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## How did Modi achieve?

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US was, in more ways than one, a success. He may not have brought with him anything tangible from America but has created a climate of confidence and won back Washington which always looked at India with suspicion. Here is a person, who was denied a US visa, who was able to shame the US Administration with speeches of friendship with America.

Modi was able to formulate a joint statement with President Barack Obama that goes farther than what his predecessors were able to achieve. For the first time, an Indian Prime Minister wrote a joint edit with the US President in an American newspaper. This is a healthy practice which the Indian media should follow.

However, in the process, Modi has buried Jawaharlal Nehru's idea of non-alignment deep. True, the movement has lost its raison d'être, the confrontation between the Communists and the democratic bloc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the Communists lost the cold war.

Still the movement had come to represent an idea that small nations

should not fear the big ones because of their size or power. In comparison, the number of states comprising the third world countries was far more than those either in the American bloc or the Soviet one.

Modi is a product of the capitalist world. He has neither the pull of the Nehru era of socialism, nor that of Mahatama Gandhi's self-sufficiency. Modi wants the country to develop, whatever be the means and how big the economy may create a distance between the haves and the have-nots.

I, belonging to an era where the independence meant economic betterment of the lower half, do not understand or appreciate how a country which is poor can develop or give justice to the have-nots without moving towards left. I believe that the socialistic pattern of society which we chose was the right path and we should go back to it. But Modi's good-worded speeches, which meant everything to everybody, may be pleasing to the ear. He is, indeed, a forceful speaker. But what do we do on ground is important.

Take for example, the Planning Commission. That it had become a parallel government is true. But

we should have removed the bureaucratic conflicts. The planning for a country like ours has to be there to marshal the resources and distribute them equitably among the states. The Planning Commission needed to be put back on the track, not to be pushed aside, as Modi has done.

It is a pity that the left in the country has not grown in influence. But this is because the Communists do not understand the Indians. Marx is important. So is Gandhi. Yet, in the Communists' politburo, you can see the photos of Marx and Engels, not that of Gandhi or Nehru who represented our independence struggle and sacrifices. Modi could have utilized the Planning Commission for the capitalist system which he preaches and follows. But its abolition does not make sense.

Many in the country praise Modi for not mentioning Kashmir when Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had devoted 19 sentences to Kashmir which, to quote a Pakistani, was never done before. Modi did not even mention Kashmir in his speech. This has gone down well in the country. But by ignoring a problem, it does not disappear. India has to discuss the problem peacefully, across the table, sooner or later because Pakistani rulers, besieged by several difficulties, find support on this issue in their country.

The Hurriyat, which seeks to represent Kashmir, is acquiring fundamentalism and losing its appeal in India as well as among the democratic countries in the West. The Hurriyat would have earned laurels if it had turned out Syed Ali Shah Gilani when he changed his pluralistic line and talked in parochial terms.

I agree with the reaction coming from across the border that we overacted when we cancelled the talks with Pakistan after its High Commissioner in India invited the Hurriyat leaders. Such talks have been held before even when the Hurriyat spoke about separatism. But Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj gave a clear and categorical reply that the foreign secretary-level talks have been suspended. She also explained that the government had changed and its policy was different.

I want to recall some instances of the past for the benefit of Modi and Swaraj so that some continuity is visible in the policy followed then and now. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif summed up his talks with the late Inder Kumar Gujral years ago at Male. "*Aap Kashmir de nahi sakte, our hum aap se le nahi sakte*" (you cannot hand over Kashmir to us and we are in no position to take it from you). Not only that, Nawaz Sharif confronted the army and entered into a time-bound agreement with India to sort out the issue of Kashmir. It's another matter that the army dismissed him and took over the reins of the country. Sharif had to undergo imprisonment of several months.

Why should the same Nawaz Sharif devote 19 sentences to Kashmir, the largest reference any Pakistan leader has made at the UN? Apparently, he has developed a vested interest in the Prime Minister's chair that he occupies. The armed forces, inherently anti-India sentimentally, do not want a settlement with New Delhi because the dispute is the *raison d'être* of the army's power in Pakistan.

Nawaz Sharif, elected with the support of the military and

the rightists remained tethered to secularism. He wanted to prove that Islam was not opposed to democracy or secularism which was equivalent to pluralism. Why has he changed? Or why he begs seeing which side is buttered. He had never compromised. I personally think the wilderness has taught him a lesson.

