Muslim call to prayer no longer sounds from Ahmadi places of worship.

### **Incremental intolerance**

Pakistan’s incremental intolerance in matters of religion is exemplified by the brutal assassination of former Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer and its aftermath. Taseer had attempted to help a poor unlettered Christian woman, Asia Bibi who was facing false blasphemy accusations. He was accused of being a blasphemer himself and killed by his own bodyguard. His murderer, Mumtaz Qadri, was garlanded and showered with rose petals by educated middle class lawyers outside a courthouse at his arraignment.

According to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), the country’s problem is the tolerance of “pervasive intolerance” in the country. The commission’s director, I.A. Rehman, asserts that “Pakistan continues to offer evidence of its lack of respect for the rights of religious minorities.” He attributes it to “the virus of intolerance” that he maintains “has infested the Pakistani people’s minds.” Human rights advocates like Mr. Rehman demand “visible action to end abuse of

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# Twenty-First-Century Land Grabs\* Accumulation by Rural Dispossession

Fred Magdoff

A combination of trends has contributed to the current twenty-first-century wave of land grabs. These include: New international trade agreements favorable to globalized capital (WTO, NAFTA, etc.). Opening up of the global South to foreign direct investment.<sup>16</sup> Growth of globalized financialization and speculation headquartered in the rich countries. Rising prices of foodstuff as more frequent droughts and floods decrease food produced in a region, especially harming countries that need to import large quantities of food; the 2008 World Food Crisis and its aftermath frightened food-importing countries. U.S. and European desire to have so-called “green” biofuels as a substitute for conventional liquid fuels—thus, stimulating the market for corn (to make ethanol) and soybeans and palm oil (to make biodiesel). Depletion of groundwater reserves in aquifers of important agricultural regions, as water is pumped out quicker than it can be replenished by rainfall.

These trends, together with insecure peasant land tenure in many countries and widespread corruption, have led to a rapid and large movement of foreign capital taking control over huge tracts of land—mainly in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America—by either outright purchase or by long-term leases and removal of peasant farmers from the land. In addition, in a few countries such as Colombia and Brazil local capital is heavily invested in land purchases

and development of large-scale agricultural ventures.

What has been happening over the last decade, and especially since the 2008 World Food Crisis, is clearly different in many respects than the earlier dispossessions. It is moving more quickly and simultaneously in many countries, mostly in the South. There are now sovereign wealth funds of countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and China that are lacking in sufficient land or reliable water supplies to grow enough food to feed their populations and do not want to rely on the workings of the “free market” to supply their import needs. The high prices of 2008 made it abundantly clear that there could well be future problems in getting needed food supplies on world markets. In addition, investors of capital, mainly from Europe and the United States, think they can profit by growing food or biofuels or engage in other types of agricultural ventures for a world market. Another smaller issue is that private wealthy individuals and conservation organizations from the North have purchased large swaths of land in the South in order to “conserve” it, but in the process locals lose or have greatly restricted use rights to the land.

A British-based private research and investment firm that produces reports for clients, Hardman & Co., has described why land and agricultural products are interesting investments: It is being called the new land grab; the rush for

agricultural gold. It is a familiar story, a mini tsunami of hot money chasing a suddenly fashionable asset class.... [L]eading the dash into agriculture by hedge funds and private equity managers is...the latest discovery of a commodity related play where there is still value to be found. However we think that this trend has significant[ly] more momentum behind it; it is not just an investment story, the re-discovery of the importance of agricultural assets reveals the very real issues facing mankind in relation to food security at a time of rapid population growth, rising affluence, urbanization, and climate change.... Agricultural land is proving a strong investment class on its own, but increasingly, we believe, investor attention will focus on the essential expertise in terms of science, equipment, and management skills that can make the land asset produce what humanity cannot live without—food.

The whole area is rife with speculation funded by the globally mobile wealth of the financialized era. Influential hedge-fund manager Michael Burry (profiled in Michael Lewis’s *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*) states that, “productive agricultural land with water on site, will be very valuable in the future. And I’ve put a good amount of money into that.” Such speculative investments are not necessarily directed at immediate production. Rather various corporations and investment funds are positioning themselves with respect to water, soil, mineral, and hydrocarbon resources. Indeed,

because growing food requires so much water, the “land grab” in the global South is as much concerned with water as land itself.

Africa, the target of much of the land grabbing, is sometimes called “the last agricultural frontier” because of vast areas of “unused” or underutilized land and generally low yields of its peasant agriculture. The continent itself is larger than most realize—its area is larger than the combined areas of the continental United States, China, India, Japan, continental Europe (including both east and west), and the UK—offering a vast area in which the new land-grab imperialism can develop. In addition, only 10 percent of the land is regarded as legally titled. Only in Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe are there significant areas of privately owned land—formerly, and in many cases currently, land owned by white settlers and their descendants. Most of Africa’s lands are considered state land and when customary rights are recognized, it is usually just for dwellings and their immediate surroundings.

It is difficult to obtain accurate figures for the amount of land in the global South that is under

the control of foreign and local private capital as well as foreign sovereign wealth funds. Sometimes announced projects do not actually go through and frequently there is less land actually used than the maximum agreed to. As of May 2012, it was estimated that between 32 and 82 million hectares (between approximately 80 and 200 million acres) of global farmland had been brought under foreign control, with the amount constantly increasing. The most comprehensive estimates of land grabs are available from Land Matrix, which has country-level information on land obtained by foreign sources that affects local communities, the crops grown, and the “grabber” country. According to this data, the countries that are the subject of the largest total land grabbed are almost all in Africa and Southeast Asia (see Table 1). The top ten land investor countries, aside from the usual suspects, include Malaysia and South Sudan—themselves a target of land grabs. But capital from the North commonly assists or dominates such operations. For example, Malaysian Sime Darby’s venture to plant oil palm plantations in Liberia includes capital from the UK, Finland, and Holland.

There are so many examples of twenty-first-century land grabs that it is difficult to select a few for discussion. Let us briefly turn toward Sierra Leone and Indonesia, both in the top ten target countries for the land grabs. Sierra Leone has made it clear that it is open for business—including land grabs. The Sierra Leone government’s Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) website is revealing. On the front page are flashing messages, among them: “Strong Private Investment and Divestiture Schemes” and “Arable land in abundance.” Land Matrix lists seventeen agreements on some 1.1 million hectares for growing everything from rubber to oil palm to sugar cane to rice to cassava and eucalyptus trees. The largest amount of land (over 600,000 hectares) is controlled by UK private capital.

Regarding Indonesia, *Guardian* correspondent John Vidal has written a number of articles about the destruction of large tracts of rainforests and the implications for the people and wildlife living in them. The following description gives some idea of the human and environmental catastrophe taking place: Land conflicts between farmers and plantation owners, mining companies and developers have raged across Indonesia as local and multinational companies have been encouraged to seize and then deforest customary land—land owned by indigenous people and administered in accordance with their customs. More than 600 were recorded in 2011, with 22 deaths and hundreds of injuries. The true number is probably far greater, say watchdog groups.

The Indonesian national human rights commission reported more than 5,000 human rights violations last year, mostly linked

**Table 1. Top Ten Land Grab Targets and Investor Countries**

Target Countries (millions of hectares)		Investor Countries (millions of hectares)	
South Sudan	4.1	United States	8.0
Papua New Guinea	3.9	Malaysia	3.5
Indonesia	3.5	Arab Emirates	2.8
DRC	2.7	UK	2.1
Mozambique	2.2	Singapore	1.9
Sudan	2.0	China	1.6
Liberia	1.4	Saudi Arabia	1.5
Argentina	1.3	South Sudan	1.4
Sierra Leone	1.2	China, Hong Kong	1.3
Madagascar	1.1	India	1.3

Source: Land Matrix, <http://landmatrix.org>



to deforestation by corporations. “Deaths of farmers caused by the increase in agrarian conflicts all across Indonesia are increasing,” said Henry Saragih, founder of the Indonesian Peasant Union, which has 700,000 members. “The presence of palm oil plantations has spawned a new poverty and is triggering a crisis of landlessness and hunger. Human rights violations keep occurring around natural resources in the country and intimidation, forced evictions and torture are common,” said Saragih. “There are thousands of cases that have not surfaced. Many remain hidden, especially by local authorities,” he says. Communities complain that they are not warned, consulted or compensated when concessions are handed out and that they are left with no option but to give up their independence and work for minimal wages for the companies.

### *Land Dispossession in China:*

#### *A Special Case*

The situation occurring in China is so different from that in other countries that we need to discuss it separately. In a way this is a return to land grabbing and dispossessions as a means of national primitive accumulation. This, of course, was a country in which a comprehensive land reform occurred, followed by the formation of communes, which was followed in the 1980s by the allocation of strips of land to individual families under Deng Xiaoping’s “Household Responsibility System.” Chinese land is either owned by the state or collectively by the village, and farmers have rights to use parcels for a certain period of time.

Local and regional officials transferring land (or use rights) to developers are primarily responsible for the displacement of farmers.

As old cities have been expanded and new ones built, land is also taken for building infrastructure such as roads, dams, airports, and various public buildings. Although rampant corruption exists among local officials in the process of transferring land use rights, another impetus is the lack of funds coming from the central or provincial governments. Thus funds to operate villages and small towns are perpetually deficient and one of the ways to generate funds is to transfer contractual rights to land to developers. According to a professor at Tsinghua University, “In a lot of cases in China, urbanization is the process of local government driving farmers into buildings while grabbing their land.” This has resulted in literally tens of thousands of mass demonstrations. Although sometimes concessions to villagers are made, as in the case of Wukan—where villagers took over the town and, after some struggle, were allowed to elect their own leaders—the anger is clearly widespread over both the corruption and the taking of farmers’ agricultural land and houses. A 2011 survey of seventeen provinces by U.S.-based Landesa Rural Development Institute, Renmin University, and Michigan State University found the following:

About 4 million farmers were losing their land annually. The mean compensation to farmers for transfer of contractual rights to land was \$17,850 an acre. The mean selling price to commercial developers was \$740,000 an acre.<sup>26</sup>

A recent ominous development is China’s program to relocate a massive number of people from the rural areas into cities. By 2025, some 250 million people are to be displaced from the land, and China’s population will go,

according to present development plans, from about 50 percent urban to approximately 70 percent. Part of the push for this may be to populate the “ghost cities” that have been built on speculation, but sit empty. Regarding agriculture, larger farms and fewer farmers are obviously part of the plan. “Supermarkets now rarely deal directly with small farmers. Instead, over the past five years, a new generation of companies has emerged to supply them with food. Some of these producers, such as Chaoda, a vegetable producer that operates farms in 29 different parts of the country, have managed to lease large enough tracts of land to justify big investments.” Agribusinesses are bypassing dealing with individual small farmers and are “negotiating supply contracts with the village officials who control the use of the land.” Corporations such as Starbucks (coffee) and Pepsico (potatoes for its Frito Lay brand) are growing crops on land that they control—Pepsico is the largest potato grower in China—as well as contracting with farmers to grow for them.

Large-scale (“factory”) dairy farms, with capacities of 10,000 cows per farm and robotic milking machines, are already in place near major Chinese cities. Factory hog farms are also being developed and large crop farms are being encouraged. The purchase by Shuanghui International (a firm connected to China’s largest hog producers) of Smithfield (a U.S. company that owns over 400 farms and has contracts with 2,100 “farmer-contractors” to produce for them—the nation’s largest hog “farmer” and pork processor) is a further indication of China’s intention to concentrate on factory animal farms to supply its citizens with meat. According to a Chinese news service article,

“The central government said in its ‘No.1 document’ for 2013...[that] it would guide the orderly transfers of contractual rights of rural lands, and encourage land contracts to flow to large-scale landholders, family farms or farmer’ [sic] cooperatives to develop scale management. The large-scale farming will improve land and labor efficiency and provide a firm support to the country’s new type of urbanization.”

The dubious idea behind this massive planned dispossession of farmers, and movement of such large numbers to cities, is to help create a self-propelling economy based on individual consumption rather than infrastructure investment and net export. “Urbanization can launch a process of value creation,” says the chief economist of the Agricultural Bank of China. “It should start a huge flow of revenues.”<sup>29</sup> Others, however, are doubtful. As Michael Pettis, professor of finance at Peking University, writes: “China’s plan to shift 300 million people into cities has become the new default argument for high growth, but it is based on a fallacy. First urbanization does not create growth. Growth creates urbanization.... Countries do not grow because they urbanize, in other words, they urbanize because they are growing and there are more good, productive jobs in the cities than in the countryside.”<sup>30</sup>

As might be expected, many problems are occurring in this rushed urbanization—especially the inability to produce sufficient new jobs to absorb the dispossessed and displaced farmers. There are people who used the compensation funds given to them for the forced relocation to buy electronic consumer goods, such as washing machines and flat screen televisions, that are now useless to them because they cannot afford to pay for the

needed electricity. At the same time there are shortages of young, migrant workers—especially prized by industry since easily superexploited—in some of the southern coastal development zones. In fact, the capacity of China to superexploit rural-based, migrant workers (known as “the floating population”) has been a key to the rapid growth of industrial production in coastal regions, and would be undermined by a massive shift of the population away from rural areas.<sup>31</sup>

The whole concept of rapid urbanization in order to have lots of consumers who will consume ever more stuff—taking the place of the reliance on investment and exports to keep the economy growing—is, to say the least, highly questionable as a development policy. This is putting the cart (moving people to cities) before the horse (jobs) and the whole effort may collapse because of its own irrational basis. And, if successful (even partially), its environmental implications are staggering: it will result in massive spending in order to promote personal consumption of more and more stuff to keep the economy growing. It also leaves the dispossessed vulnerable until a reasonably adequate social safety net is reinstated. If an economic slowdown occurs and people lose their jobs, or employees are fired in order to hire younger workers, there will no longer be the option of returning to their villages and growing food for their families.

China has another critical agricultural issue: the large amount of land contaminated with industrial wastes, estimated at 10 to 24 million hectares (25 to 60 million acres).<sup>32</sup> And this is out of an agricultural base of approximately 120 million hectares—the bottom line that the Chinese leadership has set for the minimum land necessary to be able

to grow most of their food.

The pollution arises from both the use of contaminated water for irrigation (many ponds, streams, and rivers contain discharges from chemical plants), and from airborne pollutants which are byproducts of mining and smelting. For example, the excessive cadmium in rice—especially from rice grown in Hunan province—is probably just the tip of an iceberg. The government has so far refused to release the results of a nationwide soil survey looking for contamination problems.

### **Problems with the Growing Global Emphasis on Large Farms**

During most of the thousands of years that humans have practiced agriculture, the vast majority of people worked the land, producing food for themselves and a relatively small group of non-food producing classes. Now, for the first time in human history, there are more urban dwellers than those living in rural areas. Despite this dramatic transition, farming is still critically important to the lives of a large portion of humanity. The International Labor Organization estimates that in 2013 approximately one-third of all workers (just over one billion people) were employed in agriculture, compared with about 44 percent in the services and 23 percent in industry.<sup>33</sup>

During earlier stages of capitalism there were alternative jobs available for displaced peasant farmers. These were frequently, but not always, at the expense of another population. During the rapid increase in industrial production many who lost land could emigrate to colonies or former colonies or move to cities and work in industry. But now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the world capitalist economy is not able to provide productive

employment for the huge numbers of people losing their lands. Thus the fate of those migrating to cities or other countries is commonly to live in slums and to exist precariously within the “informal” economy—about one-third of city dwellers live in slums. Fed by the rapid depeasantization of the global South, “the global informal working class,” Mike Davis observed in *Planet of the Slums*, “is about one billion strong, making it the fastest-growing and most unprecedented social class on earth.”<sup>34</sup>

This means that there is a huge problem with the growth of farm size to larger and larger units with increasing levels of mechanization. The effects on small farms and peasants are the same whether nationals (Brazil, for example) or foreigners own the large farms. Large farms tend to displace small farmers directly by dispossession (whether by the use of force or by “legal” means) or indirectly by competition, have high levels of mechanization, and require few labor hours per hectare. For a 160 hectare farm (400 acres) it takes on average 7.8 hours of labor per acre to grow and harvest corn, while for an 800 hectare farm (2,000 acres) it takes just 2.7 hours.<sup>35</sup> Approximately one-third of all the U.S. cropland is on farms of greater than 800 hectares (2,000 acres).

However, this reduction in labor hours does not mean more overall production per unit of land. Indeed, small farms can produce more food from a given area by using intercropping and other techniques, and also have the advantage from a social standpoint of employing more labor. And small farms are more ecologically efficient than large farms that need to rely on heavy petrochemical inputs, both directly and via fertilizers and pesticides,

which take large amounts of energy to produce.

The simple math of the implications of China’s push to larger farms has been pointed out in China. “Despite the promising potential of family farming, [Professor] Lin [Wanlong at the College of Economics and Management of China Agriculture University] cautioned that those establishing family farms around the nation should take a prudent approach. According to his calculations, if the size of a family farm averages 6.7 hectares, China’s arable land, totaling 120 million hectares, can only hold 18 million such farms. Provided every family farm engages three laborers, this system could only employ 54 million people, while 300 million people in China currently make their living from agriculture alone.”<sup>36</sup>

Samir Amin claims that capitalism’s ideal is for 20 million

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\*Adapted from the article published in the *Monthly Review*

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***(Continued from Page 8)***

minorities’ rights” instead of “half-truths and subterfuge in defending the state,” which they feel have been consistently employed by Pakistan officials over the years.

**Read: Condition of minorities worsening in Pakistan**

Pakistani laws, especially the one that deals with blasphemy, deny or interfere with the practice of minority faiths. Religious minorities are targets of legal as well as social discrimination. Most significantly, in recent years, Pakistan has witnessed some of the worst organized violence targeting religious minorities. Over an 18-month period covering 2012 and part of 2013, at least 200

large-scale highly mechanized farmers to produce all the food needed globally.<sup>37</sup> As he recognizes, there are two significant problems with this. It is more difficult to manage larger farms in ecologically sound ways—such as using complex rotations, integrating animal and crop production, raising animals humanely, having unmanaged natural areas, using intercropping, and trap crops. However, there is another issue as well: What will the literally hundreds of millions of people involved in agriculture today do if they are no longer farming? Most will probably flock to cities (and slums) that do not have sufficient job opportunities. This “surplus” population is already rapidly growing larger with land grabs and increased agricultural mechanization—people not needed for either industrial or agricultural production, and who no longer have access to land to grow their own food. This then is precisely one of the most critical issues of our age.

incidents of sectarian violence were reported, that led to 1,800 casualties, including more than 700 deaths.

Those of us who have been born in Pakistan have seen and experienced the effects of the hatred fed to us through our textbooks, television sets, newspapers, religious clergy and military dictators about the purity of only one religion and one version of Islam. Their need to destroy any threat to its purity, and therefore the purity of the state, has ensured that the well of tolerance has by now been well and truly poisoned. Pakistan cannot emerge as a modern pluralist state until the reversal of this culture of intolerance.

– Courtesy; *The Hindu*



# Analysis of Election Expenditure Statements of MPs 2014 Lok Sabha Elections

National Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms have analyzed the election expense statements submitted after the Lok Sabha Elections of 2014 for 537 MPs.

The expenditure limits for Lok Sabha elections were raised this year from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 70 lakh for each Lok Sabha constituency in bigger states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka etc, and from Rs 22 lakh to Rs. 54 Lakhs in smaller states like Goa. This revision of election expenditure limits came after sustained efforts by the candidates contesting elections. However, upon analyzing the expenditure statements submitted by the MPs of the Lok Sabha 2014 elections to the ECI, it is seen that the MPs continue to declare election expenditure which is significantly lower than the expense limit.

## Highlights

**Less than 50% of the Limit:** Candidates have constantly claimed that the election expenditure limit set is very low. However, based on the election expense declarations of 537 MPs analysed from Lok Sabha, 2014 to the ECI, 176 MPs (33%) have declared election expenses of less than 50% of the expense limit in their constituency

**Expenditure more than the Expense Limit:** One MP declared election expenditure more than the prescribed expense limit. Gourav Gogoi of INC from Kaliabor Constituency, Assam declared an election expenditure of Rs. 82.40

Lakhs (118% of the expense limit)

**Average Election Expenses:** Based on the election expense declarations of 537 MPs from Lok Sabha 2014 to the ECI, the average amount of money spent by them in the elections is only about Rs 40.33 lakhs, which is 58% of the expense limit.

**Party-wise Average Election Expenses:** The party wise average election expenses shows that the average spending for 277 MPs from BJP is Rs 41.81 lakhs (60% of the average expense limit), for 44 MPs from INC is Rs 41.63 lakhs (60% of the average expense limit), for 37 MPs from AIADMK is Rs 35.66 Lakhs (51% of the average expense limit) and for 34 MPs from AITC is Rs. 46.51 Lakhs (67% of the average expense limit).

**Top 3 MPs with highest Election Expenses:** The maximum expense of about Rs 82.40 Lakhs (118% of the expense limit) has been declared by Gourav Gogoi of INC from Kaliabor constituency, Assam followed by Mansukhbhai Dhanjibhai Vasava of BJP from Bharuch constituency, Gujarat with an expense of Rs 67.31 lakhs (or 96% of the expense limit) and Saugata Roy of AITC from Dum Dum constituency, West Bengal with an expense of Rs 65.53 Lakhs (or 94% of the expense limit)

**MPs with lowest Election Expenses:** Shyama Charan Gupta of BJP from Allahabad constituency, Uttar Pradesh has declared election expenditure of Rs. 39,369, followed by Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati of TDP from Vizianagaram

Constituency, Andhra Pradesh with election expenses of Rs. 4.10 lakhs and Vanaroja R of AIADMK from Tiruvannamalai Constituency, Tamil Nadu with election expenses of Rs. 5.48 lakhs.

Association for Democratic Reforms compared the expenditure incurred by the candidate/election agent (Section I) with the self-declared total assets of the MP from the affidavit filed along with their nomination papers during elections.

16 MPs have declared election expenditure incurred by them which is more than their total assets declared during the elections.

**Expense on Public Meeting, Rally, and Processions with Star Campaigners:** Out of the 537 MPs analyzed, 108 (20%) MPs have declared that they have not spent ANY amount on public meetings, processions etc with Star Campaigners.

**Expense on Public Meetings, Rally, and Processions other than the ones with Star Campaigners:** Out of the 537 MPs analyzed, 24 (4%) MPs have declared that they have not spent ANY amount on public meetings, processions etc other than the ones with star campaigners.

**Expense on Campaigning through electronic/print media:** 108 (20%) MPs have declared that they have not spent ANY amount on campaigning through electronic/print media.

**Expense on Campaign Workers:** 100 (19%) MPs have declared that



they have not spent ANY amount on campaign workers.

**Expense on Vehicles used:** 5 (1%) MPs have declared that they have not spent ANY amount on Vehicles Used.

**Expense on Campaign Materials:** 72 (13%) MPs have declared that they have not spent ANY amount on Campaign Materials

**Funds Raised from Political Party:** Out of the 537 MPs analyzed, 194 (36%) MPs have declared that they have not received any funds from political parties.

**Funds Raised through any person/ company/ firm/ associations/ body of persons etc as loan, gift or donation etc:** Out of the 537 MPs analyzed, 165 (31%) MPs have declared that they have not received

*any funds from any person/ company/ firm/ associations/ body of persons etc as loan, gift or donation etc.*

**Self funds used for election campaign:** Out of the 537 MPs analyzed, 51 (9%) MPs have declared that they have not used any of their own funds for their election campaign

- Association for Democratic Reforms



## Rural India Focus

### PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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**WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL**



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Shubhrajyotsnaa Pulakitayaaminiim,  
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Suhaasiniim,  
Sumadhura Bhaashhiniim,  
Sukhadaam, Varadaam, Maataram,  
Vande Maataram....



*Best Wishes*

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## Judicial Independence

On an earlier occasion, we had pleaded in these columns for the speedy enactment of legislation constitutionally empowering a judicial commission to oversee the appointments, promotions and transfers of high court and supreme court judges. We had argued in favour of dismantling the now-in-force collegium system on the ground that it had failed to achieve what it had been created for. Thanks to public pressure, the erstwhile UPA government had introduced a bill in the Rajya Sabha but could not pass it there or in the lower House since elections intruded. Now, Parliament is all set to pass the Constitution 121<sup>st</sup> Amendment Bill, 2014, aimed at establishing a National Judicial Appointments Commission that will replace the collegium system.

If we are returning to the theme of maintaining judicial independence and the process of judicial appointments, it is because we felt that in demanding the dismantling of the collegium system, its critics had missed a few points in its favour. We felt that in all fairness, those points also should be taken note of and a view expressed on them. The debate on the topic of judicial appointments, mooted in the last two years picked up momentum when the Manmohan Singh government brought in a bill. It has gained further spurt with the NDA government proceeding with another bill, with slight modifications, aimed at the same end-result. Whether the new bill is a significant improvement on the old, time will tell. What is to be welcomed is (a) an important procedure directly linked with the procedures for picking judges is undergoing a reform that has elicited across-the-political-board support and endorsement, and (b) while introducing its bill the law minister of the present government Ravi Shankar Prasad has declared that the government is committed to the cause of judicial independence, and will be loath to interfere in the power and authority of the supreme court even while maintaining the sanctity and supremacy of Parliament. Admittedly, this is the right note to strike and the minister must be congratulated for it.

Once the bill becomes law, the proposed judicial appointments commission will be a six-member body, comprising the Chief Justice of India, two senior-most SC judges, the law minister, and two eminent persons who will be chosen by a panel of the prime minister, leader of the Opposition or by the leader of the largest opposition

party and the chief justice of India. The procedure chosen is obviously aimed at ensuring that there is a balance between a system in which the government alone picks up judges and a system in which the judiciary alone does the appointments.

Since the announcement of the composition of the commission was announced, a number of suggestions have been voiced. It has been argued that instead of six, it should have been a seven-member commission (obviously because the odd numbers will come into play if and when there is need for voting, that one of the members should be a woman, that one of the members should be from the weaker sections of the society and that the senior-most chief justice of high court should be made a member. However, these are all matters of detail which can be decided when the chairman of the commission begins constituting it.

The critics of the collegium system have obviously missed the wood for the trees. The main charge against that system was that it was not transparent enough, that the system left room for misuse or abuse, that there were no safeguards against choosing undesirable candidates and that there was no procedure in force that would probe the suitability of the candidates for the posts, meaning checking on their background and antecedents.

The debate was sought to be put in perspective by an anguished comment from the chief justice of India, Justice R. M. Lodha, who said that criticizing the collegiums system was tantamount to criticism of the judiciary since most judges in office, including himself, were products of the system. Bringing the judiciary into disrepute would therefore shake people's confidence in the judiciary, which will be a disservice to the nation. The judiciary was most concerned about its independence and integrity and importantly about its reputation. But it had its limitations. After all, the judiciary was also a product of the imperfect society.

Like all reforms, we need to give the new one relating to the judicial appointments enough time to get into stride. On the face of it, the new system seems to be well-thought-out and so worth a try



## अपना बाजार को-ऑप.

मुंबई कामगार मध्यवर्ती ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था मर्यादित

(बहुराज्य ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था)

गोविंदजी केणी रोड, नायगांव, दादर (पूर्व), मुंबई - ४०० ०१४

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*Between the lines*

## Old Habits Die Hard

Kuldip Nayar

A spate of personal accounts by the insiders has made the Indian political scene interesting and chirpy. However subjective, they do put in the public domain some information which was not available earlier. There is nothing earth shaking in the revelations made therein. But they do confirm some of the perceptions about our governance.

For example, it was rumoured that Sonia Gandhi wielded authority without responsibility and ran the government from her residence. This is now confirmed. Official files were carried to her residence for direction. Till today, she has not said a word by way of explanation to defend herself. It appears that she believes that she doesn't have to explain as if it is the dynasty's prerogative. Those who have followed its ways will not be surprised about it.

Jawaharlal Nehru allowed his daughter, Indira Gandhi, to run the government when he was in bed due to illness. On her part, she constituted a coterie to rule, which was an extra-constitutional authority.

I was then the press officer of Lal Bahadur Shastri, Minister without portfolio. Nehru had brought him back after sending him out of government under the K. Kamaraj plan, a ruse to oust Nehru's critics, particularly Morarji Desai and Jagjiwan Ram, from the government.

The prime minister's residence was a two-storey building with Nehru staying upstairs. Who from among the visitors would be allowed to go upstairs was dependent on Indira Gandhi's decision. She did not like Shastri and would keep him waiting. Once, still working as press officer, I pointed out to Nehru's aide, T.N. Seshan that Shastri, then out of office, was kept waiting. He told me not to get involved in such things as Indira Gandhi did it intentionally. "This is politics", he said.

The ruling party may have changed at the Centre but the political culture has not. We are feudal in our outlook. This trait transcends other considerations. It does not go well with the democratic temperament. But it is there and

has not undergone any perceptible change in the past. Those who come to power become dictators in action. Even when they profess that power is with the people they are using it figuratively and not realistically because they, a very few, rule the country.

The rule by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is no different. In fact, the Prime Minister's Office under him is more powerful than the ones before. The PMO is strong and sees to it that every bit of decision is ratified even before the files are sent to the Home Minister who only signs on the dotted lines. Thus power has got concentrated in Modi's office. Therefore, one gets the impression that Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Home Minister Rajnath Singh, however powerful, appear to have Modi's eyes and ears for their statements which look out of line with the party's thinking.

In all fairness, the Modi government should have changed the administrative apparatus which has the Nehruvian stamp. After independence, Nehru who had gone through long national struggle set up paraphernalia which rejected liberalism that bound the different elements together. The BJP is different. None of its leaders went to jail during our freedom struggle. The party should have reorganized the polity to suit their way of thinking and their way of doing things.

Alas, the BJP has adopted the same old administrative methods which give all the leeway to bureaucrats. The BJP should have moved the machinery to the direction which will work the way it wants. Perhaps the Modi government should have appointed an administrative reforms commission to suggest steps to implement the saffronised agenda. The administration is still stuck in the old ways, partly secular and partly democratic but mostly the withered ideas of the RSS leaders.

True, there are so many administrative reform commission reports accumulating dust. But the Modi government's commission would be a departure from the past, the liberal era of Nehru. Modi's authoritarian way of governance requires new rules and guidelines.

A BJP appointed commission could have provided the Modi government with the instruments to Hinduise the administrative set-up.

I wish I could say that the lessons have been learnt. Persons who used authority without responsibility still wield power. And bureaucrats vie with one another in obedience to the ministers and bend rules to get out of turn promotion or a cushy posting.

The old type of civil servants is going to be hard to get. Yet there is no alternative to the bureaucracy which has entrenched itself in the system from top to bottom. The BJP must have realized this when in power more than 10 years ago. The regret is that it became a part and parcel of the system while its election plank was to cleanse it.

It can be argued that the electorate faces a big problem. People did cast vote in favour of the BJP in the recent Lok Sabha elections. This was not because they liked the party. But it was because they were sick and tired of the Congress rule. Party president Sonia Gandhi herself

admitted that the voters did not like the Congress. But she said she had no idea that their anger would convert itself into vengeance.

They had voted the BJP to power. So much so - they have given the party a majority by itself. But what would they do when they get disappointed with the BJP? They do not want to go back to the Congress. But what option do they have? That is the reason why the Congress is sitting pretty. People are waiting for the Modi government to perform and prove itself. Instead of that, the saffronisation programme is taking shape.

The alternative could have been the Aam Admi Party. In fact, it evoked hope when Gandhian Anna Hazare held meetings in different parts of the country to warn the people against corruption. Their response was solid and AAP's Arvind Kejriwal was voted to power in Delhi. But then Hazare distanced himself from Kejriwal and his dictatorial tendency, besides the ambition of some put cold water on finding a clean alternative. Unfortunately, the old cultures do not disappear quickly.

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# How to Rejuvenate Democratic Socialist Movement

**Pannalal Surana**

The monster of capitalism is spreading its claws to grab all natural resources for the benefit of a few moneypots. Raising prices of their products at their sweet will, they want all freedom to deprive the labour of all its dues. What is worrisome is that many politicians, economists and journalists have become their protagonists. The multitude of toiling masses are made to believe that their salvation lies in accepting the capitalist arrangement without a whimper.

The rulers, who are playing the role of their henchmen, are resorting to inhuman repression while dealing with the protest movements of the farmers, agricultural labourers and urban - organized as well as unorganized - workers. This is happening not only in the USA, EU, India, Egypt, etc. but also in China, which is claimed by some ultra-radicals as the vanguard of socialist movement. The media is, by and large, supporting all deeds and misdeeds of the corporates worldwide.

The new regime has cast evil influences on sports and performing arts like cinema and theatre. Match-fixing, underhand dealings, violence, vulgar sex and obscenity have become their hallmarks. They are corrupting minds of the school-going children. All norms of decent behaviour are thrown to the winds.

A nerve-breaking situation indeed.

But all is not lost. A few bold voices are drawing attention of the mankind. 'One per cent against ninety nine per cent' had triggered Occupy Wall-Street movement. There is a tremendous response to democratic socialist movement in a number of South American countries. A number of puppet regimes backed by multinationals have been replaced in Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, etc. Winds of change are blowing throughout West Asian and African countries. There are ups and downs, yes. But the spirit of humanity is trying to assert itself. It is a great sign of encouragement.

Coming to our country, mainstream parties are pursuing Free Market policies without any qualms of conscience. With the help of money of the corporates, they are manipulating elections. The elections have been made so expensive that parties of the down-trodden

people feel helpless. The media, which should serve as vehicles of communication with the people, have all become drum-beaters of the corporates. Influences of caste and creed identity are dividing the masses whose plight and problems are the same. Their resolution can be achieved only by ideology-driven unified mass action.

Odds are heavy. But, not insurmountable. In history, it has been observed that the basic human urge for justice, freedom and equality is strong enough to survive many ups and downs. What is needed is a well-knit army of visionary and dedicated activists who can motivate and mobilise people for meaningful action. Sooner than later, people do realise that heavy concentration of wealth and political power is detrimental to their well-being. People had responded to the call for resistance to age-old cruel anti-human traditions. Perriyar of Tamil Nadu, Jyotiba Fule of Maharashtra, Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and others could unleash latent forces of radical change when their calls were backed by vision, courage and sacrifice. Time has come for us to rededicate ourselves for similar herculean struggles. It will have to be a real self-less task. No tangible benefit is likely to come our way. We will have to serve as the buried foundation stones of the new revolution. History asks for that kind of sacrifice. And we should be prepared for that.

While giving proper importance to the mass action, attention will have to be paid to the moral uplift of the people at large. Corruption of the politicians and the babus cannot be wiped out if majority of people are prepared to pay bribe. If good behavior is expected from the rulers and the bureaucracy, people at large should also decide to follow norms of good and honest behavior.

The cadets of this new revolutionary army will have to be vigilant. They will have to grasp intricacies of the functioning of the corporate-directed political economy. Technology cannot be willed away. But it must be made to serve humanity at large - which means priority and preference for the down-trodden. The adivasis, the dalits, women and unemployed youth should be empowered to make sound use of the technology. Proper prioritization of various sectors like agriculture, fishing, mining,

*(Continued on Page 26)*

# Social Democracy for the 21st Century

**B. Vivekanandan**

The validity of Democratic Socialism/Social Democracy for the 21st century, both as an ideology, a movement, and a way of life as well, springs from the role it played in the advancement of human civilization, based on egalitarian principles, during the 19th and 20th centuries. Indeed, during the last century and a half democratic socialists of Europe, and elsewhere, have been striving to establish new humane societies based on principles of democratic socialism – democracy, equality, freedom, justice and solidarity. From the very beginning, they stressed, that along with economic questions, social questions also must receive adequate simultaneous attention. They rejected the political approach by which economic blinkers insensitized the social dimensions of the development process.

## Trajectory of Social Democracy

Europe was the cradle of Social Democracy where, as part of the labour movement, it grew as a movement of emancipation against inequality, injustice, discrimination and exploitation. How to achieve growth, solidarity, and distributive justice, through peaceful democratic means became the main planks of Social Democracy. The vision of a new society anchored in an egalitarian culture, evolved out of these considerations. They strove to advance the concept of solidarity which emphasized that the economically strong sections of society have a duty to carry their weak brethren along the road to freedom and progress. From Europe, the movement has now spread across the world.

Historically, the roots of Social Democracy are intertwined with the other components of the Labour movement - the trade unions and co-operatives. While the cooperatives endeavoured to liberate societies from the middle man's exploitation and to inculcate a spirit of cooperation and sharing in societies, the trade unions strove to free the working class from employers' exploitation, and the socialist/social democratic political organizations redefined the role of the state from traditional constitutional law and order machinery into a socially responsible one - responsible for health, education, housing, employment, and so on, of the entire population without discrimination.

After their successful drive to strengthen democracy in many countries of Europe, through the introduction

of universal suffrage, the social democrats focused their attention on the establishment of welfare states. They hastened the process of transfer of vital social welfare responsibilities from private organizations to the State, or to the agencies established through legislation, and made the state assume more welfare functions and become an instrument to foster distributive justice. Indeed, besides presenting it as a higher form of political democracy where the regulatory role of the state has been very well recognized, the welfare state was seen as the final phase of the societal construction. As a result, for social democrats, the nation state embodied a welfare state where social, economic and political equality becomes a fundamental element. In this new edifice, the role of work, or the pursuit of a full employment strategy, constituted a core element of social democratic state policy. In consequence, wherever social democratic ideals have been pursued sincerely, they have been able to change those societies fundamentally. The full employment strategy, which the social democrats have followed, proved not only an effective recipe for progress but also a stable measure to forestall many potential social problems. Responsibility for the weak, through human solidarity, remained a core value of Social Democracy.

Although the quality of welfare states which were thus brought into being varied, in terms of content and spread, from state to state, the social democratic ethos became a fact of life everywhere in Europe. Certain fundamental non-discriminatory social rights have been established in many of these societies. In the Scandinavian countries, where the social democratic parties became ruling parties for a fairly long time, they could successfully build advanced welfare state systems on social democratic lines, perhaps even to a point of exhaustion of their basic welfare agenda. The main thought of their initiatives was attuned to the establishment of a society based on egalitarian culture. However, whether the social democrats were in the treasury bench or in opposition, it is undeniable that they have made a powerful and enduring impact on the socio-economic and political life everywhere in Europe, so much so that in many countries of Europe the welfare state system became part of the consensus politics. Indeed, even the non-social democratic parties too had accepted substantial welfare roles for the state.

## **Main features**

The main features of Social Democracy thus evolved in the post-war period were three-fold: (1) state was perceived as the central coordinating instrument in socio-economic decision making; (2) pursuance of an integrated approach to growth, employment, and distributive justice as a fundamental element in the economic policy; and (3) organization of people as a power factor in the transformation of the system.

In addition to the restructuring of national societies on social democratic lines, the social democrats have pursued certain policies internationally as well with a view to establish a new world order based on the ideals of democratic socialism. This was more manifest from the mid-70s onwards. In order to promote democratic socialist movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and advance the application of solidarity principle on a global scale, the Socialist International opened up its membership for Socialist/Social Democratic parties from these regions.

The social democratic experiment in Europe has inspired the establishment of social democratic parties in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the post-war period with a view to pursue similar objectives in the developing countries. Many non-socialist parties in these countries have also shown social democratic tendencies when they adopted welfare state system and mixed economy as corner-stones of their state policies. As a result, in many of these countries as well, the social democratic approach became part of a consensus politics. Barring some small splinter groups here and there, no major force challenged this consensus approach.

## **Thatcher-Reagan Opposition**

But, in Europe, this consensus approach followed in the post-war period was disturbed in the 1980s by the unleashing of neo-conservatism, promoted by Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Ronald Reagan of the United States. Their ideas were essentially opposed to government intervention, redistributive taxation, egalitarianism and welfare state. As a result, these neo-conservatives have since then vociferously pursued programmes like monetarism, privatization, free market, liberalization, globalization, rolling back the role of the state from many areas of public welfare, and so on, and tried to organize socio-economic life around the free market. Obviously, all of them have posed challenges to the ideals and objectives of Social Democracy and its welfare state approach.

The offensive against the social democratic approach escalated simultaneously in the developing countries outside Europe as well. By applying direct and indirect pressures through multi-lateral institutions and transnational corporations, many governments of the developing countries have been forced to adopt neo-conservative and neo-liberalist approach and effect structural changes in their economies, unmindful of its damaging social and economic consequences for their societies. As a result, like in Europe, the social democratic values and approach in Asia, Africa and America too have been put under severe external pressures.

## **Collapse of Communism**

The collapse of communism and its Stalinist structures in the erstwhile Soviet Union and other East European countries has been depicted not only as the failure of the methodology of revolution but also, erroneously, as the failure of socialism/Social Democracy and the victory of capitalism and free market approach. To strengthen that erroneous argument, the differences between communism and Social Democracy, which have been ideological competitors all along on many basic issues, have been conveniently ignored.

## **Social Democracy - A Superior Ideology**

Indeed, as a competing ideology with communism, Social Democracy has proved superior and enduring. The collapse of autocratic communist structures in the erstwhile Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the endurance of the egalitarian societies established in Scandinavia is a testimony to it. The role Social Democracy, particularly the Scandinavian model, played to inspire and promote glasnost and perestroika in the erstwhile Soviet Union deserves recognition. Though in some Asian countries like China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea the communists are still in command, the rapid erosion which has already taken place to their systems from within towards greater democratization show that significant changes in these countries are also not far off. However, the competition is still on between Social Democracy and neo-conservatism.

## **Challenges**

Other perceptible challenges to Social Democracy emanate from the move to globalize economy, market and culture. The technological advancement and the neo-liberalist and neo-conservative philosophy of free market have cumulatively generated mass unemployment, which has the potential to upset the social balance everywhere. Indeed, many industrially advanced countries have gone through long periods of recession, resulting in much lower levels of growth and high rate

of unemployment, the highest since 1930s. However, all these developments have put new limits on the ability of national governments to control economic policies. In front of transnational industry, banking, and so on, national governments have become considerably weak and helpless in many respects. Progressively, they are losing control over the management of their national economies and social policies, which is essential for the building up and preservation of welfare states. Mass unemployment is once again becoming a normal phenomena in most of the states, which not only threatens social peace, but also affects the entire gamut of social relationships in those societies.

There is an ongoing debate among the democratic socialists all over the world regarding the problems and prospects of their movement and its role in the socio-economic and political spectrum in the emerging global system. The question has multiple dimensions. For the Scandinavian social democrats, the point is how to preserve their achievements from erosion in the midst of the current neo-liberal and neo-conservative attacks. In other parts of Europe, the issue is how to further advance social democratic ideals and programmes. For the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the issue is to launch and carry forward a caring welfare state system against the ongoing, internationally orchestrated, neo-conservative and neo-liberalist offensive.

However, a forward looking Social Democracy should have as a transient measure a two-faceted programme - one for developed countries and another for developing countries. For the developed countries, transnationalization of the economic and social power relationships and the inter-relationship between the environment and the economy could be relevant for the future. At the same time, for the developing countries, equality, social justice and solidarity are still future oriented ideals. But, the common issues which are still there before all of them are: how to meet the challenges posed by the transnationalization of the economic and cultural processes, dominated by capital and private enterprise; how to promote solidarity in societies which are under the neo-liberalist attacks; and how to promote prosperity without damage to ecology.

### **Effectiveness Needs Unity**

Social democrats have flourished and proved more effective whenever and wherever they acted in partnership with other constituents of the labour movement - trade unions and cooperatives - and reinforced each other in their pursuit to advance larger objectives. At the same

time, it was found that they remained relatively weak and ineffective whenever they remained disunited. Is there a lesson for social democrats to learn from this record of their performance? However, it has also been recognized that if the social democratic movement has to be effective, it has to be innovative without compromising with the fundamentals. Of course, growth and distributive justice will have to remain an integrated programme of the social democrats everywhere. And, they need to have answers to the many upcoming problems and issues as well.

### **Dynamism of Social Democracy**

Democratic socialism or social democracy has the dynamism, and the capacity, to renew itself in the context of the realities of the changing times, without compromising its basic goals of equality and equal justice. It may be recalled that as socialism was born in the context of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, in the second half of the 18th century, to end the exploitation of the working class, its initial impetus was how to end the exploitation of labour under the new industrial system, and how to promote equality and distributive justice in society. As the Labour factor, at that time, was the critical factor of value addition to products among the factors of production, exploitation of labour for accumulating capital by owners of industrial establishments became an important focal point. Karl Marx's analysis of the Labour Theory of Value has explained the modus operandi of that exploitation for further accumulation of capital, and promotion of inequality in the 19th century society.

### **Labour Theory of Value is Redundant**

But, in the 21st century that Marxian analysis has become considerably redundant, as technology has more or less replaced labour as the critical value addition factor. Indeed, monopoly of technology has become the new dominant factor of exploitation which promotes inequality in societies and between societies. By cleverly bringing in a bunch of Patent Laws, this new structure of exploitation, and a locomotive of inequality generation in the world, has been made legal. It has made the multinational companies (MNCs), and the countries to which they belong, dominate the global system and perpetuate inequality and hamper distributive justice in the world.

### **Need to Abolish Patent Rights**

Therefore, abolition of Patent Rights in Science and Technology, and bringing all technologies under social control for the benefit of humanity, should be an item on the agenda of socialists for pursuing in the 21st century. All scientific and technology achievements in the world should belong to society as a whole, and



not to any individual, company nor to any corporate. All technologies in the world should be made a public product, like Edward Jenner's vaccine against Small Pox.

### **Relevance of Scandinavian Experience**

The Socialist vision for the 21st century should be marked by the clarity of purpose, and the clarity of means to achieve that purpose, without any compromise on the basic vision of equality and distributive justice. That is where the Scandinavian experience of building up of social democracies by the Social Democratic Parties of those countries, become useful. In Scandinavia, all socialist goals have been systematically promoted by the construction of a solidarity based welfare state system, which assured equality and distributive justice through parliamentary democratic means. Indeed, what social democrats have done, in Scandinavia during the last 80 years, is a big leap forward in the construction of a superior social democratic system. There is an erroneous perception among ill-informed people that these Scandinavian social democracies have given only a human face to capitalism. This is incorrect. The fact is that, in Scandinavia, social democrats have replaced the capitalist system with social democracy, through an intelligently pursued reform process, with the help of the power of a benign democratic state, and effected meaningful changes in the quality of life of ordinary people in those countries. Of course, socialism is still not in full bloom in Scandinavia, but the advancement the region has made towards it is unparalleled.

### **Growth, Distribution and Full Employment.**

In the construction of socialist societies in the 21st century across the world, two important aspects come to the fore: 1) Economic growth and production methods, and 2) The distribution of the fruits of growth among the people. Economic growth and production would require the application of a combination of methodologies, depending upon the type of commodities in demand, the type of technology required, the level and scale of production, and how these factors get attuned to attain full employment, which can ensure a reasonable income and spending capacity for everybody to lead a meaningful life. Employment opportunities could be in the public sector, private sector or in the self-employed sector. It could also be in the cottage sector, small-scale sector, co-operative sector, medium-scale or large-scale sector, depending upon the nature of commodities sought to be produced, and the appropriate technology and skill required to do it. But, the state policy should be the promotion of full employment. In Scandinavia, the accepted norm is that unemployment upto three per-cent is considered as a full employment situation. This is being done under a social

democratic economy, without transferring unemployment to other countries. Needless to say that all these ventures should be free from exploitation.