In the US, Modi was able to create an environment where the BJP has begun to count. His priority for the SAARC countries has also delineated the agenda for the government. It's good that he has dropped hostility towards Pakistan. Now, it is time for the two countries to pick up the threads from where Manmohan Singh had left off.

*Back in 1919 Gandhi asked two communities asked to pledge collectively as follows :*

*"With god as a witness we Hindus and Mahomedans declare that we shall behave towards one another as children of the same parents, that we shall have no differences, that the sorrows of each will be the sorrows of the other and that each shall help the other in removing them. We shall respect each other's religion and religious feelings, and shall not stand in the way of our respective religious practices. We shall always refrain from violence to each other in the name of religion."*

*What was asked Hindus and Muslims in 1919 should be asked again of them today.*

*—Qurban Ali  
—Prem Singh*

# Jan Dhan Yojana: Ambitious but Ambiguous

**Kavaljit Singh**

Jan Dhan Yojana (People's Wealth Plan) – an ambitious financial inclusion program – was launched amid much fanfare in India on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. The initial target of Jan Dhan Yojana is to cover 75 million unbanked households by 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. The government claims that on the inaugural day, a record 15 million bank accounts were opened across the country under this initiative. Nowhere else in the world, such a large number of bank accounts have been opened on a single day. In less than a month, nearly 40 million accounts have been opened under this initiative.

The Jan Dhan Yojana (JDY) would be implemented in two phases. In the first phase, the aim is to provide universal access to banking facilities through a business correspondent or bank branch, zero-balance bank accounts with overdraft facility of Rs.5,000 after six months and RuPay debit card (domestic card payment network which competes with MasterCard and Visa) with inbuilt insurance cover of Rs.100,000. Those who open accounts by January 26, 2015 will be given life insurance cover of Rs.30,000. In the second phase starting from 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the focus of JDY would be to provide additional financial services such as micro insurance and pension schemes meant for unorganized workers.

The government claims that the JDY is a major departure from the earlier initiative launched in 2005 which was primarily aimed

at promoting financial inclusion in the rural areas with focus on the coverage of villages. Whereas the JDY aims to provide banking services in both rural and urban areas with focus on the coverage of individual households. One of the new features of JDY is the creation of local monitoring committees and a web-portal to monitor its implementation at the national level. The JDY is being run in a mission mode with the Finance Minister as head of the mission.

Even though there is no universally accepted definition of financial inclusion (FI), it has become a buzzword in development circles lately. From Queen Maxima of the Netherlands to World Bank to G20, everyone espouses the concept of financial inclusion. In simple terms, financial inclusion means delivery of banking services (such as savings accounts, loans, remittance and payment services) at an affordable cost and in a convenient manner to the poor and marginalized sections of society.

For India, financial inclusion has become a key policy concern as there are over 600 million citizens who lack basic banking and financial services. In India, financial exclusion has strong linkages with poverty and is predominantly concentrated among the vast sections of disadvantaged and low income groups. One of the important factors behind rising farmer suicides in the countryside is the lack of access to cheap credit from banks and institutional sources.

In India and elsewhere, financial exclusion is not merely restricted to rural population. A large number of urban dwellers, migrants and informal sector workers also lack access to banking and other financial services.

It is widely known that financial inclusion is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Financial inclusion alone cannot lift millions of poor Indians out of poverty but the regular usage of banking products and services can provide them with an opportunity to overcome poverty and improve their lives.

The JDY is not the first major initiative to promote financial inclusion in India. It should be rather viewed as financial inclusion 3.0 – as two policy initiatives on FI were launched previously.

## **Financial Inclusion 1**

After independence, the first initiative on financial inclusion was launched in July 1969 when 14 of the largest privately-owned banks were nationalized. The bank nationalization marked a paradigm shift as the policy focus shifted to take the banking services to poor people in unbanked locations. Before nationalization, privately-owned banks were located in metropolitan and urban areas. Much of bank lending was concentrated in a few organized sectors of economy and limited to big business houses and large industries. Whereas farmers, small entrepreneurs, laborers, artisans and self-employed were totally dependent on informal

sources (mainly traditional moneylenders and relatives) to meet their credit requirements. The share of agriculture in total bank lending was a meager 2.2 percent during 1951-67.

There were several policy objectives behind the bank nationalization strategy including the transformation of “class banking” into “mass banking,” expanding geographical and functional spread of institutionalized credit, mobilizing savings from rural and remote areas and reaching out to neglected sectors such as agriculture and small scale industries. Another policy objective was to ensure that no viable productive business should suffer for lack of credit support, irrespective of its size.