### **Middleman's Exploitation**

However, in terms of production and growth, every society will produce things all the time under every circumstance, whatever the motivations of the producer. Generally, humanity across the world produces more than what is required for the abundant consumption of the global population. Therefore, the critical aspect is how even and fair is the distribution of the fruits of growth among the people, or what is known as distributive justice. Pertinent to this is the question of ensuring distribution between the producer and the consumer without middleman's exploitation. This was the motivation when Robert Owen established Rochdale Society in New Lanark more than a century-and-a-half ago. However, in recent decades there is a gigantic growth of a class of unscrupulous middleman parasites in our society. Indeed, this parasitical class constitutes the biggest group of exploiters and perpetrators of corruption in our administration. They comprise a long chain of wholesale and retail traders, commission agents, power brokers, stock brokers and so on, who operate in our body politics with the skill of leeches. In the absence of consumer and producer co-operatives, they grow and flourish in our economy without limit. Therefore, to make distribution between the producer and the consumer exploitation free, it is imperative to build up consumer and producer co-operative societies in a big way, as an integral part of a social democratic reconstruction of society.

### **Role of Co-operative Societies**

I have seen how consumer co-operative societies work in Sweden on a no-profit no-loss basis. About 50 per-cent of population are partners of this co-operative network. The state has adopted policies to promote this co-operative networking of the people. It may be noted that in Sweden, the annual dividend distributed, after deducting the administrative costs, in a consumer co-operative society is not on the basis of shares a member of that society holds, but on the basis of the amount of total purchase a member has made from the society during that year. So, every member keeps all receipts of his/her purchases from that co-operative store which he/she produces, after the dividend in that society is declared, to claim his/her share from it. That is how the distribution system has been made exploitation-free in Scandinavia. This is done through appropriate enabling legislation, which promotes people's faith in consumer co-operative societies. Indeed, the consumer

and producer co-operatives are a well entrenched sector in the Scandinavian economy today. Do we care to look into such shining examples of transparency and social purpose, when we operationalise our own co-operative societies? It does not require a revolution to effect such reforms in our country. But, it requires the political will, and determination, to eradicate exploitation between producers and consumers.

### **Reduction of Inequality in take-home-pay**

The other key distributive aspect of social democracy is distributive justice, which ensures everyone a fairly equal quality of life from the fruits of growth. When the equality framework gets intertwined with the income policy, which, in concrete terms, means a robust application of a steeply progressive taxation system, it dramatically brings down the differences between the standard of the living of the people. How dramatically reduction of the tax system brings down the differences in employee's take-home pay, has been shown to me by Dr. Klaus Eklund, the Economic Advisor to the Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme, in a graph he has prepared in this context for the use of the Prime Minister. He showed me how the minimum and maximum ratio of the take-home-pay of individual employee has been brought down to 1:4. If family is taken as a unit of income, the income between the highest and the lowest paid family was further improved to 1:2. This was the concrete result of the income policy pursued by a social democratic state.

### **The State's Ultimate Responsibility**

As the democratic state becomes the chief custodian/trustee/repository of these accumulated resources, it becomes primarily responsible for their fair distribution among the whole population, This is done by the state by assuming more and more direct responsibility for the welfare of every person - infant or elderly - in the country. In Scandinavia, this has been done through the welfare state system the social democrats have built up, and funded substantially by the tax money. Taxpayers are the contributors and the beneficiaries at the same time. The system is operated jointly by the state and the municipalities. The system begins with the child welfare, based on a tenet that every child is an asset of the nation; therefore, giving assistance to the full development of the latent faculty of every child is a responsibility of the nation, and not merely of the parents. A healthy mind needs the nourishment of a healthy body. Therefore, special attention is also being paid to the physical development of all children. Child allowances, free high quality education for all, free health services for all, free social services for all needy persons, various kinds of insurances covering old age, unemployment, accidents,

and so on, are all interwoven into this famous "cradle-to-the-grave" welfare state edifice. Today, they are all recognized social rights of every person in Scandinavia. Other schemes like full employment, solidarity wages, co-determination in industrial enterprises, and so on, have also been put in place to promote the social objectives of democratic socialism. Since these reforms are made under the framework of equality and solidarity, inequality is least in these social democratic societies. Therefore, Indian socialists also have a responsibility to take India in this direction: and, the construction of the welfare state could be the first phase of giving effect to distributive justice under a socialist vision of India. Even if we achieve this much of the vision during the next two or three decades, it will change the face of India and the psyche of our people in favour of a solidarity approach. It is necessary that that we free ordinary people from the fear of insecurity and the selfish mould the capitalist system engenders. They should be freed from fear and want. Solidarity should envelop the socio-economic and cultural relationship of the whole community. That will establish a new dynamic and relaxed social relationship of trust, friendship and mutual concern.

### **Capitalism is bad even for United States**

It is my conviction that capitalism is bad for all societies, including for the people of United States, since it perpetuates inequality and exploitation and since it constantly promotes insecurity, selfish acquisitiveness, greed and vulgar consumerism among the people. It promoted the mindset of a Hobbesian man – narrowly selfish, brutish and short. It has produced a shocking situation which I saw myself in New York, the richest city in the world, where poor people were seen begging for food outside restaurants. America's official response to his shame is the provision of food coupons, which is also demeaning for a citizen of that rich country. However, basically, capitalism approached issues from an angle in favour of further concentration of capital, maximization of profits, and for catering to the consumption habits of the well to do. Indeed, capitalism and its ethos constitute the fountain head of many problems of contemporary societies across the world. It creates, and perpetuates, conflict situation at every level in society and at every turn of life, and thus disturbs peace and security alike. It does not allow pooling of resources, nor pooling of services, for the benefit of all. Under the market system it promotes, the quality of essential services provided is determined by person's capacity to pay for it. It provides a recipe for perpetual social unrest. Therefore, in order to build a socialist society, it is necessary to turn the people's psyche away from the rabid selfish mould which capitalism has created, and infuse in it

a sense of solidarity – a mentality of sharing part of one's own earnings, without heart burn, for the benefit of the community. That is the task which the socialists everywhere will have to undertake. We must keep in mind that for historic reasons capitalist got deeply entrenched after the Industrial Revolution, and acquired deep roots in the global economy over a long period. Therefore, to get capitalism dissolved in socialism, through various reforms, will also take some time, and cannot be achieved overnight with the help of any magic wand. We have to educate the people about the superiority of social democracy, and the need for a change from capitalism to social democracy, and about how beneficial such a change would be for them and for their children and grand children.

### **Role of Socialist/ Social Democratic Parties**

What Scandinavian socialists have shown is that changes anywhere on these lines are attainable through sustained reforms by using democratic institutions, if there is a political will to do it. In Scandinavian states, social democracies have been built up under the leadership of social democratic parties, which were dedicated to that task. Besides attending to key questions like production and distribution, they have attended also to a very difficult question, like capital ownership, without nationalization, through innovative approaches like bringing it progressively under social control, by creation of Employee Investment Funds, by institutionalization of co-determination in industrial establishments, and so on. A brilliant Swedish economist, Rudolf Meidner, is the architect of Employee Investment Funds to tackle the capital ownership question amicably under social democracy. It has made employees co-owners and co-managers of the enterprises where they are employed. Under the system, employees are entitled to own upto 40 percent of shares in those enterprises. Control over it was further advanced by the expansion of social control over the economic activities in the country. Taken together, they have effectively yoked capitalism and attuned it to serve the objectives of social democracy.

I believe that organizing society under a broad framework of equality is possible and necessary, so that people can also give their best to society as a matter of duty and social responsibility, detached from selfish motives. Of course, absolute equality between people and their contributions to society is unrealistic because human beings are not endowed with equal abilities, faculties, and aptitudes. Yet, they can give their best to the society in terms of creativity and productivity, the outcome of which could be pooled together for mutual benefit. Provision of equal facilities for all, including

free health care and free education, social services, and roughly equal standard of living for everyone is certainly feasible. However, at no stage the height of equality can become a static position. As society moves on and makes further advances, it would require constant renewal and revisions through in-built mechanisms under which inequality cannot grow beyond a point and gets automatically corrected. That can be achieved through a combination of a sound economic policy, a sound fiscal policy, a sound employment policy, a sound taxation policy, and a sound income policy in a democratic state. Therefore, while there is a possibility of re-emergence of inequality even in an egalitarian society, such tendencies can be contained through in-built mechanisms.

### **Provision of Incentives to Goodness**

It is being argued that people do not give their best to society without some self-interest. Ordinarily, this is correct, yet only partially. Partially, it is incorrect also. Under capitalism, the mind-set nurtured is of self-aggrandizement, and self-acquisitiveness. Under its spell, people are driven to act generally in self-interest. That is the basic psyche capitalism engenders. That could be the basic psyche of most people who, and whose children and grandchildren, live constantly under threat of insecurity the capital system permeates, and who are left in the open unprotected by a responsible welfare state system. Therefore, this argument is partially correct. But, socialism seeks to effect a basic change to this psyche of the people through a change in their living environment. It is my conviction that social democracy and the welfare state protection it provides to all people, and their future generation, would give a different security environment to people which would enable them to think and act differently, and contribute to society to the best of their ability, as an act of their responsibility to society and as an act of solidarity. Even under their capitalist environment, we see socially conscious people act under such motivations, sans self-interest, there is no dearth of examples of that calibre of people. In India, Dr. G. G. Parikh, veteran socialist and community builder, is an eloquent testimony of that higher motivation. Think of Robert Owen, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, and the innumerable medical scientists of yesteryears who gave their best to society and invented life saving medicines for the sake of humanity, without the lure of selfishness-driven patenting rights and personal profits, and made those achievements part of the human heritage. Did they not give their best to society without self-interest? But, today, under the influence of capitalist approach, the lure of patenting and profits drive medical scientists to invent new life-saving drugs. No doubt, it is the capitalist system that has created such a mindset in our scientists today.

## हार्दिक शुभेच्छा

शतकाकडे वाटचाल करणारी  
व कामगारांचा आवाज बुलंद करणारी  
मुंबईतील पहिली कामगार संघटना

## मुंबई पोर्ट ट्रस्ट, डॉक अँड जनरल एम्प्लॉईज युनियन

(स्थापना : ३ मे १९२०)

(संलग्न : हिंद मजदूर सभा)

## कर भला सो हो भला

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

—कवी वर्डस्वर्थ

अॅड. एस. के. शेट्टे  
सरचिटणीस

पोर्ट ट्रस्ट कामगार सदन,  
नवाब टँक रोड, माझगाव, मुंबई ४०००१०  
दूरध्वनी : २३७७६३२०/२३७७२३६१/६६५६६४८७  
फॅक्स : २३७५४७९४  
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In the circumstances, what is our choice? Should we succumb to that and accept it as a *fait accompli* or fight back and give strong incentives to goodness in human beings, and make all such inventions as part of the human heritage? I believe, that is also a task of socialists in their venture to build social democracy.

There is a contention that capitalism will always be there in some form. Of course, in a pluralist society, evolving from one system to another, certain features of capitalism may survive for some more time as a mixed feature, until they get completely dissolved in the new system. But that can only be there as a transient phenomenon, and not as a permanent feature for all time to come. The socialist vision is not to tame capitalism but to replace it with a superior system of social democracy, built around the principles of equality, freedom, democracy, Justice and solidarity. That is a positive vision, which represents the urges and aspirations of ordinary people everywhere.

A question has been asked whether a full employment policy can be effected without transferring unemployment somewhere else. It must be recognized that if full employment become a state policy, governments are bound to adopt employment-friendly policies and not job-liquidating policies which are currently followed by many capitalist/right-wing-parties-ruled countries, mainly to maximize profits of enterprises. Therefore, if states adopt full-employment policies and follow employment-friendly approaches, there will be no need to transfer unemployment to other societies. At the same time, I do not rule out the possibility of tackling the unemployment problem under a trans-national framework as well, depending on the nature of vacancies, availability of skilled personal, etc. in a given country, or group of countries, or at regional or transnational level.

In a social democratic economy and society, 'the common person based model of development' can be an important component of the multi-faceted development model. It would be better if it is enveloped in a network a small co-operatives which will help that 'common man' to free himself from a capitalist mind-set. However, it need not be the exclusively development model. Other development models can also be adopted and integrated simultaneously, depending upon many aspects, including the level of production, nature of produce requires, technology requirement, impact on job front, and so on. The approach should not assist the preservation of the compartmentalization of common man and the elite of society, but to systematically bridge the gap between them through a general elevation of common man in

terms of his income, education, health care, housing and quality of life. This can be achieved through progressive reforms, using the fiscal and other powers of a benign democratic state. However, common man should be a direct beneficiary of all development activities. We must educate the whole population about the validity of this approach and make the whole nation to share this vision to build a socialist democratic society in India.

### **Scandinavian Socialism – the Farthest Reached**

Scandinavia has made unparalleled advancement in building up a social democratic society. If asked, it is socialism, my answer is, it is the farthest point human endeavour could reach so far in the construction of socialism through democracy. Its features envelop instrumentalities to meet every vital need of every human being. Ultimately, we have to build a new socialist society which springs, sustains and engenders human happiness, based on freedom, equality and solidarity. It is an integrated construct encompassing the whole society. That construct has to pass through various stages – from laying the foundation, upto readying for occupancy to full enjoyment. In India, we have not yet laid a firm foundation of it. Whatever small beginnings have been made in the early years of our independence, are being dismantled systematically by the Indian votaries of globalization, liberalization and privatization. However, if it is our conviction that fundamental change in ordinary people's standard of living can be achieved through the construction of a welfare state, as part of the construction of a socialist society and as a concrete expression of what democratic socialism means to the life of ordinary people, we should start building it in the right earnest. We need not give the ultimate design of the evolving structure of a socialist society right now, since, due to innovative tendencies of the human mind, such designs are bound to undergo change and refinement in the course of time.

The Scandinavian countries today are not typical capitalist countries. They are renowned social democracies. Through 80 years of tireless efforts the social democratic parties of these countries and their trade unions have effectively yoked and caged capitalism by applying effective social controls in a manner that the net gains from the entire system is attuned to achieve the social goals of the whole community – construction of a welfare state. The steeply progressive taxation system, co-determination in industrial enterprises, making the employees co-owners of enterprises where they are employed, through the creation of Employee Investment Funds, etc. have effectively broken the capitalist mould in Scandinavia and transformed capitalism there into a new system attuned to promote the goals of social democracy.

Eventually, the remnants of capitalism in all these countries are bound to get liquidated unceremoniously as redundancies, without waging any specific violent revolution for that purpose.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that during the 20th century Social Democracy has made strident advances in Europe and became the strongest political force there. They have not only widened their base, but deepened their hold as well. Favourable situations are unfolding in other parts of the world as well – in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and so on. It may be recalled that when the Socialist International (Second International) was founded on 14 July 1889 in Paris (on the occasion of the first centenary of the French Revolution) its founding fathers had set certain principles for the movement to pursue – which included peaceful means to achieve political power, extension of democracy, regulation of the labour market and promotion of gender equality. More principles like solidarity, for example, have been added subsequently.

During the course of the 20th century, social democrats have pursued all these objectives vigorously and achieved great successes all over Europe and brought significant changes in the trajectory of European politics and society. They struggled for the introduction of universal suffrage and played an outstanding role in the establishment of a welfare state system all over Europe and inspired launching of similar movements elsewhere in the world including in India. And they have presented themselves as the natural opponents of all sorts of discrimination - gender, racial, and so on - and of entrenched privileges in society. The post-war period witnessed the geographical spread of Social Democracy to Asia, Africa and Latin America and has become a force to reckon with in favour of civility, moderation and humaneness. But, this geographical spread needs to be complemented by the deepening of the social democratic values and approach in the socio-political and economic life of these regions. This is what Social Democracy is beckoning to the future – onto the 21st century.

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# The Quest for Real Independence

D. K. Giri

Recently in a meeting of Dalits, largely the scavengers, people sounded very exasperated with the state of their affairs. They were lamenting that there was no real freedom for them even after six decades of Indian independence. They were so aggrieved that they began invoking some idea of *Achhutstan* (land of untouchable) that was there before the Poona Pact of 1932 between M K Gandhi and B R Ambedkar. It was an unsettling experience. That is why it is in order that, as we celebrate 68<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence, we should talk of, and work for, real independence. It is true that Indians got political independence from United Kingdom; but without certain fundamental values political independence becomes infructuous. In order to enjoy real freedom, the citizens across the social or cultural spectrum must be guaranteed the following set of five integrated values. These values can be ensured by social, cultural and moral movements, political systems, policies, and personal, social and moral education (PSME), and internationalism.

## Equality

This is the most desirable value for citizens in any democracy. This is also the most difficult concept to understand and implement, because human beings are born different from each other. So equality does not mean levelling out or uniformity. That is not possible. One is talking about recognising equally the essential worth of human beings, irrespective of such differences as may be observed in abilities, aptitudes and other variables that are innate or acquired through birth, family or profession.

Some argue that freedom and equality conflict with each other. As people enjoy their unbridled freedom, it may lead to unhealthy competition and inequality. Conversely, the first step towards greater equality is also the first step towards less freedom. Hence, freedom and equality are not to be made opposites, but mutually re-informing.

Conceptually there are two aspects of equality, that is, equality of rewards, and equality of opportunities. The first aspect of equality is not acceptable to most people. How can people get the same salary irrespective of the differences in what they do? How can CEO of a company and the peon in the same company draw the same salary? What one is suggesting here is that people

should get same wages if they are doing the same kind of work irrespective of their caste, class or gender. The other aspect, the equality of opportunity, should be given to all irrespective of their backgrounds - gender, caste, class, religion or language. But, even this aspect of equality cannot be applied mechanically. For instance, in an unequal society like India, people cannot access equal opportunities because of their socially inherent disabilities. We must create equality of condition - a level playing field. That is why the Indian constitution gives reservations to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Yet, people from these communities could not enjoy equality because of other associated problems discussed below.

## Identity

Karl Marx had prescribed that after the overthrow of capitalism, a "new man" will emerge with one identity: that is as worker. The liberal democracy confers another identity; that is "a free man". Both these formulations are limited. People acquire different identities on the bases of social and cultural affinities. We are not just talking of individual identities, but group identities. Identity and equality are closely linked. In those countries where everyone belongs to the same religion, same linguistic group, etc. it is not much of a problem, but in a country like India which is heterogeneous, culturally and racially, group identity becomes very salient. In India, where groups are unequal, identity poses a problem i.e. identity itself is not a problem but identity coupled with inequality is.

The only overarching identity for all Indians is citizenship. Indian citizens are distributed into religious, linguistic, racial, caste, and other identities. In many countries, citizens are required to abjure their identities in order to get the benefits as a citizen. But this is not true in India. Not only do we recognize identity, we celebrate it. Therefore, we can say Indian citizenship is in a way multicultural citizenship. People of various backgrounds are having citizenship entitlements. Take the example of religion. India does not have an official religion. We have several important religious communities – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Baha'is – and all enjoy freedom of religion. Except for one group – Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs - who have a common civil code, all other religious communities

have their separate civil codes. But all of them can maintain their own worship places, can establish and run their own educational and health institutions. These are all indications of the constitutional recognition of identity groups. So citizenship and identity are not juxtaposed; they are not seen in contradictory terms but as a continuum as it were. We have 22 recognized languages; many countries have just one. Every child in the country is entitled through the Constitution to be educated till the age of 14 in his/her mother tongue. In India, we have taken identity as a serious issue because we are endlessly diverse and that is why we have to reconcile the citizenship entitlements along with identity entitlements. When we fail to do so, we have social tensions and sectarian strife. All identities are recognised constitutionally, but in practice, there is discrimination and consequent alienation. The reason for such distortion is lack of pluralism, the next principle

### Pluralism

Secularism has become controversial in India. Congress and other parties have been accused of minority-ism or pseudo-secularism, whereas BJP is said to be promoting Hindutva or majoritarianism. It is perhaps because secularism in India is different from what the western countries understand it to be. That is where it seems to have got muddled and become nebulous. In the West, secularism, in French *laicite*, meant separation of state from the religion. Secular meant non-religious. But, in India, although we do not have a state religion, state gets involved in religious matters. In Indian constitution, secularism means, (i) equal respect for all religions (ii) and equal distance from all religions. Whether it was possible, even in principle, for the state to maintain those (equi-distance-and-respect) is a matter of debate, which we do not engage in here. Secularism as it has been explained, understood, and practiced, seems to be a failed concept. We need to substitute it with a more viable concept -pluralism.

Many countries in the world are diverse by nature, but they do not practice pluralism. They do not recognise multiple identities and suppress the weaker ones. Pluralism essentially means co-existence of multiple identities. Plurality or diversity is a fact, but pluralism is a value orientation, an attitude, and a principle. In order to build a pluralist society, there has to be recognition and celebration of identities, and an order of equality. In a plural society, identity groups are different but equal, not inferior or superior. For instance, religious majority does not treat a minority as inferior, or a bigger linguistic group does not suppress a smaller linguistic one. In India, the people from North call those from North-east

as *Chingi*, or from South India as *Madrasee*, These are pejoratives, undermining the identity of people. Muslims seem to be more stigmatised than others. They are treated as outsiders, as descendants of Babur, and are often discriminated. To be sure, discrimination is the enemy of pluralism, whereas practice of egalitarianism leads to pluralism.

### Dignity

The problem of dignity exists in all societies. This is, in fact, the next level of pluralism. We may not discriminate or stigmatise a group, but we do not always bestow on them their human worth: we can treat somebody as equal, recognize their identity but that does not mean we really give them dignity. The groups or communities that are denied dignity are many in our country. How do the urban people look upon the rural people, how do men treat women, how white collar workers deal with manual workers, how the physically and mentally differently-abled people or aged are denied dignity, in addition to the traditionally disadvantaged groups such as dalits, adivasis, fisher folks, OBCs and similar groups. So every human being wants to be treated with dignity irrespective of his/her class. One might not be earning much money but that does not mean that that person's dignity can be compromised. The manner in which we deal with our domestic servants or our drivers is an example. There is no equality in terms of their wages but yet we have to treat them as human beings i.e. treat them with dignity. So we have to think in terms of extending the idea of dignity to all contexts, which is a lot more than equality.

Dignity essentially means mutual respect. One cannot think in terms of legislating on that. One cannot have a law that states that you must give respect to somebody. For example, the Constitution talks about fraternity. But, one cannot say that if you are not fraternal you will be punished. The difference between other political values and dignity is that it goes beyond discrimination and stigmatization. Suppose one does not discriminate or one does not stigmatise, that does not mean one is showing dignity or the other is getting dignity. So accepting pluralism is the prerequisite for bestowing dignity just as recognizing identity is a prerequisite for pluralism. So, they are all interlinked, one cannot have one without the other. The only technical difference is that dignity cannot be bestowed through a process of legislation - it is a matter of mutual understanding. People feel degraded when denied dignity. Lack of dignity is a social and cultural evil. Many from lower social strata feel frustrated when they are denied dignity despite their professional and material success. So we need a dignitarian society for people to feel free and self-confident.



## Solidarity

Solidarity is the glue that binds all the principles mentioned above. Solidarity again has two aspects. One: to acquire a sense of overarching community; a feeling that all citizens inhabiting a country is like a large community. Our Constitution also starts with, "We the people of India give ourselves a Constitution..." The word "we" implies community-ness. And a community is based on the principle and practice of "caring and sharing", which is really the expression of solidarity. The second is the fight for justice. This refers to solidarity within the community not necessarily across the communities. This is when solidarity becomes a weapon for the weak in their fight for social justice. Karl Marx had famously said, "man exploits man." This really brilliantly characterizes the history of mankind, when strong has dominated and exploited the weak. It is true that most constitutions in democratic politics do not put the dominant and the dominated, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor in antagonistic terms. They seek to maintain equality and order through regulation and distributive justice. But human nature being what it is, acts of solidarity are critical in maintaining a plural society. The American theologian and intellectual Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr has said, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary". Without

solidarity, justice is impossible to secure or deliver. Let us remember John Ruskin's legendary essays titled "Unto This Last". The title was taken from the Bible, "The Parable of the workers in vineyard" in Mathew 20:14-15, "I will give unto this last even as unto thee... So, the first shall be last, and the last first." Gandhiji translated it into "sarvodaya" (well-being of all), and later Vinoba Bhave called sarvodaya is "antyodaya" (well-being of the last or the poorest). Both these concepts entail solidarity. Rich and the privileged must care for the poor. Solidarity also implies tolerance, love and compassion. Many countries including India lack compassion. The idea of embracing solidarity is to bring compassion to the forefront of public life.

To conclude, freedom enables people to live their lives as they want, without fear or insecurity. In an unequal society, security comes through equitable development. Nobel laureate Professor Amartya Sen says, "Development is Freedom". So in order to be free, we need to have development with all its social and economic dimensions. Development cannot be secured for all if the five values discussed here are not ensured. Based on experience of social and political processes in many countries including India, ensuring the set of five integrated values is integral to "real freedom" for a vast majority of people in India.

## 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.

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# Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism - I

**Bhagwat Prasad Rath**

Science is scaling new heights. New problems are threatening our existence. Nature is our master. We have to learn from it. So, instead of repeating parrot-like what earlier great thinkers wrote about socialism, we must subject all thoughts to ruthless criticism. Kisen Patnaik, a leading Lohia socialist thinker, with profound sadness, lamented the poverty of thought at the world level. Albert Einstein is one of our path-finders. He wrote the seminal essay - 'Why Socialism?'

Einstein wrote, "But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday; nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called "the predatory phase" of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future."

Thorstein Veblen wrote that the four predatory institutions that dominate our societies are "rulers, warriors, men of religion and sports men". C. Wright Mills, a great socialist of United States of America adds more twentieth century predatory institutions to the list of Thorstein Veblen. They are "media-moguls, film-stars and film-makers". Thorstein Veblen says that these institutions indulge in "crack-pot realism" and wallow in the slough of conspicuous consumption. C. Wright Mills agrees with him. Today's most powerful predatory institution is that of finance-dictators. Can we dream of a society free from these predatory institutions?

The world is divided into different groups of humanity who are constantly warring with each other. As Tagore said, "the world has been divided into fragments by narrow domestic walls". Psychologists like Erich Fromm think that insane people are powerful in almost all predatory institutions.

The greatest living intellectual of the present world, Noam Chomsky, says, "In the moral calculus of capitalism, greater profits in the next quarter outweigh the fate of your grand children."

Harvard professor Robert Stevens accuses the government representatives in the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change of deleting 75 per cent of the report prepared by scientists.

That Governments are subservient to the profit-crazy corporations is no secret.

Next to climate change, the other grave issue that bedevils human future is the preparation for war by the states, particularly the rich ones. The US tops the list of world warmongers. The greatest danger comes from the existence of nuclear weapons.

Like Kisen Patnaik, P. M. Sweezy, a great Marxist thinker, is worried about the poverty of thought. After the collapse of communist societies in the world, P.M. Sweezy, in his essay 'A Crisis in Marxist thought' (The book is 'Post-Revolutionary Society') wrote that Marx's idea was "It (the communist society) would be a classless society, a stateless society and a society of genuine and not merely formal or legal equality among nationalities, races, sexes, and individuals ... These goals would certainly be very long term in nature and might never be fully achieved... Certainly they establish guidelines and rough measuring rods. Only a society genuinely dedicated to these goals and shaping its practices accordingly can be considered socialist in the Marxian meaning of the term.

Now, as I have already indicated, the generally accepted Marxian interpretation of modern history leads us to expect that capitalism will be overthrown by proletarian revolutions, and that these revolutions will establish socialist societies. The theory, in fact, is so taken for granted as a reliable clue to what is happening in the world that every society which originates in a proletarian (or proletarian-led) revolution is automatically assumed to be and identified as a socialist society.

And this is where the anomalies begin. None of these "socialist" societies behave as Marx - and I think, most Marxists up until quite recently - thought they would. They have not eliminated classes except in a purely verbal sense; and..... they have not attempted to follow a course which could have the long-run effect of eliminating classes. The state has not disappeared; no one could expect it to, except in a still distant future; but on the contrary, it has become more and more the central and dominant institution of society. Each interprets proletarian internationalism to mean support of its own interests and policies as interpreted by itself. They go to war not only in self-defense but to impose their will on other countries, even ones that are also assumed to be socialist. The result has been a deep crisis in Marxian



theory... the trouble with the Marxist hypothesis is that it quickly leads to many anomalies”.

Sweezy calls Marxism ‘... a magnificent and scientific creation far superior to anything achieved by bourgeois science...’ Kuhn in his epoch-shaking book ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolution’ says that science develops through a series of revolutions, each rejecting much that has gone before and starting on new foundations. His key concept is that of the paradigm-shift which means a new way of looking at reality.

The capitalist, the socialist and the welfare societies are all at the predatory phase. All nurse predatory institutions, led by “crack-pot realists” as pointed out by Thorstein Veblen.

Evidently humanity is nurturing the death-wish and rushing headlong into colossal disasters. When did we come to such a doom-spelling precipice?

To quote Marx “The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” (Preface to the Critique of Political Economy).

Fifty thousand years back humanity made the wrong choice in the mode of production. The society of gatherers was mainly dependent on females collecting food material (80 per cent of the food consumed by the family) from nature. The society was peaceful and contented.

50,000 years ago, the mode of production changed from gathering fruits and roots to that of killing animals (even big ones) because of the efficiency of the killer tools invented in that period. As Marx said, this change brought about a change in consciousness. The social, political and intellectual life processes changed completely. The egalitarian society where men and women enjoyed equal rights gave way to the society of male-hunters dominating society. Labour lost its pre-eminent position in society. Instead of labour, the capacity to kill became the most respectable value in society. Thus started the first great exploitation, men exploiting women sexually and also in the field of labour when hunters turned into warriors. Women facilitated this process initially by preferring meat diet to fruit and root diet and choosing hunters to peaceful caring and sharing people as sexual partners. The chiefs of warrior society became kings and men imagined a super-natural king of kings whom they called God. Thus religions had their birth. The non-labouring leisure classes of rulers, warriors, men of religions and sports men cultivating physical fitness for becoming better warriors came into prominence. Thorstein Veblen’s

book ‘The Theory of the leisure class’ refers to these classes as the important members of the predatory society that dominate the modern world. Not only economic science but almost all our systems of knowledge are not free from the predatory consciousness.

Capitalism is destroying society. Socialism is the only way out. What sort of socialism do we need? Man is a product of nature and society. Our knowledge of nature and society is always expanding. We have to take account of the latest discoveries in science. Does nature have a purpose in creating man? In the animal world, man alone developed the capacity to control the violent tendencies of his amygdale through his pre-frontal cortex. This shows a direction tendency from violence to non-violence. There is also the existence of mirror neurons - in human brain alone. Mirror neurons are there in the brain of the chimpanzee. But they are much less in quantity. Mirror neurons are the nurses of empathy. This also shows a direction tendency towards solidarity (*maitri*) with all living beings.

Brian Goodwin is a professor of biology at the Open University outside London, Erode. He wrote, “The metaphors I use are related to emergence and creativity and the concept of the creative cosmos. Evolution is an aspect of this creativity. The central metaphor I feel emerging in the new biology is all connected with creativity. You see, in genetic reductionism Whitehead’s fallacy of misplaced concreteness par excellence. Genes are not themselves creative but function within the context of the organism, which is.

Whitehead’s phrase for evolution is “the creative advance into novelty”. This dance of creation is a never-ending dance that goes nowhere but is simply expressing itself”.

Darwinism stresses conflict and competition; that doesn’t square with the evidence. A lot of organisms that survive are in no sense superior to those that have gone extinct. It’s not a question of being “better than”. It’s simply a matter of finding a place where you can be yourself. That’s what evolution is about. That’s why you can see it as a dance. It’s not going anywhere, it’s simply exploring a space of possibilities...

There’s still struggle in the sense that if you’re going to be creative you have to believe in you ideas and struggle for them. Every single species has a struggle. But because there is as much co-operation among species as there is competition, the struggle is to express your being, your nature. These are metaphors whereby science can begin to connect with the arts: people, being creative and playing. There’s nothing trivial about play. Play is the most fundamental of all human activities and culture can be seen as play.



There's too much work in our culture, and there's too much accumulation of goods. The whole capitalist trip is an awful treadmill that's extremely destructive. It needs to be balanced out. This is why indigenous cultures are beginning to be recognized for their values because they were not accumulating goods; they were living in harmony. They were expressing their own natures as cultures. Nature and culture then come together."

Francisco Varela is a biologist, director of research at the centre National de Recherche Scientifique, and professor of cognitive science and epistemology at the Ecole Polytechnique, in Paris. He wrote, "I guess I've had only one question all my life. Why do emergent selves, virtual identities, pop up all over the place creating worlds, whether at the mind/body level, the cellular level, or the transorganism level? This phenomenon is something so productive that it does not cease creating entirely new realms: life, mind, and societies. Yet these emergent selves are based on processes so shifty, so ungrounded, that we have an apparent paradox between the solidity of what appears to show up and its groundlessness. That, to me, is a key and eternal question."

A great scientist, Theodosius Dobzhansky wrote, "In a sense human genes have surrendered their primacy in human evolution to an entirely new non-biological or super-organic agent, culture."

Scientists at the world level are engaged in a controversy regarding the subject of socio-biology. E. O. Wilson, a prize-winner socio-biologist, thinks that the science of biology can provide the way to solve the problems of humanity. Scientists opposing him are led by Gould and Lewontin.

A scientist writes, "...including Steven Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin... formed 'The Sociobiology Study Group, noting... that theories that attempted to establish a biological foundation to social behaviour provided an 'important basis... for the eugenic policies which led to the establishment of gas chambers in Nazi Germany'".

American and European thinkers and scholars as well as thinkers and scholars of other countries influenced by them have missed the true path for humanity fixed by nature. The controversy regarding socio-biology among two groups of scientists illustrates this position.

Einstein throws doubt on the systems of knowledge that are prevalent in the present predatory society. Both the groups supporting and opposing socio-biology become irrelevant in a non-predatory society though it cannot be denied that the Marxist thinkers have a lofty aim.

The phenomenon of emergence always leads to the creation of a new entity devoid of the qualities and characteristics of the constituting elements. The creation of man is an emergent phenomenon and cannot be understood by studying the genes alone. Genetic determinism is discredited but the role of science can not be denied in understanding humanity. Human societies took different shapes in different climes and different countries. Science was the greatest gift of nature to humanity and the only community, non-predatory in nature, used science ('Science and Society in Ancient India' by D. P. Chatterji) to reach great heights of world Maitri (solidarity) cannot be ignored in the name of natural fallacy. The unique nature of 'emergent' man ('woman' is a more truthful word) in pre-Vedic India has not been studied properly by scholars.

Has nature any purpose in creating man? Almost all the leading scholars deny the role of 'purpose' in creation. Scientist Brian Goodwin uses the words 'play' and 'dance'. In India, we have a better word. That word is 'Lila'. Creation is nature's 'Lila' and covers both the words 'play' and 'dance'. The purpose of nature is that its 'Lila' does not come to a stop at any time. If any creature destroys other creatures by becoming omnipotent, nature's 'Lila' cannot go on. 'Lila' is a spontaneous process and can go on when all elements flourish and vanish spontaneously. Any type of violence will disturb 'Lila'. Nature uses male nature of the carnivores (tigers, lions and other such creatures) to check their population. Carnivores destroy their own progeny. This goes against the conceptions of the survival of the fittest and the selfish gene (Richard Dawkins).

Prof. Robin Dunbar and his colleagues give priority to social evolution before the brain development of the human species. According to them the bigger brain is the gift of nature to the animal whose range of Maitri (solidarity) extends to bigger circles of the same species.

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# Open Loot of Public Money

Sandeep Pandey

It is believed that over 2.5 lakh farmers in India have committed suicide over the last two decades since neo-liberal economic policies have been implemented. In other words as the dependence of Indian farmer has increased on market, he is finding it difficult to repay loans taken to buy various farm inputs and feels so humiliated when harassed for repayment that he decides to end his life. On the other hand there is story of some of India's super rich who have also borrowed money from the banks but their response is starkly different from the farmers' and the banks also appear to be very liberal with them. The Banks try to restructure their bad loans as good loans and if everything else fails their loans are simply written off or shown as non-performing assets.

The All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) has released a report titled 'Bulging Bad Loans in Banks.' It has made public a list of 50 defaulters who owe Rs. 40,000 to 24 Public sector banks and a longer list of 400 defaulters who owe Rs. 70,000.

Whereas bad loans in Public sector banks till March 2008 were only Rs. 39,000 crores, by the end of March 2013 the figure had bulged to Rs. 1,64,000 crores and in September 2013 to Rs. 2,36,000 crores. Rs. 3,25,000 crores of bad loans were restructured and shown as good loans. Rs. 2,04,000 of bad loans were written off in the last 13 years.

Kingfisher Airlines tops the list of defaulters with Rs. 2,673 crores of loans not repaid. Of this it owes Rs. 601.64 crores to Punjab National Bank, Rs. 566 crores to Bank of India and Rs. 444.93 crores to Bank of Baroda. Additionally, CBI has recently revived a two year old enquiry into lending of Rs. 950 crores by the Industrial Development Bank of India in spite of negative credit rating and negative net worth. In all the company, now defunct, owes Rs. 7,000 crores to a consortium of 17 banks with the highest amount of Rs. 1,600 crores due to SBI. In spite of this Vijay Mallya, the owner of Kingfisher Airlines, sponsors golf tournaments and horse racing. He is the owner of IPL cricket team Royal Challengers Bangalore and a Formula One car racing team Force India. Instead of repaying his loans he splurges money on extravagant things and gets away with it. He has also entered the Parliament through Rajya Sabha and from a liquor barren become a "Honour

able" Member of Parliament. The relevant question is when Subrata Roy of Sahara can be put in jail to recover Rs. 10,000 crores from him, why can't Vijay Mallya also meet the same fate. In spite of owing such a big amount to the banks he wanted the government to bail out his loss making airline. He is taking the government and the people of this country for a ride. But no punitive action has been initiated against him by the government. For some inexplicable reason the CBI went to sleep on enquiry against his company. It was only after Syndicate Bank Chief Managing Director S.K. Jain was arrested along with VC and MD of Bhushan Steel Ltd. Neeraj Singal in a matter of lending by Bank to the company that CBI seems to have woken up. Jain is accused of having received a bribe of Rs. 50 lakhs for enhancing the credit limits of some companies in violation of laid down procedures.

Winsome Diamond & Jewellery Co. Ltd. is the second biggest defaulter with Rs. 2,660 crores not repaid. Electrotherm India Ltd., Zoom Developers Pvt. Ltd., Sterling Biotech Ltd., S. Kumar's Nationwide Ltd. and Surya Vinayak Industries Ltd. are the next five big defaulter with amounts not repaid as Rs. 2,211 crores, Rs. 1,810 crores, Rs. 1,732 crores, Rs. 1,692 crores and Rs. 1,446 crores, respectively.

Among Nationalised Banks, State Bank of India registers the biggest Gross Non-Performing Assets of Rs. 51,189 crores and PNB among Public Sector Banks shows Rs. 13,465 as Gross NPA in March 2013. Among private banks ICICI Bank Ltd. tops the list of Gross NPA in 2013 with Rs. 9,607.75 crores.

The AIBEA has demanded that government should take stringent measures to recover bad loans in Banks, amend recovery laws to ensure speedy recovery of bad loans, declare wilful default of bank loans as criminal offence, debar bank loan defaulters from holding public office, conduct probe into sanction of bad loans and punish the guilty. They have also demanded that government and RBI should periodically publish the list of bank loan defaulters and that Banks should be brought under effective audit on the lines of CAG and made accountable to the Parliament.

The AIBEA says that banks deal with Rs.78 lakh crores of people's hard earned savings. People's money should be utilized for people's welfare. National savings

should be used for national development and not for the benefit of some private corporations.

The AIBEA must be commended for having come out with this document in national and public interest. The employees have done a great service to the people. Now it is up to the people to put pressure on their government

*(Continued from Page 7)*

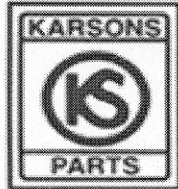
forestry, small scale industries, transport, housing and heavy industries must be carefully charted. People will have to be prepared to imbibe the simple but great slogan of Gandhi - Be bold and Fearless. Ask for your due share and assure similar treatment to all your countrymen. All agitations must be carried out in an open, peaceful manner.

The new revolutionary army will have to create strong units at the local, grass-roots level who will resort to action when called for. Financial and other resources

to recover all this money shown as bad loans or NPAs. Most of these people like Vijay Mallya are in a position to repay the loans. It is just that the government is allowing them to go scot free. The government must get strict with them. A poor country like India cannot afford thousands of crores of rupees to be simply locked up.

will have to be mobilized from amongst the down-trodden people. It is common knowledge that the poor people also spend huge amounts for religious causes. It means that they do have capacity to raise resources. Proper motivation, accompanied by vigorous dialogues at local neighbourhood levels, can certainly regenerate forces of radical social change. Its mechanism will have to be worked out carefully. Help of the experts may be harnessed. Continuous process of exchange of experiences and ideas can help a lot in charting out plan of action for basic social change.

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The United Progressive Alliance's Pakistan policy was based on the "live and let live" principle. As Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh seemed to believe that even an artificial peace was better than a (hot) war of attrition. He was inclined to be charitable towards Pakistan and condoned many of its wanton acts of provocation and hostility. Since his policy was benign, Pakistan came to believe he and India were soft and could be taken advantage of. Earlier, under the NDA dispensation, Prime Minister Vajpayee had walked more than the proverbial mile to sustain friendly bilateral ties. History, he often said, can be changed but nations cannot change geography. Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the impression on assuming office that good-neighbourly relations with Pakistan was the cornerstone of his foreign policy. Now, with the cancellation of the proposed foreign secretary-level talks, there has been a midstream policy change. What exactly is Modi's Pakistan policy? Why has he switched from the soft to the hard?

Newspaper reports attribute the shift to two reasons. The first seems to be the source for the abrupt switch. The second, more serious, points to

the continuing across-the LOC border provocations, as the cause for the change. The first cause: despite being told, as politely as diplomacy works, to refrain from meeting Hurriyat leaders, the Pakistani envoy in New Delhi continued to do so. This was interpreted as a signal daring India to do its worst and India (over) reacted by calling off the talks. The second: the border provocations which were meaningless once an agenda of resumed dialogue was on the table. As many as a dozen cases of ceasefire violations from across the LoC in less than a month. And heavy shelling on Sunday last. Why hold talks if Pakistan had no use for improving ties?

If the cancellation was on account of continuing Pakistani contact with the Hurriyat, then it would have indeed been over-reaction. Such contacts have been there for a long time, and New Delhi has taken the Hurriyat provocations in its stride in the past. Whether Pakistan met the Hurriyat for talks every time a bilateral interaction was scheduled is not a major point. The point is that Islamabad always thought that keeping the Hurriyat in the loop was a part of its Kashmir policy and was tantamount to recognizing the

*Between the lines*

Hurriyat's role as the third player, apart from India and Pakistan, in the Kashmir dialogue process. New Delhi should have let the process continue unimpeded by its resentment of the Pakistani dare. The continuation would have benefited the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who is under considerable pressure from domestic political detractors. The cancellation has vindicated the dominance of the Pakistani military and the intelligence agencies who always prefer keeping Kashmir in the spotlight.

The policy shift has not been sudden if one remembers that the Prime Minister referred during his August 11 visit to Leh to Islamabad continuing its proxy war against India. However, since he did not indulge in any anti-Pak tirade in his August 15 Red Fort speech, one could not look forward, with satisfaction or apprehension, to a shift in policy. But some related issues remain and have to be addressed First, it is the prime minister himself and not the foreign policy establishment that is formulating and executing the Pakistan-Kashmir policy. Second, if the policy change is to lead to hardening of lines, what happens to the proposed summit-level Modi-Nawaz Sharif talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions and statements since May 26 when he assumed office in the presence of an invited audience that included Nawaz Sharif have left the impression behind that Modi would like a result-oriented summit. So perhaps would Sharif, granting that the nature of the outcome that would satisfy both sides would have to be

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Politics of Kashmir

**Kuldip Nayar**

Article 370 is not meant to reflect the liberal tilt in the Indian Constitution. It is specific. It gives a special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir—a status which the people of Jammu and Kashmir won after waging a long, tough fight for freedom both from the British and the Maharaja ruling the state.

Sheikh Abdullah was in the lead and achieved what looked impossible at one time, an autonomous status within the sovereign, secular Republic of India. Except three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications—the Indian parliament had no power to legislate without the consent of the state legislature. The state could have merged with Pakistan, but preferred to integrate with secular India because the entire struggle by the Kashmiris was secular.

The undertakings given at that time are sacred and cannot be written off by the people who are of different thinking. The state had adopted even a separate constitution passed to make it clear the state would not compromise on its autonomy.

Watering it down now will amount to betrayal of the confidence which the people of Jammu and Kashmir had reposed in New Delhi. If any change had to be made, it has to be done by them. The Indian Union which the state had joined cannot amend its powers without the consent of the state people.

To give more subjects to Delhi is the prerogative of Srinagar. Sheikh

Abdullah joined the Union on that understanding. Some elements trying to undo the understanding accorded to the state people are neither serving the cause of India, nor that of the state. In fact, most of what is happening in Kashmir is irrelevant and confusing.

Take the meeting of some Hurriyat leaders with the Pakistan High Commissioner Basit Ali in Delhi. Such meetings had taken place in the past too. The Indian government did not raise any objection to them then because they were taken as exercises to exchange views from the sidelines.

Shabbir Shah was only following a practice of several other Kashmiri leaders. To be charitable to him, one can say that he met the Pakistan High Commissioner as he or some other leaders would have done in the past, without a furore.

The Pakistan High Commissioner, however, is to be blamed because he knew that the Narendra Modi government had discontinued such practices. In his case, New Delhi made a request not to meet the Hurriyat leaders. Despite the majority in India being opposed to the "cozy relationship," the Pakistan High Commissioner went ahead with the meeting. He should have anticipated the anger sweeping through India.

Apart from some sort of bravado, there was nothing positive about the meeting. New Delhi's policy on Kashmir is to monopolize power and



dilute the special status of Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah had kept the issue alive with some authoritarian thinking. When he challenged New Delhi, he was detained in a special jail at a faraway Tamil Nadu for 12 years.

No doubt, Jawaharlal Nehru tried to rub off the stigma of being power crazy and put up the Sheikh at his house after the detention. But history judged Nehru as a ruthless ruler who did not spare even his intimate friends. The same thinking prevails when those who want independence are called separatists. They are wrong in projecting a demand which has acquired a fundamentalist edge. In the bargain, the secular Sheikh's contribution has been forgotten.