Under the nationalization regime, branch networks of banks grew rapidly across the country to provide banking service to the masses. At the time of nationalization, scheduled commercial banks had 8,187 branches throughout the country. But in 1990, the branch network increased to 59,752. What is even more important is that out of 59,752 bank branches, 34,791 (58.2 percent) were located in the rural areas. In contrast, the share of rural branches was 17.6 percent in 1969. Such a massive expansion of bank branches in the rural areas was the result of 1:4 licensing policy under which banks were given incentive to open one branch in metropolitan and one branch in urban areas, provided they open four branches in the rural areas.

In the early 1970s, the concept of priority sector lending (also known as directed lending) was evolved to ensure that adequate credit flows to the vital sectors of the

economy and according to social and developmental priorities.

In addition, the establishment of regional rural banks (RRBs) in the mid-1970s also widened the reach of banking services. The RRBs were jointly owned by the central government, the state government and the sponsor bank. Between 1975 and 1987, 196 RRBs were established in the rural India. The mandate of RRBs was to serve small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, artisans and small entrepreneurs in the rural and remote areas. Further, banks were directed to maintain a credit-deposit ratio of 60 percent in the rural and semi-urban branches in order to ensure that rural deposits are not used to increase urban credit.

In rural areas, there was significant rise in bank deposits and credit. According to official data, the share of rural deposits in total deposits increased more than five times, from 3 percent in 1969 to 16 percent in 1990. The share of agriculture credit in the total bank credit increased from 2.2 percent in 1968 to 13 percent in 1980 and further to 15.8 percent in 1989. The share of small-scale industry in the total bank credit which was negligible before nationalization reached 15.3 percent in 1989, a significant achievement by international standards.

There is no denying that the banking system under the nationalization regime was not perfect as it could not reach out to each and every household but at least a serious effort was made to spread banking services: geographically, socially and functionally. There are very few parallels in the history of banking in the world where such large-scale geographical expansion

and functional diversification of the banking system (with social and developmental orientations) took place within a span of two decades.

Admittedly, there were cumbersome lending procedures, inadequate supervision, corruption and political interference which affected functional efficiency and profitability of the banking system. Nevertheless, the bank nationalization drive was inspired by a larger objective to promote social and development banking in India.

### **Neglect Banking Sector Reforms**

One of the adverse consequences of banking sector reforms launched in the 1990s was the steady decline in the number of bank branches in the rural India. During 1994-2006, bank branches in rural areas were closed down to meet the profitability criteria and to achieve higher efficiency levels. In absolute terms, the total number of rural bank branches declined from 35,329 in 1994 to 30,119 in 2006. In other words, as many as 5,210 bank branches in the rural India were closed down during 1994-2006. On an average, two bank branches were closed down on each working day during this period.

On the other hand, a rapid expansion of branches in the metros and urban areas has been witnessed in the post-liberalization period. According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) statistics, 5,960 new branches were opened in the six metros during 1994-2006.

In 1994, the share of rural branches was 57.16 percent but it declined to 37.18 percent in 2013, indicating the worsening of the rural-urban ratio of bank branches in the post-liberalization period.



In the 1990s, the banking sector witnessed a secular decline in agricultural credit. This is in sharp contrast to the 1970s and 80s when a significant shift in bank lending in favor of agricultural sector took place. The proportion of bank credit to agriculture and small sector industries declined from 30 percent in 1994 to 18 percent in 2013, despite several initiatives launched by the government to revive bank credit to these sectors which generate largest employment opportunities in the rural areas.

The share of deposits raised from rural areas declined from 15 percent in 1994 to 9 percent in 2012. All these statistics reveal a sheer neglect of the banking needs of people living in rural and semi-rural areas during the post-liberalization period.

## **Financial Inclusion 2**

Concerned over these adverse developments, another initiative towards FI was launched in 2005 with greater emphasis on branchless business correspondent model to provide last mile connectivity to unbanked villages.

In 2005, the RBI pushed banks to provide a “no-frills” zero-balance account with minimum charges for other services. Other major policy initiatives under this drive included relaxation in know-your-customer (KYC) norms, easier credit facility, introduction of General Purpose Credit Card (GCC) and support to microfinance institutions and Self Help Groups.