No doubt, the Hurriyat is a divided house. Some, led by Syed Shah Gillani, want the state to 'join' Pakistan. And the others, led by Yasin Malik, demand azaadi. Then there are those who are confused. Not long ago, when most Kashmiris, alienated from India as they are, favoured the integration with Pakistan, the Kashmiris would have voted for Pakistan if there had been a plebiscite. Today, a preponderant majority of Kashmiris, want azaadi. Yasin Malik has been able to veer them round from being pro-Pakistan elements to making them accept the demand for an independent, sovereign state.

Yet what the Hurriyat does not realize is that azaadi is an ideal, not a feasible proposition. When the British left India in August 1947, they gave the princely states an option to stay independent if they did not want to join either India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Jammu and Kashmir

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Appointment of Judges a closer look is necessary

**Rajindar Sachar**

Judiciary is very much in the news. Some praise it for its role in exposing high level corruption in the political field. To counter this, some point out the bad name judiciary is getting, amongst others, for its defective system of selection of judges by the collegiums system. In order to prevent further easy public slapping of the judiciary I feel that we must now finalize the method of appointments.

The suggested pattern in the 'Judicial Appointment Commission Bill 2013' broadly fills the void. The Commission is headed by the Chief Justice of India and includes the next two senior judges, the Union Law Minister, **two eminent persons** (emphasis added) to be selected by the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha. Some feel rightly that "eminent Jurists" be substituted instead of 'eminent persons' because the word eminent is too vague. It could include champion wrestler or boxer though I have all respect for their achievements, but they are as unfit for the job as a High Court Judge or a Minister would be unfit to make selection in wrestler's or boxer's field. I would, therefore, substitute the word 'persons' with 'Jurists' which would provide a larger but relevant field of academicians, authors, outstanding lawyers (of course no longer in practice) to choose from. The fear that the presence of a lay person will interfere with the independence of the judiciary is misplaced. As

Judicial Commission of New South Wales (Ireland) Annual Report said, "Judicial independence is not some kind of industrial benefit generously extended to judges and magistrates, it is fundamental principle of our society's constitutional arrangements".

The provision however with regard to the appointment of High Court judge suffers from the unacceptable provision that the Commission is only required to **elicit** (emphasis added) the views of Governor, Chief Minister and the Chief Justice of High Court. I can hardly see any relevance of eliciting the view of Chief Minister separately from Governor – the latter's view is obviously likely to be influenced by the view of Chief Minister. I have however strong objection to reducing the position of Chief Justice of a High Court to someone whose view is merely to be elicited. In my opinion the advice of Chief Justice of high Court as to the suitability or otherwise of a person to be appointed a judge of High Court should normally be accepted unless for grave reasons to the contrary.

From reports in the press, though technically the collegiums are being sought to be abolished, yet the Chief Justice of India has asked the Chief Justice of High Court to consult two more of his colleagues, even junior ones as much as possible – why this uncertain state of affairs? This suggestion may only be observed in breach. I remember when in

1977 Janata Government's informal suggestion was given for the Chief Justice of High Court to consult his two senior colleagues, it was observed more in breach. It was only when the collegium system was established by a judicial decision that Chief Justices of High Court had no option but to consult their colleagues.

However it did not mean that government accepted collegiums recommendation in all cases. I remember that it in 1985 Chief Justice of a High Court and his two senior-most colleagues (and who in normal course were and did succeed as Chief Justice of the same High Court) sent recommendation of four names with specific clarification that they must be appointed in the order in which names were sent. This was done so as to prevent the government from picking and choosing on the specious suggestion that some names have not yet been cleared by C.B.I. and their appointments may be delayed, and those lower down in the list may be appointed immediately. However this was opposed by the Chief Justice and such was the effrontery of the law ministry that the government did not appoint any judge during that Chief Justice's tenure; thereafter also the law ministry first appointed new names and only thereafter appointed those recommended by the earlier collegium. So the government's intervention can only be checked by the strong stand of judiciary. It is for this reason that I have my reservations on doing away with the principle of collegiums totally. I had thought collegiums was a welcome move for selection in as much it constitutes a wider circle of three judges, rather than leave it to the sole choice of the Chief Justice of High Court. The present advice of Chief

Justice of India to consult two more judges is welcome. I see no logical reason to abolish the collegiums system in the High Courts (which after all is only recommendatory) now that the appointments are to be made under the provisions of proposed Judicial Commission.

In all this discussion I am amazed that one of the most serious self-inflicted wound by judiciary is being overlooked, i.e. of appointing Chief Justice of High Court to outside his parent court. I have never understood the logic of transferring the senior most judge whose turn has come to head the court in which he has worked for almost 10 to 15 years and with the functioning of which and also the lower judiciary he is most familiar. To transfer him out of the state to a new court for a period of one or two years or even less to which he is a total stranger, and most likely not even knowing the names of his colleagues, is a strange concept of advancing the administration of justice. No one has suggested that I.A.S. officer when his turn comes to be the Chief Secretary in his parent State should be appointed outside. Why this gratuitous insult to local Chief Justice. At present one has the embarrassing spectacle of a Chief Justice on transfer being sent to State whose language is not even understood by him. More embarrassing, there are more than one transfers. I am of the view the Chief Justice should be the senior most judge of the same court – this alone will lend strength and dignity to the High Courts.

Section 8 of Judicial Commission contemplates asking the state and Central Government to send recommendations in respect of selection of Judges. I find this provision a frontal attack on the

Judiciary. After the appointment of a Judicial Commission State and Central Governments have no locus standi and are outsiders to the process of selection. I however agree that the Commission should make public the names it is contemplating for appointments to High Courts and Supreme Court of India. This will make the process more open and participatory and also negate the charge of secret maneuvering in the appointment of Judges. As is famously said sunlight is the best disinfectant.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

moderate and workable. New Delhi would do well to take the country into confidence about its new Pakistan line since high expectations prevail in both countries of the New York summit. The outcome could be a game-changer if between now and September the mood and climate and the political atmosphere in both countries improve and the cancellation of the FS level talks are pushed to the background.

**Madhu Dandavate**

By

**B. Vivekanandan**

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# Reservation of Seats for Women in Legislatures and Parliament

Vibhuti Patel

*“Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning... Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.”*

## - Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995: Article 181

The Women’s Reservation Bill (The Constitution (108th Amendment Bill) 2008 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010, and transferred to the Lok Sabha. But, the Bill has not been passed by the Lok Sabha till now though most of the national parties had promised in their election manifestos and campaign speeches otherwise. As per Article 107 of the Constitution, only Bills which are introduced and pending in the Rajya Sabha shall not lapse when the term of the Lok Sabha ends. Additionally, Rajya Sabha Legislative Guidelines also state that “After the dissolution of Lok Sabha all Bills except the Bills introduced in the Rajya Sabha and pending therein, lapse.” Since the Women’s Reservation Bill is not pending in Rajya Sabha, it too lapsed once the term of the 15th Lok Sabha ended (when the 16th Lok Sabha was elected).

The Women’s Reservation Bill (WRB) providing 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures has been introduced 14 times in several Rajya Sabhas and Lok Sabhas, from 1996 onwards. In 1996, 1998 and 1999, Constitution Amendment Bills were introduced to reserve seats for women in Parliament and state legislative assemblies. The 1996 Bill was examined by a Joint Committee of Parliament. All three Bills lapsed

with the dissolution of respective Lok Sabhas.

Women comprise nearly 50 per cent of India’s population yet continue to be under-represented in all aspects of politics including as elected representatives in the Parliament and in the state legislatures. The marginalisation of women from politics is clear as today women hold only 10.9 per cent of the parliamentary seats and make up less than 1 per cent of ministers and 4 per cent of the negotiators in major development processes. The Women’s Reservation Bill provision has been a long-standing demand of over 17 years which has routinely been treated with little seriousness by the political leaders.

Only 11 per cent and 10.06 per cent of women are represented in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha respectively, making India 108<sup>th</sup> among 188 countries covered in the annual analysis on statistics of women MPs conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In 2013, the global average of women in Parliaments was at 21.3 per cent. The top three in the 2013 analysis were Rwanda, Andorra and Cuba. India fared poorly even when compared with other SAARC countries. Nepal ranked at 24, led the pack, followed by China (55) and Pakistan (66).

During the last Lok Sabha elections in India, several women’s groups came together under the banner, ‘Time for 33% Coalition’ and campaigned for the women’s reservation bill during the winter session of 2014. A 33 per cent reservation, which is the critical minimum mass required, will be one of the most significant changes towards helping women attain their right to participate in Indian democracy not just as voters but also as decision-makers. Appropriate representation of women is possible only through affirmative action of a quota regime, and this in turn will bring more transparency, efficiency, gender sensitivity and even decency in Parliament’s functioning. In EU countries such as Belgium, France and Germany as well countries like Egypt, Iraq and Nepal legislatively provide for quotas for women candidates. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China and Pakistan reserve seats for women in Parliament. Voluntary quotas adopted by political parties exist in countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands and the UK. They not only provide quotas but also ensure that women candidates are placed in winnable positions on party lists.

Over the last two decades, elected women representatives have been taking active interest in using

budgetary allocations for promotion women's education, health, safe drinking water and sanitation. But, the people's representatives neither at the center nor at the state level wish to give up their powers over their constituencies and to share their power at the local level. Similarly the bureaucrats are not geared to play the role of facilitators. Giving up powers to representatives of the Panchayati Raj system is difficult for them. Voluntary organisations can play a major role in developing training programmes for all three groups - the politicians at the center and in the states as well as the bureaucrats - in order to help develop new perspectives on their roles as facilitators.

Historically Women's voice has been suppressed, women have been confined to domesticity and women's concerns have been neglected. Most of the women face tremendous opposition from family, community and the male political leaders if they decide to enter electoral politics or public life. The present political leadership of any hue, in spite of its populist rhetoric, wants to keep women out of the political arena. Indian women's lower educational level, inferior social status and lack of autonomy are reflected in their lower participation in politics. Increasing criminalisation, corruption and compromises required to sustain one's political career also deter women from entering mainstream politics. To provide level playing field to women against this historical neglect and adverse socio-political and cultural forces and to ensure a more participative and inclusive, a more egalitarian and sensitive citizenship for all reservation of seats for women in legislature and parliament is a must.

### **Womanifesto**

Women's movement has been demanding proactive role from

government bodies. Elected women can ensure the following tasks demanded by WOMANIFESTO from:

**Ministry of HRD:** Creating accessible lesson plans for schools, modules for training teachers and to train professionals such as doctors and lawyers.

**Ministry of Law and Justice:** Raising the number of judges to 40 per million.

**Home Ministry:** Improving policing for women, changing service rules to promote for gender competence and enhancing police personnel's attitudes and abilities through training falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs, this is further split up between the states as policing is a state subject.

**Ministry of Human Resource Development:** The gender mainstreaming to be introduced in school curricula that was announced in the Union budget, workshops at each level of school and teacher trainings in gender.

**Ministry of Women and Child Development:** The protection of children from sexual abuse and safe childcare for children in villages and urban slums.

**Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health, and Home:** ensuring that survivors of sexual violence get justice and adequate care requires close coordination. Special developmental plan for women headed households is need of an hour.

**Ministry of Labour and Employment:** Ensuring minimum wage, social security, maternity benefits, day care centre for their children for women workers in the organised and unorganised sectors.

**Ministry of Finance:** Ensuring that women have adequate access to banking and finance

**Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:** Implementing public service campaigns to transform misogynist culture through broadcast media.

**Ministry of Law: Passing of the Women's Reservation Bill**

### **Challenges before Women**

Without popular mandate if women are selected for the top positions, they will have to face non-cooperation from the administration and the law and order machinery. Women in the public life need a protective shield of popular support and tremendous good-will so that they can execute a development agenda more meaningfully. If elected women representatives don't want to be puppets in the hands of different power-blocks, they have to empower ourselves with the first hand experience of the operational reality.

Elected women should have "critical minimum" (at least 1/3) strength in power structures so that they get agenda setting power. Hence, the legislation on 33 per cent reservation is extremely important. Once elected, they should consolidate experience gained during Training of the Trainers workshops of different types of the decision-making bodies to evolve day-to-day tactics and long-term strategies for credit-worthy governance. There is no short cut to fieldwork and efficient handling of the crisis situation. Women in the public life need to create their own support structures for safe night-halts, safe transport and clean toilets. Constant up-gradation of skills and knowledge base is a must for each and every woman decision-maker to survive in a public life for a long term. Ability to handle more than



one portfolio is a key to success in this rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment. Women in public life must give up phobia for modern equipments for better communication such as computers (internet), cell phones and advanced technologies, which reduce human drudgery. Majority of Indian women are seeking protection of the benevolent patriarchs and only 11 per cent women (widows, separated, divorced, deserted and single) are actual/ nominal heads of the households. Hence it is unrealistic to seek women's liberation without active support of sympathetic men. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is going to unfold an era of partnership between men and women dedicated to the cause of liberation of humankind, which will ensure social justice, safe environment, communal harmony and world peace in an era of terrorism in the name of religion that has upset the power relations in the world.

### Conclusion

The inability to pass the Women's Reservation Bill for more than two decades has led to grave injustice to women representatives and to the democratic process of the country. Despite making promises in their manifestos to provide reservation of seats to women, most political parties themselves shy away from giving seats to women candidates. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Indian Constitution brought 33 per cent reservation in the local governance and paved way for more than a million women to enter local self-governance. Currently eight states (Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) have implemented legislation for provision of 50 per cent seats for women in local self government bodies. Now, if the proposal for 50 per cent reservation for women in the PRIs gets an official stamp for all Indian states,

1.5 million women will be actively involved in governance.

When conditions are made favorable, more and more women come forward to contest elections and win. This stride of women into the electoral politics and public arena has shown long-term implications for gender relations in society and the family. This has enabled women and marginalized sections of the society to articulate their interests and speak for their rights.

The need of today is to replicate the process of reservation of seats for women that has been given at local self-governance, in the

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### *(Continued from Page 3)*

ruler, declared that he would stay independent. The land-locked state had to have the support of both India and Pakistan for access to the outside world. He did not want to depend only on one.

With the Muslims in a majority in J and K, Pakistan expected its accession. When it did not take place, Pakistan sent its irregulars, backed by the regular troops. The Maharaja sought the help of India which insisted on the accession before sending its troops. He had to sign the Instrument of Accession Act.

The task of the Hurriyat is more difficult than that of the Maharaja. The two parts of the states are against azaadi. Jammu, the Hindu majority part, would like to join India. The Buddhist majority Ladakh, the other part, want to be a union territory of India. Therefore the demand for azaadi is essentially that of the valley which has nearly 98 percent of Muslims.

state assemblies and national parliament. It is essential to train women who have been successful in the local governance and those who wish to enter the state and national parliaments so that they can overcome the barriers and develop the skills to understand the electoral politics and the dynamics of political process. Existing network needs strengthening to support and help sustain women in politics. There is also a need to share the best practices and examples with other South Asian countries, for not only the democracy in these countries can be strengthened, but also the gender deficit in the democracies can be minimized.

When India is in the midst of endeavour for polarization and when a political party is playing a Hindu card, it is difficult to imagine that the Congress or any other political party, including the Communists, would support the Hurriyat. Even otherwise, all political parties are opposed to the demand for independence, although some may go to the farthest in giving powers to the state.

After 67 years of partition, the wounds inflicted because of the division have not healed yet. How does the Hurriyat expect the people in India to reconcile to another partition, however genuine and strong are the sentiments of the Kashmiris? If partition is again on the basis of religion, the secular state may not survive as it is. True, the 15 crore Muslims in India are equal citizens and they cannot be treated as hostages. But the valley's secession may have such repercussions which are dreadful to imagine. The Hurriyat has to introspect and change its tactics. It has to prove that it counts. Aperenterem cienius

# Actually We Need More (And Better) Planning

**Bharat Dogra**

One of the most controversial decisions taken by the new government relates to the dismantling of the Planning Commission.

While this had been talked about since the regime-change in Delhi, the Prime Minister made an official announcement in his Independence Day speech when he stated, “We’ll replace the Planning Commission with a new institution having a new design and structure....”

This’ll be done in a hurry, as the *Indian Express* pointed out on August 17: “By next week the name of Yojna Bhawan will be history. It’ll be part of several orders the government will issue soon to put an end to the role of the Planning Commission. The building that houses the Planning Commission on Parliament Street will get a new name, said a top source. The Modi government has also indicated that it’ll want to put a pause in the five year plans... The midterm review of the (12th) plan too is expected to be scrapped.”

All this is very unfortunate. If the decision of the government had only been to make important changes in the Planning Commission, that would’ve been OK and it could be seen later what kind of changes are being considered. But the decision to dismantle the Planning Commission is clearly not correct, and should be reconsidered. There should be a strong campaign for this.

Actually in the same Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister also made a somewhat different suggestion elsewhere. (Quoting from the English translation of his Hindi speech published in the *Tribune* dated August 17), he said, “So we’ll have to think about giving the Planning Commission a look. While the Planning Commission has done good work in the past, it is a very old system and it will have to be rejuvenated.”

Rejuvenation is fine, but that is very different from dismantling!

In reality what we need is rejuvenation and strengthening of the Planning Commission to cope

with new emerging challenges. With the emergence of climate change as a serious threat and with the increasing pressure on natural resources, the need for more effective and careful planning is more than ever before. The objective now of meeting the basic needs of all people has to be linked with reduction of GHG emissions and protection of natural resource base, which needs more complex and detailed planning with much better data base. Such honest planning exercises will make it amply clear that to meet basic needs for people on a sustainable basis, much greater equality and environment protection have to be ensured strictly and carefully without further delay. However the agenda of much greater equality and environment protection is not acceptable to powerful corporate interests including multinational companies. This is one major reason why the role of planning has been steadily eroded over the years and now a much bigger attack has been made on it in the form of the dismantling of the Planning Commission.

## Political gamesmanship

Without going into the merits of the stand of Pakistan to meet separatists or resultingly the reaction of Indian government into cancelling the Foreign Secretary meeting, an immediate end to the unedifying anti-Pak. demonstrations both by Congress and B.J.P. must happen.

I am amazed at the low level of political gamesmanship between B.J.P. and Congress – the congress has even gone to the length of calling for sending back Pakistan envoy. Has partisanship and low politics reached such a low level that political parties are willing to damage irretrievably Indo-Pakistan relations which were becoming better after Modi-Shariff meeting. Congress is of course so desperate after losing power that it is behaving like rabid V.H.P. and R.S.S. extremist communal elements by taking this anti-Pakistan stand. Modi needs to step in to immediately to repel this vicious demand of recall of Pakistan High Commissioner. Indo-Pak relations are too delicate to be allowed to be damaged by the irresponsible elements in both the parties.

Both Indian and Pakistani people and Governments must never forget that they are like Siamese twins – any injury to either of them will cause equal suffering to the other.

**Rajindar Sachar**

# A Human Problem

Javed Anand

Count me as part of the global community of individuals, organisations and governments protesting against the latest round of brutality being perpetrated by Israeli forces on non-combatant men, women and children of Gaza.

Count me among those outraged by the hypocrisy of the US government which condemns the Israeli pounding of a UN-run shelter of refugees in one breath and announces its eagerness to replenish the depleting ammunition supply of the mass murderers in the next. Count me among the admirers of Latin America's governments which, acting virtually en bloc in an unprecedented move, have denounced the Israeli government for the death and destruction it continues to rain down on innocent citizens. While Bolivian President Evo Morales has declared Israel a "terrorist state", other heads of state have condemned the "war of extermination" against the Palestinian people and recalled their ambassadors from Israel. In a way it is especially reassuring that the largest protest demonstrations and show of solidarity with the people of Palestine have been not in the Arab world but in Europe and Latin America. The Palestinian question is not a Muslim, but a human question. In India, in sharp contrast to the decades-old national consensus, the new National Democratic Alliance government did not even allow a discussion on the issue in Parliament though it had to bow to global sentiment in the UN and vote with the overwhelming majority of member countries in censuring Israel. Outside Parliament, many secular groups have organised pro-Palestine solidarity marches in

different parts of the country.

But to anyone who reads Urdu papers it appears that for far too many Indian Muslims, Palestine is a religious problem. To the Muslim religious leadership and the Urdu media in India I have a few questions to ask. Are you agonising over the pain and suffering of "fellow Muslims" or of "fellow humans"? Why the inflamed sentiments over ongoing atrocities in Gaza/Palestine but near silence over the virtually parallel mass crimes being committed in neighbouring Iraq by a rogue army that calls itself the Islamic State (formerly Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS) and is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi who has declared himself as the new "Caliph" of the entire Muslim world? The claim of being a Caliph has been treated by most as a silly joke, I know. But what about the crimes of his followers? Am I suggesting moral equivalence between the misdeeds of an elected government that is accountable to the UN and other international fora with that of an army of non-state extremists? No. But what about the fact that the ISIS claims to act in the name of Islam, a religion we proclaim is a religion of peace? Shouldn't we be shouting and screaming louder than anyone else since the "Islamic State" is supposedly acting in your name and mine? Ahmed Rashid, Pakistani author and expert on the growth of Islamist extremism in the region, sees the Islamic State as the "new Taliban". Since capturing large parts of Iraq and Syria in the last few months, the Islamic State has been enforcing a version of Islam on fellow Sunnis (globally the major sect among Muslims) which even the Al Qaeda

is unable to digest. As in case of the Taliban, women are the worst victims. Among other things, they have been forced behind the all-embracing burqa (only eyes may be seen), are not permitted to appear in any public place without a male chaperon. Shias, for the Islamic State, are apostates who deserve to be killed. If the Islam that the Islamic State is forcing on fellow Sunni Muslims deserves the strongest condemnation, al-Baghdadi's ultimatum a fortnight ago to the 5,000 odd Christians of Mosul — Iraq's second-largest city now under their control — is despicable to say the least: Convert to Islam, leave Mosul, pay jaziya (\$450 per family, per month according to some reports) or face the sword. Needless to say, the hapless Christians have fled the city en masse. Christianity in Iraq is as old as the religion itself. "Two thousand years of beautiful history, where the Christians and Muslims for centuries had helped each other, but now it's the end of Christianity in Mosul. It's dreadful news," laments Father Andrzej Halemba, West Asian coordinator for Aid to the Church in Need. An Australian radio news channel has reported: "In Mosul, ISIS fighters have daubed the letter 'N' for Nazarene, or Christian, on the walls of Christian-owned houses before rounding up the residents and stripping them of their money, jewellery and even mobile phones. Another report quotes human rights lawyer Nina Shea as saying: 'One old woman had her life savings of \$40,000,' and she said, 'Can I please have \$100?' and they said no. They took wedding rings off fingers, chopping off fingers if they couldn't get the ring off.'" Spare a thought for Mahmoud

Al Asali, a law professor at the University of Mosul. Al Asali had the courage to assert that the ultimatum to Christians was contrary to the teachings of Islam. He was promptly executed. Forced to flee Mosul, most Christians have found safety and shelter in Iraqi Kurdistan where 94 per cent of the population is Muslim. But the Islam they practice

in the autonomous region is different from the one that the Islamic State is forcibly imposing on others. In June 2012, the Kurdish regional government had declared that education in schools will henceforth be religiously neutral; students will be taught all the great religions of the world on an equal basis. The responses of the late professor Al Asali, Kurds from Kurdistan and the

Shias from Najaf and Karbala to the pain and suffering of the displaced Christians of Mosul show that, as in case of the global protest against the plight of Palestinians, for them too it is not a question of religion but that of our common humanity. The atrocities being perpetrated by the Islamic State have as little to do with Islam as the tyranny of Zionists has to do with Judaism.

*Courtesy- The Asian Age*

## Don't discard planning

**Pannalal Surana**

NDA government seems to be bent upon discarding planning in toto. That would be disastrous for our country. Planning should not be equated with License-Permit Raj. Some of the controls over various economic activities were playing havoc. Doing away with objectionable rules and regulations is useful. But economic planning for bringing about desirable and sustainable development is highly desirable and useful. While embarking upon planning in 1950-51, the Planning Commission had adumbrated the following objectives: 1. To raise the standard of living of the common man, 2. To increase productive capacity of different sectors of economy, 3. To generate avenues of gainful employment for all the able-bodied men and women, 4. To achieve balanced growth of various regions of the country.

For formulating policies and programmes of development, it was felt necessary to enumerate resources available and to accord priorities for their optimum use, not only for a year, which has to be done for preparing annual budgets of the Central and State Governments, but for a longer period, say twenty-five or fifty years. It is not possible for Finance Ministries at the Centre and the States as these

don't have the required know-how and infrastructure. That is why Planning Commission was brought into existence.

That body may not have performed its role properly. But the remedy is to reform and improve, and not the dissolution.

There are differences over the desirability of adopting complete Free Market policy. Some are advocating removal of all controls over all kinds of economic activities and restricting role of the government to looking after defence and maintenance of law and order. Actually, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister, had announced in 1991 that "the decisions about development will be taken in the Board Rooms of the companies". But, very shortly, the chambers of commerce and industries started clamouring for enhanced activity by the Government to expand infrastructure. So, everything concerned with development cannot be left to Free Market.

But it is not wise to cater to the needs of the business class alone. Our economy consists of other sectors like agriculture, small scale industries (which are contributing to the promotion

of export trade in a significant proportion besides providing employment to the millions) and other primary occupations. They also need infrastructure plus a few other things. And who else but the government can provide that?

Let us keep in mind that there are disparities between various sectors, classes and regions as well. Experience of unfettered Free Market all over the world is that all new enterprises flock to the already developed regions leaving others high and dry. Desirable pattern of economic growth cannot be a lopsided one but a balanced one. To pursue that objective, long term planning is not only desirable but is a condition precedent. Formulating long-term strategies and splitting them in short or medium term plans and schemes is a specialized job for which a representative and responsive planning body must be kept in place. Allocation of limited resources in a balanced and equitable manner is to be planned and monitored meticulously.

The present rulers at the centre should not disband planning process. Desirable and required changes may be effected in the composition and the procedures.



# How to deal with Ganga

Gopal Krishna

First of all there has been a structural flaw in the conceptual design of initiatives for saving Ganga which is 2,525 kilometres long across northern and eastern India and neighboring countries from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

Once again Supreme Court has pulled up central government for not showing urgency' in saving Ganga. It has asked for status report and road map for cleaning Ganga by September 3, 2014. Like other pillars of our democracy, the court has been involved with the Ganga issue for several years. This involvement has not altered the current state of Ganga in anyway. From now onwards, the court should hear the matter on the bank of Ganga in the polluted and dammed stretch- not in the court premises- to witness the plight of the river and decipher the true meanings of the affidavits filed by central government, state governments and other agencies.

On June 6, 2014, four ministries - water resources, transport, environment and tourism met to discuss the road map for the river Ganga. This inter-ministerial group (IMG) on the river Ganga has been given the task of preparing a blueprint for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream project to create an aviral and nirmal (clean and continuous) Ganga within 30 days. The IMG is headed by Nitin Gadkari with Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, Tourism Minister Shripad Naik, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Uma Bharti as its members along with

senior ministry officials. An inter-ministerial committee of secretaries under the chairmanship of Alok Rawat, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources has been constituted for the same. "A Cabinet note on the subject will be prepared thereafter," said Gadkari, Union Minister for Road, Transport and Shipping Ministry.

The IMG has proposed to construct 11 terminals on the banks of the Varanasi-Hoogly stretch on the river Ganga for freight movement along with barrages at every 100 kilometers. Gadkari said, "It is proposed to conduct dredging to provide a width of 45 meters and for a three meters draft (depth) to enable transport of passengers and goods between Varanasi and Hoogly on the river Ganga in the first stage of its development." Such proposal without a proper cumulative environment impact assessment gives birth to serious doubts.

During his election campaign, Modi claimed that he is contesting from the Varanasi seat because he has been called to "serve Ma Ganga." After the electoral victory a separate ministry for the river Ganga has been carved out.

Prior to these proposed initiatives by the Modi Government, a 110 page report of B K Chaturvedi headed Inter-Ministerial Group on River Ganga set by Manmohan Singh government dated March 2013 underlined the need to address three problem areas for a comprehensive solution to Ganga pollution. These

were: "(i) The inadequate flow of water in the river, needed to dilute and assimilate waste; (ii) The growing quantum of sewage discharged from cities along the river; (iii) The lack of enforcement against point source pollution from industries discharging waste into the river." The report recorded its assumption stating, "Rivers have a self-cleansing ability, which allows for assimilation and treatment of biological waste. But in the current context, where withdrawal from the river is much higher than the discharge of waste, pollution is inevitable."

To deal with this situation, the Inter-Ministerial Group recommended mandatory ecological flow in all stretches of the river which was 50 % for the lean season flow and 20-30% for all other seasons contrary to even the pre-existing wisdom that environmental flow of the river should be at least 75 % in winters and 50 % in summers.

Besides that it recommended that for urbanized stretches mandatory ecological flow be based on quantum of wastewater released in the river and calculated using a factor 10 for dilution and suggested business as usual for power generation by 69 large hydro projects unmindful of the fact that it contributed to depletion in flow of Ganga and thereby deteriorating water quality. This was suggested as part of the UPA Government's National Mission for Clean Ganga. It is evident that both the diagnosis of the problem and the remedial action that was suggested failed to address the root causes

that threaten the existence of Ganga itself. The complicity of several organizations with the report and its recommendations revealed how environmentalism with regard to protection of Ganga was hijacked by the government.

In the meanwhile, a 2012 parliamentary committee report revealed that so far Rs 39, 225.95 crore has been spent on cleaning of the river under various schemes or projects. As of now it can only be hoped that the initiative of the Modi government will chart a new course.

The Ganga Action Plan, which used function under the Ministry of Environment and Forests has been placed under the supervision of Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti, who is also in-charge of the Ganga Mission. She convened a the first National Dialogue on Ganga on July 7 2014 organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) as part of Ganga Manthan, a national level consultation to facilitate interaction with various stakeholders including policy makers and implementers, academicians, environmentalists, saints and spiritual leaders from all faiths and NGOs on how to save the river.

Each Ministry within the IMG of the new government has been given specific mandate. Tourism Ministry has been asked to explore and expedite a tourism plan covering the stretch of the river starting from Gangotri, and running through Rishikesh, Hardwar and Varanasi. Power Ministry has been entrusted with the responsibility of looking after ways to harness hydro-electricity. Environment Ministry has been assigned with the task of cleaning the river, and the plan to set up a national waterway has been placed under the stewardship of

the Ministry of Surface Transport and Shipping. Gadkari has been asked to prepare a feasibility study on the proposed river-route for development in a time-bound manner.

These deliberations need to be looked at in a context. Citing a World Bank document of 2009, the three volume and 909-page report titled 'United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states: "The National Ganga River Basin Authority in India, with the financial support of the World Bank, launched a programme in 2009 to clean the Ganges, to ensure that 'no untreated municipal sewage or industrial effluents would be discharged into the river by 2020'. Previous action plans did not improve the health of the river, in which almost 95 percent of the pollution is caused by sewers and open drains. This time the governmental approach has moved from a town centric approach to a broader river basin approach..."

But the UNESCO report's treatment of Ganga Basin, the largest river basin of the country which has catchment in 11 States leaves a lot to be desired. The report fails to enlist any achievement of the Ganga River Basin Authority that was set up in February 2009. It does not scrutinise whether or not the promised 'broader river basin approach' has indeed been adopted. It does not dwell on the split personality of the World Bank either.

The Bank has been undertaking contradictory projects in the Ganga basin without any sense of accountability. It depletes water quality of Ganga by supporting

dams upstream and it provides loans for improvement of water quality in its downstream. The second volume of Environmental and Social Management Framework for Bank assisted National Ganga River Basin Project document says, "The Ganga basin (which also extends into parts of Nepal, China and Bangladesh) accounts for about 26 percent of India's landmass, 30 percent of its water resources, and more than 40 percent of its population."

If the Bank knew that Ganga basin is an international river basin but it chose to refer to it as 'national' accepting its faulty description by the government. The UNESCO's report like the Bank failed to comprehend that Ganga like Mekong are trans-boundary rivers of the Himalayan watershed.

In such a backdrop when Jim Yong Kim, World Bank President met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 23, 2014 in New Delhi and promised to help in cleaning up the river Ganga saying, "If Prime Minister Modi wants this to be a top thing to work on together, then that's what we will do. It is hard. We happen to have one of the best water specialist in the world. We will bring our A+ team here and will do everything we can to help," it did not inspire confidence.

While the commercial benefits of damming rivers has been talked about a lot, the in-stream and off stream monetary and non-monetary benefits and advantages of flowing rivers has not been assessed so far. Does basin approach mean undertaking that assessment?

The declaration of Ganga River Basin Authority in the aftermath of the acknowledgment by the Prime Minister's Office during

UPA's regime said, "there is a need to replace the current piecemeal efforts taken up in a fragmented manner in select cities with an integrated approach that sees the river as an ecological entity and addresses issues of quantity in terms of water flows along with issues of quality" merits attention of the Modi government as well.

One can refer to initiatives under Ganga River Basin Authority as the Third Phase of Ganga Action Plan (GAP-III) which promised a river basin approach which could have affected the quality and quantity of surface water, ground water and the survival of natural flow of the rivers in the basin. The GAP-I, which was to be completed by March 1990 was extended till March, 2000 when it was declared complete but Phase I of the Plan is not yet fully complete. GAP-II which was to be completed in 2001 was extended till December 2008. This too remains incomplete. Not surprisingly GAP-III also failed because it applied only to 79% of Ganga basin, which is in India. It did not include 13 % of Ganga basin that is in Nepal, 4 % in Bangladesh and 4 % in Tibet. It did not factor in its relationship with the river systems and with the composite Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin and its consequences.

The fourth phase for the protection has been initiated by the Modi Government. The fact remains unless measures for protection of Ganga is in not situated in the policies of Industry, Power, Agriculture, Urban Development, Health and Environment by the central government, the governments of eleven states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttranchal, Uttar Pradesh

and West Bengal), the neighboring countries, industry bodies like CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and PHCCI and religious organizations, this phase too will meet the fate of earlier initiatives.

IMG will have to examine and deploy the relevance of Ganga River basin approach because the river channels have been amputated from the flood plains besides the amputation of the river channel itself.

Given the poor track record of the National River Conservation Directorate in the past and the new regime under Gadkari and Uma Bharti, it would be naïve to believe that the threats to Ganga's existence will be identified and mitigated.

But if the Ganga basin approach is indeed adopted then as per Comptroller Auditor General's audit reports there is a need to strengthen the environmental clearance process emanating which is being weakened with each passing day. The blind enthusiasm about mega projects like Ganga Expressway and 'interlinking of rivers' scheme must factor in the fact that Ganga, an inter-generational heritage of our civilization is more important than development and the ecological entity of the river basin is non-negotiable.

Whether or not the Ganga basin approach gets the support of concerned states remains to be seen but what can be done even under current scheme of things is to review and reverse the policies like the government's current hydro power policy because they were formulated when river basin approach was not adopted. Consequently, fragmented river valley project specific clearances are given without any considered sensitivity towards

the environmental health of the river ecosystem. An environmental audit of all the industrial activities in the Ganga basin is a must because auditing and accounting are inextricably interlinked, the important pre-requisite for effective environmental auditing is sound environmental accounting.

Data on environmental costs and liabilities can be used for better decision making relating to usage of alternative raw materials, consumption of utilities like water and power, choice of processing technology based on environmental cost of treating discharge into water, adverse environmental aspect and impact on flora fauna and human beings and treatment of byproducts.

In the face of limitations encountered by National Water Quality Assessment Authority, one of the immediate needs of the basin is to take urgent steps to restore the water quality by seeking Zero tolerance towards hazardous chemicals, waste water and depletion in the natural flow due to uncalled for hydro projects adversely affects the water quality.

Here is a litmus test for the new Government vis-à-vis protection of Ganga. Pursuant to the Cabinet note on Ganga, to begin with by issuing an enforceable order banning discharge of industrial effluents and domestic sewage into Ganga, its tributaries and the ground water aquifers of the Ganga basin, it can demonstrate its political will and its commitment for saving the holy river.

**P.S: The Ganga basin outspreads in India, Tibet, Nepal and Bangladesh over an area of 10,86,000 Sq.km.**

In India, it covers states of

Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Delhi draining an area of 8,61,452 Sq.km which is nearly 26% of the total geographical area of the country.

The basin is bounded by the Himalayas on the north, by the Aravalli on the west, by the Vindhya and Chhotanagpur plateau on the south and by the Brahmaputra Ridge on the east.

The Ganga originates as Bhagirathi from the Gangotri glacier in the Himalayas at an elevation of about 7,010 m in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

At its source, the river is called as the Bhagirathi.

It descends down the valley upto Devprayag where after joining another hill stream Alaknanda, it is called Ganga.

The total length of river Ganga (measured along the Bhagirathi and the Hooghly) up to its outfall into Bay of Bengal is 2,525 km.

The principal tributaries joining the river from right are the Yamuna and the Son. The Ramganga, the Ghaghra, the Gandak, the Kosi and the Mahananda join the river from left. The Chambal and the Betwa are the two other important sub-tributaries.

The major part of basin in Indian territory is covered with agricultural land accounting to 65.57% of the total area and 3.47% of the basin is covered by water bodies.

The basin spreads over 239 parliamentary constituencies comprising 80 of Uttar Pradesh, 40 of Bihar, 40 of West Bengal, 25 of Madhya Pradesh, 16 of Rajasthan, 12 of Jharkhand, 8 of Haryana, 5 of Uttarakhand, 4 of Chhattisgarh, 2 of Himachal Pradesh and 7 of Union Territory of Delhi. But these MPs have failed to demonstrate required political will to set matters right in Ganga basin without pandering to the interests of polluters, mutilators and dam builders who sponsor their elections.

## Murder of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar

Even after a year since the brutal murder of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, anti-superstition activist and progressive thinker, the Maharashtra police has failed to find his killers, which clearly points towards improper investigation and lack of will of the Government. It is gravely ironical to note that allegedly highly unscientific

method 'planchet' was used by the police in the investigation, which in fact is a mockery of Dr. Dabholkar's life-long work against blind faith and unscientific approaches. NAPM condemns the inability and failure of the Government and police of Maharashtra and demands immediate arrests of the murders of Dr. Dabholkar, failing to which

collective protests will continue until justice is rendered.

We extend our solidarity and stand with the progressive movements, groups and family members of Dr. Dabholkar in demanding justice.

–Medha Patkar - Narmada Bachao Andolan - NAPM; Prafulla Samantara - Lok Shakti Abhiyan, Lingraj Azad - niyamgiri suraksha Samiti and samajwadi Jan parishad, NAPM, Odisha; Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, MP; Gautam Bandopadhyay – Nadi Ghati Morcha, NAPM, Chhattisgarh; Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe - NAPM, Maharashtra; Gabriel Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan – Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; C R Neelakandan – NAPM Kerala; Saraswati Kavula, P Chennaiiah – NAPM Andhra Pradesh, Bhupender Singh Rawat – Jan Sangharsh Vahini, Rajendra Ravi, Sunita Rani, Seela M, Madhuresh Kumar, Kanika Sharma – NAPM, Delhi; Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh - NAPM, UP; Sister Celia - Domestic Workers Union, NAPM, Karnataka; Sumit Wanjale – Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao Andolan, NAPM, Mumbai; Manish Gupta - Jan Kalyan Upbhokta Samiti, NAPM, UP; Vimal Bhai - Matu Jan sangathan, NAPM, Uttarakhand; Vilas Bhongade - Gosikhurd Prkalpgrast Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Maharashtra; Ramashray Singh - Ghatwar Adivasi Mahasabha, Jharkhand; Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan – Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan, NAPM Bihar; Mahendra Yadav – Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar





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## Coalgate scandals

**S. Viswam**

Pushed to the corner by some embarrassing allegations by Natwar Singh, Sonia Gandhi offered to write a book herself so that the truth could and would come out. The time has perhaps come for former prime minister Manmohan Singh to write a book explaining why he did not follow up on his instruction to the coal ministry to allocate coal blocks by auction. The scandal over coal allocations, better known as Coalgate, is not the only topic that calls for a book from Dr. Singh. There are other scandalous instances that point an accusing finger at the consequences of the UPA government's poor governance. If the Coalgate scandal has surfaced at this stage, it is due to the Supreme Court's ruling that all allocations of captive coal mines since 1993 are illegal. Aside from illegality, the court has pointed to other attributes like arbitrariness, ad hocism, casualness, unfairness and opaqueness. Unfortunately, some of these attributes are traced to the law itself, making it rather difficult to blame any one single or particular administration for so viciously damaging the coal economy sector. Between 1993 and 2010 as many as

218 coal blocks under various categories were allotted by three successive administrations but the worst examples of wrong-doings are being traced to the decade-long rule by the UPA during which Dr. Singh himself headed the coal ministry for a few years. The Apex Court's verdict is in many respects an eye-opener. It is also a wake-up call for the managers of India's economy, and in particular of the coal sector which is obviously the victim of official caprice and lack of transparency.

We have not heard the last of Coalgate. What the court has done till now is to say that all coal allocations since 1993 are illegal, unfair and arbitrary. In the coming weeks, the court is to deliberate on the situation after its findings and decide on what to do about the blocks already allocated. Should the illegal allocations be cancelled in toto? What happens to the huge investments that the allottees have made in developing the blocks? What about the blocks that have been allocated but not yet developed? And above all, what about the root cause of the trouble

in the sector, the law that nationalized coal production and distribution in 1973 and expanded in 1976 and 1993 to allow captive mining to those also engaged in production of some related products like steel and iron and power and so on?

One answer of course, is to tackle the law itself first. De-nationalise coal. Let both the private and public sector share the economy, and take away Coal India's monopoly status and power. The second answer is to bring reforms to the sector. Introduce transparency in coal block allocations by insisting on public auctions of the blocks. Dr. Manmohan Singh was a votary of the auction route but his government did not listen to him. Although Coalgate became a scandal as bad as the one in the telecom sector, Dr. Singh chose to maintain silence. Even the supreme court does not appear to have been enlightened on why the auction route was abandoned in preference to arbitrary action which in turn permitted favouritism, a new version of crony capitalism. Bureaucrats, private operators and companies, politicians of the coal-bearing states, appear to have entered into an unholy conspiracy to make money at the cost of the exchequer. One is not sure if de-nationalisation will automatically do away arbitrariness and unfairness. But one can be sure that denationalization will encourage competition, and competition will ensure more transparency and less favouritism.

Importantly, the Supreme Court have to find a way through which all those who secured allocations under the prevailing system and have invested in the development of

*(Continued on Page 8)*

Between the Lines

## A straw in the wind

**Kuldip Nayar**

It appears that the magic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is waning. His Bhartiya Janata Party has met a reverse in the by-polls. Out of the 18 seats in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar, the BJP won only seven. The parliamentary election held nearly four months ago saw the BJP sweeping and even getting a majority on its own in the Lok Sabha.

The disenchantment of the voters in such a short period is indeed a point of deeper analysis. True, the party made too many promises which were hard to implement. But that is only a part of the explanation. The full explanation is that no home work seems to have been done on the capacity to deliver.

Over the years, elections have become only a futile exercise of tall promises and very little implementation. Since the parties' purpose is to win, the reality comes before the public long after it is all over. The voters flip from one party to another, expecting better performance than the last time. They also punish those who did not measure up to their standard. The Congress has been reduced to only 44 members in the parliamentary elections, not even making the 55 seats required to claim the position of Leader of the Opposition.

The results of the by-polls also show how the political parties, jaded as they are, losing sheen. The BJP, which swept the Lok Sabha polls, has quickly slipped down in position. The fault lies with the political parties that are not learning their lessons. The voters'

disillusionment is visible from election after election. It is obvious that the present dispensation does not sway the electorate. They are looking to prepare the ground for a setup, which in the long run, can counter the saffron power.

The by-elections were seen as a litmus test for the BJP as well as the new combination of the Rashtriya Janata Dal of Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Janata Dal (United) of Nitish Kumar and the Congress. Indeed, the stakes were high for all the three parties in the secular alliance against the BJP which was riding on its massive success in the Lok Sabha polls. The results must have come as a real morale-booster for the combine, particularly for the grand old party Congress.

On the other hand, the BJP must be feeling greatly disappointed for its performance which was below expectations. Though the party leadership put up a brave front, it will have to go back to the drawing board to arrest the trend sooner than later as the BJP has little time before the September by-elections in Uttar Pradesh for 11 seats.

For BJP president Amit Shah, who has made wholesale changes to the party structure—it is a pity that old guards L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi have been omitted from the parliamentary board—the UP by-poll results will be crucial. He has already said that he would want all the 11 seats in his basket, largely because the elections will be sort of a semifinal before the 2017 assembly elections in the state.



Shah will have to work overtime to pick his candidates since the by-elections will be a triangular affair with the Congress and the Samajwadi Party having announced their candidates. Even otherwise, Shah's credibility is at stake after he was pitch forked to the current position when he singlehandedly helped the BJP win 70 out of 80 seats from the state in the Lok Sabha polls.

The loss of a seat in the Madhya Pradesh by-polls particularly is an alarm bell for both Shah and Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the state chief minister who has been inducted in the parliamentary board, which is the highest decision-making body. More than the victory by the Congress which wrested the Bahoriband assembly seat from the ruling party, it is the defeat of the BJP candidate which must be hurting it badly. After all, the Congress had managed to retain just two out of 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state only recently.

As for the Lalu-Nitish alliance in Bihar, the by-poll results must have come as a shot in the arm for the two veteran politicians. It was a well thought out political gamble the two took and it has paid rich dividends, after their parties had taken a real drubbing in the April-May Lok Sabha elections. Knowing full well the pattern of voting and caste arithmetic of Bihar politics, the two leaders apparently realized that they stood a chance only if they were to put up a collective fight.

No doubt, it was a bold experiment that may well pave the way for a possible realignment of anti-BJP parties on a single platform in the run up to the next assembly elections in the state. Bahujan Samajwadi Party's Mayawati has shunned such an offer from Mulayam Singh Yadav for the UP by-polls because she has not yet forgotten the "attempt" by the

Samajwadi Party to eliminate her. But in the time to come if she gains confidence, she could reconsider the offer.

In any case, the by-poll results must have warmed the hearts of many anti-BJP leaders who will want to follow up such an experiment in the future. CPM leader Prakash Karat who claimed that unity among secular parties had paid off in the recent by-elections is willing to cooperate with the like-minded parties to fight the BJP. But,

his party and he have issues with the Congress. "Our party line is to fight the BJP primarily because it is in power now. But we are opposed to the policies of the Congress too," he had said.

Whatever the case, there is one lesson for all secular parties to learn. The voters are yearning for an alternative, away from the Congress as well as the BJP. They want secular and democratic governance, which is what the independence struggle has promised us.

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## Release Irom Sharmila, Scrap AFSPA

The Socialist Party protests the arrest of Irom Chanu Sharmila after only three days of her release. The Socialist Party wants to draw attention to the fact that 14 years ago in 2000, the security forces gunned down 10 innocent citizens at a bus stop in Imphal. The dead included an 80-year old woman and a bravery award winner child. Shaken by the incident Irom Sharmila started her indefinite fast against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (Assam and Manipur) 1958 (AFSPA) that shields the security forces even after such indiscriminate firings on innocent people.