The focus on FI was further intensified in 2009 when the RBI directed banks to draw up a road map to cover nearly 74,200 villages with more than 2,000 population with one banking outlet by 2012. To achieve

this target, several new regulatory measures were introduced. For instance, the domestic banks (both public and private) were given freedom to open branches in Tier-2 to Tier-6 centers without prior approval from the RBI. In order to encourage banks to open branches in the predominantly unbanked North-East region, domestic banks were allowed to open the branches in rural, semi-urban and urban centers without the prior approval from the RBI. Later on, banks were mandated to open at least 25 percent of their new brick-and-mortar branches in the unbanked rural areas.

Under the financial inclusion plans adopted by banks, 7,459 new branches were opened in rural areas in three years during 2010-13. However, this period saw the domination of banking correspondents (BCs) to provide banking services to unbanked population. Most of the villages covered under this drive were through BCs. As discussed in more detail below, the BC model failed to adequately accomplish its intended purpose despite a rapid increase in its outreach.

A business correspondent is a representative of bank who provides doorstep banking services through the use of smart card handling devices which are connected to the main servers of the bank. The handheld device can identify the bank customer through finger prints and facilitates basic transactions such as depositing and withdrawing cash. The RBI has allowed banks to use the services of NGOs, microfinance institutions, non-banking finance companies and post offices as BCs.

Since 2006, the policymakers have supported the expansion of

banking services through BC model on the pretext that it provides services at the doorstep of customers living in unbanked locations and reduces the costs involved in putting up and operating a brick-and-mortar branch.

There is no denying that the BC model has expanded its reach across the country in the last eight years. The RBI's annual report for 2013-14 notes that “nearly 248,000 BC agents had been deployed by banks as on March 31, 2014 which are providing services through more than 333,000 BC outlets.” Close to 117 million zero-balance accounts have been opened up by the BCs as on March 31, 2014. In addition, there were 60,730 BC outlets in urban locations as on March 31, 2014.

These are pretty impressive numbers. But empirical evidence from Sundergarh in Orissa to Surendranagar in Gujarat suggests that access to bank accounts has not translated into use. More than 80 percent of zero-balance bank accounts are dormant.

In cases where customers receive wages under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), they simply withdraw the entire amount immediately after the NREGA disbursement. Not even 5 percent of zero-balance account holders make deposits into their bank accounts. If people are not actively using their bank accounts, it defeats the very purpose of financial inclusion.

Banks, on their part, are not interested in promoting awareness activities on the usage and benefits of formal banking services as they lose money on zero-balance accounts due to few transactions and low balances. Most banks view zero-

balance accounts as a corporate social responsibility thrust upon them by the government.

For banks, serving poor clients is a social obligation rather than a viable business opportunity. With the result, the potential benefits of access to formal banking services are not fully realized.

Some caution is obviously warranted because the JDY relies heavily on the BC model for expanding banking network in both rural and urban areas. One of primary reasons behind the unsatisfactory performance of BC model is the poor remuneration (Rs.2000-3000 per month) paid to business correspondents. For such a meager amount, it is unfair to expect a BC to visit villages or slums at regular intervals, open new bank accounts for poor people, process financial transactions, educate customers about banking services and answer all queries of the customers. With the result, there is a high attrition rate among BC agents across the country. Surveys have found that more than half of BC agents are untraceable.

Under the JDY, the BCs will get a minimum compensation of Rs.5000 per month. This is a welcome move but there are several other important factors which act as a barrier in the delivery of banking services through BC model. Some of these factors include inordinate delay in issuing of smart cards to customers (three to six months); limited utility of smart cards as services such as remittance are not loaded; inadequate cash handling limit given to BCs; devices not working properly due to technical problems or poor network connectivity; lack of trust in BCs; lack of customer-centric banking products and services;

poor governance and inadequate supervision of BCs; and absence of a comprehensive strategy for financial education.

If these impediments are not addressed, the JDY may turn out to be another government program under which ambitious targets of opening millions of bank accounts are achieved on paper but very little meaningful financial inclusion is actually accomplished on the ground.

### **JDY Should Emphasize on Physical Branches**

Given the unsatisfactory outcomes of the BC model, the JDY should give greater emphasis on brick-and-mortar branches which enjoy a high degree of trust and acceptability among the rural people. Besides, there are several transactions (e.g., loans) require physical branches and direct interaction with the bank officials.