The court said on last Tuesday, that there is no case for attempted suicide against Sharmila who has been on continuous fast for the last 14 years demanding removal of the AFSPA, and that she should be released immediately. Despite this, the Police arrested her again after three days in the same matter. The Police said that they have received orders for her judicial custody from the Chief Judicial Magistrate. The Socialist Party believes that Sharmila's arrest again after the court's release, is a direct violation of her fundamental rights, and is contempt of the court's order.

As a result of acquittal after a long arrest and then arrest again has worsened Sharmila's health. She has been kept in a hospital, where attempts are being made to force feed her through a tube. Her life is in danger considering her already fragile health.

After the release from prison, Irom Sharmila said, "we should all look for a solution to the issue so that we can all live together, eat, drink and sleep together. I am no martyr. I am a normal person. I also want to have a meal." After the court's order when she was released on Thursday, a huge number of citizens went to meet her. Many people throughout the country who have faith in a non-violent struggle are with her. Obviously the central and state governments who want to enforce AFSPA, are scared of the non-violent protest and again arrested Sharmila who is also known as the 'iron lady'.

The Socialist Party demands that Sharmila should be released immediately and AFSPA should be scrapped. The party is extremely worried about Sharmila's health. Therefore it appeals her to stop fasting and carry on her struggle against AFSPA.

—Prem Singh, General Secretary, SP(I).

# Abolish Padma Awards

**Rajindar Sachar**

An acrimonious public debate is going on as to the names, which may be picked up by the Central government for the award of Bharat Ratna. The conferment of civilian awards has no sanction in the Constitution. It was introduced by an Executive order in 1954 by the Central Government. They are of various categories beginning with Padma Shri to the highest of Bharat Ratna. Their concept as propounded by government describes Bharat Ratna as per (India 2013 Pg. 1154) "The highest civilian award. It is given for exceptional service towards advancement of Art, Literature and Science and in recognition of public service of the highest order. Since its inception in 1954, 41 persons have been decorated with Bharat Ratna so far. There are also three categories of Padma Awards – 'Padma Vibhushan', 'Padma Bhushan' and 'Padma Shri'".

Such awards have had their critics right from the beginning. That is why many individuals including some Gandhians, eminent journalists, historians and human rights activists have politely declined to accept the awards as recently as 2007. That is why the assumptions and actuality in giving these awards needs to be debated in a brutally open manner. The Bharat Ratna was first given in 1954 to the Governor General of India, C. Rajagopalachari; to be followed by S. Radhakrishnan, Pt. Nehru (1955). Pt. G.B. Pant (1957). It is unfortunate that Pt. Nehru who was the tallest of

leader in 1955 set up a bad precedent by being persuaded to accept Bharat Ratna. He was the Prime Minister at the time. He did not require the award to increase his stature. In fact there is credible information that Maulana Azad declined to accept it in 1955 and advised Nehru also to do so. But once Nehru had accepted it, politicalisation and partisanship of the award was inevitable. So we have a curious example of Maulana Azad (though he was against this institution) being given the award posthumously in 1992, Sardar Patel in 1991, while Pt. G.B. Pant had already been so given in 1957. Is that not perverting seniority and history? The only way out is to abolish the institution of awards.

But then I suppose politicians suffer from the vanity and enjoy giving awards in all spheres, curiously even in sports, when in reality they may not even know what is off break bowling in cricket or offside in Hockey. That is why hockey in which we had wizards like Dhyan Chand (in 1936), the winner of Olympics has not been given Bharat Ratna, because the present day small politicians find more money in IPL Cricket. It is money angle that determines the supremacy of game. Is that not the reason why 'Kabaddi' our home grown game, and especially so popular in North particularly in Punjab was never picked up – it was rather scoffed at by the Anglicized Indians when Dr. Lohia, the socialist leader, wanted it to be treated as a national game. Now of course it is one of most

upcoming event (all because of T.V., IPL presentation and the consequent money making in the bargain).

The awards of Bharat Ratna raise serious question of propriety, and especially, the conceit and impudence of present small time politicians to arrogate the right to recognize the contribution of our national heroes of past. I firmly believe that any attempt of pygmies like our generation to pick our heroes and freedom fighters of pre-1947 like Netaji Subash Chander Bose and Bhagat Singh is shamefully presumptions. Who do these small politicians think they are – puny individuals strutting in false feathers by purporting to confer honour on our heroes, when we should instead be bowing our heads for their sacrifices in the fight for freedom. Let their life be an inspiration to all of us.

Let me share with you the courage and bravery of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. In 1930 after they had been sentenced to death, efforts were being made by some well wishers to persuade Bhagat Singh to sign the application to be sent to the government for his commutation to life imprisonment. My father was also in Central Jail Lahore, where he had been detained for participating in the Satyagraha started by Gandhiji. In the evening prisoners were allowed to come out of a cell for some time to walk and exercise in the outside lawn. Father and Bhagat Singh used to walk in

*(Continued on Page 13)*

## The controversial bard

Nandana Reddy

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy or Ananthu as I affectionately called him was one of the Bards of Indian polity. Not unlike William Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon, he commented on events, ridiculed fundamentalism and mocked authority. From his deeply embedded socialist convictions he examined modern times through the lens of democracy. He questioned all things and analysed all motives in the belief that it would lead to a deepening of democracy. On January 26, 2014 he said; "...everything is politics. In a democracy, one has to constantly respond...it is not about what is right in the eternal sense. We'll have to do some things that are right at the moment. But that is politics and we'll have to do what is right." He believed that the role of a watch dog was not a duty that can be abdicated by anyone irrespective of who they were.

Our paths first crossed in 1967. I was 15 and though my parents were not in politics they had many friends in the Socialist Party that shared their political beliefs, but also their love for art, music and literature. One day over lunch at our home Shantaveri Gopal Gowda, a long time friend of Ananthamurthy's and the one who introduced him to Lohia socialism and shared his passion for Kannada literature, told the story of Ananthamurthy's novel, Samskara to Dr. Lohia and Madhu Limaye. He said that Ananthu was a Lohia follower [though he had never met Lohia in person]. My parents Sneha

and Pattabhi were struck by the story and decided to make it into a film. Dr. Lohia encouraged them and with the help of many talented friends the film was made and Ananthu became a part of the 'Family Pattabhi'.

Interestingly 'Samskara' the novel was inspired by a film. When Ananthamurthy was in England he went to see "The Seventh Seal" by the celebrated Swedish Director Ingmar Bergman with his teacher Malcolm Bradbury. Though it didn't have subtitles he 'experienced' the film and could relate to the plague, the atmosphere of death and the indecision of the protagonist. There had been a plague in his hometown and he remembered how the upper castes were treated by the doctor while the Dalits were not.

Ananthu was intrigued by the fact that time was so linear in the West while in India they ran spirally like an archaeological site where the layers of time were sandwiched together as Ananthu said; "You in England or Europe in order to create the medieval ages, you have to go back to a library and collect all information. But the medieval times are already there in me. They are there in my mother. I can see and feel the 18th century in my mother and the 10th century in my grandmother. Different times in Europe are simultaneously present in India. As we walk the road, we are simultaneously walking the different times2."

Malcolm Bradbury challenged Ananthu to write and apparently the novel 'Samskara' was written as my father said; "in four furious days, synchronising with the four day time lapse in the novel. A very great part of the novel reads like a film script. The details and mannerism of the Brahmins are so graphic and visual possibly, due to the influence of the film on the novel. Besides these superficial similarities the novel is brilliantly original.3" He wrote it in 1965.

The book created a literary sensation in Karnataka and when the film was banned by the Censor Board it sparked a major political controversy. It was finally released in 1970 and won the National Award for Best Film and several International Awards including the Bronze Leopard at Locarno. A. K. Ramanujan, Professor of linguistics at the University of Chicago saw the film and said; "If I had seen this film in Chicago, I would have danced in the streets with joy!" In 1976 he translated Samskara into English and began using it as course material. The film was path breaking and ushered in the parallel cinema movement in South India and took Ananthu to the international stage.

Interestingly the controversy around the book was after its publication while the controversy generated by the film died out after its release. My father felt that this had something to do with the treatment of the story in the film. "One major departure of the film

from the novel is the later half. In the novel the burning of Narayanappa's body, takes place halfway through. In a way, the story ends half way through the novel" wrote my father in his paper 'Literature and Film'. He said; "The interest in the novel is sustained by Praneshacharya meeting Putta and undergoing experiences the exact opposite of his earlier experiences. His previous religious ritualistic Brahminical world is contrasted with the amoral physical world of the Non-Brahmins, with its cock fights, prostitutes and sensual entertainment. The novel's interest is further sustained by the devise of dramatic irony and black humour where the Brahmins prepare for an elaborate funeral for a non-existing body, which has already been spirited away by the Muslims." He felt that this will not work in the film. "Both the novel and the film start with the problem of the dead body. If the dead body is disposed of half way through the film as in the novel, the film will lose interest. In the novel, literary devices like dramatic irony could be made use of to keep interest. Not so in the film. The film starts with the conflict of to burn or not to burn the body of Narayanappa. The conflict is resolved in the very end when Praneshacharya returns back to the village to do the cremation. Thus the interest is sustained till the very end.

"According to Sri A.K.Ramanujan who translated Samskara into English, Samskara is a novel of decadent Hinduism. This is exemplified by the Madhva Brahmin Community's concern with materialism and greed and their internecine quarrels. Even Praneshacharya, though inspired by noble motives, is forever in the grip

of indecision and scarcely shows any leadership. The dead body is a symbol of decadent Hinduism and the Brahmin community is unable even to dispose of it, whereas the Muslims cart it away in a jiffy and cremate it. When we made the film, we had no doubt that the Muslims stealing the body and burning it should totally be omitted. There arose a big literary controversy when the book was released. We did not want that to become a communal controversy when the film is released, besides the censors would have certainly objected to it. We tried to tone down the literary controversy that the novel was anti Madhva by ennobling the character of Praneshacharya in the film. Praneshacharya in the book discusses his inner feelings of guilt of doing secretly what Narayanappa did brazenly, but he is unable to tell anyone. In the film by his open confession to Putta, his stature rises immeasurably. The film has a positive ending and Praneshacharya redeems himself by his open confession of his guilt and his new determination to act; that is to cremate the dead body."

Strangely 'Samskara' has several associations with the lives of both Ananthu and my father. It brought them together, not only on the artistic plane but politically as well. They were both writers with strong political moorings in socialism. They were good friends. When my father was alive they would visit each other at least once a month to discuss their latest ideas or work. Invariably, the personal intertwined with the intellectual as they both drew heavily from their life experiences. They had much in common and yet were very different beings. Their life in a way mimicked

their art – or was it the other way around?

Ananthamurthy is considered one of the pioneers of the 'Navya (new) movement' in Kannada literature that began with his novel 'Samskara' that was a scathing attack on decadent Hinduism and critic of Brahmanism, its superstitions and hypocrisies. My father is considered the father of modern Telugu poetry as he rebelled against the sweet, rhythmic poetry of Tagore under whom he studied at Shantiniketan and wrote instead about the squalor and filth of Calcutta city.

They both fell in love and married Christians – Ananthu made that a political statement; while my father never did. We, even as their children, were never conscious of the fact that our parents not belonging to the same religion was a daring and courageous step to take in those times. Marrying the person you loved was just the right thing to do!

Ananthu who was born on 21 December, 1932 in the village of Melige, in Tirthahalli taluk in Shimoga District, grew up in an orthodox Madhava Brahmin family as the grandson of a priest. His schooling began in a traditional Sanskrit school before he went to the University of Mysore and to Birmingham, England, for a doctorate in English on a Commonwealth Scholarship where he was awarded a doctorate in 1966 for his dissertation on 'Politics and Fiction in the 1930s'.

The amalgam between politics and his literary expression began early and as he grew older developed into a literary activism very few writers have achieved in history. In



a TV interview he stated that "We should not be politically correct - then we are NOT correct. If there are enough people who can swim against the tide, then democracy is safe. Hence political correctness which places all value on the majority is a wrong thing. Even one voice is enough, because ideas have a way of living... We should be able to say whatever is unpleasant...4"

Ananthu was greatly influenced by Lohia's writings and that was another thread that bound us. Just before Indira Gandhi promulgated a State of Emergency, we saw a lot of Ananthu. My father and mother were shooting 'Chanda Marutha' [Wild Wind], an uncanny prediction of things to come. Then my mother passed away after eight months in jail. Ananthamurthy wrote her obituary in which he said; "It is hard to believe that Snehalata is dead at the age of forty-four. She will remain a vivid memory for ..... people from all walks of life: socialist leaders and intellectuals, theatre artists from India and abroad, writers and above all many young people still searching for a meaning and purpose in life. She ..... could never tolerate injustice and ugliness. ....she is one of the martyrs of our age. By her manner of life and death she has redeemed us who have had to live in a state of sin, because of our quietism and indifference in the face of evil."

This was perhaps a turning point in Ananthu's life. The Emergency strengthened his convictions and he became the most vocal secular, socialist voice Karnataka has seen in recent years. Ananthamurthy was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Shakespeare during his childhood, which shaped his

political and social conscience. He was also a close associate of stalwarts of socialist movement, like Jayaprakash Narayan, Madhu Limaye and Shanthaveri Gopala Gowda.

After the Emergency during the Chickmagalur elections where I campaigned against Indira Gandhi, Ananthu had been campaigning too and when I was beaten by the police and lay in a semiconscious state he visited me. He was the person who accompanied me back home from the hospital to Bangalore at night shining a torch on my face so the crowds that had gathered could see me.

In 2013, he made a statement that in the Mahabharata it is described how the Brahmin community used to eat beef, but this was claimed as baseless by several prominent people like the Pejavar Mutta Swamijee and the Vishweshwara Thirtha Swami, Udupi. The Pejavar Mutta also requested Ananthamurthy to reconsider his statement, as it hurt sentiments of a caste, but Ananthamurthy ignored his request.

He set off another controversy when he denounced the politics of Gopalkrishna Adiga even though he considered him to be one of the leading poets. He believed that being left of centre was better than being right of centre and that it was important to say these things out loud.

Many people create controversies, some unknowingly, some to stay in the news and most out of stupidity, not so in Ananthu's case. These were not just spontaneous acts based on emotion,

not principled responses to situations – even though that may have been the original motivation – but well thought out calculated and sculpted political interventions designed to cause ripples of controversy and debate. This also ensured that the space for democratic dissent remained intact.

The controversies reached a new height during the recent elections, when he said: he does not want to live in an India where Modi rules. In a telephonic interview with CNN-IBN from his hospital bed in Bangalore, he said; "I won't live in a country ruled by Narendra Modi. When I was young, I used to criticise Prime Minister Nehru. But, his supporters never attacked us. They always respected our views. Modi supporters are now behaving like Fascists. They are behaving like the Fascists in Germany during Hitler. I don't want to see a man like Modi in the chair, where once a man like Nehru sat and ruled. I am too old and unwell. If Modi becomes the PM, it will be a big shock to me. I won't live5."

Ananthu was gracious enough to attend a screening of Samskara just three weeks before he passed away. He came and spent two hours interacting with Tom Cowan the Australian cinematographer of Samskara, the audience and the press. On the dais he whispered to me about Modi. He was concerned that Modi would bring about a "shift in our civilization." He said; "I have a feeling that we are slowly losing our democratic rights or civil rights, but much more than that when there is a bully we become cowards." I added that we were already in a state of emergency, but only this time,

Modi did not have to promulgate it – he was doing it through the brute force of his election mandate.

That was the last time we met. He was his charming and affectionate self though one could see the strain his illness was having on him. I spoke to him a couple of times after, inviting him to lunch at home, but he could not make it as he was in hospital that day undergoing dialysis.

During the last months he often joked about his illness and the extreme cleanliness it imposed on him and those around and compared it to the 'Madi' or cleanliness he had to observe in his orthodox Brahmin home as a child where he could not touch anything without washing and bathing

The day he died, I went to visit him in hospital with another close friend Dr. Ratna, not knowing that a few hours later he would be no more. He was on a ventilator, but looked so peaceful and serene. We did not want to disturb him so we spent time with Ester, the children and grand children. The doctor's prognosis was positive, so we left with the hope that he would recover as he had done so many times before. After all he was a fighter!

By the time I reached home we got the news that he was no more. He had threatened to leave India if Modi came to power and some members of the Sangh Parivar had bought him a ticket to Pakistan. Ananthu then recanted his statement and said; "That was too much to say because I can't live anywhere except India." Ananthu decided his own departure – not by an Emirates

flight, but his own.

I said my goodbyes to Ananthu in the privacy of his home the evening he died. I did not want to share that moment with the large crowds that would be part of the State Honours. Ester was inconsolable and I was at a loss for words. What can you say to a partner of more than 50 years, one who cared and watched over him? Despite her own ailments she guarded and protected Ananthu zealously. She was his strength and foundation. Ananthu could not have done what he did without her. Though this was rarely recognized, Ester is the reason for the person Ananthamurthy is.

Many were surprised that his last rites were performed according to religious convention. Though Ananthu broke all traditions, his fascination for the spiritual was deeply imbedded and perhaps his inner strength came from this. My father was the same and this was not a contradiction, but an intellectual rejection of the negative aspects of organised religion while pursuing the search for a greater truth.

Now Ananthu is in good company – my father and mother, Lankesh, Lohia, Gopal Gowda, Madhu Limaye, Karanth and Ramanujan and many others with whom I am sure he is debating our predicament here in this world.

Farewell my dear friend and God speed. May your journey to the other world be safe and adventurous and your search of answers exciting. May the mysteries of the universe unfold and your explorations take on another dimension. We thank you for

your legacy – we who remain, will try and keep it alive by taking the struggle forward.

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1. T. Pattabhi Rama Reddy /"What Life Has Taught Me" - Deccan Herald November 13 1993
  2. The Inner World of U. R. Ananthamurthy/An interview by Arvind Radhakrishnan, Editor-in-Chief of The Bangalore Review (TBR) and Sudeep Reguna, Executive Editor of TBR/link
  3. T. Pattabhi Rama Reddy/ "Literature and Film"/ Paper presented at the International Seminar on Indian literature and film, September 24-26, 1992 and published in Abhinandana Grantham.
  4. Interview with Girish Nikam, anchor and senior journalist, in the programme 'To the Point' for Rajya Sabha TV
  5. Telephonic interview with CNN-IBN
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*(Continued from Page 2)*

the coal sector economy should not be penalized for no fault of theirs. After all, they acted in good faith. Again, after all, the issue pertains to one of the prime national resources which is vital for the over-all development of the national economy. Whoever manages the specific sector, private or public agencies, have to be above board in their operations that national wealth is not squandered away or strays into criminal hands. The court will of course ensure that those who have benefited through criminal conduct are made to pay for their crimes and those who profited at others' cost are made to part with their ill-gotten gains.

# Learning from Babasaheb

**Harsh Mander**

Among most secular progressive people in India today there is the belief – indeed an article of faith – that India has been, through most of its long history, a diverse, pluralist and tolerant civilization – the land of Buddha, Kabir and Nanak, of Ashoka, Akbar and Gandhi. It is a culture in which every major faith in the world found through the millennia the space and freedom to flourish and grow, where persecuted faiths have received refuge, where heterodox and sceptical traditions thrived alongside spiritual and mystical traditions, and where ordinary people live and have instinctive respect for faith systems different from their own.

All of this is true, and this is why the rise of a narrow, monolithic and intolerant interpretations of Indian culture – what Romila Thapar describes as the right-wing Semitisation of Hinduism – in new India causes us deep disquiet. But what our analysis does not stress often or deeply enough is that all of India, both old and new, has been also built on the edifice of the monumental inequality and oppression of caste, and that this is equally the story of India, old and new. Increasingly therefore as the years pass, I am influenced – and challenged – more and more by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. You cannot change India until you understand India, you cannot understand India until you understand caste, and you cannot understand caste until you read Ambedkar. For those who celebrate

Babasaheb, from Mayawati to Arundhati Roy, the assumption appears to be that it is obligatory to pit him against Gandhi, to discredit all that Gandhi stood for so as to install Ambedkar to his due place in modern Indian history. It is as though Ambedkar can stand tall only if his lifelong political adversary Gandhi is toppled from his high pedestal. I do not agree. I feel that history is too complex and pluralist to be reduced to a simple ordering – and reordering – of heroes and villains. History is expansive enough to admit the role of the two vastly different men who most influenced the making of new India in the years of the anti-colonial struggle for freedom and the immediate years after Independence, Gandhi and Ambedkar.

From Gandhi, too, I have learned much, but foremost maybe, is the importance of conformity between means and ends (and that no end however lofty justifies violent, unjust and untruthful means to achieve these), his idea of secularism as equal respect for all faiths, an alternate development economics ‘as if people matter’, non-violence, and the importance of struggling lifelong for greater ethical consistency between a person’s beliefs and the way she lives her life. From feminist philosophers, I have learnt that biology does not, and cannot be allowed to determine a person’s potential, rights, dignity and destiny, about interlocking systems of inequality, about assertion, nurturing, caring and

solidarities.

Having said this, I find I agree with many of Babasaheb’s major critiques of Gandhi. He rightly rejects Gandhi’s idea of trusteeship, which undermines the imperative for redistributive policies and laws; ignores the injustice and oppression which underlies a great part of large wealth accumulation; and leaves the dispossessed at the mercy of the ‘goodwill’ of the wealthy instead of as oppressed persons receiving their just due.

He is correct in dismissing Gandhi’s glorification of ‘village republics’, which Babasaheb accurately describes as ‘cesspools’ of caste injustice and bigotry. He denies equally Gandhi’s defence of tradition, because tradition in India has always been implacably hostile to the rights and dignity of people of disadvantaged castes and women. He rejects acutely as a ‘myth’ the idea of a Hindu society or community. He suggests instead that it is a society devoid of a unifying principle, a conglomeration of an ‘amorphous’ group of people. People owe loyalty within it to their sub-caste, whose customs and purity have to be maintained through endogamy and restrictions on commensality; therefore he believes that the system automatically pits one sub-caste against another. He observes that the only time one sub-caste felt unified with another, or one caste with another, was during conflict with other communities. The gradation of castes, with greater

rights given to higher castes also prevents the formation of a unified front against the caste system, as each caste 'takes pride and consolation' in being graded above certain other castes.

But Gandhi's greatest failing was his vigorous defence of caste. He opposed untouchability and was an influential champion for the dignity of caste-based scavengers who cleaned human shit with their own hands. He took to cleaning his own toilets which was a radical and humanist act in the times in which he lived. However his monumental mistake – an error so unjust to millions of India's oppressed castes that it has led to the rejection by many of India's poorest people of his entire legacy – was in insisting that untouchability was an aberration of caste, and caste was in itself a benign social system for the division of labour.

I cannot understand how Gandhi could defend the idea of caste even if he artificially excised from it the idea of untouchability. How could he defend a system of ordered social hierarchy based on birth? And even more pertinently, how could he have posited the righteousness and justice of a system which traps a child into a profession because she or he was born into a family which belonged to a particular caste, and not by a child's inclination and strengths. Babasaheb insisted – and I believe accurately – that far from being an aberration of caste, the cruel system of untouchability was intrinsic to the caste system. That caste was not a division of labour but a 'division of labourers', in which certain groups of people are trapped in devalued work, based on their parents' social status. It does not allow mobility – therefore he viewed caste as a sort

of 'endogamous, enclosed class', which further suppresses individual development by forcing people to work in occupations that they do not necessarily like or choose. In this respect, he thought that industrialization and capitalism would create conditions for Dalits to escape the stigma of caste, whereas Gandhi was opposed to modernity and industrialisation.

Further Babasaheb was convinced not only that untouchability was intrinsic to caste, but that caste was inextricable from the Hindu religion. Gandhi was a devout Hindu all his life and is believed to have died with Ram's name on his lips. But Babasaheb declared in 1936, 'I was born a Hindu and have suffered the consequences of untouchability. I will not die a Hindu'. He describes Hindu society with what Arundhati Roy aptly describes as a 'chilling metaphor': 'as a multi-storied tower with no staircase and no entrance. Everyone has to die in the storey they were born into.' This battle against the Hindu faith culminated in his conversion to Buddhism in 1956, along with about a million Dalits, a few months before his death.

Babasaheb, born into an indigent, low-caste Mahad family in an army cantonment Mhow, was able to acquire an education only because his father was a subaltern in the British Army. He studied law at Columbia University on a state scholarship, and returned first to join the Baroda administration but was wounded and angered by the open caste humiliations he endured in office, and instead joined as a professor at the Sydenham College in Bombay around the time Gandhi returned to India to lead its freedom

struggle. In 1924, he formed the Bahishkrut Hitakarini Sabha to promote education and socio-economic improvement among the most disadvantaged castes, as well as a forum to voice grievances[ii].

87 years ago, in 1927, he led a movement to assert the rights of traditionally 'Untouchable' castes, to draw water from public tanks and wells and to enter Hindu places of worship – known as the Mahad Satyagraha. In Mahad, more than a thousand people marched to the Chavadar Lake and drank water from the tank in the centre of the town. Worried that Babasaheb and his followers were planning to enter a Hindu temple, a riot ensued. Caste Hindus later 'purified' the tank by performing prayers as they believed that untouchables polluted the tank by drinking its water. They also filed a case against Babasaheb claiming that tank was a private property. On 25 December, Babasaheb publicly burnt the Manusmriti in protest. Years later, in December 1937, the Bombay High Court ruled that untouchables have the right to use water from the tank.

Decades later, in my many district postings and as the head of the department charged with Scheduled Caste Welfare in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh, and my later research into the practice of untouchability, I found that in the majority of villages across large swathes of the country, dalits are still barred from access to common wells and temples. In a village in Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, dalit youth raised a demand that since the upper-caste enclaves of the village had many hand-pumps from which dalits were barred, at least one hand-pump should be drilled in the dalit hamlet. But the upper-caste villagers were



outraged at their assertion and punished them with boycott and violence which ultimately brought them to their knees. In Bilaspur, a dalit man with great devotion touched a Hanuman statue under a tree in gratitude that his life was saved, and was brutally attacked and exiled from his village. I wrote both their stories in *Unheard Voices* and Shyam Benegal made these into a film *Samar*. But these stories are far from unusual. They continue to be so commonplace in rural India that they are for many unremarkable. Babasaheb's proud words during the Mahad satyagrah in 1927 still ring in my ears:

'It is not as if drinking the water of Chavadar Lake will make us immortal. We have survived long enough all these days without drinking it. We are not going to the Chavadar Lake merely to drink its water. We are going to the Lake to assert that we too are human beings like others. It must be clear that this meeting has been called to set up the norm of equality...'

I recall also L. S. Rokade's fierce lament about the injustice of unequal birth:

*Mother, you used to tell me when I was born your labour was very long.  
The reason for your long labour;  
I, still in your womb, was wondering  
Do I want to be born  
Do I want to be born at all in this land?  
Where all paths raced horizonwards  
but to me barred...  
Mother, this is your land flowing  
with water  
Rivers break their banks  
Lakes brim over*

And you, one of the human race

must shed blood struggle and strike for a palmful of water...

My other debt to Babasaheb is for leading the writing of India's Constitution, one of the finest documents to illuminate just governance in the world. He negotiated painfully and resolutely a document which no doubt reflected political compromise; but in its substantive guarantees and even more in its Directive Principles it lays out the blueprint of a just and equal state and society.

He was acutely conscious right up to his death that political equality as offered by India's republican constitution did not in itself guarantee social and economic equality, for which a much longer struggle would have to be waged. His speech in an All-India Radio broadcast on October 03, 1954 remain prophetic today: 'Indians today are governed by two different ideologies. Their political ideal set out in the preamble to the Indian Constitution affirms a life of liberty, equality and fraternity. Their social ideal embodied in their religion, denies them.'

He reminds us pertinently that the Constitution establishes a higher morality than all our respective faiths, prejudices and beliefs, and this higher morality is binding on us all even if it conflicts with our personal beliefs. Decades later, when passing their historic judgment which wrote down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (that criminalises homosexuality), Justice A. P. Shah and Murlidhar distinguished between public and constitutional morality. They laid down that when these are at odds or in conflict, the only morality which passes the test of compelling state

interest is constitutional morality.

And Babasaheb places as much stress on fraternity as he does on liberty and equality. Fraternity, he says, is nothing other than 'fellow feeling' and is an essential element of a just society. It is the 'disposition of an individual' to treat others 'as the object of reference and love', and the 'desire to be in unity with fellow beings'. He also declares that 'I and my neighbours are all brothers...'. He should surely have added '... and sisters'. His greatest conviction – which recognises that the foundation of all contemporary liberal Indian ideas of secularism, pluralism, social equality is ultimately social solidarity, an idea which indeed is the burden of this book – is contained in his incandescent words, that only 'collective liberty is true liberty'.

–Kafila

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# The gospels of Maududi and Golwalkar

Aakar Patel

In the 1900s sprang the two great men from Maharashtra who would trouble the world with their ideas before they were 40. One was M. S. Golwalkar of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The other, from Aurangabad, was Abul A'la Maududi of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

This is not widely known, but Maududi has provided the intellectual underpinning for Islamism across the world.

Very briefly, he did this through his brilliant interpretation of the word tawheed (indivisibility of Allah). Traditionally Muslims were always suspicious of things such as the Christian Trinity and insisted there be no violation of Allah's godhead. Maududi extended this principle of indivisibility and said tawheed "totally negates the concept of the legal and political independence of human beings, individually or collectively".

From here, Maududi arrived at the idea that because of tawheed, all sovereignty belonged to God and not to the people. Thus he rejected Western democracy, which was not Islamic and had to be resisted. The other thing Maududi did, through his text *Al Jihad Fil Islam* (Jihad In Islam), was to lay down the way in which Muslims were to establish the theocratic state.

Every Islamist, from Sayyid Qutb of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood to Saudi Arabia's Osama bin Laden to

Iraq's ISIS, has located his rebellion inside the theoretical structure provided by Maududi. There is not a single idea that the Arab jihadists have put out that eclipses Maududi (our loonies being brighter than their loonies) and in several ways he remains more advanced.

He rejected Muhammad Ali Jinnah's tribal jihad in Kashmir against India, saying only the state could wage war and such freelance jihad was not lawful.

Maududi conceived a small vanguard (exactly as in the Marxist sense) of Muslims who would take over the state and impose piety on society top-down.

Today, the Jamaat-e-Islami seeks to implement Maududi's ideas in Pakistan through electoral politics, and I hope to be able to write again about these soon.

Though the founder of the RSS was K. B. Hedgewar, its true identity emerged after the young Golwalkar took it over in his 30s. Hedgewar was a doctor but he didn't have the sharpness of his successor, who was also well educated.

Golwalkar expanded the RSS with an unrelenting focus on the shakha, a word that means branch, and its morning activity. Golwalkar theorized, correctly, that it was simple physical work, playing games and singing anthems together that would build a disciplined neighbourhood Hindu community

from a society fragmented by caste.

This Hindu brotherhood would be deployed where Golwalkar needed it, for relief during a natural disaster, protecting Hindus during a riot and spreading the cultural message of Hindu nationalism. Golwalkar's stress is also, like Maududi's, on indivisibility. But here the suspicion is of diversity not in godhead but in nation.

It is breaking from Hindu culture and Indianness that is unacceptable and everyone must fold their cultural expression into it. Golwalkar was the real father of Hindutva, figuring out exactly how he could use the ideas of Hindu nationalism on the ground.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognizes his genius. In his biographies of 16 great men, Modi writes his longest chapter on Golwalkar. Though the Prime Minister doesn't engage with his master's ideas intellectually, offering only anecdotes that show his character, the reverence is total.

Here is how Modi describes Golwalkar's release from jail: "After Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, the Sangh was banned. It was later found to be not guilty. Guruji was released from jail. This man, who spoke of loving all humanity, was to be felicitated in Delhi. He was a young man of only 40. Lakhs of swayamsevaks were ready to sacrifice their lives for him. Lakhs of ears were eager to listen to him in Delhi. Journalists from all over the

world were at hand. Everyone was eager to know what instruction Guruji would send out. Would he urge them to bring down Pandit Nehru's government violently? To spread anarchy across India? Instead, after 19 months in jail, this great man said: 'Forget all that happened. Those who did it are our people. If the tongue is caught between the teeth, we don't break the teeth to punish them because the teeth are also ours. Forget it.'

Ultimately, of course, the ideas of the two great thinkers Maududi and Golwalkar turned out to be dangerous and violent both to their own communities and to others.

Maududi had international impact, but we must consider that Golwalkar's heirs are only just taking over.

The papers say Modi is thought to be considering the Bharat Ratna for two men, Subhas Chandra Bose and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This is being written a couple of days before 15 August and I don't know if he will announce this. In any case I doubt Bose and Vajpayee are particularly important to him. The man whom Modi would really want to give the Bharat Ratna to is Golwalkar.

The Congress has given Bharat Ratnas to its leaders and one could say it has done so indiscriminately, handing it to everyone from Gulzarilal Nanda to K. Kamaraj to Rajiv Gandhi.

The RSS feels aggrieved by this and rightly so. In 2003, The Times of India's Akshaya Mukul reported that an RSS man, Dattopant Thengadi, refused the Padma Bhushan under Vajpayee, saying he

couldn't accept it before "Shri Guruji", meaning Golwalkar, was given the Bharat Ratna.

This had been attempted in 1998, but Vajpayee was careful in managing relations with his "secular" allies and wisely kicked the can further down the road. Modi's management of Godhra destroyed Vajpayee's coalition. After that he was forced to ignore

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*(Continued from Page 4)*

the same place. After his death sentence father told Bhagat Singh "Many people are requesting you to sign the petition. Do not you think that if your life is spared, movement will get a big push". On this the young man of 23 years said unflinchingly 'No, Sachar Sahab, I feel my sacrifice will bring higher results'. Such was the courage of a young man. We all know the wave of revolutionary ferment which swept the country after his execution. Of course I was young kid, but I still remember the electrifying current in the country. And lest any one forget – the Congress which was up-till at that time content with asking for Dominion Status, was forced into demanding complete independence as insisted by Bhagat Singh when it held its Annual Conference on the banks of River Ravi at Lahore on January 26th 1930 (Bhagat Singh's was hanged on 23rd March 1930).

One of the suggestions given by a eminent columnist is to give Bharat Ratna to Field Marshall Manekshaw. Personally speaking if awards are to be continued, it is an apt name. But then the journalist in

his Hindutva instincts but lost the election in any case.

Modi has never disowned or forsaken Golwalkar and at some point in his tenure, I believe, will give him the Bharat Ratna. Modi has popularized Golwalkar's ideas through democracy, just as Maududi's ideology is today dominant in Pakistan's constitution and its civil society.

his enthusiasm has made the unfortunate comment that "Manekshaw's contributions were greater and more memorable than those of awardee Aruna Asaf Ali..." I feel that in his over-enthusiasm, journalist friend has hit his own toe. Probably he was too young in 1942, when Quit India movement called by Gandhiji was at its peak. All the Congressmen even at the village level were put in jail. Quit India movement was led by Socialist leaders, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Lohia and Aruna Asaf Ali. In 1942 Aruna Asaf Ali was the face of underground movement. She bravely traveled throughout the country and inspired the youth. To try to underestimate her contribution is unforgivable. But then modern newspapers have a different priority. I say this because none of the main newspapers even carried a small information chip of 9th August being the Quit India movement day.

In this background the only respectable and dignified course is to abolish the awards – in democracy the affection and recognition by the masses is the best tribute to stalwarts in various fields of life.

## Cancelling talk with Pakistan

Citizens For Democracy deplores the decision of India for cancelling the Foreign Secretaries level talk between India and Pakistan which was scheduled to be held on 25th August, 2014 in Islamabad. The reason for cancellation is trivial and a non-issue. This decision is a significant drift in the foreign policy which shows that Modi government has decided to follow a policy of aggressive nationalism which insists that Kashmir is a part of India irrespective of the wishes of the people of Kashmir. This kind of nationalist approach has attachment to the land of Kashmir and not to the people of Kashmir. This decision flies in the face of what Narendra Modi had declared in his independence speech that he wants to govern by consensus, not by majority. He also called upon the SAARC countries to join hands to fight poverty. The disproportionate military expenditure incurred by both countries i.e. India and Pakistan, as a result of continuous animosity over the issue of Kashmir is a continuous drain on the economic

resources of both the countries and one of the major causes of growing poverty of their respective people. Poverty cannot be fought by flexing muscles on hollow nationalist slogans. The present government should be wise enough to know that no solution reached by India and Pakistan will work out satisfactorily unless it is acceptable to the majority of the people of Kashmir. This policy of aggressive nationalism will further increase the alienation of the people of Kashmir.

Therefore Citizens For Democracy urges upon the present government to approach the issue of Indo-Pakistan relation in a sensible manner keeping in view the larger interest of the people in the region, and not to be swayed by jingoism which will earn for it only disdain and contempt of the civilized world, besides being disastrous for India in many respects..

–N.D.Pancholi

### U. R. Anantamurthy

The doyen of Kannada literature, Jnanpith and Padma award winner, and one of India's best known public intellectuals, U.R. Ananthamurthy passed away on 22nd August 2014. His death is an incalculable loss for the public domain. He was a towering figure committed to the socialist political tradition with a moral integrity grounded in great personal courage and conviction. Despite failing health and prolonged illness, he never acquiesced quietly in a political turn of events that he felt strongly about and which he believed called for an unambiguous response. Recently he had been in the headlines for his comment that he could not live in a country in which Narendra Modi was the prime minister. His forthright comment reduced his political opponents to the pitiful condition of having to send him a one-way ticket to Pakistan, revealing both their pettiness and their inability to brook any opposition. His famed novel 'Samskara', later converted into a film, was an unsparing critique of brahminism and caste oppression, and Ananthamurthy remained true to his concern for social justice throughout his life. He continued to support various social movements in defence of people's rights

and their liberties. In paying homage to him, the AIFRTE would like to draw attention to his commitment to taking a public stand on important pedagogical issues. He stood firmly in support of the Common School System as the cornerstone of an egalitarian national system of education. He advocated, along with the best pedagogical theorists, the importance of the mother tongue as the medium of education. He led a demonstration in July, 2006 in Bengaluru to oppose the Centre's abdication of its constitutional obligation to the state governments for passing a Right to Education Act. Under pressure of such public protests, the Central government had to reverse its initial position. He opposed the Karnataka government's attempt to outsource the SCERT and its tasks to the Azim Premji Foundation, established and supported by corporate funds. His open resistance played a big role in the government's retracting from its earlier position. AIFRTE salutes U.R. Ananthamurthy, an icon who epitomised the best values of India's literary and social traditions – pluralism, social justice and moral conscience.

–All India Forum for Right to Education



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**Elders' House is sixty years old**  
K. S. Chalam

**Pattom A.Thanu Pillai**  
B. Vivekanandan

**Rebuilding  
Democratic Socialism**

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## Pakistan in siege

**Kuldip Nayar**

There was time when the people in Pakistan came to the streets to defend their democratic system from the onslaught by the military which wanted its say in the country's affairs. Today, the same people want the military to intervene to save whatever is left of the democratic structure in their country.

This was visibly seen when the popularly-elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met the Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, to request him to assist the Government. Nawaz Sharif thought that he could get away quietly with a civilian Prime Minister seeking military help. But the army has issued an official press release to state that the Prime Minister made the request which the army chief did not accept. The army's explanation was that traditionally its role in a democratic setup was to defend the country, not to run it.

In fact, Prime Minister Sharif has brought this misery upon himself. His mis-governance has alienated the people. They want him and his brother, Punjab chief minister Shahbaz Sharif, to quit and hold mid-term polls. Instead, Nawaz

Sharif had a resolution passed by parliament to back him. It does not help the situation because both of his opponents, Imran Khan of Tehreek-i-Insaaf and Qadiri of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), are from the civil society.

Some leaders opposing Nawaz Sharif have demanded a mid-term poll. Their thinking is that the people must once again decide whether they want Nawaz Sharif, who has lost luster or someone else should run the government.

Whether the fresh elections would throw up any other person who is acceptable to Sindh, North Western Province and Baluchistan, apart from Punjab, is in the realm of conjecture. Yet the once-hated military would get sanction from the people to run the administration if polls were to be held. Whether or not world opinion accepts it, the military appears to be the only unifying factor. However, it is reluctant to intervene as the meeting of army commanders has revealed.

Still what has happened in Pakistan is a soft coup. The army is at the centre of whatever is

happening in the country. The mood of the people was to see the back of the army. But in the current situation, the question is: what is the way out? Pakistan has faced such a situation many a time before. Willingly or unwillingly, the military has ruled the country for 37 years, half of the period since its independence.

No democratic country wants the army to rule it. A few opposition leaders were candid enough to say that the army should have a role in the country's governance. However, leading political parties are not prepared for it. Still the question that confronts Pakistan is the type of polity it should have to have all on board, including the military.

General Zia-ul Haq, who did the greatest harm to Pakistan's democratic system as a martial law administrator, said that probably a Turkey-like model which recognizes the military role in governance would strengthen the Pakistan system. The Turkish constitution lays down that the army can intervene if and when democracy is derailed. But it was rejected by the popularly elected leaders.

Today, the army is acting as a go-between to convey the viewpoint from one political faction to another. It is considered a neutral party. There is enough evidence of this at Islamabad as the popular cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan is calling the shots. He has declared that his men—who are protesting in the streets of the capital itself—will not leave until Nawaz Sharif has submitted his resignation. PAT's Qadri, a fundamentalist, too has joined the chorus to get rid of Nawaz Sharif.

Contact with the people is the

basic requirement of democracy. And Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has maintained it through public meetings. His stance is that whatever they are doing tantamount to defending the institutions to sustain democratic and constitutional machinery in. Pakistan is no exception.

Not long ago, Nawaz Sharif was pulled down by the army from prime ministership. His call on the army chief now to intervene is a full turnabout. But he does not realize that the army will have no hesitation in staging a coup as and when it feels or whenever the situation demands. That is the reason why Nawaz Sharif brings in parliamentary democracy in his statements to underline that the role of the army can, at best, be only temporary.

Even then, the intervention by the armed forces is becoming too often in Pakistan. The people are getting used to it and associating stability with the military's governance. This feeling is anti-democratic in content because the discipline of soldiers is tantamount to authoritarianism, in contrast to the people's participation in a democratic society.

One feels sorry over the spectacle in Pakistan. People there are no different from those in India. But mis-governance at the top made the army to walk in once. General Ayub Khan, then the army chief, took advantage and imposed the martial law. His rule lasted for eight years. And once the army took over, its influence stayed even after the troops went back to the barracks.

Since then the situation in Pakistan has remained in flux. In fact, the strong methods used by the army were responsible for East

Pakistan to secede, giving birth to Bangladesh. Unfortunately, both Pakistan and Bangladesh, however democratic in declaration, are essentially at the receiving end of a telephone call from the military headquarters. Still whatever has been retained in the form of elections gives democracy a flicker of hope.

A retired military army official has predicted that Nawaz Sharif would come back with a reduced strength if a mid-term poll were to be held. Nonetheless, it would be a sad end to the people's rule because a democratically elected Prime Minister has been asked to step down by people like Imran Khan who has only 38 seats in the house of 342 members, including 60 reserved seats. But how long would it take for the elections to be held or what shape they assume is anybody's guess. Until then, the democratic setup in Pakistan is in a siege.

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*(Continued from Page 15)*

- To challenge the casteist and communal forces and their evil designs
- To embrace democratic socialism, constructive activities, new technology for genuine and equitable development.
- To organise a nationwide march for a democratic socialist alternative by involving socialist communities, organisations and movements.
- The meeting requested Janata Trust to call a meeting of socialist organisations, individuals and parties.

*—the Resolution in Hindi has  
been translated*



## Elders' House is sixty years old

**K. S. Chalam**

The recent prorogued Parliament has demonstrated that its proceedings are different from the previous sessions. The breadth and depth of debates in the Rajya Sabha providing wise counsel to the law makers and at the same time extracting what is essential for the country is really admirable. The upper house or elder's house would be completing 60 years of its existence in the present form very soon. It was named as Rajya Sabha on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1954, though it was constituted in May 1952 after the elections. Thus 2014 is the year of its sixtieth year of birth. The creation of a bicameral system under a parliamentary form of democracy based on Westminster structure was the gift of our visionary leaders. There was a serious discussion in the Constituent Assembly as to the need for a 'Council of States' the upper house, with no money Bill coming for its approval. The intense debate about the purpose of the house clearly display how our leaders forethought about the crucial presence of elders in the Parliament to guide the destiny of the nation. The Indian structure is either analogous to the House of Lords who function under the crown in the UK or the Senate in the USA Constitution to represent states. Indian bicameral seems to be a compromise between the UK, Canada and the US structures with varying functions. The conciliation between different provisions found at that time in diverse countries appeared to have been modified to suit our conditions. B. R. Ambedkar being a Buddhist by conviction at that time seemed to have adopted the

middle path. He has pointed out in his speeches that India is a union of states and should reflect the aspirations of the people both in the Lower House and in the Upper House. In reply to a question on the disproportion between the membership of the Upper House and the membership of the Lower House, he said that the proposed Article 172 follows a different procedure that was to be adopted with regard to the two chambers at the centre, namely a joint session. 'What we propose to do is to permit the view of the Lower House to prevail over the view of the Upper House in certain circumstances. Consequently, the Upper House by reason of this different political complexion has no possibility of overturning the decision of a majority or a large majority of the Lower House'. Some commentators assert that the Upper House has no value in view of its character of non-intrusion in financial matters including passing of budget, however, some others do emphasise its importance at the time of political uncertainty through a course of joint session. It seems the founding fathers have expected that there would be different groups of members with distinct political ideologies sitting in the two chambers deliberating on issues of national importance, would make the presence of a permanent house as shock absorber. Therefore, we have article 108 for joint sitting of both the Houses.

However, the Upper House is not representative of the society as it carries only those who are sponsored

or elected from particular political parties out of 238 members and the remaining 12 are nominated by the President to make it 250. But, in practice the government in power keeps their own people, alleged to be cronies or those who could not make it in direct elections as sponsored candidates. In fact, the quality and background of some of the members is so knave that many commoners comment that the RS is no more an elder's house but, is demonstrative of the ill-gotten wealth through different manipulations after liberalisation. This is not absolutely correct and we can contest some of the allegations as the number of such individuals and their voice in the House is very placid (notwithstanding Sachin, Rekha and such). Yet, given the practical functioning of the parliament is built on standing committees, their presence on issues that are close to their heart being passed, no doubt gives credence to some of the contentions.

The elders' house should have been more active than it is today in the formulation of policies concerning the majority of the people who are poor. The RS and even the Lok Sabha have not been able to stall any of the economic strategies that are against the interests of the people and the sovereignty of the nation. The left and democratic forces have tried to voice the concerns of the people, but due to the limited mandate, the RS could not do much to the people of the country. It is likely that their share would dwindle in future. There is another serious weakness in the

formation of our RS. There is no representation to the scheduled castes and tribes there like that of in the case of the LS. In fact there was a discussion in the Constituent Assembly when Muniswamy Pillai raised the issue of representation to scheduled castes and tribes. There seems to have been very little debate and Ambedkar being convinced of the political reservations being continued for only 10 years, did not evince interest in the matter. But, the six decades of RS experience suggest that the House is not very impulsive as far as the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged are concerned. It is only in the recent times that issues relating to poor and downtrodden are taken for discussion by the Upper House may be due to the dynamic presence of some honest representatives.

Some commentators consider that the RS should be made responsible to deal with issues of national importance in the light of the Directive Principles of State Policy and should not leave the judiciary to interfere and direct the Government to pass Acts like RTE, RTI, etc.. It should be made as a watchdog of judiciary that is becoming constricted and non-representative of Indian plurality with little accountability. In the USA, federal Judges are appointed by the President and confirmed by the senate – that procedure could be as well be followed here with necessary amendments. In fact, the RS should take on itself the obligation to initiate debates on the basis of the preamble and basic structure of the Constitution. Socialism, Secularism and Scientific temper are being disparaged by some motivated individuals with the help of a section of the media in

recent times. But Members of Parliament irrespective of the political ideology of the party who affirm their faith in the Constitution by oath as per Art 99 were infrequently found defending it. This would have definitely enhanced the prestige of the House. The basic structure as interpreted by the apex court needs to be taken seriously by the permanent House as the Lower

House or Lok Sabha keeps on changing every five years or whenever it is dissolved, but not the Rajya Sabha. Therefore, Rajya Sabha being represented by elders in terms of the age prescribed in the Constitution has sufficient message for the incumbents and the people that the members of the Upper House would not have behaved differently.

–with inputs from D. Raja M.P(R.)

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## Balraj Puri

In the sad demise of Balraj Puri at Jammu India has lost a great champion of human rights and a political analyst of high repute. He was 86. He was participant in momentous political events such as 'Quit India Movement' of 1942, and 'Quit Kashmir Movement' of 1946 in association with Sheikh Abdullah and Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz against Dogra Ruler Maharaja Hari Singh. He did his utmost to prevent outbreak of communal violence and check its spread in Jammu in 1947 and on many occasions thereafter - even at the risk of his life. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, sought his opinion on Kashmir affairs on crucial occasions. Puri always tried to bridge the gap between Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. He rendered great help in the conclusion of Indira Gandhi-Sheikh Abdullah Accord in 1974.

Puri's activities encompassed various fields - from active social and political to academic and journalistic work of high standard. I had the privilege to associate with him on few occasions in the course of human rights work.

Jayaprakash Narayan had inaugurated the Citizens For Democracy in April 1974 at Delhi and he became its founding member. I came in touch with him at that time. He was also a founding member of the PUCL in 1976. He was a member of the National Councils of both the organizations for several years and was very active.

Militancy had started in Kashmir

at the end of 1989 and by the start of January 1990 Jammu & Kashmir was under Governor's rule. Militancy was at its height leading to killings of large number of people - both Muslims and non-Muslims whom the militants suspected as government agents and it led to exodus of Kashmiri Pandits on large scale. On the other hand the entire Kashmir valley was placed under army rule and the Kashmir police was sent to the barracks by Governor Jagmohan as he suspected almost all the Kashmiries. Clashes between militants and security forces were the daily occurrences and indiscriminate firing by the security forces in retaliation was resulting in large number of casualties of the innocent people. Curfew used to be imposed for 21 to 22 hours daily which was causing great deal of misery and hardship to the people and this situation continued for several months. There were frantic messages to the PUCL and CFD from the people in the valley requesting for sending a team to investigate into human rights violation by the security forces.

It was with the initiative and assistance of Balraj Puri that a team of PUCL and CFD was formed for the purpose. The team visited the valley in the last week of March 1990. The team members were Justice V. M. Tarkunde (Retd.), Justice Rajinder Sachar (Retd.), Balraj Puri, Inder Mohan, Ranjan Dewedi, T.S. Ahuja and myself. On the first day when we were at Hazratbal in Srinagar in connection with an incident, suddenly 4/5 militants with AK-47 rifles appeared and began to enquire about us and

our purpose. Our local guide conversed with them in Kashmiri. However, he told the militants that we were Christians and not Hindus as he felt that militants might do some harm if they come to know that the team members were Hindus. We did not know Kashmiri but Balraj Puri knew and as soon as he heard the team members being described as Christians he became angry and reprimanded our guide. He told the militants that we were not Christians but Hindus and that we were not representing the Government or any party but were representing Indian Human Rights organizations and had come to the valley for the cause of 'Insani Haquq'. Militants appeared to be confused and after some deliberations among themselves disappeared from the scene.

The report which was brought out by the team exposed the darker side of the rule of Jagmohan at that time and was widely discussed and debated nationally and internationally. Subsequently several human rights teams used to visit the Kashmir valley and in most of them Balraj Puri either used to be part of the team or adviser. He not only took up the issues of human rights violations in Kashmir but also of Punjab, North-east and other parts of India.

He had deep commitment for human rights issues and his whole life was a supreme dedication to the cause of secularism. He has always been a great inspiration to me and many others in the human rights movement.

-N. D. Pancholi

# Pattom A.Thanu Pillai

## B. Vivekanandan

“Three times Chief Minister and five and a half years as a Governor. How much is there in my Passbook, Thampi? Thirty-eight rupees only?”

–Pattom Thanu Pillai

This poser by late Shri Pillai to his biographer T. Kumaran Thampi on 29 August 1968, after looking at his updated passbook, soon after he retired as Governor of Andhra Pradesh, speaks volumes about Pattom’s personality and his unquestionable integrity in personal and public life.

This first English biography of Pattom Thanu Pillai complements, and supplements, two other biographies on him, published in Malayalam, by V. Narasimhan Thampi (*Pattom A. Thanu Pillai: A Biography*) published in 1979, and by Rajeev Gopalakrishnan (*Pattom Thanu Pillai: An Invincible People’s Leader*), published in 2008. Though the Malayalam biographies also have provided detailed accounts of Pattom’s political activities and his contributions to national life to Malayali readers, Kumaran Thampi’s English biography unravels Pattom’s contributions as a patriot and as a statesman, who had maintained highest standards in personal and public life, to a wider readership beyond Kerala, and India, who also should understand and evaluate the contributions of Pattom to the nation’s public life. Thus this book fills a void, in the collection of English biographies on the galaxy of India’s great statesmen of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the skyline of Kerala’s political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pattom Thanu Pillai is a legendary figure. For four decades, he was a beacon in Kerala politics. He founded the State Congress in the princely state of erstwhile Travancore, led a heroic struggle for freedom, democracy and responsible government – an executive responsible to an elected State Assembly – against the British imperialism and Dewan’s autocracy, until India’s independence. He was courageous and was a man of strong moral fibre and ethical conduct. During the freedom struggle, it was common to hear in political rallies a paired slogan “*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai, Pattom Thanu Pillai Ki Jai,*” in recognition of his patriarchal position in Travancore’s freedom struggle. Indeed, during those days, Pattom Thanu Pillai was a household name throughout the state.

In Kerala’s political history, Pattom occupies a unique position and his life is closely intertwined with it. In the course of Kerala’s evolution from Travancore to Travancore–Cochin (in 1949), and then to Kerala (in 1956), he headed governments in all these aggregations. He was Prime Minister of Travancore, Chief Minister of Travancore–Cochin, and Chief Minister of Kerala and

initiated several pioneering progressive reforms in the state. He was President of the State Congress for eleven years, and the State Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party for twelve years. He was Chief Minister three times and Governor for five and a half years. In personal traits, he was incorruptible, and a fair minded person who took decisions on merit, without fear or favour. He embodied the highest integrity in personal and public life, which few can match. He nurtured his incorruptibility through his austere habits: teetotalism and resolve to limit his expenditure within his legal income, which, as he stopped his legal practice, virtually meant the salary of his wife Ponnamma, who was a High School teacher in Trivandrum. As an austerity measure, when he was President of the State Congress, he used to walk up and down every day from his home to the State Congress Office, which was about four kilometers away. Indeed, he belongs to a rare breed to public men who are hard to be seen in the political arena today.

### Outstanding Statesman

Pattom Thanu Pillai was an outstanding statesman who was admired by friends and opponents alike for his sterling qualities. He



was erudite, farsighted, patriotic and honest to the marrow. Indeed, he represents the age of idealism in Kerala Politics, untainted by greed and self-aggrandizement. There was an aura of nobility and imperiousness in him that they had endowed him with great commanding power. He loathed selfish politicians and those who had a parasitical approach to politics. He was opposed to doing favours on the basis of recommendations on the ground that doing favours like that to some would constitute doing injustice to some other deserving people.

The biography under review gives a graphic account of the socio-political environment in Travancore in 1920s and 1930s when Pattom Thanu Pillai became politically more active, gave up his legal profession, and founded the State Congress. It also gives a detailed account of Pattom Thanu Pillai's formative period, his education and career as a lawyer until 1929 when he got elected to the State Assembly from the graduate constituency. In the Assembly, he became a vocal critic of the Government, and made Dewan the target of his attack. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer (CP) was the Dewan of Travancore from 1936 to 1947. Prior to that, he was the Advisor of the Maharaja. During the period, the State Assembly witnessed hot exchanges between the Dewan and Pattom, who took up various public issues in the Assembly for discussion. In the biography, there is an extensive analysis of Pattom's learned speeches on various issues and the role he played in the State Assembly, brushing aside various intimidatory tactics used by C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer during those debates. In addition to issues pertaining to

various socio-economic-political and administrative matters, he paid special attention to improve public facilities, including clean water supply, in the Trivandrum City. His speeches in the Assembly exposed Dewan's misrule in the State. He opposed CP's cynical move to label the State Congress as a subversive and anti-royal organization, and his attempt to use the tactic of divide and rule, by doing special favours based on castes and communities to advance the divide and rule strategy. Innumerable instances of fiery exchanges between Pattom and CP in the Assembly on public issues have been illustrated in this biography.

### **Freedom Struggle in Travancore**

The book gives a comprehensive analysis of the freedom struggle in Travancore under the leadership of the State Congress. It may be noted that even before the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the State, the State Congress and its youth wing were declared illegal in August 1938. And, Pattom was banned from addressing public meetings anywhere in the Trivandrum District. But, Pattom defied the ban and addressed a huge rally in Sankhummukhom Beach and courted arrest on 26 August 1938. He was sentenced to one year imprisonment. Pattom's arrest and imprisonment stimulated the Civil Disobedience Movement and stirred up head on clashes in streets between the police and the State Congress volunteers. In those clashes Neyyattinkara Veera Raghavan was shot dead in police firing during that agitation in August 1938. Following these developments, Gandhiji expressed his concern over the situation in Travancore. There were several thrilling moments during the

course of that struggle in the State, narrated in the book like, for example, Akkamma Cherian's visit to the East Fort to meet the Maharaja on his birthday, with about a lakh of people following her on foot from the Trivandrum Railway Station and the events that followed. Such popular agitations forced the government to release Pattom from prison prematurely, on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1938.

### **Gandhiji's Influence**

Pattom Thanu Pillai was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi – his stress on ethics in politics and administration as well as simplicity and austerity in personal and public life. He met Gandhiji many times. Gandhiji also respected Pattom and his views as he realised that Pattom was a man of conscience who always stood by truth. Pattom respected Gandhiji's opinions. It was in deference to Gandhiji's advice that Pattom withdrew some of his references against C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, although his allegations against CP were based on facts. When CP tried to depict the State Congress as a subversive organization, Gandhiji rebutted it and defended the State Congress.

Though Pattom and CP disagreed on many matters and publicity criticised each other, they possessed the civility to quietly respect each other. Three instances give credence to this fact. One was that when Pattom fell seriously ill in April 1945 and went to Madras for treatment, CP, on his own, quietly wrote to the concerned physician, Dr. Guruswamy, urging him to give the best treatment to Pattom so that Pattom could recover quickly. The second instance was that, on the night of 25 July 1947, when CP was

subjected to a sword attack at Swathi Thirunal Academy in Trivandrum, in which CP's nose was cut. Pattom knew nothing about the incident. But, enthusiastic police men went to Pattom's house immediately and arrested him, assuming that he had a role in the attack. This action against Pattom was taken without the knowledge of CP. When CP was told, soon after, that Pattom was arrested in connection with the attack, CP became angry and ordered his immediate release, saying that "Pattom would be the last person to do such a thing". CP knew Pattom's deep commitment to non-violence. The third instance was when CP was invited to Trivandrum in 1962 to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the *Hindumatha Grandhasala* on 29 August 1962. The meeting was presided over by Pattom Thanu Pillai. On that occasion CP praised Pattom, and Pattom reciprocated it graciously. He praised CP for the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936.

CP wanted Travancore to be independent when the British Paramountcy ended and opposed Travancore's joining the Indian Union. But Pattom and the State Congress opposed that idea and two days before independence, on 13 August 1947, Maharaja signed the document of Travancore's accession to the Indian Union.

### **Transfer of Power**

On the basis of a resolution of the State Constitution Committee, the Maharaja issued a proclamation on 4 September 1947 and transferred power to a Ministry responsible to the State Assembly. With that, adult franchise was also introduced in the State. Pattom Thanu Pillai formed

his first Ministry in Travancore on 24 March 1948, with himself as Prime Minister, and T. M. Varghese and C. Kesavan as ministers.

The book also gives an account of unhealthy power struggles, which took place in the state after independence, to destabilize Pattom's governments repeatedly. Indeed, it gives the picture of a struggle between Pattom's refusal to compromise with his principles and the selfish demands of disgruntled colleagues of his own party for personal gains or positions of power, and between the record of Pattom's good governance and the resultant apprehensions of other major political parties in the state – the Congress and the Communist – that if Pattom Government was allowed to continue for a full term they would have no future, which caused his repeated resignations from the Chief Ministership of the State. His first Government in 1948 was pulled down for the reason that some aspirants for ministerial berth, like Parur T. K. Narayana Pillai, for example, were not made ministers, which led to a signature campaign against Pattom, leading to his resignation in October 1948. His second government, a Praja Socialist Party (PSP) Government of 1954–1955 was pulled down for the reason of its impressive record of progressive reforms and good governance, which moved in the direction of implementing socialist programmes like provision of universal free education, initiation of land reforms in the state, nationalization of public utility services like transport, strengthening of the public sector and the cooperative sector, introduction of solidarity wage policy of reduction in the salary ratio between the highest and the lowest

paid employees in government, etc., which, looking at the year (1954) in which they were introduced, were pioneering revolutionary reforms, which, till then, were being introduced only in some Scandinavian social democracies like Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Since Pattom was leading a minority PSP Government when he initiated all those progressive reforms, Congress and Communist parties apprehended that continuation of Pattom's PSP Government would undermine their existence in the State. And they joined together and pulled it down on the basis of such narrow considerations. Third time he was pulled down (or elevated) from his Chief Ministership to become the Governor of Punjab, to make room for R. Sankar.

### **Reforms in Education**

Pattom Thanu Pillai's PSP Government in Travancore–Cochin made education, upto VIII<sup>th</sup> Standard, free and universal, which was a pioneering reform in India. And Pattom's approach was that the school education to children should be imparted only by State-run schools, under a uniform syllabus. He wanted not only equality among students, but also that the idea of equality should be inculcated in them at school level itself to enable them to develop a culture of equality in their formative stage. He emphasized also another objective of school education - the strengthening of secularism. It was his conviction that to promote secularism in India, all schools should be run by the government to teach children the values of secularism and equality in their formative years. That basic objective should be kept in mind when children's school education is

planned. It should be attuned to strengthen values of equality and secularism among children. He was against caste/communal considerations in the sanctioning of permission to run educational institutions, which would potentially promote communal/caste sentiments in children. Managers of private schools did not agree with those progressive approaches. Private school managers, who had developed vested interests by running schools in the state, especially the church authorities, became critical of the statization of education in the state in order to preserve their grip on young minds. Therefore, from then onwards, educational reform became a controversial subject.

### Land Reforms

Land reform was a new idea to promote equality in society. The first land reforms bill in the democratic world for equitable distribution was passed in Sweden in 1947 by the Swedish Socialists, to equitably organize Swedish agriculture on the basis of family units of about ten hectares of arable land per family. Within seven years, in 1954, Pattom, through his first land reform bill in India initiated action to meet the demand of equitable distribution of arable land in the Travancore–Cochin State. The land reform bill was introduced in the State Assembly in the form of seven separate, but interconnected, bills, which had a structural unity, to safeguard the reforms from potential judicial intervention, and a rejection in toto under Article 31 of the Constitution. Pattom defended that *modus operandi* methodology and said that if all clauses of the land reform bill were put in a single comprehensive transcript and moved

as a total bill, it might result in being lapsed through judicial interference and suspension of any one clause of the Bill. It reflected Pattom's, and his revenue minister P.S. Nataraja Pillai's legal acumen embedded in that approach - as became evident when in the Kesavananda Bharati Vs State of Kerala case, the Supreme Court, in 1973, intervened and stopped the implementation of the whole Land Reform Act.

Pattom government's land reform bill had certain special features. One was that it proposed a land ceiling of individual holding, based on an annual net yield of Rs. 3,600 from it, which was still a big amount at that time. The land ceiling was not based on the extent of the land holding. K. R. Gouri, Revenue Minister in the first Communist ministry led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, presented a new comprehensive Land Reforms Bill, by clubbing the earlier seven separate bills introduced by P. S. Nataraja Pillai. The innovation in Gouri's bill was that the ceiling of land holding was based on its area. What Pattom apprehended in 1954, came true in 1973. The hurdle of that judicial intervention was removed when the Janata Party Government of Morarji Desai passed a constitutional amendment, which removed the right to property from Fundamental Rights, and made it an ordinary right.

Pattom government's land reform bill had several other new radical features. The whole bill was designed to grant fixity of tenure to tenants who were lessees, to provide for the payment of fair rent, and to grant right of ownership to those peasants who could prove that they were Pattadars for 12 years.

The bill was sent to the Select Committee of the Assembly. Indeed, this bill was a key factor which had resulted in widely publicised observation that if Pattom's PSP Government got a full term in office in the State, other parties, like Congress and the Communist, would have to wind up their offices in the State. Panampilly Govinda Menon, Congress leader from Trichur, made extensive use of this observation to whip up anti-Pattom and anti-PSP feelings in Congress and Communist parties. And they joined together and pulled down the Pattom ministry before the land reform bill was returned to the Assembly from the Select Committee for its passage. They conveniently made use of the Tamil language agitation in the southern taluks of Trivandrum District. Reportedly, Panampilly with petty motives, encouraged the Tamil separatists in the southern taluks to energise their agitation to merge those taluks with Tamil Nadu.

As the Tamil agitation took a violent turn, and as the agitators indulged in arson and started the demolition of a strategic bridge across the Kuzhithura river, the only road connection between Trivandrum and Kanyakumari, the police resorted to firing, causing death of a few agitators. With that Panampilly achieved his objective. Pattom was removed from power with the support of three defectors - T. S. Ramaswamy, Kodakara Kesava Menon and Vayala Idikkula - from the PSP. With their support, Panampilly became the Chief Minister.

Pattom was opposed to the division of Travancore, as there was no valid reason to divide it. This biography gives a graphic account

of the powerful arguments Pattom made in the State Assembly against the separation of southern taluks of the State and their merger with Tamil Nadu. He said that the proposition was absurd since people were living there together there for centuries by communicating in both Malayalam and Tamil smoothly. He said that, he had reservations about the language based state formation. The recent split of Telugu speaking Andhra Pradesh to create a new state of Telengana validates Pattom's reservations, expressed decades ago. Whether this new development in Telugu speaking Andhra Pradesh would provide any new powerful basis for the return of Kanyakumari District peacefully to its natural home – Kerala – and end Kerala's Present truncated look, is an open question, since geographically or culturally Parassala does not provide any feature of a dividing line between Kerala and Kanyakumari. Social life and economic activities of Kanyakumari District remain more connected to Kerala than to Tamil Nadu, east of Ghats. Moreover, a journey through Kanyakumari District today gives it the impression of an adjunct, neglected district, in the periphery of Tamil Nadu. It is widely believed that if Pattom (not Panampilly) was the Chief Minister, the merger of southern taluks with Tamil Nadu would not have taken place.

### **Other Reforms**

Some other notable reforms Pattom's PSP Government initiated in 1954 deserve our attention. One is his initiative to introduce a new salary structure in government by reducing inequality between the maximum paid and the minimum paid employees. In Scandinavia, this approach is known as Solidarity

Wage policy. This approach was adopted by socialists in Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Denmark and Norway and Finland in early 1960s. But to attempt to introduce a similar approach in Travancore–Cochin, the first attempt in India, in mid-1950s, was, indeed, revolutionary. As an initiative in this direction, Pattom ministry reduced the monthly salary of ministers from Rs.700 to Rs.500 and increased the monthly salaries of the low-paid employees.

### **Ownership of Public Utilities**

Similarly, the Pattom Government initiated a move for public ownership of public utility services – like the public transport for example – in the State. The public transport system in Trivandrum District was nationalized. All private bus operations were stopped in the Trivandrum District. He wanted all public utilities and essential services like transport, health care, education, etc. to be organized only in public sector and so that they could be detached from the rapacious private sector. Similarly, his government successfully enforced prohibition in Trivandrum District, and stipulated preference to Khadi items in the purchases for official purposes. In order to make ceremonies simple and unostentatious, his government issued a guest control order, limiting the number of guests for marriages and other similar ceremonies to 50. It is also interesting to note that Pattom was the first person to propose that all government appointments in the State should be made from a merit list, prepared on the basis of written competitive tests, conducted by the State Public Service Commission.

### **Attachment for Trivandrum**

Trivandrum enjoyed a special place in Pattom's heart. After he became the Prime Minister of Travancore in March 1948, he ordered that all files related to the capital city should be seen by him and decisions on them should be taken only with his consent. For Pattom, Trivandrum was like his extended family. He knew almost everybody in the capital personally, and could call them by their first name whenever he met them. And the people also lavishly reciprocated it by showering affection on him. To cite an example, this author has an experience to share. Once, in early 1960s, Pattom Thanu Pillai was passing through the road in front of my home. And, I organized a reception for him in front of my home. For that, I went to a flower merchant in Chalai, the main market in Trivandrum, to buy some garlands for me, and my friends in the locality, to garland Pattom and welcome him. I took five medium sized garlands from the florist and asked him to pack them. While he was packing those garlands, he casually asked me about my place, and the purpose for which I was taking those garlands. I told him that they were for garlanding Pattom Thanu Pillai, at a reception, while he was passing through my neighbourhood. The moment he heard that those garlands were for garlanding Pattom Thanu Pillai, he became humble and showed reverence to that name, and to my great embarrassment, he refused to take money from me for those garlands. He was so insistent that ultimately I yielded to his wish. Such was the depth of genuine affection and respect ordinary people in Trivandrum had showered on Pattom Thanu Pillai.



When Panampilly Govinda Menon floated an idea, in mid-1950s of shifting the state capital from Trivandrum to another location, Pattom sensed the ill-motive behind it, and took measures to scotch such ideas from recurring in future. The establishment of the Trivandrum City Improvement Trust in 1960, when he became Chief Minister of Kerala, was made in this context. The City Improvement Trust had radically changed the complexion of Trivandrum city. *Marachinivila* (Tapioca farm) was transformed into the present day Jawahar Nagar. The secretariat building was expanded with additional new North and South Blocks. Vikas Bhavan was built up. All important state offices got housed in Trivandrum. He criticized an earlier government decision to shift the High Court from Trivandrum to Ernakulam. He had taken all these measures when he was Chief Minister in 1960-62, before he left for Punjab, to see that such ideas of shifting of the capital from Trivandrum are never floated again by anybody in future. If Trivandrum is firmly seated as the capital of Kerala, it to a great extent, due to the vision Pattom Thanu Pillai had shown when he was heading governments in Kerala.

But does Trivandrum suitably acknowledge it? Doubtful. If it did, the name of Trivandrum International Airport in Sankhummukhom would have borne his name. If it did, in the naming Putharikandom Maidan, E.K.Nayanar would not have got priority over Pattom Thanu Pillai. If it did, the location of Pattom's statue, now in front of the V. J. T. Hall, would have been either in front of the Secretariat, on the line where Velu Thampi's Statue is located, or in the Kerala Legislative Assembly

compound. To tag his name to a desolated peripheral locality of Trivandrum, by calling it "PTP Nagar" (most people do not know what "PTP" stands for), is not the way to express Trivandrum's gratitude to Pattom Thanu Pillai.

### A Gandhian Socialist

Pattom was a Gandhian Socialist, who imbibed Gandhian values and led a simple and unostentatious life all through. He imbibed socialist values and ideas too, and endeavoured to look at issues from the angle of the poor and the downtrodden, in adherence to Gandhiji's famous *Talisman*. At a meeting organized by the Cooperative Union in April 1954, Pattom explained his socialist ideas. At that meeting, he urged people to understand the value of equality and its practice. He said that although there is no equitable sharing of wealth and resources in our present society, we should learn how to enjoy the fruits of growth in society equitably. He said that the government should ensure provision of land to the landless poor. He was emphatic that he was opposed to any system which gives happiness only to one section, and sadness for rest. Such systems must go, he said.

Pattom was opposed to communism because it believed in violence. Therefore, he disliked communists in general. But, he was not a blind anti-communist. He had a special liking for Gandhian communists, like C. Achutha Menon, for example, who had followed a Gandhian way of simplicity, honesty and unostentatiousness in his life style. C. Achutha Menon had several opportunities to meet and interact with Pattom. Pertinently, a senior

official in the Secretariat who knew Pattom's anti-Communist attitude, put up an unhelpful note to Pattom on an application of a known communist activist, who had a record of many sacrifices, assuming that Pattom would be happy to turn down his request. But the unhelpful note annoyed Pattom, who summoned the concerned senior official and conveyed his displeasure over the unhelpful note he had put up and got it revised, and granted the request of that communist activist. This happened in 1960.

### Voids in the Biography

This biography does not throw much light on Pattom's activities as the Governor of Punjab, and his effort to stop powerful Punjab politicians from the misuse of governmental machinery for electoral advantages. Soon after Pattom became the Governor of Punjab, there was a by-election in Chandigarh in which Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon's son Surinder Singh Kairon pressed the official machinery in favour of his Congress candidate. As part of it, on the polling day, he used State cars also to ferry voters to the polling booth. When an opposition candidate lodged a complaint to Governor Pattom Thanu Pillai against the misuse of State cars, Pattom ordered their seizure and placement in the Raj Bhavan compound. That was done. Enraged by this action of the Governor, Surinder Singh reportedly gatecrashed into the Raj Bhavan and forced his way to the place where Pattom was sitting at that time, and used impolite language to him, with a warning that "Mr. Pillai, Remember. This is not Trivandrum. This is Chandigarh", and swiftly went away. But, such threats did not deter Pattom from taking appropriate

action against anybody. It did not deter him either from advising the President of India to institute a judicial enquiry against the Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon, a close confidant of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, when he got from the President, for his advice, a petition containing serious corruption charges, involving one million dollars, against the Chief Minister, Kairon. On the basis of Pattom's advice a former Chief Justice of India, Justice S.R. Das, was appointed to enquire into the charges. It led to Kairon's resignation in 1964. But, prior to the release of that Commission Report Pattom Thanu Pillai was transferred to Andhra Pradesh as Governor. But, the biography contains an information that this transfer of the Governor was due to a disagreement between the Governor and the Chief Minister over an issue of commuting a death sentence to life imprisonment. That is not correct. The main reason was to decide the timing of release of the S.R. Das Commission Report, which found Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon guilty.

### **A Strong Personality**

Pattom was a strong personality who would not brook in ways unacceptable to him. A case in point is Pattom's reaction at the Food Ministers' Conference, in New Delhi held in October 1948, presided over by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the Food Minister at the Centre. When the Food Minister started the Conference proceedings in Hindi, an unfamiliar language to the Travancore Prime Minister, Pattom instantly stood up and reacted sharply. He told Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Rajendra Prasad firmly that "Gentlemen, I will go and learn

Hindi and come back to understand what you are saying". With that he collected his papers from the desk and started to leave the Conference. Instantly, Jawaharlal Nehru, who understood the wider implication of what Pattom said, rose from his chair and rushed to Pattom and stopped him from walking out, by assuring him that the proceedings of the conference would continue in English. Further proceedings were in English. That was the imperious way he communicated to Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad. Nehru respected him and fully accepted his proposition to grant food subsidy for all needy and deserving states in India. When he was making this dazzling performance in New Delhi and receiving lavish praise from other participants of the conference, in Trivandrum some petty-minded colleagues were busy collecting signatures against him, expressing no-confidence in him!

### **Responsible Spending of Public Money**

There is an episode in this biography which reveals Pattom's attitude towards spending public money by those who are occupying positions in Government. It is related to a sudden visit of Governor Pattom and his wife from Hyderabad to Trivandrum, following the death of his wife's mother, for which he and his wife travelled on privately bought air tickets, with money borrowed from his Private Secretary, which was repaid to the Private Secretary from his next months salary. When he was asked why he borrowed money to buy two air tickets to travel to Trivandrum while he could have done it officially by arranging a tour programme for him in Kerala, Pattom replied: "This is my personal affair, and I am

particular that the government is not burdened with personal bills". That was the ethical standard of Pattom Thanu Pillai. Another notable instance mentioned is the attempt of a representative of the Leyland Motors, in 1960, to present him a 'gift' of Rs.50,000 for the decision of the KSRTC to buy 200 buses from the Leyland company. Pattom flatly refused to meet him, asking a question that if the Company is so generous, why can't they provide the KSRTC with an extra bus? Not all State Transport ministers of later years have emulated Pattom in such transactions. I know an instance of an ex-transport minister of Kerala, volunteering advice and assistance to his successor how to receive such 'gifts' from automobile companies! But the latter, an honest man, rejected the offer. Both are there now in the present State Assembly. Pattom returned to Trivandrum in April 1968, after spending five and a half years as the Governor of Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. That was the time when he looked at his updated Passbook and found that his bank balance was rupees thirty-eight. He passed away on 26 July 1970 in Trivandrum. Prior to his death, V. V. Giri, President of India, visited him at his residence.

### **Inaccuracies**

There are some inaccuracies in this biography. The reference about Dr. Rammanohar Lohia in page 125 as the President of the Praja Socialist Party is incorrect. He was General Secretary of the PSP, not President. Similarly, in pages 71-72 there is a reference about the ownership of the private ground at Vattiyurkavu, in Trivandrum, where a Conference of the State Congress was held in December 1938, when all public grounds were denied by the Dewan

for holding the Conference. That private ground did not belong to Pattom Thanu Pillai, but to K.Krishna Pillai, a rich revenue official from Vattiyoorkavu, who made his ground available for holding the Conference of the State Congress, braving the intimidations of Dewan C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer. For giving that ground for the conference K.Krishna Pillai was dismissed from service, and CP's Government machinery used private goondas to completely demolish his big *Nalukettu* house in Vattiyoorkavu, in reprisal. And, he was forced to leave Travancore for safety immediately, and he went to Ottappalam and became an inmate of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram there. That was C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer's vengeful response to those who aided the State Congress at that time. K.Krishna Pillai returned to Trivandrum only after India got independence in 1947.

There is considerable inadequacy of information in this biography relating to Pattom's innovative contributions during his Chief Ministerships of the state, and also about his activities during his Governorship. Instead, more space is devoted to focus on intrigues against him and betrayals by his close compatriots and friends, which remains a bane of Kerala politics.

This biography must be read by all those who are in positions of power, and by all budding politicians of all parties, to understand and recapture the value system and ethical standards a statesman like Pattom Thanu Pillai had adhered to all his life in politics.

It would have been good and useful if the book had carried an 'Index' also.

## Prosecute Yogi Adityanath

Citizens For Democracy strongly condemns the communally sensitive remarks made by Yogi Adityanath in a programme 'Aap ki Adalat' on 'India TV' on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. In that programme which is reported in various newspapers, he has publicly blamed the Muslim community for being responsible for instigating the riots. He has publicly declared that where there are more than 35 persons Muslims, there is no place for non-Muslims. He has publicly justified his provocative speeches in the past in which he said that if a Hindu is killed 10 Muslims will be killed in retaliation. He has publicly said that if he has a 'mala' (rosary) in one hand, he also carries a 'bhala' (javelin) in the other and that as a 'Sanyasi' he has no qualm in punishing the evil elements. He has publicly charged that 'love jihad' is a part of the strategy to turn India into a Muslim country. He has publicly said, casting aspersions on the loyalty and integrity of the Muslim community as well as giving a veiled threat to it, "if you want to live here, you will have to respect Indian culture and traditions. You cannot have your body here but mind in Pakistan."

All the aforesaid statements made by Yogi Adityanath are criminal offences amounting to generate hatred and enmity against the Muslim community. He is straight away liable to be prosecuted under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code which provides punishment of imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine or with both to anyone who by words, either

spoken or written promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or caste or communities, and who commits any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different communities and which disturbs and is likely to disturb the public tranquility. Yogi Adityanath must be knowing that India has a Constitution and is meant to be governed by the Rule of Law. As per Indian Constitution nobody is entitled to take the law in his own hands in order to teach "other side" in the so-called "language they understand" or use "bhala" (javelin) in retaliation to punish the "supposedly" evil elements.

It is obvious that Yogi Adityanath is trying to polarize communities for electoral gains in view of the forthcoming elections in UP to serve narrow political interest for his party that is BJP.

Citizens For democracy hopes that Shri Rajnath Singh, the Home Minister, will rise above the narrow sectarian political interests, and will prove true to the oath he has taken to uphold the values and principles of the Indian Constitution. Citizens For Democracy, therefore, appeals to him to take immediate action against Yogi Adityanath by arresting and prosecuting him as per law in the interest of maintenance of peace and communal harmony in the country.

## Rebuilding Democratic Socialism

Socialists in India have disintegrated as a party since they merged into Janata Party in 1977. There have been few successful attempts to reunite them and revive the Socialist Party at a national level. But socialists have been active in various other parties too. They have also formed parties of their own. The latest in the line are the Socialist Party of India founded on 28-29 May 2001, and the Voters Party, on 26 January 2014. All the Socialist parties are small, unable to make a national impact as individual parties. But the socialism, to be precise, democratic socialism, is a formidable and credible ideology, with its eternal values of liberty, equality, justice, solidarity, dignity, identity and pluralism.

Some of the comrades after wide consultations thought of bringing about an ideological clarity on

People of India have been suffering for decades from violation of cardinal values, guiding principles and basic rights. Despite several achievements, governance in India has been marked by inequality, injustice, casteism communalism and anti-democracy. 'Socialism' was written into the Constitution, albeit, a bit late. But since the economic policies, the governance process and development implementation were not socialistic, people from various sectors: farmers, labourers, dalits, adivasis, fisher folks, youths, students, artisans, and women took to the path of struggle. The successes achieved in these struggles are; securing basic necessities for poor, farmers, workers and scope for democratic participation for the marginalised

Socialism in the present context, and unity among socialists in thought and some limited action. The response to such an initiative was overwhelmingly encouraging.

So a get-together of socialists from different parties and institutions took place at Yusuf Meherally Centre' Tara campus, near Panvel in the Raigad district of Maharashtra on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> August. The meeting, organised with the help of Janata Trust, drew people from most parts of the country and the proceedings were conducted in the usual atmosphere of socialist camaraderie. The most touching comments came from G.G. Parikh. He said, "I have lived a successful life as a social activist, happily supported by my family, I have been honest in my profession as a doctor, and have been fairly successful in my community works. But what

communities. Yet, the political forces, and economic policies have undermined not only the dreams and aspirations of common people but even their right to exist. Some of such policies and practices include (1) Increase in corporate power instead of people's power (2) Dividing the people on the basis of caste and religion, (3) Manipulating economic policies to support those exploiting natural resources and common goods. Socialist comrades kept fighting such divisive and exploitative policies while maintaining contacts with like-minded socialist and progressive forces.

1. Presently, the capitalist forces through globalisation,

makes me feel sad is my failure to live up to the promise of establishing a Socialist society. I wish I could do more." His next comment jolted all the delegates present. He said, the biggest challenge today is to be able to use the word socialism in Indian politics. Because of the irresponsible behaviour of some socialist leaders in splitting the Socialist parties time and again, people lost enthusiasm and even faith in Socialists and their ideology." He was so true. An idea is kept alive and authentic by its proponents.

Lots of ideas were mooted for furthering the ideological unity, inter-organisational solidarity, and deepening the camaraderie. Reflecting such collective moods and a mission, a resolution was passed which is presented below:

—D. K. Giri

liberalisation and privatisation have a field day. In every five year plan, the big companies get exemption of millions of rupees in tax and custom duties. Consequently capitalists like Ambani and Adani are pitted against 1.5 million hapless farmers driven for years to committing suicide. This has become a challenge for all the progressives. Not only from within the country, we have also multinationals from abroad entering the life-saving sectors like water, electricity, education and health. They have gradually taken over the public goods as well as the public space. Now, the new government at the centre is allowing the MNCs with maximum profit incentive and various concessions, thereby



undermining the sovereignty, self-reliance, democracy, even the livelihoods of common men and women.

2. The foundation of Narendra Modi and BJP's politics is based on Hinduvta. This poses a challenge in terms of escalating communalism and insecurity of minorities. Millions of Indians believing in secularism are deeply concerned. After the sad and infamous developments in Ayodhya, the riots in Muzzafarnagar and Khandua are indicative of the concern that sectarian violence, small and big will increase under Modi. It is also likely that terrorism will reveal in the country and internationally its barbaric and dark side. Despite assaults on our secular politics, our traditional and assiduously nurtured multi-culturalism has been upheld so far, but now in danger of dilution and disintegration.

3. The politics which has thrived on inflation, unemployment has now fallen victim to market economy. Instead of addressing basic problems of the people there is systematic loot of water, land, forest and minerals in the name of development. Destruction of environment, displacement, commodification of women, torture of dalits, adivasis and women are alarmingly rising. Casteism and communalism are getting entrenched in electoral politics. Instead of democracy consolidating through regular elections, tons of black money is changing hands during elections. To become the Prime Minister by spending thousands of millions of rupees and securing only 31 per cent of the votes only shows that fundamental change is necessary and immediately in the electoral process as well as representative

democracy. The present government, having won the elections, by the power of money is inclined towards a handful of capitalists. It is making policies to cater to their profiteering such as on FDI, Land Acquisition Act, DMIC corridor, Infrastructure projects, river linking, change in labour law, etc. Shall we keep quiet? Commercialisation of education and growing unemployment have alienated vast majority of youth. We need to assuage their frustrations by taking corrective steps.

4. In the above context many socialists from different peoples' movement, political parties and civil society organisations, got together to discuss a common course of action. They expressed their desire and determination to move forward by drawing on the ideas and inspirations from Gandhi, Vinoba, Acharya Narendra Dev, Lohia, Jayaprakash, Ambedkar, Periyar, Marx, Mahatma Jyotiba and Savitri Phule, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Maulana Azad, Yusuf Meherally and others. They want to come together while maintaining their separate identities. Not common minimum, but a common maximum programme must be the basis for such a united action.

5. This mission could be possible by strengthening the people's movement, by expressing mutual solidarity, and by engaging in politico-economic process. Further it is necessary to fight the anti-people policies pursued by both Congress and BJP, for the defence of democracy and sovereignty and by reaching out to the people to articulate their exasperations and problems. There was a consensus that we need to take radical steps to preserve the unique heritage and

glory of our freedom movement.

6. The meeting demanded prosecution of those responsible for the murder of the anti-superstition activist, Dr. Narender Dabholkar.

7. The Meeting decided to support Siksha Adhikar March, which is planning an All-India March for the sake of common school system and against the privatisation of government schools and commercialisation of education.

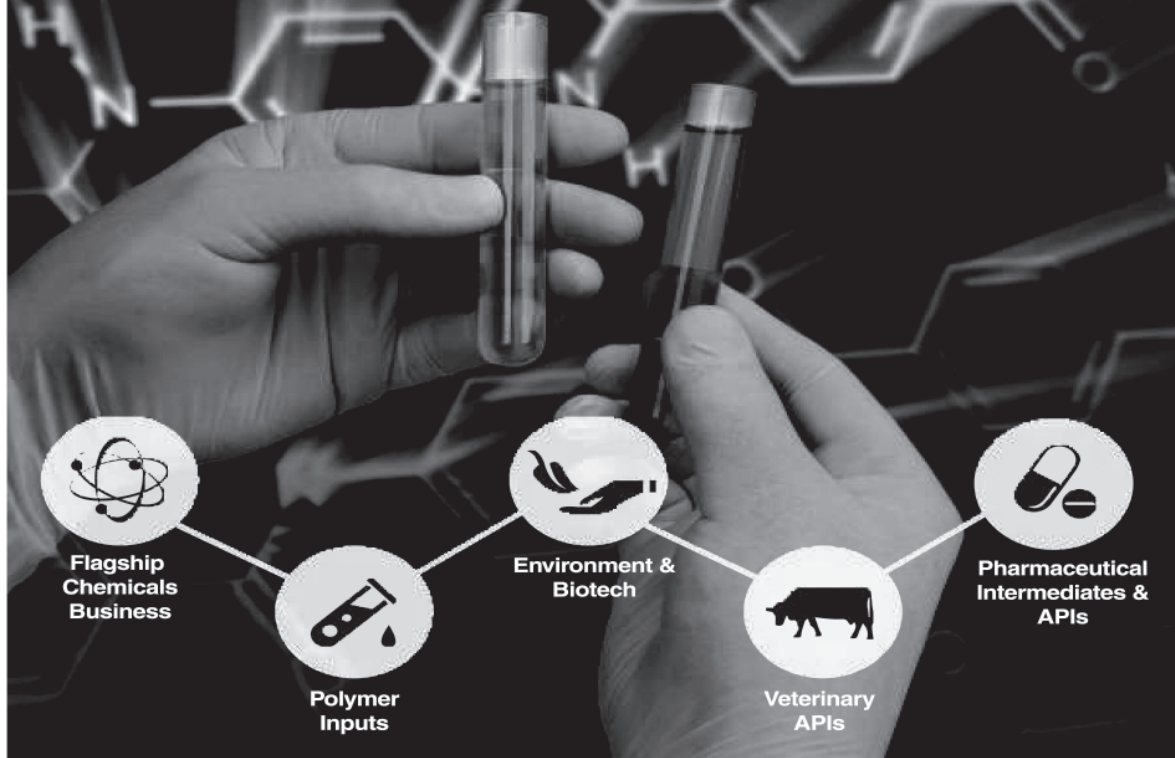
8. It was decided in the meeting to constitute a small representative body to take the mission forward. The responsibility for coordination was assigned to Dr. Sunilam and delegates from different parties, organisations and states. This Body will make common cause with youth, workers, and farmers, women fighting for the economic, political and social change. It will also invite the participation of various sympathetic progressive thinkers and activists.

- To discuss and implement this resolution another meeting will be convened on 30<sup>th</sup> October in Pune.
- To recruit and engage youth in socialist ideology and activities a cadre camp will be organised on 13, 14, 15 December in Puri, Orissa.
- People's movement will be launched on issues of land and water ad workers rights as well as against FDI, displacement, growing inequalities, privatisation of common properties.
- To launch a nationwide dialogue and movement for fundamental changes in electoral policies.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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## Politics of Kashmir

**Kuldip Nayar**

Kashmiri Pandits, like Punjabi Hindus, have no homeland to return to. Both want to go back. But the militancy that ousted them is still strong. On the top it is the local population which has been contaminated by the fundamentalists.

Some Pandits who have returned are unhappy. They find that the atmosphere of secularism is, by and large, a memory of the past. They have the feeling of being strangers at places where they and their forefathers lived happily.

Religious bias has built walls between the communities. The Pandits had to leave their homes when the militancy, which hit Kashmir in the mid-nineties, was at its peak. Though the militancy has waned, overall situation is not congenial,

True, most of Pandits live in Jammu and the places around the city. But these are refugee camps, not homes. Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Farooq Abdullah has been vainly trying to sort out the matter which is essentially human.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh, a BJP stalwart, has politicized the issue by asking Omar to give land to the Pandits. Who is Ranjath Singh

to do so? He is not serving the cause of the Kashmiri Pandits who are not outsiders. They are part and parcel of the Kashmiri culture. Their protest against the sufferings is understandable. But that does not mean that the Home Minister should play politics while taking up their cause.

This is not a Hindu-Muslim question and should not be made into one. All political parties need to initiate steps which will enable the Pandits to go back. Most of their property is intact. The rest must be taken back from the people who have occupied it forcibly or otherwise.

I recall the Hurriyat leader, Syed Shah Gillani, vehemently denying that it was Hindu-Muslim question. At that time, the bug of fundamentalism had not bitten Gillani. He may not have changed his views. But he is conspicuous by his silence. He should have re-enunciated his earlier stance: the Kashmiri Pandits are part of our culture and should not be mixed with the general Hindu-Muslims question. Gillani, in fact, told me that he had wrongly stated earlier that the Kashmiri Pandits' question would be settled with the overall Kashmir dispute.

# Undertrials and Political Prisoners

**Bharat Dogra**

Rajnath Singh has unnecessarily given an opening to those who argue that Kashmir is an unfinished task of partition. They want the state to be divided on religious grounds. Somewhere they will also try in Pakistan to reemphasize their contention that the criterion of religion—on the basis of which India was divided—should be extended to Kashmir. Omar's response to allot the land to pundits only gives a communal colouring to the problem.

Some extremists have demanded a separate area and security for the Kashmiri Pandits. At present, 30,000 of them are reportedly in Kashmir while their total number is around four lakh. As long as Sheikh Abdullah was dominant in the affairs of Kashmir, he did not allow religion to play any role in politics. He would say that he opposed to the state's integration with Pakistan because Jammu and Kashmir was a secular state. He did not want to join an Islamic country because he preferred pluralism to communalism.

Even during the independence struggle, the Sheikh sided with the Indian National Congress instead of the Muslim League which demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims. He paid the price for being critical of New Delhi's policy of wanting a strong centre. After being detained for 12 years at Kodaikanal in the South, he stayed with the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to register that Nehru had realized his mistake of misjudging the Sheikh when he demanded that the centre should only administer three subjects -Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications – as was offered at the time of partition.

The Shiekh's famous statement was that the Kashmiris would not eat the Indian wheat if it meant their compromising their autonomous  
*(Continued on Page 9)*

The recently reported decision of the government to arrange for the speedy release of a significant number of undertrial prisoners should be widely welcomed. The criteria for release is likely to be that prisoners who have served at least half the sentence they would have been awarded, if convicted, are likely to be released (leaving aside cases which can attract the punishment of life sentence or death sentence).

Although it is not yet known exactly how many of the estimated 254 thousand undertrial prisoners (out of the total member of 381 thousands prisoners) will benefit from this decision, it is likely to lead to release on a significant number of undertrial prisoners on personal bond. While there is a threat that some hardened criminals may also be released in the process and they may even threaten witnesses in their cases, the gain in terms of release of many innocent people or those with minor offences is much higher.