In a rural setting, a mini branch (consisting of two staff persons) can easily serve 4-5 villages and provide a full range of banking services. This would ensure that the villagers will no longer have to take substantial travel and expense to visit a mini branch. A mini branch linked with a nearest large branch could function as a hub-and-spoke system. In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, HDFC bank has recently established several mini branches and found it to be a commercially viable model to offer full banking services to rural people.

The last-mile connectivity is very crucial for the success of JDY. Given the large outreach of post offices across the country, postal networks could be explored to provide banking products and services at a low cost.

Like “Post Office on Wheels” which provides a variety of postal services through a mobile van in the country, the mobile van banking is another credible delivery model which could be used to serve large customers located in the far-flung rural areas at regular intervals.

### **Other Pertinent Questions**

During a recent visit to my bank located in East Delhi, I found that many low-income customers enrolled under the JDY already had zero-balance accounts in another bank. They have opened new accounts under the JDY scheme to avail special privileges of overdraft facility, insurance covers and a RuPay debit card. While they had opened bank accounts last year to receive LPG subsidy under the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme. Currently, there is no system in place to ensure that one person does not open multiple bank accounts.

In another bank, I found that the bank staff is demanding a minimum deposit of Rs.500 for opening an account under the JDY. If such practices are widespread in a metropolitan city, one can well imagine the actual implementation of JDY in the rural and remote areas.

The JDY will be spearheaded by domestic banks (both state-owned and private) though the bulk of task would be carried out by state-owned banks which have over 43,000 branches in the rural and semi-urban areas. It is heartening to note that the government has realized the importance of state-owned banks in promoting inclusive development despite a strong anti-statist slant.

But why there is no participation of foreign banks in JDY? Why foreign banks have not been directed

to join the JDY initiative? There are 43 foreign banks operating in India with 332 branches and 1207 ATMs. Since 95 percent of their branches are located in the metros and urban locations, foreign banks should be given targets to serve the urban poor. This would induce foreign banks to tweak their niche banking model as they “cherry-pick” the most profitable businesses and affluent customers residing in the metros and urban areas.

Some commentators have questioned the financial feasibility of the JDY on the grounds that the estimated costs involved in its implementation will be a drain on the entire banking system. Such concerns are unconvincing on four counts. Firstly, banks in India have not accurately worked out the per account cost. As K C Chakrabarty (former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India) has pointed out, costing is opaque in the banking services and therefore it is very difficult to determine the exact cost of maintaining a zero-balance account.

Secondly, a cost sharing model could be worked out between banks and various government agencies as the government is considering cash transfers of subsidies and welfare payments directly into the bank account of beneficiaries under the DBT scheme. Banks can levy a transaction fee in the range of 0.5 to 2 percent on the value of each payment made to the beneficiary’s account under the DBT scheme.

Thirdly, the adoption of appropriate and affordable technology can bring down transaction costs over time. The introduction of low-cost smartphones provides a unique opportunity to deliver

banking services to poor people. The M-PESA in Kenya, GCash in Philippines and Celpay in Zambia are notable examples of providing a variety of financial services to low-income households in cheap and convenient ways.

Lastly, the total annual cost of the JDY estimated at Rs.150 billion is just one-tenth of total operating expenses of Rs.1566 billion incurred by banks in 2012-13. If the domestic banking system can afford to spend Rs.1566 bn to provide banking services to 600 million people, can’t it spend Rs.150 bn to serve another 600 million people?

Many studies in India and elsewhere have proved beyond doubt that poor are bankable and trustworthy. If 50 percent of country’s population joins the mainstream banking system, it can vastly improve the lives of the people in the base of the pyramid and contribute to inclusive economic growth.

If Rs.80 trillion Indian banking system can bear huge losses due to bad loans given to big corporate wilful defaulters, can’t it share the costs involved in providing affordable banking services (a public good) to millions of poor people?

Hence, the contentious issue is not the financial viability of JDY but its design and actual implementation.

### **No Silver Bullet**

More than four decades of experience tells us clearly that there is no single silver bullet approach towards FI given the sheer scale of financial exclusion in India. To ensure sustainable universal financial inclusion under the JDY, both supply-side and demand-side

challenges have to be addressed simultaneously. The key to the success of the JDY will lie in the government’s ability to address these challenges in a coordinated, coherent and collaborative manner with banks and other major stakeholders.

The government should develop a holistic framework and infrastructure support focused on four core dimensions of financial inclusion – affordable products; reliable and viable delivery models; diverse customer needs; and multilingual financial education programs.