However a note of caution should be voiced here. Earlier also the previous government had announced a initiative for release of undertrials. Why that initiative did not prove effective should be kept in mind. Also it should be asked why even if once undertrials are released, the existing system has a tendency for the number of undertrials to rise again. This tendency should be checked by reforming the system.

The Supreme Court has drawn attention to the high presence of

weaker sections among undertrials. On August 29 a bench of Chief Justice R.M. Lodha and Justice Kurian Joseph and R. F. Nariman said, "This is a very serious matter. ...This is the obligation of states and every state has to take care of undertrial prisoners."

The Supreme Court also had some directives for the centre, "Talk to the states. You cannot remain as a mute spectator."

The Supreme Court asked the centre to convene a meeting of home secretaries of all states within six weeks to sort out the issue of undertrials. The court has said that after the meeting, within two weeks a report is to be filed to the court on the status of undertrial prisoners.

These directives were given in the course of hearing a PIL which has particularly emphasised the sufferings of adivasi undertrials whose numbers have been increasing most of all in Naxilite affected areas. This PIL filed by an organisation called 'Fight for Human Rights' has stated, "Adivasi undertrials speak only adivasi language and there are no sufficient number of interpreters/translators available in courts, hence they are deprived of their fundamental right of fair trials as they are unable to explain the real facts and circumstances to the judicial officers."

While urgent action to help undertrials is certainly needed, the issue of basic rights of political prisoners should also be taken up



on the basis of urgency. The special status of political prisoners should be recognised and respected. During the freedom movement we had several examples of glorious struggles for rights of political prisoners. The fasts, extending from 63 to 93 days, of Bhagat Singh, Jatindranath Doss, B.K. Dutt and other young revolutionaries for the rights of political prisoners can never be forgotten.

These rights are sometimes denied on the plea that political prisoners are alleged to be linked to violent movements. Even if these allegations are true, what harm can be done to security if those who are already imprisoned are treated more humanely. There can be absolutely no justification particularly for ill treatment of sick, elderly and disabled persons.

In this context particularly a strong plea should be made for humane treatment of Dr. G. N. Saibaba, who is 90 per cent disabled and made great academic achievements overcoming poverty, disability and other difficulties. Surely no harm to security can be caused if a wheel chair bound prisoner like Dr. G. N. Saibaba is treated with dignity and humanity.

Kobad Ghandy is another scholarly prisoner suffering from many ailments for whom more humane treatment is a must for protecting his health and life. His difficulties and ailments have been documented in detail by a campaign of the Doon Old Boys' Network for his release and/or humane treatment.

There are many such political prisoners for whom better treatment is needed on the basis of great urgency. At a wider level, rights

of all political prisoners should be recognised and respected.

Recently the fast of Anup Roy in a jail in W. Bengal for demanding political prisoner status was reported in the media. Earlier the Kolkata High Court had provided political prisoner status to several prisoners on the basis of the state's Correctional Services Act. In the context of this wider demand for recognition of political prisoners and their rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of the UN

(ICCPR) is an important reference point.

Sometimes bail is denied to those workers who have been jailed in the course of various agitations for workers. The recent most prominent such case has been that of about 148 Maruti Udyog workers in Gurgaon, Haryana. Several reports about them have expressed surprise at the denial of bail to them even though their sufferings and the sufferings of their family members have been highlighted from time to time.

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# Train-bus collision - missing the wood for trees

**Sankara Narayanan**

About two dozen children were killed when a passenger train rammed into a private school bus at an unmanned railway crossing on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 at Masaipet village in Telangana's Medak district. Driver and cleaner of the bus too died. It was reported that while moving past the level crossing, the bus driver failed to notice the approaching passenger train. The photograph showing a mother hugging her two dead children has been haunting this writer for days together.

Villagers allege that there was no one at the railway gate and this resulted in the accident. Railway authorities, for reasons best known to them, had left the gate works unfinished at the level crossing. Villagers alleged that they had brought to the notice of railway officials, the need for a railway gate to avoid accidents. They alleged that several accidents had occurred at the spot in the past. For them, it is a reminder of the September 25, 1998 incident in which as many as 19 villagers, including 12 schoolchildren, were killed when a train hit an APSRTC bus at an unmanned crossing at a nearby village.

Investigators are looking into the charge that the bus driver was talking over cell phone while going past the crossing. Others held the view that a concrete structure built by the railways for the guards blocked the view of the approaching train

resulting in the accident. Railway Minister told the Lok Sabha that the accident happened due to the negligence of the driver of the school bus. The driver did not stop the bus at the stop board just before the level crossing to check for the approaching train, the Minister said.

By blaming the bus driver, the minister tries to escape from the criminal liability of his department. British made railways in India providing thousands of unmanned crossings to save money. Indians lives were not precious for them. There are still about 15000 unmanned crossings existing in India. Are the native rulers any different from the colonial masters?

Railways' criminality does not end with unmanned crossings. The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act was passed by the Union government in 1993. This Act prohibits employment of manual scavengers as well as construction or continuance of dry latrines. It is mandatory to convert dry latrines into water-seal latrines or to construct water-seal latrines in new construction. It is for eliminating the dehumanizing practice of employment of manual scavengers and for protecting and improving the human environment. Whoever fails to comply with or contravenes any of the provisions of this Act will be punishable with imprisonment for a term or with fine. Should railways be not prosecuted for violating the law for two decades

on three counts: (1) Engaging manual scavengers, a dehumanising crime (2) Construction of dry latrines and (3) Continuance of dry latrines?

In the year 2014 (21 years after the Act came into effect) Railway Board (RB) informs the NHRC that the entire fleet of coaches would be free from open toilets by 2021-22. The job of installing bio-toilets had been started only in 2013 and that also due to Supreme Court's pressure. Can the task of fitting 50,000 coaches with bio-toilets wait till 2022? Will a citizen be allowed to flout a law for two decades and when gets caught will he be allowed to go scot free? If he asks for seven more years to comply with the law fully, will any court allow such a request? Less said about the horrifying conditions in which the unreserved passengers travel like insects, the better. RB's attitude towards manual scavenging duly brings to one's memory what B. R. Ambedkar once said, "The system of untouchability is a gold mine to the Hindus. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of untouchables to do the dirty work of scavengers and sweepers which the Hindu is debarred by his religion to do and which must be done for the Hindus by non-Hindus who could be no others than untouchables".

RB is gearing up to install bullet trains at an astronomical cost of Rs 50000 crore for the privileged few. But we are told paucity of fund is the reason for continuing with the killing/dehumanising minefields

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism -II

**Bhagwat Prasad Rath**

Albert Einstein wrote, “Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive culture, in which the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hopes: human beings are not condemned, because of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate”.

Fifty thousand years back humanity made the wrong choice in the mode of production. From that day the social, political, cultural and intellectual life process in general moved in the wrong predatory direction. (Refer Marx’s remarks in the first part of the essay) The evils that afflict the modern society can be traced to that day. The society of gatherers was mainly dependent on females collecting food material (80 per cent of the food consumed by the family) from nature. The society was peaceful, contented and affluent. Anthropologist Marshal Sahlín writes in his essay ‘The Original Affluent Society’:-“Bushmen who live in the Kalahari Desert enjoy a thing of natural plenty in the realm of every day useful things, apart from food and water ... they had no sense of possessions.” Patricio Draper (Professor of Anthropology, New Mexico University) writes in his essay in the book ‘Toward an Anthropology of Woman’, “The point to be developed at some length is that in the hunting and gathering

context, women have a great deal of autonomy and influence. Some of the contexts in which the evolutionarism is expressed will be described and certain features of the foraging life which promotes egalitarianism will be expressed... A similar degree of mobility for both sexes, the lack of rigidity in-sex-typing of many activities including domestic chores and aspects of child socialization, the cultural sanction against physical expression of aggression, the small group size...”

Thus writes the anthropologist Peter Gray, “During the twentieth century, anthropologists discovered and studied dozens of different hunter gatherer societies, in various remote parts of the world, who had been nearly untouched by modern influences. Wherever they were found - in Africa, Asia, South America or elsewhere; in deserts or in jungles - these societies had many characteristics in common. The people lived in small bands, of about 20 to 50 persons (including children) per band, who moved from camp to camp within a relatively circumscribed area to follow the available game and edible vegetation. The people had friends and relatives in neighboring bands and maintained peaceful relationships with neighboring bands. Warfare was unknown to most of these societies, and where it was known it was the result of interactions with warlike groups of people who were not hunter gatherers. In each of these societies, the dominant cultural ethos was one that emphasized individual autonomy, non-directive

childrearing methods, nonviolence, sharing, cooperation, and consensual decision-making. Their core value, which underlay all of the rest, was that of the equality of individuals”.

Again Peter Gray wrote, “If just one anthropologist had reported all this, we might assume that he or she was a starry-eyed romantic who was seeing things that weren’t really there, or was a liar. But many anthropologists, of all political stripes, regarding many different hunter-gatherer cultures, have told the same general story. There are some variations from culture to culture, of course, and not all of the cultures are quite as peaceful and fully egalitarian as others, but the generalities are the same. One anthropologist after another has been amazed by the degree of equality, individual autonomy, indulgent treatment of children, cooperation and sharing in the hunter-gatherer culture that he or she studied. When you read about “warlike primitive tribes,” or about indigenous people who held slaves, or about tribal cultures with gross inequalities between men and women, you are not reading about band hunter-gatherers”. (How hunter-gatherers maintained their egalitarian ways.)

Human beings are what they are because of their brain which is a product of the culture of the hunter-gatherer society. Our brain development came to a stop when the hunter-gatherer society was replaced by hunter society fifty thousand years ago. Scientists say that research shows that within the

last twenty thousand years we lost about 20 per cent of our brain cells.

In spite of the research done by Robin Dunbar and his colleagues, exactly why we developed such large brains is a disputed subject. The rapid growth of the human brain, which for about 1.5 million years remained at about 750 cm and then in the past 0.5 million years doubled to its present volume, has led some, such as Geoff Miller (1996), to suggest that a runaway sexual selection process must have been at work. We have seen, in the case of the peacock's tail, how sexual selection can exert powerful force and bring about rapid change that flies in the face of natural selection. (The Evolution of Brain Size in the book 'Evolution and Human Behaviour' by John Cartwright).

When John Cartwright wrote the words 'disputed subject', the book 'Female Brain' had not been written and thinkers had not made a deep study of the original Mahabharata known as "jaya" containing one twelfth the size of the present Mahabharata. Both the books give sufficient evidence to prove that 'sexual selection' is the cause of human brain development. Dunbar's research also indirectly points at sexual selection because in forming big societies females play an important role. Males generally prefer solitary living (Orang Outang, lions), harem building (Gorilla) and forming groups with males only (Chimpanzee, the Greek warriors who were generally homo-sexual).

Louann Brizendine, M.D. writes in the book *The Female Brain*, "This means that women are, on average, better at expressing emotions and remembering the details of emotional events. Men, by contrast, have two and a half times the brain

space devoted to sexual drive as well as larger brain centers for action and aggression...Men also have larger processors in the core of the most primitive area of the brain, which registers fear and triggers aggression - the amygdale. This is why some men can go from zero to a fistfight in a matter of seconds, while many women will try anything to defuse conflict."

"Women's tendency to defuse conflicts was responsible for stopping male's fights for women's sexual favour seven million years ago. In the case of other great apes, this type of role was not played by their women folk. About 3.6 million years ago, human species in the phase of Australopithecus *Afarenses* only among the great apes had their teeth changed in shape to less-intimidating ones because of their non-use in male fights for the sexual favour of women folk. As male-fights played no role in women's sexual choice; men resorted to carrying presents of gathered fruits to women. Thus bio-pedalism occurred in the human species (Lovejoy)".

"That our mental instincts haven't changed in millions of years may explain why women, worldwide, look for the same ideal qualities in a long-term mate, according to the evolutionary psychologist David Buss. For over five years, Buss studied the mate preferences of more than ten thousand individuals in thirty-seven cultures around the world - from West Germans and Taiwanese to Mbuti Pygmies and Aleut Eskimos. He discovered that, in every culture, women are less concerned with a potential husband's visual appeal and more interested in his material resources and social status... Nevertheless, he found that, in all thirty-seven cultures, females value these

qualities in a mate much more than males do, regardless of the females' own assets and earning capacity".

In the Mahabharata, we come across many episodes where women want progeny from caring and sharing males (Yogis). *Sulabha*, a famous intellectual, adept in Samkhya philosophy, approached *Janaka* for sexual favours. *Ganga* approached the family of the saint kings of *Santanu* for marriage purpose. *Madhabi* shunned kings and approached *Rishi Galab* to be her life mate.

*Madayanti*, the wife of the famous Veda-mentioned king *Sudas*, established sexual relations with *Rishi Vasista* with the consent of her husband. *Rishi Dirghatama* became the father of king *Vali*'s children *Anga*, *Banga*, *Kalinga*, *Brahma* and *Sumha* with *Vali*'s consent. There was no sexual jealousy among the males in that society. *R. S. Sharma* writes in his book '*Rethinking India's past*' (Chapter- Rethinking the Past) that a sexually free Aryan society still exists in India in *Ladakh* area. To quote him 'A case of the presence of an Aryan tribe in Ladakh valley in Kashmir has been reported in the *Times of India* in Patna on 11 March 2006'. It refers to an Aryan tribe living in three villages in the valley and suggests that they practiced agriculture. They are presented as fair people with good eyes and noses. Though their colour is not mentioned they seem to be white-skinned. They practiced polyandry and polygamy and kissed one another openly. They are Buddhists by religion. Under modern protests they gave up polyandry and open kissing'. The *Nair* society in Kerala, till recently, was matricentric in character. *Nair* women preferred to have children from *Nambudri* Brahmins rather than from their



*Nair* warrior husbands.

The Hunter Gatherer period of human history was the golden period of human development. It is better to call it 'The *Gatherer Period*' as man was not the hunter but the hunted in that period. Predatory animals stopped hunting human beings when the discovery of fire and the formation of big band - men-women mixed societies of more than 100 individuals made human-hunting difficult for predatory animals. Whatever meat was available in that period was not because of hunting but scavenging. Fifty thousand years ago when man improved the killer apparatus, the hunter society came into being. The Gatherers who were mainly from the women folk lost their importance. They started choosing hunters, who were having high status in their societies, as their sex-mates.

When man had reached the stage of Lucy (*Australopithecus Afarensis*) in the Pliocene era, the male-female body dimorphism was 1.7:1, but, unlike Bonbons and Chimpanzees, the canine teeth of human beings showed no male-female dimorphism. This was because of sexual selection. Initially human society was not like Chimpanzee society but Bonbo (Dwarf Chimpanzee) society, peaceful and women-dominated. In Bonbo society, women chose their sexual partners indiscriminately. In the case of human females, they chose their sexual partners amongst those who did not fight each other. Till today, it is not the females who are responsible for our wars, but, our males.

The female brain has tremendous unique aptitudes – outstanding verbal agility, the ability to connect deeply in friendship, a nearly

psychic capacity to read faces and tone of voice for emotions and states of mind, and the ability to *defuse conflict*. (What makes us women?: *The Female Brain* by Louann Brizendine, M.D. ) .0

“If you can read faces and voices, you can tell what an infant needs. You can predict what a bigger, more aggressive male is going to do. And since you’re smaller, you probably need to band with other females to fend off attacks from a ticked off caveman-or cavemen.....If you’re girl, you’ve been programmed to make sure you keep social harmony”. (The Birth of The Female Brain: *The Female Brain*.)

A socialist society must be a matricentric society. Matricentricism is a word coined by the great thinker Erich Fromm. It is different from matriarchy. Like Patriarchy, Matriarchy leads to domination of the females in society. In a matricentric society men and women enjoy equal power. Matricentricism works only at the cultural level. All the members of society have love for others. They give importance to the caring and sharing attitude. Thus wrote Fritjof Capra in the book '*Uncommon Wisdom*': "It seems that at the very basis of our health problems lies a profound cultural imbalance, the overemphasis on *yang*, or masculine, values and attitudes. I have found this cultural imbalance to form a consistent background to all problems of individual, social, and ecological health. Whenever I explore a health problem in depth and try to get to the roots of things I find myself coming back to this imbalance in our value system'. (*The Big Sur Dialogues* ).

In the past, there were two societies which were totally matricentric. One was that of Israel in the pre-Biblical age. The other was the society of

pre-Vedic India. In these societies, religion had no role. We have clear evidence regarding the pre-Vedic Indian society. The Mahabharata in its earliest form 'jaya' contains a lot of information. Regarding matricentricism and the Israel society Murray Bookchin writes in his book. 'The Ecology of Freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy'. In any case, some ten thousand years ago, in an area between the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean, nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers began to develop a crude system of horticulture and settle down in small villages, where they engaged in mixed farming... The development of horticulture, or gardening, was probably initiated by women. Evidence for this belief comes from studies of mythology and from existing preliterate communities based on a hoe-gardening technology. In this remote period of transition, when a sense of belonging to a relatively fixed social community increasingly replaced a nomadic outlook, social life began to acquire entirely new unitary qualities that (to borrow a term devised by Erich Fromm) can best be called matricentric. By using these terms, I do not wish to imply that women exercised any form of institutional sovereignty over men or achieved a commanding status in the management of society. I merely mean that the community, in separating itself from a certain degree of dependence on game and migratory animals, began to shift its social imagery from the male hunter to the female food-gatherer, from the predator to the procreator, from the camp fire to the domestic hearth, from cultural traits associated with the father to those associated with the mother. The change in emphasis is primarily cultural, "Certainly 'home and mother' are written over every phase of Neolithic agriculture," observes Lewis Mumford, "and not

least over the new village centers, at least identifiable in the foundations of houses and graves,” ..... Today, one would want to replace some of Mumford’s words, such as his sweeping use of “agriculture”, which men were to extend beyond woman’s discovery of gardening into the mass production of food and animals. We would want to confine “home and mother” to early phases of the Neolithic rather than “every phase”.

“...If anything, woman’s stature in inscribing her sensibilities and her hands on the beginning of human history has grown rather than diminished. It was she who, unlike any other living creature, made the sharing of food a consistent communal activity and even a hospitable one that embraced the stranger, hence fostering sharing as a uniquely human desideratum. Birds and mammals, to be sure, feed their young and exhibit extraordinary protectiveness on their behalf. Among mammals, females provide and produce of their bodies in the form of milk and warmth. But only woman was to make sharing a universally social phenomenon to the point where her young - as siblings, then male and female adults, and finally parents - became sharers irrespective of their sex and age. It is she who turned sharing into a hallowed communal imperative, not merely an episodic or marginal feature”.

‘Finally, we cannot ignore the fact that women’s foraging activities helped awaken in humanity an innate sense of place, of *oikos*. Her nurturing sensibility helped create not only the origins of society but literally the roots of civilization - a terrain the male has arrogantly claimed for himself. Here “stake in civilization” was different from that of the predatory male: it was more

domestic, more pacifying, and more caring. Her sensibility ran deeper and was laden with more hope than the male’s, for she embodied in her very physical being mythology’s ancient message of a lost “golden age” and a fecund nature. Yet ironically she has been with us all the time with a special genius and mystery; one whose potentialities have been brutally diminished but ever present as a voice of conscience in the bloody cauldron that men have claimed for their “civilization.”... ‘In the remains of early Neolithic villages, we often sense the existence of what was once a clearly peaceful society, strewn with symbols of the fecundity of life and the bounty of nature. Although there is evidence of weapons, defensive palisades, and protective ditches, early horticulturists seem to have emphasized peaceful arts and sedentary pursuits. Judging from the building sites and graves, there is little evidence, if any, that social inequality existed within these communities or that warfare marked the relationships between them’.

The crucial role in human evolution was played by women’s choice of caring and sharing males as sexual partners. That this type of choice was prevalent in ancient India can be affirmed from the numerous episodes in the Mahabharata. Probably this type of society developed and continued in Israel also. That the most intelligent men and women of the ancient world lived in matricentric pre-Vedic India can be proved from the fact that the elite of the Mohenjodaro–Harappa society were free from any conception of God and any type of violence. There were no kings or priests in that society (archeology and the Mahabharata).

World history teaches us that war-loving societies have not produced

good philosophers, scientists or creative artists. The two famous Greek cities were Athens and Sparta. Sparta produced only great warriors. Today Israel is one of the worst violent states in the world which has embraced aggressive nationalism of the Hitlerian variety. A little more than twenty percent of the Nobel laureates in science are Jews. Six million Jews live in America. Eight million Jews live in Israel. American Jew community produced one hundred twenty six Nobel laureates in science. Israel Jews can claim only six Nobel laureates in science as their own. The military mentality of the Jews may have been partially responsible for this phenomenon. Intelligence is a hereditary product. To quote from the book ‘Evolution and human behaviour’ written by John Cartwright, ‘The rapid growth of the human brain, which for about 1.5 million years remained at about 750 cm<sup>3</sup> and then in the past 0.5 million years doubled to its present volume, has led some, such as Geoff Miller (1996), to suggest that a runaway sexual selection process must have been at work’ (Chapter: The Evolution of Brain Size). The credit for uncommon Jew intelligence goes fully to the Jew women folk of the past matricentric Jew society. They preferred caring and sharing males as sexual partners. This led to the extraordinary growth of intelligence in the Jew society. Einstein says in the essay ‘*Is there a jewish point of view?*’: ‘How strongly developed this sense of the sanctity of life is in the Jewish people is admirably illustrated by a little remark which Walter Rathenau once made to me in conversation: “When a Jew says that he’s going hunting to amuse himself, he lies.” The Jewish sense of the sanctity of life could not be more simply expressed.’

In India after the Aryans came, the people who built the Sindhu

civilization left their lands and got scattered in many parts of India. Most of the Dravidians who constituted the Sindhu society went to the South. Later the elite of the Sindhu civilization became the Brahmin community. The present Tamil Brahmin society is steeped in superstitions. The caste system and untouchability (a horrible custom) that plague the whole of India are present in virulent forms in Tamil society also. Tamil Brahmins constitute about 0.2 percent of the Indian population, yet they have produced the three Nobel laureates of India. V. S. Ramachandran, a great world -level neurologist, Ramanujan, a great genius in the field of Mathematics, Viswanath Anand, a world champion in the field of chess in the past and many other world-level scientists and mathematicians are products of this community. Next to Tamil Brahmins, the Bengalis also produced some world -level figures in many fields. Extra-ordinary persons like the Buddha and Gandhi are India's great gifts to the world. The presence of extra-ordinary intelligence (both social and general) in many communities in India is due to the legacy of the past matricentric societies. Women of the pre-Vedic past, chose caring and sharing males (Yogis) as their temporary or permanent sexual partners.

The Sindhu civilization was an egalitarian one. R. S. Vist, the archeologist who excavated Dholabira asserted that there is enough evidence regarding the fully egalitarian nature of Dholabira society. Socialists the world over should make a deep study of this civilization which gave the highest place of honour to the philosophers. Even in the Mouryan age, this system of highest status being given to the philosopher in society continued (Megasthenes and Arthasastra). The Greek philosophers dreamt of such

a society run by philosopher -rulers but produced a highly in- egalitarian society.

In an essay of the news paper 'Orissa Post (24.01.2012)' named 'Male Sex Drive, the root of all evils' it is written, 'The Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology (Oxford) claim that it is actually the male warrior instinct which has helped men evolve to be aggressive to outsiders (Philosophical trans-actions of Royal Society 'B').....In contrast, women are naturally equipped with a tend and befriend attitude, meaning they seek to resolve conflicts peacefully in order to protect the children, according to the researchers'.

***(Continued on Page 15)***

status within the Indian Union. The Sheikh's faith in secularism was deep although he wondered whether India would stay pluralist in the long run.

Chief Minister Omar Farooq, too, is said to have the same apprehension. His perception is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is anti-Muslim. It was however healthy to see Modi and Omar appearing at the same platform after the Prime Minister had made an aerial survey of the flood-ravaged state. Modi announced a special relief of Rs. 1,000 crore and said that it was a national disaster, thus transcending the special status under Article 370.

This may erase the charge that he was anti-Muslim. (Kashmir's population is 80 per cent Muslims). Modi's gesture to Pakistan to help the victims in the occupied Kashmir is praiseworthy. This is a thaw of sorts in frozen relationship between the two countries. Pakistan has also made a similar gesture. Both Prime Ministers must have realized that misery knows no religion or politics.

In his essay 'Self as a Political Concept' (Self-Images, Identity and Nationality): Ashis Nandy writes 'Among the hundreds of often non-cumulative studies which I came across then were certain running themes. I shall crudely summarize .....I found that a large number of these studies mentioned that, as compared to the highly competent, the highly creative showed, if they were men, qualities more associated in the American Society with femininity.....'

How important matricentric values are for the development of humanity can be gauged from the above two paragraphs.

Understandably, India does not want to talk to Pakistan because Islamabad is dragging its feet on the trial of the militants who attacked Mumbai in 2008. The trial is litmus tests of Pakistan's intention to punish the perpetrators who are now without any charge. Islamabad's plea is that New Delhi has not provided enough evidence to its courts to convict the guilty.

Whether the Kashmiri realize it or not, they have lost the services of trained people. The Pandits have gone to other parts of India and have found jobs because of their high qualifications. They are not likely to go back even if the state offers them equivalent jobs. In fact, Kashmir has lost the cream of youth which is technically well equipped to help the state develop economically.

Yet, Srinagar should make efforts to get the Pandits back because that will give them the secular image which they had enjoyed for decades. Lack of efforts on this front would only alienate the rest of the country where the Kashmiris are gainfully employed.



## Bipan Chandra

Noted historian Bipin Chandra died on 30<sup>th</sup> August, at his residence at Gurgaon (Haryana) after a prolonged illness. He was 86. He had not been keeping well since the last few months.

Bipan Chandra had donned multiple roles including that of chairperson of the Indian History Congress; Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Member of the University Grants Commission and Chairman of the National Book Trust.

He specialized on the national movement and is considered to be one of India's foremost scholars on Mahatma Gandhi and economic and political history of India. Chandra had authored several books including 'The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism', 'In the Name of Democracy: The JP Movement and the Emergency', 'Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India' and 'The Making of Modern India: From Marx to Gandhi', among others. The left-leaning author had founded the journal 'Enquiry' and was a member of its editorial board for a long time.

Born in 1928 in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, Chandra studied at the Forman Christian College, Lahore; Stanford University, US and the University of Delhi. He worked as the Reader at Hindu College of Delhi University and then became the professor of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Chandra's text books on History have been taught in schools and


colleges in the country for a long time. Bipan Chandra served as sectional president and then the general president of the Indian History Congress in 1985, was also awarded 'Itihas Ratna' on his 86th birthday in December last year, by the Asiatic Society of Bihar.

He was at the forefront of the communist struggle in India since independence. He collaborated with historians like R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Satish Chandra and Arjun Dev, whose text books were prescribed in Indian schools for a long time.

A number of leaders and scholars expressed grief over the demise of the veteran historian. According to veteran historian Prof. Irfan Habib "Prof. Bipin Chandra was an ardent member of progressive movement in the country and a crusader against communalism.


Another noted historian Mridula Mukherji said "by passing away of Prof. Bipan Chandra we lost a veteran worrier who fought with the communalism. During previous NDA regime when NCERT books were written with communal bias, he was in the forefront to oppose it and organized Delhi historin groups".

– Qurban Ali




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# India's Black Economy: Causes, Implications and Remedies

Arun Kumar

## I. Introduction

India's black economy is roughly estimated to be 50 per cent of GDP - generating at current prices in 2012-13, about Rs.50 lakh crore or \$1 trillion. It is so extensive because it is generated in every sector and economic activity and all the elite sections of society are involved in it. It is in both the public and the private sectors and involves everyone down the line from the Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers, top industrialists, army men, judges, bureaucrats, lawyers, teachers and so on. Taxes not collected at current rates of taxes amount to about Rs.20 lakh crore in 2012-13. Thus, the Union budget instead of showing a Fiscal Deficit could have shown a surplus of Rs.14.5 lakh crore. If this amount could be collected, there would be enough money for employment generation, education, health and infrastructure, like, roads and power.

An indication of the growing black economy is the rapid unearthing of more and more and bigger scams. The speed with which scams are being revealed makes the public forget the scams they were exercised about just a few months back. Today, with IPL in the news and the imbroglio around the JPC on 2G and the expose of the attempt of the Law Minister to influence the CBI, the Westland Helicopter deal has receded to the background. The wrong doing in the Tatra truck deal and the Army Chief's complaint that he was sought to be bribed are forgotten. Similarly, the Adarsh

Society scam, ISRO-Dewas deal, Commonwealth Games scam, and the Hasan Ali case are hardly talked of. Bigger scams have taken hold.

While the biggest scam prior to 1990 was the Bofors scam at Rs.64 crore, in the 1990s there were many scams that were above Rs.1,000 crore (Kumar, 1999). The largest was the Harshad Mehta led Stock Market Scam of 1991-92, estimated by the Janakiraman Committee Report at Rs.3,128 crore (RBI, 1993). The Telgi scam regarding forged stamp papers was also initially estimated to be in thousands of crore but no firm figure emerged. In the first decade of this century, there has been a flood of revelations of major scams – almost one a week - not counting the smaller cases of corruption involving a few crore or less (Kumar, 2013). Now the scams run into tens of thousands of crores and at times in lakhs of crores. In the allotment of natural resources, like, mines and spectrum, huge scams have been unearthed.

If we cut back to end 2006 what was the situation? MPs had been caught accepting money for asking questions in Parliament. This is nothing new. During the debate on the nuclear issue, MPs produced wads of notes in Parliament which they said were for buying their vote in favour of the government. The government cleverly deflected the issue but this is also nothing new. In the 1990s the JMM MPs were caught with cash in their bank accounts which had been given to them for helping the government survive.

Around that time, Mayawati, Badal and Jogi were in the news on the same day for violating some law or the other. They are in the distinguished company of Laloo Prasad Yadav and Jayalalitha who already had cases against them. Daler Mehndi, Bharat Shah, four members of the elite President's guards, doctors in private clinics, manufacturers of spurious drugs, judges of high courts, VCs of Universities, bureaucrats and police officers, journalists, film producers, etc., all hit headlines for having committed some illegality or the other in the mid-2000s. These are the elite sections of our society so that the implications of such widespread illegality are serious. It is gnawing at the innards of our society with influential sections of society increasingly in the grip of illegality to generate extra incomes; above what they make legally.

The list is unending, in the 1990s and 2000s, illegality in petrol pump allotments, admissions to professional courses, procurement of defense materials, allotment of licenses, disinvestment of shares of public sector, etc., have come to light. Yet, there have been few prosecutions in cases of graft and the public impression is that the system is very corrupt. The quick action against the MPs caught asking for money for questions is an exception and not the rule. People in their day to day dealings (police, telephone, electricity, petrol pumps, medical clinics, etc.) face constant

harassment, whether in the public or the private sector.

For the public, illegality and corruption are a constant and they feel helpless to do anything about it. They are exercised at the time a scam is revealed and then they go back to their routine. They re-elect the corrupt time and again thus signaling to the political class that they can ride out the storm and return later without reforming themselves.

The public has little choice since almost all the political parties have been caught indulging in corruption. Thus, a change in the ruling party means that another corrupt set up comes to power. The net result is that the people vote for their own corrupt who would help them. Hence the dalits would vote for their own and the backward castes would vote for their brethren and the muslims vote for their community and so do the upper castes. That is why today it is said that corruption is no more an issue. The politicians have decided that they only need to wait patiently in the wings for their turn. The clever thing to do is to collect enough while in power and when out of it not unduly ruffle the feathers of the ruling group - behave like a 'responsible' opposition. This is the weakness of our democracy that people have little choice – that between Tweedledee and Tweedledum (Kumar, 1999). Be that as it may, what are the implications of a large and growing black economy in India?

## **II. Implications of the Black Economy for the Nation**

### **II.1 Spread of illegality and weakening of democracy**

Illegal activities at the top echelons (political, bureaucratic and

business) in the country have serious implications. National security is being seriously compromised. Even cabinet decisions are often not a secret as Wikileaks revelations suggest. Foreign agencies and business interests may get the most sensitive information for a price (or via blackmail because they may have information on the illegality of the top people in administration). The recent attack on the top leadership of the Congress (I) in Chattisgarh or the earlier attack on Shri Naidu's motorcade are indications of serious security lapses. There is not only leakage of information on movements of leaders but also laxity in policing since there is huge corruption in the police set up everywhere. Police is busy collecting hafta from illegal activities rather than in controlling illegality in its jurisdiction (Kumar, 1999). Contraband (arms, drugs and so on) and suspects slip in and out of airports and ports and across borders.

There is growing criminalization in society since almost the entire official machinery is involved in committing illegality – there are always the exceptions that prove the rule. The businessmen and politicians use the police and the bureaucracy to commit illegality. When the latter gets the license to commit illegality, they also do it for their own ends for making money from those committing illegality. The result is that the force for maintaining law and order – the police – is often a party to the illegality.

Posts of lucrative thanas are apparently auctioned for a price. The price paid (and above that for ones own use) has to be recovered by collecting hafta from the

jurisdiction of the thana. Illegal activities like, theft, pick pocketing and encroachment are encouraged to enable hafta to be collected. Traffic police turns a blind eye to violation of traffic rules or over charging by transporters since it collects a monthly payment from commercial operations. If a theft occurs in an influential person's house, the stolen items are recovered since the police knows who the thieves are in that area. If the police is in league with criminal elements in society is it any surprise that criminalization is increasing by leaps and bounds.

Illegality is committed in the thanas themselves with the police violating the rules. This is justified on grounds of extracting information from the criminals. However, it is mostly the honest who are harassed to extract money whereas the criminals with their nexus escape to continue their activities in collusion with the police. No wonder, an alternate system of justice has emerged where the public takes the law in its own hand or goes to the corrupt and the powerful to get justice. It has affected our politics which is now increasingly criminalized with those having a criminal background entering the legislatures in increasing numbers. What can be expected when in the biggest state of the country, a minister with a criminal record was recently appointed as the jail minister? There is a vicious cycle in which respect for justice is eroded, social functioning is impeded and democracy weakened.

### **II.2 Economic aspects**

All the key economic problems can be linked to the impact of the growing black economy. In an economy where billions of dollars are spirited out of the economy,

where black transactions abound in the stock markets and the real estate markets, where getting admission for children requires bribes, is it surprising that the impact of the black economy is all pervasive? What is being revealed by official agencies or in the media with relentless regularity is only the tip of the iceberg.

Due to the black economy, policy fails and society is unable to achieve its goals, like, literacy and health and a vast majority live in rather uncivilized conditions which are prevalent in very few countries of the world. As the Finance Minister in his budget speech said in 2007, 'expenditures do not mean outcomes'. Rajiv Gandhi said in 1987, out of every rupee sent to the field, only 15 paise reaches the ground. He did not mean that all of it was lost due to corruption but also due to the bureaucratic costs. Now the courts feel only 5 paise reaches the ground.

The black economy has destroyed the work ethic of a vast section of society so that we do not achieve (with few exceptions) world standards whether in sports or in technology. There is waste of resources and alienation of the citizen from society making collective effort almost impossible. An economy that has the potential of growing at 10 per cent per annum is growing at an average of 5.4 per cent per annum since the 1980s (Kumar, 2005). In brief, the black economy has affected the social, political, economic and cultural life. It is in our own enlightened self interest to curb it.

## II. 2.1 Increasing inefficiency

Many aspects of the black economy are like 'digging holes

and filling them' (Kumar, 1999). If during the day a person is set to work digging a hole and at night another person is asked to fill it up, next morning there is zero output but two people have earned incomes for the work they have done. Thus, there is activity without productivity. Assets are not created commensurate with the expenditures. So, for instance, in road construction, sub-standard material is used so that it gets potholed when the rains come and has to be repaired. Thus the road budget is spent on repairs rather than building new roads for say, rural connectivity.

In schools, the teachers teach poorly so that the students do not learn or enjoy classes. They get put off from learning and divert their attention to other things. When they go home they are forced to take tuition so as to do well. Teachers have a vested interest in not teaching well so that they can get tuitions to make extra money. The implication for learning is that the children find it difficult and mug up the material rather than understanding it. They stop questioning and lose curiosity about various things in life. Their time is wasted first in the class and then in tuition. The time that could have been used for other activities and for learning is lost. Further, the tuition syndrome leads to leakage of question papers and other malpractices so that the tutees can do well in the exams and justify the tuition.

Because of poor teaching and learning, students attend coaching classes to pass competitive exams. Their intermediate training is not good enough to help them do well in the competitive exams. This results in massive waste of resources for the nation since the outcome with regard

to learning is poor. Further, most of the students in higher education are of indifferent quality. So, in spite of the large numbers of students in higher education, we produce very few who are internationally competitive.

Such examples of waste are all around us. In the bureaucracy where work is not done and people run around in circles or in the judiciary where cases go on for years even though they are supposed to be solved in months. There are crowds milling around the offices and courts but little gets accomplished. The police do not register cases and harass the public. Cases are poorly investigated and in the end they are thrown out by the courts so that justice is not done in spite of the efforts of many people.

Another aspect of the black economy is that it makes the 'usual the unusual and the unusual the usual' (Kumar, 1999). That which should happen does not and that which should not happen does. So the citizens should get 220 volts electricity but often they get 170 or 270 volts and expensive equipment burns out. One needs additional circuits and voltage stabilizer for equipment and capital costs rise. Cost of servicing equipment rises as the breakdown rate increases. The fluctuating voltage and variable cycles of supply of electricity also leads to poor quality production since machines can malfunction. In continuous flow production like in case of chemicals, such malfunction can lead to clogged lines and so on.

One should get clean drinking water in the taps but often it is polluted. This is because the pipelines may not be properly laid and sewage seeps in. Thus, one has

to incur additional expenditure in boiling water or using purifiers of various description. Further, one buys bottled water at thousand times the cost, etc. Even then, a little carelessness leads to water borne diseases and additional health costs which are unnecessary. Parents remain tense about what the children will drink in school and so on.

One does not get the service one should get from the bureaucracy so one has to approach touts and pay them extra. This is true for tax assessment, getting passport or driving license made, admission to schools, admission to professional courses, getting railway reservations and so on. Either one fights everywhere or gives in and pays the extra cost (bribe included) and in turn generates extra income where ever one gets a chance. How many places can an individual fight?

The result is that people have got alienated from the system. They have lost faith that things can work and they automatically assume that they need to pay extra. Even in a medical emergency it is often the case that one first calls up some friend/relation for advice as to where to go rather than going straight to the nearest hospital emergency room. It is often a miracle that one survives a medical emergency since so many things can go wrong. In a road accident few stop to help take the victim to hospital. In the hospital the doctors may wait for the legal formalities. They may do a slip shod job of treatment and the drip or the medicines may be spurious or sub standard and may not have the desired effect and so on. Since all this is so much a part of life, people stop resisting corruption and extortion and that helps it grow further. People lose faith in the

collective and try for individual solutions. This weakens democracy.

These various aspects of the functioning of the black economy result in growing inefficiencies of the system and wasteful use of capital and resources. It has been estimated that due to such inefficiencies, India has been losing 5 per cent rate of growth for the last three decades (Kumar, 2005). Thus, its rate of growth could have been 8.5 per cent in the seventies and 12 per cent now, if the black economy had not existed. The per capita income could have been about \$10,000 and it would have been the second largest economy in the world. Thus, though the black economy generates output and employment far more is lost than gained. In other words, development is set back

### II.2.2 Impact on inequality

The black economy is concentrated in the hands of at most 3 per cent of the population (Kumar, 1999). Yes, there is petty corruption but this is insignificant compared to the huge earnings of the few. According to a calculation, in 1995, the ratio of incomes between the top 3 per cent and the bottom 40 per cent was 12:1 in the white economy but it became 57:1 including the black economy. By now, the disparities have become much worse. Thus, in a vast and poor population of 1.25 billion, there are 35 million well off, the size of a European nation, that can afford all the luxuries. This explains the existence of vast poverty in the midst of glitzy markets and ostentatious consumerism of the well off.

The result of this skewedness of income is that the savings propensity of the economy is higher than recorded in the white economy (Kumar, 2005). This is simply the

result of the rich saving more than the poor. Due to wastage of capital and unproductive investments, the investment rate in the economy is lower than it could have been. The result of both these trends is that the level of output is lower than it can potentially be - missed development.

### II.2.3 Black economy and illicit financial flows

A recent report estimates that since independence, more than \$460 billion has been lost to the nation due to flight of capital (GFI, 2010). This is much larger than India's foreign debt or the aid it received. A capital short country has been exporting capital on a large scale. In a sense, the drain of wealth during the colonial rule has continued in a different form after independence. Those resorting to flight of capital include the businessmen, corrupt politicians, bureaucrats, professionals and so on. These are the people whose interest in the country has weakened as their wealth abroad has increased and they often push the interest of foreign powers. They are also open to black mail by the foreign agencies that track the flow of illicit funds from and back into India.

This figure of illicit financial flows (flight of capital is part of this) does not take into account loss of capital due to illegal activities like havalas, narcotics drugs trafficking, smuggling and so on (Kumar, 2012). If all this could be taken into account, the opportunity cost should run into a few trillions of dollars. If this amount had been invested in the country, say, in rural areas that are woefully short of basic infrastructure, like water, sanitation or electricity, conditions of life could have been far better. Alternatively, if this capital had been invested in industry, industrialization,



technology and productivity could have been far greater/higher than at present. Thus, flight of capital associated with the black economy results in slower development than India can achieve.

Of late, there is a return flow of capital called 'round tripping'. From the late 1990s the software industry became the conduit for bringing back capital without paying taxes. Later the Mauritius route was also added to facilitate this 'round tripping'.

The flight of capital associated with the black economy is the main cause of the Balance of Payment problems that have plagued the Indian economy for much of the time since independence. It takes place through under and over invoicing of foreign trade, transfer pricing and havala (parallel banking). Much of this is managed through shell companies set up in tax havens (over 70 at current count) to launder the money siphoned out of the country.

#### **II.2.4 Black economy and policy failure**

Black economy leads to policy failure. Policies on paper and as they are implemented are vastly different. Whether it is environmental regulation or industrial location or urban zoning or traffic lights, all laws are routinely violated. No wonder at a low level of per capita income, India has some of the worst air and water pollution in the world. Due to insanitary conditions and water pollution, most people suffer from poor health resulting in low labour productivity. Literacy is low because money sent for constructing schools is often siphoned off and teachers are not appointed. Children even in the fifth

grade are found to have acquired few skills (ASER reports) so for the rest of their life they are condemned to work at low levels of productivity and remain poor.

The black economy results in loss of revenue of about 20 per cent of GDP, at current rates of taxes. In comparison, the fiscal deficit is currently around 6 per cent of GDP for the Centre. If the black economy had instead been white, there would have been a surplus in the budget and there would have been much greater investments in infrastructure and poverty removal. Also with less corruption, expenditures would have been more effective. The revenue deficit which underlies the fiscal deficit and rising debt in the budget would have been wiped out so that the fiscal health of the government would have been better.

#### **II.3 Growing size of the black economy since 1991**

The size of the black economy is given relative to that of the white economy - as a per cent of the declared GDP. The size of the black economy was estimated to be 4 per cent of GDP in 1955 (GOI, 1956), 7 per cent in 1970 (GOI, 1971), 18 per cent in 1980-81 (NIPFP, 1985) and 40 per cent in 1995-96 (Kumar, 1999). The last estimate includes 8 per cent contributed by illegal activities like, drugs, mafia and smuggling. 32 per cent comes from the legal activities like manufacturing, finance, trade and construction. It is growing in spite of the reduction in tax rates and whittling down of the degree of controls and regulation in the economy over the last two decades. This is not surprising since these are not the causes of generation of the black incomes.

Since generation of black incomes involves illegality, the above figures suggest that illegality in the country has been growing. More and more scams are surfacing and the sums that are involved in them are increasing exponentially. If currently illegality is associated with 50 per cent of the economic activity, it has to be 'systematic and systemic'. Systems are set up to bribe politicians and bureaucrats, for adulteration of food, for producing spurious medicines, for not declaring the full output produced so that profits are generated off the balance sheet and so on. It is not that one day one generates black income and not the next day; it is a 24x7 activity.

*(to be concluded)*

*(Continued from Page 4)*

like unmanned crossings, manual scavenging and unpardonable conditions in unreserved compartments. It is time we scrap such a railways.

Last but not the least. RTE Act mandates the state to provide quality uniform primary education at state's cost to all children in the neighbourhood schools. Children are herded into unsafe transports and carried to long distances for getting primary education at the cost of poor parents and to fatten the bellies of education sellers. The state and railways are squarely responsible for the gruesome death of children.

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## **A weak prime minister**

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India’s Black Economy: Causes,  
Implications and Remedies - II  
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“I did my duty” is the defence of the former Prime Minister to the charge that he was aware of corruption taking place in the mobile (2G spectrum) and sale of coal mines and did not do anything to stop the corrupt deals going through. That he himself is above board goes without saying but it does not absolve him conniving at open corruption going on under his nose.

The report by the former Comptroller and Auditor General Vinod Rai is so damaging that the former prime minister has to explain his side, if there is one, to sustain his credibility. It is not enough to argue that he did not personally make any money or that he is nowhere directly involved. He has to defend the impression that he looks like conniving at the scams which spread over months. And even when the entire corrupt deal was for everyone to see he took no action. How can he say that he was doing his duty. At least he should have taken action when the CBI had reconstructed the scandal from A to Z and had sent the report to his office.

His defence that “he did his duty” is a statement which is neither here nor there. Those who were responsible for the corrupt deals

carried on for a long period without any check. Once the Prime Minister’s Office had got the initial report it should have moved in. Its lack of action raises many questions which need an answer. The mere silence will not be reply nor would it minimize the gravity of charges.

It is clear that he was in the know of the happening and preferred to keep his silence because of political considerations. In fact if one could be blunt he wanted to be in the chair at any cost.

And it has been more or less proved that he was the mere front and the money was being made by the elements which have come to be known by the name of No. 10, Janpath, the residence of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. That does not absolve him of looking the other way when the corrupt deals were being made and executed. Nobody blames him for being part of the scams. But nobody can say with authority that he looked at everything as if he was helpless.

He has often said that posterity will judge him better than what is being said against him today. It is difficult to anticipate what will be popular perception after three-four decades. Even then the observation against

him of being a weak prime minister will stay.

It will be unfair to the nation if the things are left at what they are today. There has to be a probe. It is pity that there is no Lokpal yet because of political quarrels. But that does not mean that there should be no effort to reach at the bottom of the scams to pinpoint who, if not former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, was supervising the rampant corruption which was going on.

The office of prime minister may not be in any way responsible for the corruption which was prevalent but it cannot be said that it did not know of what was happening.

That the corrupt deals took place is now a proven fact. Not to proceed further and pinpoint the blame will not be fair to the nation if the entire gamut of deals is not made public. It is not difficult to find who is to blame because somebody must have sanctioned the deal and somebody must have seen the execution.