It is imperative that the policy focus should shift from the quantity of inclusion to the quality of inclusion. The success of the JDY should not be measured only on the basis of number of new accounts opened. The measure of success should also include clearly defined targets for usage and transactions.

The real challenge is to encourage poor people to actively use a variety of formal banking services (including savings, credit and remittance) so that their dependence on informal sources is greatly reduced.

–*Madhyam*

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## Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism – III

**Bhagwat Prasad Rath**

Scientific outlook and attitude should guide the social, cultural, political, economic activities and knowledge systems of a socialist society. The law of fallibility accepted by science as its chief hallmark should guide the socialist society. In the past, scholars made distinctions between social sciences and physical sciences. No doubt laws discovered by different fields of knowledge are different to some extent. The laws of classical physical sciences are different from the laws of biological sciences. But all the fields of knowledge should be governed by the scientific attitude which includes the law of fallibility. The Buddha declared that his sayings should be subjected to the law of fallibility and the principle of rationality. That his followers did not follow his advice is another matter. Religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism are based on belief alone. Religions which are expected to increase the reign of love and peace collide and bring ruin to humanity. When rationality is guided by self-interest or self-group interest, it creates havoc in society. This sort of rationalism which boosted nationalism, imperialism, capitalism, racism and patriarchy has demonized large chunks of humanity and brought modern civilization, which is mostly the legacy of the West, to the brink of colossal disasters threatening the extinction of all the living species. Like the Greek civilization, the Vedic civilization, too, believed in superstitions, racism, de-gradation of the women folk (patriarchy). Sciences, which should help humanity, are at present endangering human life and happiness in the

whole world. When a great scholar like Will Durant thinks that, in spite of the world wars, humanity has advanced because less number of people died in the wars than were saved from fatal diseases because of the discoveries of science, it smells of European arrogance that places quantity at a higher level than values (Is Progress Real?). The elite of Germany were famous in many fields of knowledge including science and technology. Nobody can accuse them of not being rationalists. They were responsible for creating the most heinous and the worst murderous machine in the world. Einstein resigned from the membership of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. He wrote, "I gave as my reason for these steps (resignation) I did not wish to live in a country where the individual does not enjoy equality before the law, and freedom of speech and teaching ...I also call upon all sensible people, who are still faithful to the ideals of civilization in peril, to do their utmost to prevent this mass-psychosis, which manifests itself in such terrible symptoms in Germany today, from spreading any further." Is this psychic distemper temporary and skin deep or has it affected the European psyche at deeper levels, lying dormant but flaring at times. Truman's decision to blow into dust two populous cities of Japan is also an example of this sick psyche.

Carl Sagan writes in his book 'The Demon-Haunted World'. "(Science) is more than a body of knowledge; it is a way of thinking...Avoidable human misery is more often caused not so much by stupidity as by ignorance, particularly our ignorance

about ourselves." He again writes, "The scientific way of thinking is at once imaginative and disciplined. This is central to its success. Science invites us to let the facts in, even when they don't conform to our preconceptions. It counsels us to carry alternative hypotheses in our heads and see which best fit the facts. It urges on us a delicate balance between no-holds barred openness to new ideas, however heretical, and the most rigorous skeptical scrutiny of everything - new ideas and established wisdom. This kind of thinking is also an essential tool for a democracy in an age of change...One of the great commandments of science is 'Mistrust arguments from authority'. (Scientists, being primates, and thus given to dominance hierarchies, of course do not always follow this commandment). Too many such arguments have proved too painfully wrong. Authorities must prove their contentions like everybody else. This independence of science, its occasional unwillingness to accept conventional wisdom, makes it dangerous to doctrines less self-critical or with pretensions to certitude."

Einstein writes, "For whereas formerly it was enough for a man to have freed himself to some extent from personal egotism to make him a valuable member of society, today he must also be required to overcome national and class egotism. Only if he reaches those heights can he contribute toward improving the lot of humanity". Again he wrote, "Any social organism can become psychically distempered just as any individual can, especially in times



of difficulty. Nations usually survive these distempers. I hope that healthy conditions will soon supervene in Germany ...”

America exploded two atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and within seconds lacs of people became ash. Today the US, the world leader in science and technology, is the most dangerous war-mongering nation in the world. The Middle East is a destabilized region in to-day's world.