The Central Bureau of Investigation can be entrusted with the job, even risking the political pressure which will be exerted on it to give a clean chit. It is a pity that no action is taken even against the highly placed bureaucrats because politicians are themselves involved in the deals made. If the government decides not to do anything because the country had a weak Prime Minister, does not mean that the scams did not take place or that both politicians and bureaucrats made no money.

Now there is a change in the government. With the incumbent Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is saying again and again that he

## ‘Gujarat model’ of communal politics flourishing in UP

Harsh Mander

There is nothing, nothing which can persuade us to return to our villages. They burned and looted our homes: We could barely save our lives, as we desperately ran with our children in our arms and just the clothes we were wearing. What is there for us to return to? Words I heard over and over again in a harrowing journey through the districts of Muzaffarnagar and Shamli, exactly a year after a storm of hate overnight tore this peaceful countryside apart.

As I travelled from village to village, everywhere one bore witness to a social landscape ravaged by communal hate — just a year old, but already settled like the crusted burdens of generations. An old man said sadly, “No one has come this full year to call us back, neither the village elders, nor people we grew up and worked with.” “No village cricket team was complete without a Muslim lad or two,” said another. “And now they don’t care if we live or die”. “Look at this camp in which we live now,” said a third, pointing to leaking, soiled plastic sheets stretched over bamboo sticks affording each family a few square feet of minimal shelter, surrounded by black cesspools and mosquitoes. “We know we can die here as well. But at least here we are assured that our loved ones will bury us. Not like our village where our people were killed and burned.”

Contrary to claims of the state government that all camps are emptied, we found over 10,000 women, men and children still living

in camps in around 25 villages.

Even in the immediate months after the conflagration, state support was restricted to food supplies or a few blankets in many camps, and only after national outrage following the death of many children in the winter cold, occasional visits by medical teams. Now even this has become a distant memory. Charitable organisations, mainly faith-based Muslim associations, have also closed their offices. Compassion also wearies. The unhappy people — fugitives from the hate which pervades the villages of their birth — are left to fend for themselves. They have just survived the monsoon showers, and are gearing up to endure another long winter.

In these camps, people subsist mainly by casual labour in surrounding fields, and in the numerous brick kilns which dot the landscape. But they report much lower wages than prevailing rates, as employers know of their misfortunes and desperation, and besides they have to compete with local labour. They still have to beg landlords for loans, to cope with illness and hunger, and if they are lucky they get a few thousand rupees at twice the already usurious interest rates, 10% compound per month. “Who knows when you might run away with our money?” reason the landlords. Many children drop out of school, sometimes because teachers refuse to admit or sometimes even taunt the children, but more often because they must also labour to light their kitchen fires.

*(Continued on Page 3)*



We found that more than 10,000 more people had permanently resettled in more than 20 new colonies, and even in pouring rain, people were busy building new small brick houses, hoping that they would not have to spend another winter under plastic sheets. Determined like those in camps not to return to their old villages, they have bought plots in hastily laid out colonies in what a year ago were cultivated fields. All of these are in villages and small towns with a majority of Muslim people.

The tragedy of Muzaffarnagar is that the state government has actually facilitated this separation of populations on religious grounds, by a bankrupt policy of paying Rs. 5 lakh to all households which undertake in writing not to return to their old villages, instead of facilitating their return with dignity to their original villages through effective steps for security and reconciliation.

Seizing the opportunity to make windfall profits, local large farmers and real estate developers have sold these plots at exorbitant rates to these hapless displaced persons. People have spent the entire government compensation of Rs. 5 lakh on tiny plots, and borrowed at incredibly usurious rates to build their small homes. Distress sales of their properties in their old villages yield a small fraction of their actual value. Muslim charities have collected donations from Indian Muslims overseas for about half these colonies, but even they charge the residents for the land and houses. The developers have rarely invested in drinking water, sewerage, drainage or electricity, and the district administration at most has installed a hand-pump. In these hellish slum-like settlements,

these internal refugees are bravely building their lives anew.

Only around half the 50,000 people who ran away in fear after the attacks on Muslim villages a year ago have returned home, the rest are still in camps or in these new colonies in Muslim habitations. But it has been a sombre homecoming for all who returned. They arrive to homelands in which they are no longer friends and neighbours but hated 'others', suddenly unwelcome in festivals and weddings. Taunts and barbs have become commonplace, and young men are particularly discourteous in transports and open roads, pulling beards and heckling women in burqas. Social hatred has replaced traditions of shared living that endured all of living memory. Many who return are, therefore, saving to

*(Continued from Page 2)*

would clean the system; some action should have started by now. That the government servants should come on time is alright but this is not a change which will satisfy the people who are expecting action against the politicians and bureaucrats who were involved in scams.

There is no direct evidence but the perception is that 10, Janpath was very much in the picture. The books which have come out to tell a story of what was happening behind the scenes have revealed enough for the appointment of a top independent team of eminent persons to go into the whole things and bring before the public how the politicians and bureaucrats had joined hands to literally loot the country.

On the other hand, without having any direct responsibility, Sonia Gandhi is said to have run the administration. Although the allegation that secret files used to go to her has become public, there is no cogent explanation either from her or

buy land and move ultimately to Muslim villages.

These divided populations represent the triumph of communal politics, successfully undoing in just one year histories of shared living between Hindus and Muslims over centuries. This is the 'Gujarat model' unleashed on Uttar Pradesh, deploying violence and hate to drive out and cleanse entire villages of their erstwhile Muslim residents. These strategies of engineered social hate continue to yield a rich harvest of votes of polarised populations. But new generations of Hindus and Muslims will be raised deprived of friends and neighbours of the 'other' community. This will render them much more amenable to communal politics, eroding ultimately the idea of India itself.

from the then government headed by Manmohan Singh.

The interview which the Auditor General has given is much more damaging than his report. He has revealed that he had met the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and conveyed certain things verbally. Still there has been no action taken.

It is difficult to say why Manmohan Singh did not act except that he wanted to stay as the prime minister. Since Sonia Gandhi had done everything to put him in the seat he comes out very badly as if the chair was more important than the perception people had that he would do something to stop the corruption.

One feels sad that a person like Manmohan Singh who had no axe to grind should compromise to stay in the chair. The posterity will judge him that he did not rise to the expectation that the office demanded - to ensure that he does not lose the office he occupied.

# Decent Work

D. K. Giri

In a gathering of youths and students from various countries in Malta, I was part of the panel talk on “Decent Work, Decent Life: Creating a Just and Dynamic Labour Market”. The discussion was moderated by a Spanish youth. The moderator started off by saying, it is all right to advocate for decent work, but what about the joblessness! “My country, Spain, has 47 per cent of unemployment”. That set the tone for my presentation.

Let us make two assumptions which complementarily constitute the definition of decent work. One, if we improve the working conditions of labour; and second, if we create opportunities for productive work for men and women, we contribute to assuring decent work. So, clearly, decent work does not only mean workers’ rights and a conducive working milieu, but it also calls for opportunities for work.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) which started the campaign on decent work says that it is the only sustainable way out of poverty. Joseph Stiglitz, the noble laureate economist says, “Decent work (wages) is not only for social cohesion and fairness, but for a strong economy too”. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1B) says, “Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and youth”.

To use a slice of statistics in order to set the context: Half of the workforce in the world work for less than \$2 a day. Around 12.3 million

people work in slavery. Above 200million under the age of 15 are child labours instead of going to the school. People dying due to work related accidents every year are about 2.2 million. After the recent economic crisis, 34 million jobs were lost. Unemployment across the world including in the developed countries is soaring.

## What is decent work?

There are several perspectives on ‘decent work’. For instance, E. F. Schumacher, the legendary economist and author of the classic “The small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered”, quotes Buddha on the right livelihood, which is worth recalling now, at the time of rabid individualism and consumerism. The Buddhist point of view takes the meaning and function of work to be threefold: to give an individual the opportunity to utilise and develop his faculties; to enable the individual to deal with his ego by joining with other people in common tasks, and the third, to produce the goods and services needed for human existence. In Buddhist concept, a work properly conducted in conditions of human dignity and freedom blesses those workers and their products. Likewise, J. C. Kumarappa, an advocate of Gandhian Economics says in ‘Economics of Permanence’, “If the nature of the work is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body. It furnishes an excellent background for (wo)men to display his/her scale of values and develop his (her)

personality”. If an individual does not have work, not only s/he lacks an income, s/he lacks the opportunity to grow as a human being. Nothing can replace work as a nourishing and enlivening factor.

In contemporary literature and approach, decent work consists of: (i) guaranteeing fair wages - recently, Germany introduced minimum wages under relentless pressure by social democrats, which bodes well as a key factor for decent work; (ii) ensuring job quality, not only quantity - job quality will mean people getting appropriate jobs commensurate with their skills and they should not only be unemployed but not be underemployed too; (iii) the workers having the scope for collective bargaining at their work places - workers on their own may not be able to fight for their rights against mighty companies or employers, hence they need to form groups and associations for collective bargaining; (iv) striking a balance between demand and supply in labour - without this balance, the workers run the risk of getting low-paid jobs and not-so decent working conditions and hence, while it is necessary to increase the workforce, it is important to activate the labour demand.

## Labour demand

Economic policies pursued by the governments across the world seem to focus on production of goods. Their fundamental criterion for success is the total quantity of goods produced during a given period of time. Professor Galbraith

in his, "Affluent Society" way back in 1962, nicely articulated this approach, "If the marginal urgency of good is low, then so is the urgency of the last man or the last million men in labour force". It is bad economics to consider goods more important than people, consumption as more important than creative activity. Instead, creating more and more employment, pursuing the goal of employment for everyone should be the guiding principle.

There are several ways in which more jobs could be created. We list a few here as illustration: (a) Banks could be instructed to make more job investment. This in fact, is the part of the mandate of development banks. There are banks like Asian Development Bank in Manila, Small Industries Development Bank and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in India. There may be many such banks in other countries also. (b) Countries need to change their industrial policies, go into diversification that creates new jobs, and invest in green jobs. Germany has switched heavily into renewable energy through medium enterprises which have generated new jobs. (c) Creating a solid labour market. This needs to be done by making up the skill mismatch between labour and employment, building skills and re-skilling the work-force that is laid off due to industrial restructuring etc. India's attempt to use the demographic dividend by providing skills to its huge young population is worth noting in this context. India has set up a National Skill Development Board that aims to impart skills in several trades. (d) The Danish System of giving flexicurity to the workers is also good practice in job creation. While this system gives job security, it also gives flexible

working arrangement. Although there are some criticisms of its use by the European Union, the concept is good for the workers if it is genuinely implemented. At the end of the day, employment opportunities are better created in a progressive labour market.

### **Progressive economy**

How do we create a progressive labour market? Obviously, a progressive labour market can be provided by a progressive economy, politics and society. The latter (politics and society) requires a separate and elaborate discussion. Suffice it to say that progressive politics and society are created by following a set of integrated values of social democracy. They are: liberty, equality, identity, pluralism, dignity, justice and solidarity. We talk here of progressive economy which is a prerequisite for a progressive labour market. The currently predominant economy is neo-liberal capitalist, marked by individualism, consumerism and cynicism (alienation). This economy is anti-jobs. E.F Schumacher, advocating in 1970s for a people-oriented economy was prophetic when he said, "The increasing production and consumption, the twin pillars of modern economy is unsustainable". He commented profoundly that economics does not stand on its own feet, but instead it is derived from a view of meaning and purpose of life. Progressive economy should be based on two principles. One, on the idea of self-sufficiency or "enoughness"; if we produce beyond what is required; it is "evil, destructive and uneconomic". M. K. Gandhi had famously said that "World has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed". Furthermore, excessive wealth creation has no limits

whereas we live in an environment that is limited in its resources. This leads to the second principle, that is, an economy based on renewable resources. Over exploitation of non-renewable resources has caused unprecedented environmental degradation and global warming with dangerous consequences. The economy should be driven by compassion and care for people not by unending desire for goods. Is it not that, "we produce massive goods that end up in the landfills but we fail to provide everyone with basic health care! Progressive economy serves the people, but in a material and consumerist world the people serve the economy.

Another element of the progressive economy is putting people before the product. This requires transforming the production system. It would mean production by masses not mass production. At the same time, this does not mean that, we go back traditional modes and bypass the wonderful new technology. What is being suggested is technological pluralism - use of appropriate and decentralised technology; linking small, micro and medium firms to big industries; and mainstreaming those in the margins of economy. This would require a new model of globalisation consisting of decent work, strong public services, universal social protection, respect for human rights, fair income distribution, progressive taxation, accelerated sustainable development, elimination of absolute poverty and so on. This would require a new development model in which the developed countries spend 0.7 percent of their GDPs for overseas assistance, companies discharge their corporate social responsibility genuinely, focus on ecological security, or "deep

## BJP and AAP should jointly form government to avoid horse trading

Prem Singh

ecology". Among other things, deep ecology prohibits "human interference with, or destruction of, natural world that poses a threat not only to humans but to all organisms constituting the natural order. Finally, the new development model should be based on partnership between state, market and civil society. The partnership brings out the synergy between the authority of the state, resources of the market and humane social values of the civil society. On the other hand, it moderates the authoritarianism of the state, rapacity of the market, and unrest in the civil society.

### Measuring decent work

The ILO has developed a matrix to measure decent work. The main components of the tool are: (i) counting people employed in proportion to the country's GDP; (ii) rate of employment in proportion to population; (iii) proportion of employed people living below the poverty line i.e. 1 USD a day; (iv) rate of vulnerability employment.

There could be several other methods to measure decent work using the principles of gender equity, freedom to voice one's opinion, the right to organize, scope to fulfill the workers' aspirations, opportunities for productive work, social protection for their families and so on.

To sum up, decent work and decent life would depend on just and dynamic labour market, which in turn draws on a progressive economy. Such an economy should be based on self-sufficiency and renewable energy. One should read the writing on the wall. Non-renewable fuels like coal, oil and natural gas are unevenly distributed.

*(Continued on Page 15)*

After speculations of over four months the official initiative has been taken towards formation of government in Delhi. Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung has written to the President Pranab Mukherjee seeking his permission to give a chance to the largest party in the Legislative Assembly to form the government. The President immediately sent Lieutenant Governor's plea to the Home Ministry. In the 70-member Legislative Assembly the current number of MLAs is 67, three MLAs of the BJP having been elected to the Lok Sabha. In the 67-member assembly, the BJP is the largest party with 29 MLAs including one legislature of its ally Akali Dal. Even in the Delhi Assembly elections, the BJP was in the first place with 32 seats. However, it did not stake claim for forming the government.

The Lieutenant Governor has said that even though the BJP has not staked its claim, it may still be invited to form the government. Delhi BJP president has promptly responded that the party will consider a proposal as and when it comes. He met the Home Minister twice in the meantime. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister and in-charge of the party affairs in Delhi too met the Home Minister Rajnath Singh in this regard. It is reported that the central party will also seriously consider the proposal. However, one theory is that the BJP has done this exercise only to go past September 9, the date set by the court; in reality it intends

to have the elections in Delhi only after the election results of the four states are out. It is also being said that some senior BJP leaders are opposed to the idea of forming a minority government. They argue that if the government is not able to achieve majority then it can have a negative effect on the image of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, the state leaders can place a counter argument as to how long would they sacrifice their political interests for such an image building project? A similar problem may arise in the four states where elections are due within one or two months.

The manner in which all the actions are taking place at high levels, there is a possibility of a BJP government in Delhi in the near future. It does not need to be stated that the decision of the BJP high command and the high ups in the central government have led to the beginning of this exercise. The Lieutenant Governor could swear in the candidate of the largest party as Chief Minister and then allow him/her to prove his/her majority in the next six months. It is said that the BJP has the support of two independent MLAs as well as one MLA who has been expelled from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). It will need the support of two more legislators to reach the required 34 figure for the majority. The way accusations and counter-accusations of horse-trading by mainly AAP and to some extent by the Congress are being heard, it will not be very hard



for the BJP to muster a majority after forming the government. In fact, there is a possibility that to avoid the ramifications of the anti-defection law, a group with the required numbers from AAP might break away and join the BJP government. Or some of the Congress MLAs might give way to the formation of the government by abstaining from the house. It is true that no MLA, except Kejriwal, from any party wants fresh election. Kejriwal has hopes that his dramatic politics will again make him chief minister of Delhi.

The bargaining power of the AAP MLAs will be much more. It was heard that the BJP tried to swing four out of the eight Congress MLAs to their side. But the Congress somehow saved itself from possible harm. Ever since Arvind Kejriwal resigned, it is being hotly discussed that the several AAP MLAs are ready to go into the BJP fold. If there was no suspicion of a break in the ranks of the AAP MLAs, the AAP leadership would not have made such a hue and cry about the BJP leadership trying to bribe them. The AAP leadership has even made an appeal to the President in this regard. Although in the recent sting operation, passed on first to the press and then to the Lieutenant Governor by AAP, the Delhi BJP vice president purportedly offered only rupees four crores to buy the support of AAP legislator Dinesh Mohania - it is commonly discussed and has also been stated by Kejriwal that the amount set for one MLA by the BJP is rupees 20 crores.

Obviously, there is a bid only when there is something to be sold. It is possible that the AAP leaders, who are being heard giving statements against the formation

of the BJP government, might become part of the government holding important positions. One cannot have high expectations of commitment, and that too for long periods of time, from the MLAs of a party which does not believe in organization and ideology. AAP's Pandora's box is falling apart. Most of the apolitical AAP MLAs who got elected riding on the wave of the anti-corruption movement, will not join the Congress. Their destination can only be the BJP. In this scenario, protestations that the BJP will not be able to prove its majority do not have much strength.

AAP, which had the second position in the Delhi Vidhan Sabha elections with 28 members, formed the government with the support of the Congress. This government lasted merely for 49 days. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal used the Jan Lokpal Bill as an excuse to tender his resignation and requested the Lt. Governor to dissolve the Vidhan Sabha. The Congress did not withdraw its support. Actually, the intention of Kejriwal was not to work for the public of Delhi but to 'create history', and after doing that in Delhi he moved on to Benares.

Throughout this whole exercise, the people of Delhi, who voted for the AAP and BJP against the Congress, have simply been taken for a ride. The people of Delhi need a government, not one more election. The BJP and AAP should get together and form a stable government in Delhi to serve the people. There is no ideological or policy related obstacles in BJP and AAP coming together. Both the parties subscribe to neo-liberalism. The BJP never hides its allegiance to capitalism. In the last two decades it has scaled higher peaks on its path

to corporate capitalism abandoning its earlier ranks of small traders. Kejriwal, in the meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), clearly stated his commitment to capitalism. By now it has become clear that the socialist elements in AAP have been cornered. Now it is a group of non-ideology warriors who are destined to be the true servants of the corporate world.

Opposition to the Congress also binds both the parties together. Both have won in the Vidhan Sabha elections by declaring their opposition to the Congress. If one looks back a little in time, it may be noticed that they were together in the India Against Corruption (IAC) and the anti-corruption movement from which AAP has emerged. The whole movement was managed under the auspices of the RSS. Kiran Bedi, a senior as well as active person of the IAC and the anti-corruption movement has already stated that there is no ideological difference between the BJP and AAP. This is why she was against the formation of AAP. The 'secular' face of AAP, Prashant Bhushan, protested against AAP forming the government with the support of the Congress and suggested that the government should be formed with the BJP support instead. The BJP and AAP are natural allies, the most authentic proof of this would be the fact that AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal helped Narendra Modi win the election from Benares.

There is another facet of similarity between the two. Both believe in the 'moral force' as opposed to the Constitution and democratic institutions. This has made clear in the article titled 'Rule by Messiahs' by Prof. Prabhat Patnaik. Also, S.

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Appeal for Jammu & Kashmir Relief Work

Dear Friends,

You all must be aware of the disastrous flood in Jammu and Kashmir. Lakhs of people in the nook and corner of the state are facing devastation, impoverishment and till date are struck in the inaccessible areas without food and clothing. The army may be doing its work, no doubt, however we, the members of civil society, must reach out with all possible help at the earliest.

A group of highly committed youngsters from **Yusuf Meherally Centre**, including **Jabbar Singh** of Uttarakhand, who is also the state convener of **National Alliance of People's Movements** Uttarakhand. He, along with other volunteers has reached certain areas which are worst affected near Rajouri township, only to find that no one, not even a *Patwari*, has reached to them. This team had no other way but to organize the affected people who went on *Satyagraha* in front of the Commissioner's office on 13th of September with hundreds of participants, suffering-yet-struggling for life support. They made the administration take an initiative in providing relief. However, the team reports that much is lacking and basic material needs are far from fulfilled. (Jabbar Singh can be reached on +91 9769041890)

Furthermore, another team has been sent to the affected areas of the Jammu and Kashmir to carry out relief work and **Faisal Khan** from Khudai Khidmatgar, who is also the state convener of Haryana-Delhi NAPM, is coordinating from Delhi. (Faisal Khan can be contacted at +91 9968828230)

We herewith appeal to you to come forward and provide anything of the following to provide relief to the people of Jammu and Kashmir:

1. Blankets and Bed sheets, 2. Clothes for children and women, 3. Warm/woollen clothes, 4. Plastic sheets
5. Basic medicines, 6. Water, 7. Torches and lanterns

Do contribute generously, organise collection drives in your areas, contact us with details of material help and also if you decide to extend financial support.

For sending your contribution, please refer to details given below:

1. The relief material can be sent to: **Study Point, 84 D, Tikona Park, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-25**  
Contact: +91 9871700595

Khudai Khidmatgar team has also set up several spots for collecting relief material in different parts of the country, please find the nearest spot by calling on the given phone numbers: **Tabish Bhatti**: +91 9871700595 **Arish**: +91 9555999150

2. If you wish to make financial contribution, you can do so by transferring the amount in the given dedicated relief account of the **Yusuf Meherally Centre**. Bank : **The Shamrao Vithal CO-OP Bank LTD.**

*For the rest of the transferring details kindly contact: Manohar More: +91 9869162358:*

**Yusuf Meherally Centre** D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Nausher Bharucha Road, Mumbai 400007

Second option to send money is by sending a cheque in the name of the **Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan** at the following address

**Vijaya Chauhan 84**, Olympus, MM Chotani Marg, Mahim, Mumbai- 400016 Contact: +91 9820236267

Please send your contribution along with a letter specifying therein the purpose it is being sent for i.e. Relief Work in Jammu & Kashmir. Also do specify in the letter your: i. Name, ii. Address, iii. PAN card number, iv. Contact number, v. Email address.

(Note: 80 G facility available in both the above mentioned accounts).

**In Solidarity,**

**Medha Patkar** - Narmada Bachao Andolan - NAPM; **Prafulla Samantara**, Lok Shakti Abhiyan, **Lingraj Azad** - Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti and Samajwadi Jan Parishad, NAPM, Odisha; **Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava** - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, MP; **Gautam Bandopadhyay** – Nadi Ghati Morcha, NAPM, Chhattisgarh; **Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe** - NAPM, Maharashtra; **Gabriele Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan** – Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; **C R Neelakandan** – NAPM Kerala; **Saraswati Kavula, P Chennaiah** – NAPM Andhra Pradesh, **Bhupender Singh Rawat** – Jan Sangharsh Vahini, **Rajendra Ravi, Sunita Rani, Seela M, Madhuresh Kumar, Kanika Sharma** – NAPM, Delhi; **Faisal Khan**- Khudai Khidmatgar NAPM Delhi/Haryana; **Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh** - NAPM, UP; **Sister Celia** - Domestic Workers Union, NAPM, Karnataka; **Sumit Wanjale** – Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao Andolan, NAPM, Mumbai; **Manish Gupta** - Jan Kalyan Upphokta Samiti, NAPM, UP; **Vimal Bhai** - Matu Jan sangathan, NAPM, Uttarakhand; **Vilas Bhongade** - Gosikhurd Prakaalpgrast Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Maharashtra; **Ramashray Singh** - Ghatwar Adivasi Mahasabha, Jharkhand; **Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant** - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; **Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan** – Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan, NAPM Bihar; **Mahendra Yadav** – Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar

# How to deal with Ganga

**Gopal Krishna**

First of all there has been a structural flaw in the conceptual design of initiatives for saving Ganga which is 2,525 kilometres long across northern and eastern India and neighboring countries from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

Once again Supreme Court has pulled up central government for not showing urgency in saving Ganga. It has asked for status report and road map for cleaning Ganga by September 3, 2014. Like other pillars of our democracy, the court has been involved with the Ganga issue for several years. This involvement has not altered the current state of Ganga in anyway. From now onwards, the court should hear the matter on the bank of Ganga in the polluted and dammed stretch- not in the court premises- to witness the plight of the river and decipher the true meanings of the affidavits filed by central government, state governments and other agencies.

On June 6, 2014, four ministries - water resources, transport, environment and tourism met to discuss the road map for the river Ganga. This inter-ministerial group (IMG) on the river Ganga has been given the task of preparing a blueprint for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream project to create an aviral and nirmal (clean and continuous) Ganga within 30 days. The IMG is headed by Nitin Gadkari with Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, Tourism Minister Shripad Naik, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Uma

Bharti as its members along with senior ministry officials. An inter-ministerial committee of secretaries under the chairmanship of Alok Rawat, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources has been constituted for the same. "A Cabinet note on the subject will be prepared thereafter," said Gadkari, Union Minister for Road, Transport and Shipping Ministry.

The IMG has proposed to construct 11 terminals on the banks of the Varanasi-Hoogly stretch on the river Ganga for freight movement along with barrages at every 100 kilometers. Gadkari said, "It is proposed to conduct dredging to provide a width of 45 meters and for a three meters draft (depth) to enable transport of passengers and goods between Varanasi and Hoogly on the river Ganga in the first stage of its development." Such proposal without a proper cumulative environment impact assessment gives birth to serious doubts.

During his election campaign, Modi claimed that he is contesting from the Varanasi seat because he has been called to "serve Ma Ganga." After the electoral victory a separate ministry for the river Ganga has been carved out.

Prior to these proposed initiatives by the Modi Government, a 110 page report of B K Chaturvedi headed Inter-Ministerial Group on River Ganga set by Manmohan Singh government dated March 2013 underlined the need to address three

problem areas for a comprehensive solution to Ganga pollution. These were: "(i) The inadequate flow of water in the river, needed to dilute and assimilate waste; (ii) The growing quantum of sewage discharged from cities along the river; (iii) The lack of enforcement against point source pollution from industries discharging waste into the river." The report recorded its assumption stating, "Rivers have a self-cleansing ability, which allows for assimilation and treatment of biological waste. But in the current context, where withdrawal from the river is much higher than the discharge of waste, pollution is inevitable."

To deal with this situation, the Inter-Ministerial Group recommended mandatory ecological flow in all stretches of the river which was 50 % for the lean season flow and 20-30% for all other seasons contrary to even the pre-existing wisdom that environmental flow of the river should be at least 75 % in winters and 50 % in summers.

Besides that it recommended that for urbanized stretches mandatory ecological flow be based on quantum of wastewater released in the river and calculated using a factor 10 for dilution and suggested business as usual for power generation by 69 large hydro projects unmindful of the fact that it contributed to depletion in flow of Ganga and thereby deteriorating water quality. This was suggested as part of the UPA Government's National Mission for Clean Ganga. It is evident that both

the diagnosis of the problem and the remedial action that was suggested failed to address the root causes that threaten the existence of Ganga itself. The complicity of several organizations with the report and its recommendations revealed how environmentalism with regard to protection of Ganga was hijacked by the government.

In the meanwhile, a 2012 parliamentary committee report revealed that so far Rs 39, 225.95 crore has been spent on cleaning of the river under various schemes or projects. As of now it can only be hoped that the initiative of the Modi government will chart a new course.

The Ganga Action Plan, which used function under the Ministry of Environment and Forests has been placed under the supervision of Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti, who is also in-charge of the Ganga Mission. She convened a the first National Dialogue on Ganga on July 7 2014 organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) as part of Ganga Manthan, a national level consultation to facilitate interaction with various stakeholders including policy makers and implementers, academicians, environmentalists, saints and spiritual leaders from all faiths and NGOs on how to save the river.

Each Ministry within the IMG of the new government has been given specific mandate. Tourism Ministry has been asked to explore and expedite a tourism plan covering the stretch of the river starting from Gangotri, and running through Rishikesh, Hardwar and Varanasi. Power Ministry has been entrusted with the responsibility of looking after ways to harness hydro-electricity. Environment Ministry

has been assigned with the task of cleaning the river, and the plan to set up a national waterway has been placed under the stewardship of the Ministry of Surface Transport and Shipping. Gadkari has been asked to prepare a feasibility study on the proposed river-route for development in a time-bound manner.

These deliberations need to be looked at in a context. Citing a World Bank document of 2009, the three volume and 909-page report titled 'United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states: "The National Ganga River Basin Authority in India, with the financial support of the World Bank, launched a programme in 2009 to clean the Ganges, to ensure that 'no untreated municipal sewage or industrial effluents would be discharged into the river by 2020'. Previous action plans did not improve the health of the river, in which almost 95 percent of the pollution is caused by sewers and open drains. This time the governmental approach has moved from a town centric approach to a broader river basin approach..."

But the UNESCO report's treatment of Ganga Basin, the largest river basin of the country which has catchment in 11 States leaves a lot to be desired. The report fails to enlist any achievement of the Ganga River Basin Authority that was set up in February 2009. It does not scrutinise whether or not the promised 'broader river basin approach' has indeed been adopted. It does not dwell on the split personality of the World Bank either.

The Bank has been undertaking contradictory projects in the Ganga basin without any sense of accountability. It depletes water quality of Ganga by supporting dams upstream and it provides loans for improvement of water quality in its downstream. The second volume of Environmental and Social Management Framework for Bank assisted National Ganga River Basin Project document says, "The Ganga basin (which also extends into parts of Nepal, China and Bangladesh) accounts for about 26 percent of India's landmass, 30 percent of its water resources, and more than 40 percent of its population."

If the Bank knew that Ganga basin is an international river basin but it chose to refer to it as 'national' accepting its faulty description by the government. The UNESCO's report like the Bank failed to comprehend that Ganga like Mekong are trans-boundary rivers of the Himalayan watershed.

In such a backdrop when Jim Yong Kim, World Bank President met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 23, 2014 in New Delhi and promised to help in cleaning up the river Ganga saying, "If Prime Minister Modi wants this to be a top thing to work on together, then that's what we will do. It is hard. We happen to have one of the best water specialist in the world. We will bring our A+ team here and will do everything we can to help," it did not inspire confidence.

While the commercial benefits of damming rivers has been talked about a lot, the in-stream and off stream monetary and non-monetary benefits and advantages of flowing rivers has not been assessed so far. Does basin approach mean



undertaking that assessment?

The declaration of Ganga River Basin Authority in the aftermath of the acknowledgment by the Prime Minister's Office during UPA's regime said, "there is a need to replace the current piecemeal efforts taken up in a fragmented manner in select cities with an integrated approach that sees the river as an ecological entity and addresses issues of quantity in terms of water flows along with issues of quality" merits attention of the Modi government as well.

One can refer to initiatives under Ganga River Basin Authority as the Third Phase of Ganga Action Plan (GAP-III) which promised a river basin approach which could have affected the quality and quantity of surface water, ground water and the survival of natural flow of the rivers in the basin. The GAP-I, which was to be completed by March 1990 was extended till March, 2000 when it was declared complete but Phase I of the Plan is not yet fully complete. GAP-II which was to be completed in 2001 was extended till December 2008. This too remains incomplete. Not surprisingly GAP-III also failed because it applied only to 79% of Ganga basin, which is in India. It did not include 13 % of Ganga basin that is in Nepal, 4 % in Bangladesh and 4 % in Tibet. It did not factor in its relationship with the river systems and with the composite Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin and its consequences.

The fourth phase for the protection has been initiated by the Modi Government. The fact remains unless measures for protection of Ganga is in not situated in the policies of Industry, Power, Agriculture, Urban Development,

Health and Environment by the central government, the governments of eleven states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttranchal, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal), the neighboring countries, industry bodies like CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and PHCCI and religious organizations, this phase too will meet the fate of earlier initiatives.

IMG will have to examine and deploy the relevance of Ganga River basin approach because the river channels have been amputated from the flood plains besides the amputation of the river channel itself.

Given the poor track record of the National River Conservation Directorate in the past and the new regime under Gadkari and Uma Bharti, it would be naïve to believe that the threats to Ganga's existence will be identified and mitigated.

But if the Ganga basin approach is indeed adopted then as per Comptroller Auditor General's audit reports there is a need to strengthen the environmental clearance process emanating which is being weakened with each passing day. The blind enthusiasm about mega projects like Ganga Expressway and 'interlinking of rivers' scheme must factor in the fact that Ganga, an inter-generational heritage of our civilization is more important than development and the ecological entity of the river basin is non-negotiable.

Whether or not the Ganga basin approach gets the support of concerned states remains to be seen but what can be done even under current scheme of things is to review

and reverse the policies like the government's current hydro power policy because they were formulated when river basin approach was not adopted. Consequently, fragmented river valley project specific clearances are given without any considered sensitivity towards the environmental health of the river ecosystem. An environmental audit of all the industrial activities in the Ganga basin is a must because auditing and accounting are inextricably interlinked, the important pre-requisite for effective environmental auditing is sound environmental accounting.

Data on environmental costs and liabilities can be used for better decision making relating to usage of alternative raw materials, consumption of utilities like water and power, choice of processing technology based on environmental cost of treating discharge into water, adverse environmental aspect and impact on flora fauna and human beings and treatment of byproducts.

In the face of limitations encountered by National Water Quality Assessment Authority, one of the immediate needs of the basin is to take urgent steps to restore the water quality by seeking Zero tolerance towards hazardous chemicals, waste water and depletion in the natural flow due to uncalled for hydro projects adversely affects the water quality.

Here is a litmus test for the new Government vis-à-vis protection of Ganga. Pursuant to the Cabinet note on Ganga, to begin with by issuing an enforceable order banning discharge of industrial effluents and domestic sewage into Ganga, its tributaries and the ground water aquifers of the Ganga basin, it can demonstrate its

political will and its commitment for saving the holy river.

**P.S:** The Ganga basin outspreads in India, Tibet, Nepal and Bangladesh over an area of 10,86,000 Sq.km.

In India, it covers states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Delhi draining an area of 8,61,452 Sq.km which is nearly 26% of the total geographical area of the country.

The basin is bounded by the Himalayas on the north, by the Aravalli on the west, by the Vindhyas and Chhotanagpur plateau on the south and by the Brahmaputra Ridge on the east.

The Ganga originates as Bhagirathi from the Gangotri glacier in the Himalayas at an elevation of about 7,010 m in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

At its source, the river is called as the Bhagirathi.

It descends down the valley upto Devprayag where after joining another hill stream Alaknanda, it is called Ganga.

The total length of river Ganga (measured along the Bhagirathi and the Hooghly) up to its outfall into Bay of Bengal is 2,525 km.

The principal tributaries joining the river from right are the Yamuna and the Son. The Ramganga, the Ghaghra, the Gandak, the Kosi and the Mahananda join the river from left. The Chambal and the Betwa are the two other important sub-tributaries.

## India's Black Economy: Causes, Implications and Remedies - II

**Arun Kumar**

Some with faith in the market mechanism believed that the black economy would shrink with the implementation of the New Economic Policies in 1991. The package consisted of the lowering of taxes and reduction of controls like, MRTP, FERA, reservations, licensing and so on. However, the black economy grew even faster as the restraint on businesses declined (Kumar, 1999). For instance, they could take their money out more easily as exchange controls were relaxed. So, they started taking out more of their capital. They could play around more easily in the financial markets and so could generate more of black incomes. The increase in the collection of direct taxes as a percentage of the GDP since 1999 is not due to a reduction of the black economy but due to the dramatic rise in the income of the corporate sector (Kumar, 2007) and the black economy has continued to grow.

Gold inflow is an example of the above argument. When its import was banned till 1992, the smuggling of gold into the country was to the extent of 160 tons (Sarma, 1992). After 1992, when gold was allowed to be imported, the amount of gold inflow increased to 900 tons by 1999 and half of it was smuggled. Thus, the legal part of imports of course increased but the illegal inflow also increased. The loss of savings to the country increased by a factor of

5.5 times. For a poor country this is criminal since it aggravates poverty. Of late, this has become an important reason for the high current account deficit and the BOP crisis.

### III. The underlying cause: the growing Triad

To effectively tackle the black economy there is a need to identify the causes underlying its existence and growth. For illegality to be involved in 50 per cent of the economic activity, it is only possible if those in charge of implementation of rules are a party to black income generation. They connive in the persistence of illegality and share the extra profits generated. A triad exists between the corrupt businessmen, corrupt politicians and the corrupt executive (Kumar, 1999). The last consists of the police, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. Since the 1980s the criminal has entered the triad. So, either the businessman or the politician has a criminal record and this has led to growing criminalization in society as discussed earlier. This nexus is so powerful that a financially honest PM voluntarily tolerates the corruption all around to survive and he also provides credibility for a corrupt system – a mascot.

The triad is mutually convenient to all. The businessmen are able to influence policy and protect their ill-gotten profits. The other two in the triad need the businessman to

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*From : the volume edited. by Prof. Vivekanandan: India Today: Issues Before The Nation.*

invest their funds and launder them. Most politicians have at least one businessman close to them who provides such services. The media is increasingly a party to some of these illegalities.

The reduction in tax rates and removal of controls like MRTP, FERA, licensing and easing of reservations for small scale after 1991 has not led to a reduction of the size of the black economy. It is because the triad has grown stronger and forms of making black incomes have changed.

#### IV. Remedies

The cause of the black economy is not just technical (high tax rates or controls) and that is why it continues to grow in spite of the hundreds of steps taken to tackle it in the last 50 years. There have been more than 40 committees that have gone into the different aspects of the black economy and they have suggested thousands of measures. So we are not short of suggestions or of measures to tackle it, like, demonetization, voluntary disclosure, payment by cheque, anti-defection law and citizens' charter. Some of these steps have not only not helped curb the menace but have often fuelled it because they have added to the complexity of the laws or turned people into habitual law breakers (Kumar, 1999). The cause of the growing illegality lies in the political economy of conflict in our society with the elite forming the triad and making incomes over and above what they can make legally.

To tackle the black economy, the triad has to be dismantled. It functions in secrecy. Hence the most important step is the 'Right to Information'. This would make the politician and the executive accountable and

their functioning transparent so that unlike at present, they cannot subvert the law deliberately. The present dispensation on Right to Information is entirely inadequate since it is far too complex for the common man to use. The mind set of the politicians and the bureaucracy needs to change. Unfortunately, those heading the Right to Information bureaucracy have mostly been bureaucrats.

Howsoever good bureaucrats may be, their training has been to not give information and to not push the system to reveal it. Someone from outside the system was required to head it – someone who would be willing to put the politicians and the bureaucrats in the dock. It is argued that a Seshan or a Kiran Bedi have done much good to the system even though they are from the executive. However, in any absolute sense, they have done little and even that stands out compared to others. They have played the system and done well because they have made compromises with it rather than challenging it. They are used by the system to legitimize its choices so that it can continue to more or less function as it is. We need people who would challenge the system every step of the way otherwise the Right to Information will also get discredited over time.

A major reform required is that political parties function democratically. Many of today's leaders come up without serving the people and take over parties. Parties and constituencies are often passed on to relatives like property from one to the other. Such leaders are often contemptuous of people and represent the interest of society's upper crust.

Electoral reform is required so that genuine representatives of the people

enter the legislature (not purchasable by vested interests). State funding of elections will not help since it only gives additionality of funds to the corrupt. Election expenses are 10 times the allowed limit and a bulk of the expenditures are on illegal activities and raised from illegal sources (Kumar, 1999). For these purposes, state funding will not help/cannot be used. Citizens' groups which can present an independent record of the performance of the candidates before elections will help make the voters better informed (For a more detailed discussion on this, see Kumar, 1999).

Audit of accounts of parties, Lok Pal, etc., will hardly help. Accounts are easily manipulated. Who will prevent the Lok Pal from getting corrupted? Philippines has functioned with an Ombudsman who is unable to check corruption in high places. If Justice Ramaswamy could be in the dock and the Chief Justice of the Punjab High court had to take steps against other judges, what is the chance that the highest will not be corrupted/silenced? After initial euphoria, what have the CVC and Chief Election Commissioners achieved?

Mere formalism will not work. Vote should not merely mean the duty to go to the polling booth on the election day. A politically alert public which votes consciously in national self-interest and not on sectarian lines - caste and communal - is needed.

Reform of Judiciary is required. Cases have to be speeded up and procedures simplified. With 30 million cases pending in courts the powerful manipulate it for their own ends and faith in justice is eroded which undermines any notion

of a civilized society. There is neither a shortage of judges nor of courts. The problem is that the judiciary does not act and is unaccountable to the public. Cases that should be wound up in six months take more than six years thus clogging courts and wasting everyone's time. The age of retirement of the executive should be raised to 70 years and after that they should not be allowed to serve in the private sector. Those taking early retirement should be disqualified from work for others for 10 years – not even consultancies for the private sector.

Businesses have to be made accountable and transparent. Independent directors on the Board of the Companies are needed as public watchdogs. Such directors should be chosen from outside the triad (who are easily corruptible in different ways). The members of the triad belong to the same class and have sympathy with the manipulations indulged in by businesses since they are also somewhere associated with such actions (What happened in the case of Satyam). Directors should be made to pay for the wrong actions of the companies they are supposed to be associated with. Chartered Accountants have to be made accountable through fines on them if accounts are found to have been falsified.

Direct taxes need to be simplified by elimination of concessions and deductions. Taxation of business income should be based on gross profit and not net profit. Internal indirect taxes should be levied only on final luxury products. Estate duty, Gift Tax, property and wealth taxes should be revived to unearth black incomes (Kumar, 1994).

The common man is hit more by

the indirect taxes (which are still 60 per cent of all taxes collected) than the direct taxes. Even though some direct tax is paid by the workers in the organized sector, most of it is paid by businessmen and managers. Low direct taxes help these rich people. High indirect taxes hurt the common man since they, through their consumption, are forced to pay a substantial part of their incomes as taxes. Raising direct taxes on wealth and profit would enable the state to lower the indirect taxes and this will help check the growth of the black economy (Kumar, 1999).

### V. Conclusion

In brief, the black economy underlies the major macroeconomic problems faced by India - fiscal crisis, inflation and BOP problems. The micro and the sectoral problems of the economy, like, education, health and infrastructure also relate to the black economy. It weakens democracy. If not checked, India's growth story can become a thing of the past. It is argued above that New Economic Policy has not been able to check the growing black economy as the pro-market thinkers hoped for. Instead, as restraint on businesses has decreased, the black economy has grown further since 1991.

No law is worth the paper it is written on if it not implemented. Political will is required to take the tough steps and that means strengthening democracy. The politicians know/have the intelligence about the corruption of those in the triad but who will bell the cat since when out of power they can also be caught as has happened to Badal and Amrinder Singh or to Jaylalitha and Karunanidhi. Thus, mostly there is a conspiracy of silence amongst the members of the elite.

If matters are to be resolved, the public has to act against the entire political class via alternative movements on a host of issues which will throw up an alternative leadership. In recent times, new political parties and social organizations have come up to take up the issues of the common people of India. However, the task is not easy; but has the task of nation building ever been easy?

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***(Continued from Page 6)***

To exploit these, there will be violence against nature, which will inevitably lead to violence between human beings. There are enough evidences to prove this hypothesis.

The Social Democrats should not try to out-capitalise the capitalists or consumerists, they should rather outsmart them. They should be more creative in intelligently using the fruits of human efforts and ingenuity. They should embrace and exercise robust and credible alternatives instead of just tinkering with the present neo-liberal economy. One such alternative is presented here that merits a debate and campaigning.

***(Continued from Page 12)***

The major part of basin in Indian territory is covered with agricultural land accounting to 65.57% of the total area and 3.47% of the basin is covered by water bodies.

The basin spreads over 239 parliamentary constituencies comprising 80 of Uttar Pradesh, 40 of Bihar, 40 of West Bengal, 25 of Madhya Pradesh, 16 of Rajasthan,

12 of Jharkhand, 8 of Haryana, 5 of Uttarakhand, 4 of Chhattisgarh, 2 of Himachal Pradesh and 7 of Union Territory of Delhi. But these MPs have failed to demonstrate required political will to set matters right in Ganga basin without pandering to the interests of polluters, mutilators and dam builders who sponsor their elections.

***(Continued from Page 7)***

P. Shukla in his article, ‘Myopia, distortions and blind spots in the vision document of AAP’ has revealed the destructive approach of AAP leaders. It is a well known story that AAP leaders demonstrated their ‘bajrangi’ attitude by doing ‘justice’ to the foreign women on the streets at night in Malviya Nagar area of Delhi.

Given that there is no difference regarding the thinking and work-style between the two parties, it will be proper if both get together to form the government. This will mean that there will be no horse-trading, no unnecessary heavy election expenditure and no waste of precious time of government employees.

**Madhu Dandavate**

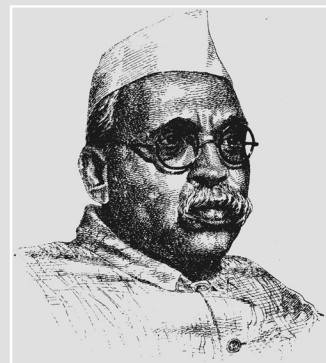
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## After Xi's visit

**Kuldip Nayar**

My hunch is that Gujarat's map of India showing Arunachal Pradesh with dotted lines, suggesting a disputed territory, was at the instance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Gujarat is his backyard and he can have anything done there. Even the contradiction was half-hearted and left to further "investigation."

What Modi probably tried to convey to the visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping was that he was willing to keep Arunachal Pradesh as a disputed territory provided there was an indication by Beijing that it was willing to settle the border dispute keeping New Delhi's sensibility as well as sensitivity in view. The standoff in Ladakh holds no such hope.

President Xi's response was not helpful and he sustained the incursions in the Indian territories during his entire visit. And after returning to Beijing, the Chinese President has reportedly told his top military officials that they should be ready for regional wars which he contended must be won. It was all directed towards New Delhi which, for reasons best known to it, did not say a word to register its annoyance. It was a stance which the subject nations

take against their masters.

What surprised me was why we invited the Chinese President when Beijing has made no amends for the betrayal in 1962 when it attacked the unprepared India. Nor has it vacated the territory which it forcibly captured since then. The Ministry of External Affairs should have tested waters before Xi's visit.

The various steps China has taken since, from the stapling of visa on passport to amassing PLA soldiers in Gilgit-Baltistan, should make things clear for New Delhi—a plethora of irritations. However, it would be naïve to play into the hands of China as India did in 1962. A sense of growing strength has given Beijing a measure of superiority. It is crudely exhibiting it, particularly when India looks disorderly and divided.

More concerting for New Delhi is that Beijing is an emerging power in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal, the countries surrounding India. New Delhi should also reach out to Taiwan, Vietnam and other south Asian countries which are feeling the assertiveness of China. And Beijing should be made to realize that India has accepted China's

suzerainty over Tibet but not the demographic change or the ruthless repression in that territory. The Dalai Lama is already feeling restive and edgy.