In the essay ‘Approaching Socialism’ (Analytical Monthly Review: July to August- 2005) Harry Magdoff and Fred Magdoff wrote:

“The variety of structure and organization of past civilizations is truly striking. It was not so long ago - in the span of human existence - that the native peoples in North and South America had a very different consciousness than that imposed by the invasions and conquest of the European armies and settlers. Thus Christopher Columbus wrote after his first voyage to the West: “Nor have I been able to learn whether they held personal property, for it seemed to me that whatever one had, they all took shares of...They are so free with all they have that no one would believe it who has not seen it; of anything they possess, if it be asked of them, they never say no; on the contrary, they invite you to share it and show as much love as if their hearts went with it.

“The missionary du Tertre writes from the Caribbean in the 1650s, “they are all equal, without anyone recognizing any sort of superiority or any sort of servitude... Neither is richer or poorer than his companion and all unanimously limit their desires to that which is useful and precisely necessary, and are

contemptuous of all other things, superfluous things, as not being worthy to be possessed....” And Montaigne wrote of three Indians who were in France in the late sixteenth century. They explained to him about the common Indian custom of dividing the people into halves, groups with special and separate duties for ritual or administrative reasons, such as the summer and winter people of the various North American tribes. The Indians were struck by the two opposing groups in France. “They had perceived there were men amongst us full gorged with all sorts of commodities and others, hunger-starved, and bare with need and poverties begged at their gates: and found it strange these moieties so needy could endure such an injustice, and they took not the others by the throat, or set fire on their house...”

“We have briefly referred above to societies in which economics was subservient to social relations. That changed dramatically in the evolution of capitalism as private property, money and trade for gain came to the forefront. Social relations became but reflections of the dominating force of society's capitalist economics instead of the reverse.”

Indigenous communities teach us about the glory of human relations. The question that haunts humanity is what lies wrong with modern civilization. Have we the will and sufficient time to overcome our psychic distempers? Here we can discuss the topic of human nature. Human nature has not been constant in different countries and different ages. Harry Magdoff and Fred Magdoff write, “...the consciousness, behavior, habits and values of humans can be so variable

and are influenced by the history and culture that develops in a given society. Not only has so-called human nature changed, the ideology surrounding the components of human nature has also changed dramatically. The glorification of making money, the sanctioning of all the actions necessary to do so, and the promotion of the needed human traits - “unnatural” and repugnant to Aristotle - is now the norm of capitalist societies.”

What lies wrong with indigenous communities is their lack of scientific outlook. They have their shamans who believe in mysticism, miracles and in a number of deities who guide and guard their lives. The Aztec society sacrificed human beings to propitiate their great God.

“Under the hardest living conditions, this tribe (pueblo Indians) has apparently accomplished the difficult task of delivering its people from the scourge of competitive spirit and of fostering in them a temperate, cooperative conduct of life, free of external pressure and without any curtailment of happiness.” (Religion and science: irreconcilable? by Albert Einstein)

Pueblo Indian society is mercifully free from male sexual jealousy. Unfortunately this society has become stagnant and lacks movement at the social and cultural level.

Latin America has produced some of the best theoreticians of socialism in the world. Regarding the urban areas of Latin America Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt write in their book ‘Fractured Cities’: “The first issue and the starting point is the long-standing syndrome of urban poverty, inequality and social exclusion. Although this has been

part and parcel of Latin American patterns of urbanization over the past century or so, the new neo-liberal model that dominated the past two decades has intensified this pattern to a considerable degree.” The second issue addressed throughout the book is the withdrawal (if not failure) of the (local) state, especially of its public security functions. The widening of so-called governance voids and the un-rule of law is now acknowledged as an important element in the relationship between urban exclusion, insecurity and violence. In many cases, the police and the judiciary are ineffective in dealing with crime and violence, or worse, are among the active protagonists. This failure is partial or selective, however, roughly following a class colour divide; hence ‘state abandonment’ might be a more appropriate term. As is clearly demonstrated by Elizabeth Leeds for Rio de Janeiro (in Chapter-2), Wil Pansters and Hector Castillo Berthier for Mexico City (in Chapter-3) and Roberto Briceno and Leon for Caracas (in Chapter-6), local official security forces are often ineffective owing to disorganization, lack of vision, political disputes or an overly militarized approach to law enforcement and public security. In Rio de Janeiro and particularly in Medellin, the police have even been part of a veritable urban war. As a result, in many Latin American cities the police are highly distrusted and often seen as a threat by inhabitants of low-income neighborhoods. (Introduction: the duality of Latin American cityscapes’: Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt’) Can Latin America become a truly socialist country without a sea change in their urban areas? Socialist thinkers of Latin America are proposing a socialism based on protagonist democracy which is definitely an improvement in the

socialist theory.