Jawaharlal Nehru warned India as back as in 1962 thus: "It is a little naïve to think that the trouble with China was essentially due to a dispute over some territory. It had deeper reasons. Two of the largest countries in Asia confronted each other over a vast border. They differed in many ways. And the test was as to whether any one of them would have a more dominating position than the other on the border and in Asia itself."

I mean no disrespect to the Chinese President. But his visit was doomed to be a failure. Investment is at best palliative to the hurt caused on the border. I have not been able to understand, much less appreciate, the purpose of the visit from our point of view.

In fact, China's incursions in Ladakh when the President and Prime Minister were talking in Delhi, underlined the intractable stance on the border. That China would invest \$20 billion (the initial figure was \$100 billion) in India suits Beijing because it wants to increase trade with New Delhi which offers a vast market and other opportunities. But what about the basic requirement: trust. Nehru introduced to Chinese leader Zhou Enlai to the world. He looked up to Nehru but that was till he got known in the international arena. Zhou Enlai betrayed Nehru when China took advantage of our trust—and unpreparedness.

I do not think that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would ever have as much equation with the Chinese President as Nehru had with Zhou

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## From Chief Justice to Governor

**Rajindar Sachar**

Ever since news reports appeared that the Union Government proposed to appoint a former Chief Justice of India, P. Sathasivam, as Governor of Kerala, a spate of comments, rather adverse, have appeared in the Press. Questions have rightly been raised about propriety. Also the dignity of the office of CJI has been compromised with the acceptance of this appointment by the ex-CJI.

Personally, I was deeply distressed because some judgments of Justice Sathasivam a year or so before his retirement did reinforce one's faith in the judiciary. His bold decision on the implementation of the "None-of-the-Above" clause showed his broad outlook, considering that both the BJP and the Congress had opposed it for over a decade.

Justice Sathasivam also showed his humanitarian streak when he boldly commuted the death penalty of Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar on the ground of inordinate delay in carrying out the hanging. The Supreme Court, no doubt, had been dealing with the matter for some time but he at least boldly took the lead in clarifying the matter.

So I was disappointed when Justice Sathasivam went public seeking to justify his acceptance of the post. My first reaction was to keep silent because to me the judiciary is an invaluable asset in a democracy and one should be cautious in one's criticism. But now that Justice Sathasivam has finally taken up the assignment, it is no longer possible to remain silent; rather it is a moral duty to speak up. I plead in my defence the words of

Justice Holmes of the US Supreme Court, who said: "I trust that no one will understand me to be speaking with disrespect of the law because I criticise it so freely.....But one may criticise even what one reveres.... and I should show less than devotion if I did not do what in me lies to improve it."

The Congress in its opposition has crossed all decent limits. It has accused the BJP government of returning a favour in exchange of having received a favourable decision in the case of Amit Shah. Sathasivam was appointed Chief Justice during the UPA regime. Does the Congress suggest that it appointed Sathasivam because it had hoped to get favourable orders from him? How disgusting the conclusion! The opposition to Sathasivam's appointment as Governor is on the larger ground of public interest of separation of the executive and the judiciary. But the Congress in putting on a saint-like attitude is hypocritical when in reality it must bear the blame for the original sin.

Examples of the Congress polluting the judiciary are galore. In 1949 the Chief Justice of Punjab was Dewan Ram Lal. He was a personal friend of Nehru. Immediately on his retirement, Nehru appointed him Ambassador to Rome. Chief Justice S.R. Das was to take over from Chief Justice Ram Lal in the Punjab High Court. When he met Pandit Nehru in Delhi before proceeding to Simla, where the High Court was then situated, Nehru told him without any embarrassment to tell CJ Ram Lal that he should not



worry because the orders for his appointment as ambassador would be issued soon. The distance that rightly should prevail between the executive and the judiciary had not yet been established. Maybe Nehru's personality was such that the bona fides of the government were not easily doubted. But since then one has to face a low level of maneuvering in politics. The Congress appointed Bibi Fatima Begum (from Kerala), a retired judge of the Supreme Court, as Governor of Tamil Nadu without any embarrassment. The Congress also followed the partisan practice when it nominated Chief Justice of India Ranganath Mishra to the Rajya Sabha. It never offered any explanation for breaching the distance between the executive and the judiciary. But of course that in no way absolves the BJP of the charge of breaching the convention accepted the world over.

I feel that the former CJI Sathasivam should have declined the appointment. A high office carries with it certain compulsions.

In sensitivity to public opinion and correct precedents, let me give an example. In the mid-fifties a politician was appointed Governor of Andhra Pradesh. The Nizam of Hyderabad, though bereft of political power, was still holding his domain of private properties, trusts. The Nizam had refused to receive Pt. Nehru at the airport on his visit immediately after the takeover of Hyderabad by the Indian Government. The Nizam never called on the Governor. The Governor also never called on the Nizam during his tenure of five years. The Governor, after his retirement in 1962, received a letter at his home from the Nizam on his personal letter paper inviting him to be a trustee of some of the Nizam's several trusts "for the benefit of the members of my family and for other

religious charitable purposes". He offered membership of one of the trusts to the Governor with effect from 1st June of 1963 "on a monthly allowance of Rs. 3,000 plus traveling expenses for visiting Hyderabad for meetings of the trust." The allowance of Rs 3,000 was not a small amount at that time; it was equal to the monthly salary of a High Court judge.) The Nizam wrote: "I am making this offer on my own accord as I was much impressed by your popularity as Governor of Andhra Pradesh, and the manner in which you maintained the dignity of that office." The Governor declined the offer because, according to him, if he accepted the offer it might give rise to the gossip that he got the trusteeship by being unduly friendly to the Nizam.

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***(Continued from Page 2)***

Enlai. Still, the latter carried out the task he had in mind, capturing in Ladakh the area which China claimed to be its own. In fact, the incursions in our territory that took place during the talks between Modi and Jinping underlined that China does not want to accommodate India on the border issue.

I do not find the determination at the highest level. There is a lot of wishful thinking. What purpose does it serve in discussing whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi had the better of China or President Jinping on the border issue when the reality of our society is the caste and class? The dalits are still treated as untouchable as our forefathers did. Today's youth is indifferent to everything else but not to the feeling of superiority which he seems to feel as his birthright.

Eleven children, all cousins belonging to a dalit family, were ousted from a government primary school in a village in Bikaner,

I am giving this example because even if the Governor had accepted this offer, it was no big deal. But a healthy convention of public morality would have been lost. I feel the former Chief Justice Sathasivam will have to bear the cross for permitting the judiciary to be slandered by small-time politicians who are engaged in petty maneuvering.

The Congress had distorted the judiciary's face many a time through supersession - remember the case of Chief Justice A.N. Ray which can never be lived down. Let the BJP not learn such bad lessons. For democracy, a healthy distance between the executive and the judiciary is essential.

Rajasthan, after two of them drank water from an earthen pot meant for an upper caste teacher. He reportedly humiliated the two students and even beat them up. True, the teacher, Mangal Singh, was arrested after the family lodged a police complaint against him. But the society on the whole remains unreceptive. Prime Minister Modi talks about development. What kind of development does he have in mind where the caste bias is sustained? To some extent, the class and caste seem to coincide.

Coming back to the disputed part of India-China border, the matter has got more complicated after the visit of President Jinping. For example, the Chinese troops which entered the Indian territory not only stayed there but also increased their strength. They have reportedly now withdrawn from the place. But Beijing has made it loud and clear that India should stay from the disputed territory.

## A new socialist caucus

D. K. Giri

After Narendra Modi's victory this year with an absolute majority in the parliament, the texture of Indian politics seems to have changed. Political observers and analysts argue that nothing much will change, the Congress in alliance with one regional party or the other will bounce back. Also, if and when Modi makes a big mistake, people will turn to Congress. But such prognoses relate only to electoral politics, where, at national level, people have little choice. But what about the politics of ideas, ideologies and principles? So far, barring a couple of decades since independence, Indian politics has been driven mainly by the quest for power. There have been occasional shifts of focus to specific issues, such as, in 1977 elections, to the Emergency which took away the political and civil rights of the people, to the stability of government in 1979, to Bofors corruption in 1989, and then on, to the success of coalition politics. Now in 2014, BJP, backed by RSS, gained for the first time in its political life, a full majority to run the government at the centre. This marks a turning point in the nature of politics in India. Unlike the Congress party which was a cling-on to power at any rate, without subscribing to any ideology, BJP has its own agenda which cannot be overlooked by any serious political observer or practitioner.

A veteran Indian politician once smartly said, "In public action including politics, one needs two things for bringing about the desired change: one, an idea, and the other, to be able to educate, organise and

mobilise for that idea. We have quite a few mobilisations or even agitations going on at any point of time, but many are without a robust, long-term idea. Our current politics seem to be devoid of options in idea. Then, who will counter the BJP agenda? In the past, the Communists had a consistent line of opposition to BJP's ideology. The Congress had one line opposition to BJP, that the latter is not secular. Communists have gone down under the heavy weight of their ideological contradictions - between their revolutionary rhetoric and reformist practice. The fate of Congress party tends to ebb and flow with the so-called charisma of the Indira Gandhi family. There is no other party on the national political horizon to provide the alternative. Aam Admi Party (AAP) did spring up briefly to give a breath of fresh air, but it vanished like the proverbial flash in the pan. It could not mutate from a movement into a political party. Without a sound ideology, a strong organisational strategy, it would be hard for AAP to revive.

There is, however, a formidable ideology - with a strong tradition, rich legacy, and its timeless values; that is democratic socialism, popularly known in India as socialism. Admittedly, socialists in India have had impeccable integrity, but organisationally, earned an avoidable reputation of being "anarchists" or splitters. One section of Indian socialists added this epithet of splitters to the socialist movement. There were others who stood up for their conviction, remained politically correct, publicly clean and became source of inspiration to many in the

next generation. Besides, democratic socialism is vindicated in its principles, reconfirming its relevance at all times, and internationally, it is followed by the biggest group of political parties.

If idea precedes action, democratic socialism, redefined in the present context should spur us to action at this critical juncture, when ideas seem to have dried up in political discourse. A caveat may be shared here. That is, there is no consensus on democratic socialism in India amongst its adherents. Given the nature of the ideas underlying democratic socialism, it is normal to have different points of view. What is universally agreed though is that the values of democratic socialism are eternal but the mechanisms to achieve them may be time and situation-specific. With such understanding, a few socialist comrades got together after the general elections this year to recreate the socialist platform in the country.

### Samajwadi Samagam

It was decided to call a get-together of all socialist comrades (*samajwadi samagam*) working in any sector from all over the country. Socialists from all over the country gathered in Yusuf Meherally Centre's rural development campus, near Mumbai on 10 and 11 August this year. The idea was to meet and greet, and to explore the possibility and mechanism of building a socialist network. The deliberations took place in a comradely spirit for two full days. A resolution containing the intent to move forward, and a plan of action was passed unanimously. It

was agreed to constitute a national steering committee to take the *Samajwadi Samagam* forward. A convener was identified to put the ideas that came forth in the meeting to action.

The first step was good. But it was felt that the journey ahead could be tortuous, given the practical problems in running such a broad platform. However, the mood in the get-together was upbeat and the comrades, for the first time, felt that it was the call of the hour for all of us to work in unity and solidarity even if we were in different parties or organisations.

The second meeting of the *Samagam* was held on 22 September in Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi, although, in the meantime, through the activism of the convener, many small meetings were taking place in different parts of the country. The Delhi meeting was occasioned by the memorial lecture, organised on September 23, to mark the 111<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Yusuf Meherally, one of the founding member of the Congress Socialist Party. The Delhi meeting was to ratify the resolution passed in Mumbai and to prepare a plan of action for the National Capital Region (NCR). The meeting was attended by leaders of political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations. It is to be noted that, in Delhi meeting, comrades experienced a re-run of 'socialist self-righteousness' and a bit of intolerance towards others' points of view. Such acrimony in meetings of ideological groups is natural. But, it must be underlined that the intellectual differences should not create attitudinal or organisational divide. Happily, the spirit of camaraderie was restored quickly. However, the experience of Delhi meeting reinforced the

need for breaking away from the controversial past, assiduously adopting a new approach to mutual interaction, and a new culture by socialist organisations.

### Organising Principles

Although the *Samagam* is purely a voluntary and informal network, a set of organising principles need to be adumbrated for everyone to respect. It is proposed that any individual, institution, party or organisation, calling themselves socialist should be embraced and invited to be a part of the *Samagam*. Once they are all in the fraternal ambit of the *Samagam*, they could argue and thrash out differences in understanding, or failing which, they simply respect each other's' point of view and live with their differences. The second principle is the strict adherence to the notion of pluralism - not only social and cultural pluralism but intellectual and ideational pluralism. The precondition of socialism is democracy, and no democracy can survive without practicing pluralism. The third principle is the absoluteness of a collective approach, group discipline and collective interest, no self-aggrandisement of any leader. This is a paramount requirement in building a new culture. How can we share these precious human values with others if we do not observe them ourselves? Socialism is strictly against elitism, feudalism, nepotism and egoism. No leader should arrogate oneself to the entire organisation. Since the *Samagam* is not a single party, the interactive principle is mutual respect and accommodation, even at some personal costs. The fourth principle is consensus building in decision-making. It is not a coercive consensus, but an accommodative one, where, once the majority is established on an issue, others with

a different point of view should accept the decision gracefully. The fifth principle is the individual as well as institutional conduct. Each of the socialists should follow certain minimum standards in public life such as punctuality, trust, transparency, word-keeping etc. The sixth principle is what Yusuf Meherally had famously said: "I hate ugliness and cruelty that is why I am a socialist". So, we must stand for beauty, aesthetics and compassion. The seventh principle is relationship-building. The former Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair wrote in his autobiography that politics is all about relationship, liking each other, and having a good time together. This is possible when we build and maintain relationship

*Samawadi Samagam* is a forum or a network, where people relate to socialism and socialists. Here people learn to talk to each other in respect and camaraderie. People unlearn the quarrelsome and divisive attitudes, and relearn the universal and eternal values of socialism. These principles may sound platitudinous or patronising, but, to be sure, no sanity can prevail in politics without such values.

### Issues and Challenges

Finally, there are several issues and challenges facing the society in general and the socialists in particular. There are issues in almost all sectors - politics, economics, trade, technology, finance, foreign policy - which merit serious attention of all socialists. But issues are perennial. They crop up from time to time. Socialists need to be in full preparedness to tackle those issues in order to promote justice, equity and dignity in the society. Challenges are also logistical and organisational,

(Continued on Page 10)

# The Challenge of Educating Deprived Children RTE Act Not the Solution

Arun Chavan

In reference to the hype that attended this year's observance of Teacher's Day the problem of out-of-school children has once again come into public debate. The global initiative on out-of-school children was launched by UNICEF in 2010. India section of its recently released Report is fraught with quite a few uncertainties. As regards out-of-school children the reader has to contend with multiple definitions, the use of more than one source of data and application of different methods for determination of school dropouts. He is confused about the number of school-deprived children, what their identities are, where they are located and about the reason of their deprivation. Moreover, the total number of out-of-school children as estimated in the Report is not correct, the reason being that the children of nomadic tribes are left out. Obviously, these children will not be brought under the purview of the RTE Act in view of its nature and scope.

The National Commission on the Nomadic and Denotified Tribes appointed by the Government of India has submitted its Report in 2008. According to its findings the number of out-of-school children (5 to 17 age group) belonging to 500 tribes and groups is a whopping 70 million. Only a small portion of these nomadic people lead a sedentary life. They are constantly on the move and therefore they are not on the radar of the enumerator of the village Panchayat or the municipality, on the basis of whose feed-back RTE

implementers identify the out-of-school children.

The provisions of the RTE Act will not be effective in getting the children of the nomadic groups enrolled in schools, much less in keeping them at school engaged in studies as day scholars, because their families mostly lead a peripatetic life. And even for those who lead a settled life, their subhuman conditions on the fringe of society nullify their children's learning possibilities.

It is pertinent to note in this behalf the comments of Dr. Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate in economics. He has said that the children of nomadic tribes are special children because their problems are special. Therefore they need special schools for their education and training. These schools have to be of residential type, and preferably run by dedicated set of people immune from official venality and red tape. Investment in education brings in returns more quickly than any sector of a nation's economy. Exactly same is the case with the proposed schools. Therefore it is a sound business proposition to invest a few thousand crores annually in educating nomadic and deprived children.

The point at issue is whether the ruling class can be accused of having the kind of social passion that is needed to initiate and propel such a radically humane intervention.

## Unto the last

The most deprived, the most vulnerable people in India are the

dalits, women and the nomadic tribes. The latter groups also include the so-called denotified tribes. The women and the nomadic tribes are more deprived and poverty-stricken than the rest.

It will be instructive to understand their living conditions. The total population of nomadic tribes in India is 150 million. They are far from being a homogeneous or unitary lot. They are parceled out into 500 distinct groups and tribes. Each is different from the next. The difference is in race, in language, religious practices, origin, life style, food habits, self image, etc. They cannot act together as one entity. They exist in air-tight compartments, even in mutual hostility. They can be found scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country.

One instance will be revealing about the subhuman way they survive. Some of them eat mice because that is the only source of protein for them. They are known as 'Mushairies'. Meaning 'mice-eaters': 'Mushak' is the Sanskrit word for mouse, ('Mushak-Ahari). The present Chief Minister of the fourth largest State in India, Bihar, is of that tribe! That does not mean group emancipation or empowerment. It only means cooption of a few by upper crust power wielders, a ploy to buy group allegiance thereby. It seems political establishment is not in a hurry to improve their lot by enacting enabling laws. The government did appoint a national commission on nomadic tribes in



2005 to suggest suitable action. In 2008 the commission submitted its Report to government. Till this day the Report is not even tabled in the Parliament. While the Report gathers dust in the holy of holies of Indian democracy the Mushairies will continue to feast on mice. While doing so, they will be unhindered by legislative caveats and undeterred by social stigma. In that they will compete keenly with snakes and other predators of the wild, and hopefully be not worse off than them. After all, they need strength to wait upon the slow turning wheel of Indian democracy. Let us hope that the quantity of the mice meal in their belly will be maintained at an optimum level to give them the necessary energy.

### Global perspective

Looking at the populations who exist on the fringe of society from global perspective helps better understanding. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its report of 2005 has published the Human Development Index (HDI). It deals separately with the HDI of dalits and forest tribes, which are 0.328 and 0.270, respectively. The HDI of nomadic tribes is equal to the mean of the two, that is, 0.298. The UNDP has published in July 2014 its human development report which covers all the 187 countries of the world. Niger, the West African country figures at its bottom with 0.337 as its human development index. Whereas the HDI of the nomadic tribes of India, (0.298), is even lower than the lowest.

In terms of country population the Philippines with 94,000,000 stands 12<sup>th</sup> in the world. The number of nomadic tribes in India is higher than the population of Philippines. If a nation were to be carved out of

their combined population it would have become the 12<sup>th</sup> largest nation in the world (albeit, with hundreds of sub-nationalities horns-locking within its borders). From the above data it is possible to measure the complexity and size of the problem. The problem will need to be handled from many angles.

### Development Spectrum

Amelioration of their sufferings can be done by a broad strategy that will include: (i) empowerment of the communities, (ii) their awareness raising and (iii) education of the younger set.

Awareness raising and empowerment of the whole groups is done by ensuring that they get their entitlements. They are entitled to employment guarantee, pensions and bank credits for certain categories, food security in substantial measure, post-natal and general health care, housing plots and subsidies, even free education and other student concessions. But the flow of these benefits is hampered due to defects and infirmities of implementation machinery, which is highly insensitive and dry as dust. "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." The slip between the cup and the lip is engineered by the sinisterly venal manipulation of the executive machinery of the government? This gap between good schemes at one end and the needy people at the other is required to be closed by social action groups.

### Home school

For the past fifteen years Avani our associate, has specialized in educating deprived children of 6 to 17 age group. Most of them are of nomadic background. The VDS and Avani pattern comprises a smoothly functioning home school

and enrollment of its inmates in public schools and later in technical training centres in accordance with age suitability and aptitude. Our first and immediate step consists of education of the younger set. They need arrangements dedicated to their special needs which will include proper nourishment and amenities. There will be concentration on creation of special educational tools for the children. Abject poverty and lack of security is the crux of their problem. Therefore they need to be provided with wholesome living conditions. That will encourage them to pursue their studies in comfortable and delightful environment.

We have organized a home school in Sangli where we will give admission to boys of 6 and above age group. They will be drawn from the shanties which shelter nomadic families. Our centre will start functioning from November 2014. We will impart to them education which will lead to all round cultururation. It will act as a pilot project, as a model to be emulated by other action groups. Their active participation will be needed to reach out to the vast number of deprived children in Sangli District.

### Action Plans

The number of out of school children in Sangli District is about 25000. They mostly hail from the deprived groups. We have before us a perspective plan of development. It has two parts. One is mid-term plan and the second is the long term plan. The mid-term plan consists of mobilization of like-minded persons, social action groups and institutions. We will not exclude from the action plan the government wings connected with child welfare, juvenile justice, public

*(Continued on Page 11)*

# Planning in a modern economy: Is its role over in India?

**Arun Kumar**

The Independence Day speech of the PM announced that the Planning Commission set up in 1950 would be closed. Given that this institution has played a central role in the way government functioned in India, does this announcement presage a major institutional change in governance? A new body/think tank is supposed to replace this institution. Would this proposed institution essentially do what the Planning Commission did but under a different name and rubric? One may also ask whether in spite of the many perceived failures of the Planning Commission in India, planning is still needed?

Big companies in their annual reports announce plans whether to increase their market share, introduce new products, etc. Individuals plan to save to build their homes or give their children good education, etc. Political parties plan to come to power by polarising the voters, etc. Narendra Modi planned for the last many years to become India's PM. So, we are all planners.

However, these are all examples of individual or firm level planning while what the Planning Commission was supposedly doing was economy wide planning. What is the difference? Those with faith in capitalist ideology oppose system-wide planning while favouring planning by individuals and firms in a given milieu. After 1991, when the India embarked on the path of marketization, planning was downgraded and since then the role of the Planning Commission has been increasingly questioned. However, none of the governments since then

eliminated it because they found uses for it. The Modi government may also need it but is making a political point by announcing a break from the Nehruvian path of development.

All economies face the problem of change over time. Time is divided between the past, present and the future. We are always in the present. The past is already gone and is a parameter of the system. The real complication is that the future is ahead and unknown. So, there will always be uncertainty associated with it. What is planned may not be achieved so that there is failure of expectations and consequent problems. If we look at the future just ahead, it is a continuation of the past so not too uncertain. But if we look further ahead, the uncertainty is larger and the possibility of failure greater.

If all economic agents act in an atomistic fashion, without any coordination, they face very large uncertainty. If the aggregate economic system has some coordination, it gives all the economic agents some guidance to plan their actions and that reduces the uncertainty for them. But, the aggregate system itself faces uncertainty which cannot be eliminated. However, it may be moderated by government actions.

Left to its own device, a capitalist economy was found to go through business cycles with booms and busts which is costly, especially for the poor. It is only with increased government intervention the world over since the mid-1930s that the major cycles have been moderated

and replaced by political business cycles. So, for individuals and firms in a capitalist economy macro coordination is important. The global economic downturn starting 2007 did not turn into a depression because of massive government interventions in the major world economies.

Many successful economies of today have not had central planning and done well while India in spite of planning has lagged far behind. So, it is legitimate to ask whether systemic planning is at all needed? In 1947, India was extremely poor and backward. The savings rate was 8.6 per cent. Yet, the ambition of the ruling elite was to copy western modernity and become like a European country. That required massive investment in infrastructure like education, health, transportation, energy, basic goods and so on. The imperative was that there be full utilization of scarce resources and elimination of waste through coordination of economic activity. So, planning was needed as an optimizing exercise - how best to utilize resources to achieve rapid growth?

The Bombay Plan was drafted in 1944 by several of the Indian big businessmen associated with the Indian National Congress. It suggested the need for a large public sector to create the necessary infrastructure for the economy to modernize since the private sector was short of capital. The need for optimal use of resources followed from it. The USSR had used planning to grow rapidly and was a readymade

example to follow. Nehru and Bose were impressed with the Soviet model and were ready to emulate it.

Modern day economies face many situations of market failure. In such situations, neo-classical paradigm suggests the need for government intervention to help achieve optimality. What the markets cannot achieve has to be obtained via government intervention. In 1870, governments of OECD countries spent 9 per cent of GDP. By 1990 they were spending 43 per cent of GDP. As economies grew and more and more situations of market failure came to the fore, government intervention increased. So, it is not just in the poor countries that government intervention is needed. Markets are known to work on the basis of 'dollar vote'. If one has more purchasing power one can influence the market more. Markets 'marginalize the marginal'. Thus, they are not able to cater to the basic needs of the poor. The implication is that the poorer countries need larger government intervention than the rich countries.

With competing demands optimization is needed. The Modi government wishes to start 100 mega cities, eliminate filth and dirt everywhere, start bullet trains and so on - all commendable ideas. But the government would not spend only on these projects. The existing schemes would continue. The new projects would have to be initiated while continuing with most of the existing priorities. How can this be done without a new prioritization and sequencing which requires planning?

If bullet trains idea is pursued, it would absorb most of the scarce resources available with the railways so that the rest of the system would

be starved of funds and begin to break down. Thus, overall there may be even greater inefficiency while some bullet trains run. Thus, a balance will have to be struck. Similarly, if 100 mega cities are planned and that requires lakhs of crore of investment per city, then funds for existing cities and villages which are anyway crumbling will fall further short so that there would be enclaves of development and massive increase in disparities. Thus, proper prioritization and sequencing is needed to implement some of these grand schemes.

India anyway faces major regional disparities. It is being argued that the states should have greater autonomy to do what they would like to. In a federal structure this is essential. Any plan should be based on the needs of its components and should not just be top down. Consider banking in India. It collects savings and lends to those in need of funds – mostly businesses. Market based investments go where profitability is higher, so funds flow out of the poorer states to the richer ones aggravating the existing disparities. As it is, the poor states generate less savings and of that also if a bulk goes to the richer ones their investment levels would further lag behind that of the advanced states. Thus, the gap would widen between the backward and the advanced states.

It is only when there is overall coordination of investment that the poorer states may have a chance to catch up. Yet, in spite of coordination through planning commission and finance commission, disparities across states have increased. Disparities within states have also increased. Maharashtra, one of the most advanced states has Vidarbha which is one of the most backward

areas with a high rate of farmers' suicides. So, do these examples contradict the idea that planning is better than no planning? Not really, imagine if coordination at least at the level of the public sector was not there, how much wider the disparities would have been. There would have been severe social and political costs, like, far greater migration and regional conflicts.

Reduction of disparities and inequalities require a degree of coordination. According to neo-classical theory, markets cannot affect redistribution so government intervention is needed. Unfortunately, modern day economies are also plagued by policy failure. For the Indian economy, the rapid growth of the black economy (presently, over 50 per cent of GDP) has led to increasing policy failure and non-fulfilment of targets. Only a fraction of the money sent by the Centre reaches the ground leading to policy failure. According to Rajiv Gandhi in 1988, only 15 paise reached the ground and according to the Supreme Court, now that figure is even less. The existence of the black economy leads to lower tax collection so that the economy appears to be resource short. Due to flight of capital, the opportunity cost to the economy is more than a trillion dollars in the last 65 years. Black economy also leads to wastage of resources through activities which are like 'digging holes and filling holes'. Thus, the economy operates at much below its potential.

India embarked on the course of central planning in 1950 and its rate of growth rose sharply, industry diversified, infrastructure improved and so on. However, the top down approach adopted by the self-centred ruling elite



did not prioritise rural areas, agriculture and the marginalized sections. This resulted in failure of planning and severe problems in the drought years of 1966 and 1967. The economy lived from 'ship to mouth' with food imported under PL 480. The US extracted concessions for rescuing a sinking Indian economy and the Rupee was sharply devalued. Planning was downgraded with three years of plan holidays in 1967 to 1969. This was the turning point for planning in India. When planning was revived after 1969, various ministries and states became more assertive and planning largely became ex-post. Political interference in the PSUs increased sharply leading to its many problems. Planning continued in form but not in essence. The Fourth Plan had the vision of eliminating poverty. Smt. Gandhi had come to power in 1971 on the 'Garibi Hatao' plank. But the top-down approach of the policy makers came in the way of its success.

Planning has to be ex-ante and not ex-post. At the end of the year, money would have been spent by the different parts of the economy and by each of the ministries but it would be uncoordinated (ex-post) but without a vision or an advance plan (ex-ante). We can list many things like the present government has done but to implement them one needs to have coordination between various requirements.

In 1977, the Janata government came to power and proposed a rolling plan to end Plans. But, it was too busy squabbling and could not push for major changes. However, it did downgrade the public sector and its R&D effort was set back with long term consequences. For instance, the collaboration between

BHEL and the Soviets was replaced by that with KDW of Siemens which refused to part with technology. The Fertilizer Corporation (FCI) was split up so that technology for upgrading of the 900 tons per day plants was lost. The 1350 tons per day plants were imported.

In 1980, India went to the IMF due to the BOP problems following severe drought and the Iran and Afghanistan problems. That is when the consumerist phase of the economy started and imports grew sharply. India's foreign debt rose during the decade of 1980s from \$10 billion to \$93 billion. This along with the Iraq war of late 1980s led to a huge BOP crisis and this time there was no Soviet Union to help bail India out – it had collapsed. IMF and the World Bank forced marketization of the economy and planning was further downgraded. Formulating the Plan itself became difficult and each plan document got ready only a few years into the Plan. Joan Robinson had perceptively observed that planning cannot succeed with a large private sector. The poor have been left to their own devices so that disparities have widened significantly – consequently, India has one of the largest number of billionaires and the largest number of poor.

The UPA saw the revival of the importance of the Planning Commission because the Deputy Chairperson was close to the Prime Minister. But that did not lead to the restoration of planning because both of them believed in promoting markets. Plan size was arbitrarily cut year after year to meet fiscal deficit targets. 'Growth at any cost' strategy was adopted with little attention to the cost imposed on the environment, rural areas and

the poor; little coordination was attempted.

In brief, the failure of planning in India is due to the black economy, the top down approach adopted by the ruling elite and its being downgraded over the last many decades. Then, is it not legitimate to close the Planning Commission and end planning which is anyway formal only. But then, which agency will perform the many essential functions listed above? This needs to be understood rather than throwing the baby with the bath water. Can the Ministry of Finance replace the Planning Commission? Not really. It is largely for accounting - to collect revenue and allocate them keeping the deficit under check. So, its task is to cut expenditures of Ministries and not to do overall coordination or give a vision. In the rush to break with the Nehruvian path, is the Planning Commission being closed little realising that it may reappear in another form?

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*Based on sections from the author's book, 'Indian Economy since Independence: Persisting Colonial Disruption'. N Delhi: Vision Books.*

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**(Continued from Page 5)**

some of which are discussed here. There could be many others. It is a new organisational and interactive culture that will revive and sustain a new socialist politics. What does the future of *Samagam* look like? It is a bit cautiously optimistic. The stakes are high, but the spirit is strong. If the socialists succeed in creating a new culture, they would be contributing to changing the political discourse. The key to do so is to adhere strictly to the organising principles. All in all, the new caucus that is emerging from across the parties and organisations bodes well for socialists and for the country.



## Socialist Party

Socialist Party, in its three-day (19-21 September, 2014) national executive meet held in Udaipur has passed the resolution that the Chinese incursions into the Indian territories will continue till the 20,000 sq km land is reclaimed from the Chinese control. Socialist Party believes that the Indian visit of the Chinese premier Jin Ping and the agreements signed between the two countries portray India as the grantee and China as the grantor. This has exposed the hollowness of the patriotism of those who call themselves 'Hindu nationalists.' Socialist Party warned the toiling masses that the Indian ruling class lusting after consumerism is selling the invaluable resources of the country and on the other hand are begging for foreign investment.

Dr. Lohia had termed China's invasion of Tibet as infanticide. The Prime Minister, in his talks with the Chinese premier has not even mentioned long pending issue of Tibet's independence, which has been a long-standing demand of India.

Socialist Party, while strongly opposing the Bullet and High-speed trains has demanded that the government should make available, safe, punctual, hygienic, convenient and cheap train services, especially to the far-flung remote regions of India. In insurance, the money is paid by the policy holder. Hence, it is misleading to talk about foreign investment in the insurance sector. The party has demanded a complete ban on the entry of foreign companies in the insurance sector.

The present government and Prime Minister want to disband the

Planning Commission and run the country's economy solely for the corporate houses. Socialist Party believes that in a poor country like India, development and the related economic planning should be carried at the level of local bodies according to the Directive Principles of State as well as the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution. There should be a proper representation of tribals, dalits, farmers, laborers and women in it. The party believes that the deprived classes can be empowered only by establishing a decentralized system on the basis of the Four Pillar State as proposed by Dr. Lohia.

Socialist Party reiterated its demand of bringing the details of

*(Continued from Page 7)*

health, primary education, etc. The mobilization will aim at achieving zero tolerance to child exploitation and child deprivation. Within a reasonable time frame the goal will be school enrollment of every child of the school-going age. Then, the long term plan will be unfolded. It will project this, path-breaking development across the national horizon for nationwide emulation. In the interim period, however, the goal will be to rid the state of Maharashtra of child slavery.

What is the larger significance of our project? If the ultimate aim is to create an exploitation-free, equality-based democratic social order, then the generation of a radical people-based motive force will be necessary. The Constitution of India has provided for a functional democracy. It is ail-inclusive. It gives equal rights to all citizens. It includes the oppressed ones that

finances of political parties under the ambit of the RTI. The party will start a signature campaign for the same.

The party's executive decided that a day's fast will be observed by all the state units of the Socialist Party on the death anniversary of Dr. Lohia on the coming 12<sup>th</sup> October for the release of Irom Sharmila and the removal of the AFSPA.

The meeting was presided over by Bhai Vaidya. Dr. Shriram Arya, president of the Socialist Party Rajasthan welcomed the office bearers and members of the executive.

—Dr. Prem Singh

languish now at the bottom of the social pyramid. That possibility of building a Republic of the Just will contract, will shrink and the window of democracy that is open now will collapse if the inequalities are allowed to fester endlessly. To prevent this collapse these oppressed people need to be unshackled. They need to be liberated in time, salvaged and empowered to become society's locomotive.

We do not need a state driving rough shod a GDP-obsessed economy. We do not need an economic system which is trapped in a rat-race. We do not need an economic policy that is uncaring about social justice, or the one that is indifferent to its long term ill effects on the health of Mother Earth, which is the only home for mankind. What we need is an all-caring welfare state with a benign human face.

# Harassment of Students in Santiniketan

**Niranjan Haldar**

The sexual harassment of a Sikkimese girl, also a Second-year Fine Arts student of Kala Bhavan, Visva Bharati University (as per PTI News, first on August 29, 2014), and the attempts of the University to suppress pieces of information pertaining to this incident, has caused widespread indignation. Like the other past criminal activities of the students of Visva Bharati University, the disciplinary committee of the University tried to whitewash the case, in the name of mutual reconciliation.

The Sikkim Chief Minister's letter to punish the culprits alarmed the Government of West Bengal and the University Grants Commission. The DIG-West of the State Government visited Santiniketan to enquire about the case. A two-member UGC team visited Santiniketan, and the harassed student, in Burdwan Medical College Hospital, on September 6, to investigate the case of a sexual harassment. On the same day, under the auspices of Sikkimese Students' Association, students from the North-East studying in Jadavpur, Kolkata, and Visva Bharati Universities, demonstrated in Kolkata, from College Street to Esplanade, and demanded punishment of the wrong-doers of the Visva Bharati University, and also stoppage of harassment of students of the North-East. It reminds one of the solidarity of the students of the North-East, expressed in Delhi, after the Arunachal Pradesh student, Nido Taniam's murder, in Delhi's Lajpat Nagar.

It is not the first such case, in Santiniketan. Earlier, a sexually harassed student had to leave the University, and one student was murdered in the University hostel, because she refused to marry the assailant. Very few persons knew what had happened to that case, except the appointment of several hundred security personnel, the construction of walls, and the erection of iron-fencing around the buildings of the University, inside its premises. But, this case is different.

The people from the North-East have a soft corner for Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan. It was Rabindranath, who, in a way, had placed the Manipuri dance-form in the world-map, and had introduced the teaching of Manipuri dance in Santiniketan, and had used it to express his ideas through this dance-form. The people from Manipur reportedly expressed their gratitude to him, by adopting Bengali script for their language.

Rabindranath Tagore's songs are the national anthems in three Asiatic countries - India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Mainly, two departments of Visva Bharati attract foreign students - the Bangladeshi students in the Sangeet Bhavan, and the students from other Asian countries in the Kala Bhavan. The student who was harassed, came to study in Kala Bhavan. Had the Chief Minister of Sikkim not write a letter for the punishment of the culprits, the incident, by this time, might have gone under a wrap.

After the news of sexual harassment was reported in the media, and the father of the girl came down to Santiniketan, to take care of her, Santiniketan, the Abode of Peace of Tagore, was converted into an army camp. The Chief Security Officer, with hundreds of security personnel, prevented the father of the student from meeting the media, and directed him to waste his time, at the Bolpur Police Station. On September 6, he had the audacity to ask the father of the student to bring his daughter from Burdwan Medical College & Hospital, to his office in Santiniketan.

The UGC team showed the same insensitivity, while talking with the sick, as well as mentally depressed student at the Burwan Medical College & Hospital. The UGC team's Dr Ratnabali Banerjee is a woman, and she ought to know how shameful it is for a girl, to narrate an incident of sexual harassment of herself, again and again, to outsiders.

The assault on the students by another group of students is not a new thing in Santiniketan, but the culprits were punished, perhaps, only on one occasion, in the University, when Prof Amlan Datta was the Vice Chancellor. Prof Arun Mazumdar of the University did narrate the incident in his book, written in Bengali 'Rabindranather Visva Bharati, Ebong Bangalli Modhyobvito Mon'. The story goes like this - two groups of students' organisation of the Congress party, had a skirmish against one another,

in the election pertaining to the students' union. The group that was defeated attacked their rival group, during a cultural programme of the students with knives and bicycle-chains. The students who got wounded, were admitted in the Pearson Hospital. The assailants were students of the Agricultural Sciences of Sriniketan. The Karma Sacheev or Secretary to the University Matters, lodged a complaint at the Bolpur Police Station, on the same day. The students of the said department raided/attacked the house of the Principal, forcibly took him to the Police Station and those students were released on the personal undertaking, given there, by the Principal. The V.C. was not in Santiniketan at that time. The next day, when he came back, Prof Datta visited the students who were wounded, at the Pearson Hospital and came to know of the incident. In the past, all such cases were tackled by the Disciplinary Committee and the Director of Students' Welfare. They used to send letters of show-cause to the accused, but ultimately, the victim was pressurised to withdraw the complaint, and the cases used to be dismissed as "compromised". The attackers became heroes in the University, no one dared to touch them. Prof. Datta, in the next meeting of the Shilpa Samiti, raised the issue, and ultimately, a committee was formed with three teachers and an assistant Karma Sacheev, to investigate the incident and recommend the action necessary. The Committee sent their recommendation in a sealed envelope. However, the content of the recommendation got leaked out and the three students went to Kolkata High Court and secured an injunction against the University. The University closed the Department of Agricultural

Sciences for six months, and after the withdrawing of the injunction expelled the three students from the University.

The Ashram school in Santiniketan was the first co-educational institution in the country. Rabindranath used to request his visiting lady guests, to send their sisters, and other female relatives to this school. There was complete equality of the sexes in Visva Bharati, and even older boys and girls behaved as friends. Many students there, who were women, chose their life partners irrespective of caste, language, race and religion. Santiniketan empowered the women, especially those who were students there. A former student of Kala Bhavan, from Thailand, became a monk in Thailand, and was able to form a society of women order of Buddhist women monks/nuns. She used to visit Santiniketan so long Shyamali Khastagir was alive. Malati Chowdhury, along with Nabakrishna Chowdhury, left Santiniketan to join the freedom movement in Odisha, and were the founders of the Congress Socialist Party. Asha Devi Aryanakam became a great Gandhian social worker. Young female members from Marwari families in Kolkata were taken to Santiniketan every month by batches when Rabindranath was still alive, and they were inspired by the status of the female students in Santiniketan who later on participated in the movement against the purdah-system in the Marwari society in Kolkata, in 1945.

Apart from the Ashram atmosphere, Santiniketan has a social ambience which no other university in India possesses. That is the attraction of former students

who continue to visit Santiniketan for three main reasons, the lovely atmosphere of Santiniketan has seemingly degenerated. The Prime Minister, Pdt J L Nehru, made Visva Bharati a Central University. The Visva Bharati University Act of 1951 was modeled after other Central Universities - Rabindranath, and Santiniketan had hardly a place, in that Act. His daughter Indira Gandhi, when Prime Minister of India, converted the University into a department of Central Education Ministry by the Visva Bharati University Act of 1984. The teachers and staff recruited for this University, had no zeal / special urge, to know about Rabindranath, and his vision. The same was the case with the students. They started getting admitted here, mainly for a degree.

With the expansion of education, more students started coming from the villages, where the status of women is still considered to be lower. Had there been special courses for Tagore and his ideas for all the students, as well as staff, Santiniketan might have changed their mentality towards men and women.

Indians throughout this country pay 1 per cent cess, over service-tax of 12 per cent, for Higher education. The students hardly have access to the cess for higher education. Visva Bharati is a residential University, still the students who are girls, can be admitted to the hostels when they start studying in their second-year, and their male counterparts-when promoted to the third-year. The question arises- Where would they stay? They would have to rent rooms, may be for more than one person, paying quite a bit of money, may be at the premises of

the University-staffs. Again, each admission for High-School, Degree, as well as Post-Graduate course cost money! English is considered to be a foreign language in the University, and the Admission Forms to join in the English Language Courses, are expensive. For the Degree Course, the students have to buy at least four forms. For example- before 2013, at the time of admission

there, one had to pay Rs 550.00, and from 2013- one has to pay Rs 5,500.00 (inclusive of Insurance payment of Rs 500.00), towards admission charges. The admission charges for Physical Education, is Rs 13,000.00, and for a PhD student, it is Rs 9,810.00. This may keep one wondering whether it is a Central University, or a Private University, for minting money.

The sexual assault on a student of Kala Bhavan has raised the degenerated aspect of the University. The cheating of students, and the indifference of the Authority towards the students' activities, is another feature of malady that needs to be tackled by the concerned people.

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## Appeal for Jammu & Kashmir Relief Work

Dear Friends,

You all must be aware of the disastrous flood in Jammu and Kashmir. Lakhs of people in the nook and corner of the state are facing devastation, impoverishment and till date are struck in the inaccessible areas without food and clothing. The army may be doing its work, no doubt, however we, the members of civil society, must reach out with all possible help at the earliest.

A group of highly committed youngsters from **Yusuf Meherally Centre**, including **Jabbar Singh** of Uttarakhand, who is also the state convener of **National Alliance of People's Movements** Uttarakhand. He, along with other volunteers has reached certain areas which are worst affected near Rajouri township, only to find that no one, not even a *Patwari*, has reached to them. This team had no other way but to organize the affected people who went on *Satyagraha* in front of the Commissioner's office on 13th of September with hundreds of participants, suffering-yet-struggling for life support. They made the administration take an initiative in providing relief. However, the team reports that much is lacking and basic material needs are far from fulfilled. (Jabbar Singh can be reached on +91 9769041890)

Furthermore, another team has been sent to the affected areas of the Jammu and Kashmir to carry out relief work and **Faisal Khan** from Khudai Khidmatgar, who is also the state convener of Haryana-Delhi NAPM, is coordinating from Delhi. (Faisal Khan can be contacted at +91 9968828230)

We herewith appeal to you to come forward and provide anything of the following to provide relief to the people of Jammu and Kashmir:

1. Blankets and Bed sheets, 2. Clothes for children and women, 3. Warm/woollen clothes, 4. Plastic sheets
5. Basic medicines, 6. Water, 7. Torches and lanterns

Do contribute generously, organise collection drives in your areas, contact us with details of material help and also if you decide to extend financial support.

For sending your contribution, please refer to details given below:

1. The relief material can be sent to: **Study Point, 84 D, Tikona Park, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-25**  
Contact: +91 9871700595

Khudai Khidmatgar team has also set up several spots for collecting relief material in different parts of the country, please find the nearest spot by calling on the given phone numbers: **Tabish Bhatti**: +91 9871700595 **Arish**: +91 9555999150

2. If you wish to make financial contribution, you can do so by transferring the amount in the given dedicated relief account of the **Yusuf Meherally Centre**. Bank : **The Shamrao Vithal CO-OP Bank LTD.**

*For the rest of the transferring details kindly contact: Manohar More: +91 9869162358:*

**Yusuf Meherally Centre** D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Nausher Bharucha Road, Mumbai 400007

Second option to send money is by sending a cheque in the name of the **Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan** at the following address

**Vijaya Chauhan 84**, Olympus, MM Chotani Marg, Mahim, Mumbai- 400016 Contact: +91 9820236267

Please send your contribution along with a letter specifying therein the purpose it is being sent for i.e. Relief Work in Jammu & Kashmir. Also do specify in the letter your: i. Name, ii. Address, iii. PAN card number, iv. Contact number, v. Email address.

(Note: 80 G facility available in both the above mentioned accounts).

### **In Solidarity,**

**Medha Patkar** - Narmada Bachao Andolan - NAPM; **Prafulla Samantara**, Lok Shakti Abhiyan, **Lingraj Azad** - Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti and Samajwadi Jan Parishad, NAPM, Odisha; **Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava** - Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, MP; **Gautam Bandopadhyay** – Nadi Ghati Morcha, NAPM, Chhattisgarh; **Suniti SR, Suhaz Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe** - NAPM, Maharashtra; **Gabriele Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan** – Unorganised Sector Workers Federation, NAPM, TN; **C R Neelakandan** – NAPM Kerala; **Saraswati Kavula, P Chennaiah** – NAPM Andhra Pradesh, **Bhupender Singh Rawat** – Jan Sangharsh Vahini, **Rajendra Ravi, Sunita Rani, Seela M, Madhuresh Kumar, Kanika Sharma** – NAPM, Delhi; **Faisal Khan**- Khudai Khidmatgar NAPM Delhi/Haryana; **Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh** - NAPM, UP; **Sister Celia** - Domestic Workers Union, NAPM, Karnataka; **Sumit Wanjale** – Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao Andolan, NAPM, Mumbai; **Manish Gupta** - Jan Kalyan Upphokta Samiti, NAPM, UP; **Vimal Bhai** - Matu Jan sangathan, NAPM, Uttarakhand; **Vilas Bhongade** - Gosikhurd Prakaalpgrast Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Maharashtra; **Ramashray Singh** - Ghatwar Adivasi Mahasabha, Jharkhand; **Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant** - Paryavaran Suraksh Samiti, NAPM Gujarat; **Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan** – Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan, NAPM Bihar; **Mahendra Yadav** – Kosi Navnirman Manch, NAPM Bihar



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