In India the vulnerable sections of the population - women, children and the aged people - are being harassed. This harassment increases from year to year. Society becomes more and more nuclearized as days pass. In the American society divorces are ruining families. Children are becoming more and more anti-social from year to year. Pornography and warmongering have become the hall marks of American society.

Scientists have rightly discarded the theory of gene determinism but the theory of neural determinism cannot be thrown away dismissively. When certain areas of the brain are damaged due to accidents or otherwise, the personality changes completely. Scientists have made the discovery that within the last twenty thousand years humans have lost 20 per cent of their brains. Prof. Robin Dunbar and his colleagues discovered that social evolution always precedes the increase of intelligence in the human brain.

Amydale which is responsible for the violence in human nature is controlled by the prefrontal cortex only in the human species. Mirror neurons which are responsible for empathy are not so many in other species. This shows the direction in which evolution is moving. Nature wanted to produce a species which would make its task of the survival of all the species easier. Has human nature changed for the worse? The question needs an answer from scholars.

Scientists who simulated nature within computers to study evolution that took place within millions of years came to the conclusion that in evolution nature follows a particular method and evolution has also a

particular aim.

W. Daniel Hillis is a computer scientist, co-founder and chief scientist of Thinking Machines; corporation editor of several scientific journals. He wrote: “The engineering process doesn’t work very well when it gets complicated. We’re beginning to depend on computers that use a process very different from engineering process (evolutionary process of nature) that allows us to produce things of much more complexity than we could with normal engineering”. - *Close to the Singularity*. “I said to the Computer “Computer, would you please make a hundred million random sequences of instructions. Now, execute all those random sequences of instructions, all those programs, and pick out the ones that come closest to what I wanted.” In other words, I defined what I wanted to accomplish, not how to accomplish it.”

Einstein wrote, “For the scientists, there is only “being”, but no wishing, no valuing, no good, no evil - in short, no goal”. From this it might seem as if logical thinking were irrelevant for ethics, scientific statements of facts and relations, indeed, cannot produce ethical directives. Einstein’s question was ‘What is the origin of such ethical axioms? Are they arbitrary? Are they based on mere authority? Do they stem from experience of men and are they conditioned indirectly by such experiences?’ (The Law of Science and The Laws of Ethics (Sane voices for a Disoriented Generation)

The questions and the problems raised by Einstein have also troubled J. Doyne Farmer who is a physicist, and professor at the Santa Fe Institute, USA. He wrote, “In the last half of this century, the view has emerged

that life and consciousness are natural and inexorable outgrowths of the emergent and self organizing properties of the physical world. This fundamental change in our view of consciousness and life gives us a new way of looking at ourselves and our beliefs, and of understanding how we fit into the universe....It seemed really important to know why we were here, and to understand the meaning of life. It was upsetting to me that these question, which seemed to lie at the foundation of everything, didn't have any good answers. The easy solutions just didn't fit. My brief preadolescent foray into religion left me with nothing but the realization that people have a desperate need to understand these questions." (The Second Law of Organization).

Regarding the artificial world created in the computer, he said: "It's a symbiotic system, in which everything co-operates to make the metabolism work - the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. If normal replication is like monogamous sex, autocatalytic reproduction is like an orgy. We were interested in the logical possibility for this to happen - in an artificial world, simulated inside a computer, following chemical laws that were similar to those of the real world but vastly simplified to make the simulation possible." (The Second Law of Organization)

"The Paradox that immediately bothers everyone who learns about the second law is this: If systems tend to become more disordered, why, then, do we see so much order around us? Obviously there must be something else going on. In particular, it seems to conflict with our "creation myth": In the beginning, there was a big bang. Suddenly a huge amount of energy

was created, and the universe expanded to form particulars. At first, things were totally chaotic, but somehow over the course of time complex structures began to form. More complicated molecules, clouds of gas, stars, galaxies, planets, geological formations, oceans, autocatalytic metabolisms, life, intelligence, societies..."

"And it's important to stress that no one is saying the second law of thermodynamics is wrong, just that there is a contrapuntal process organizing things at a higher level..."

"Social evolution is different from biological evolution: it's faster, it's Lamarckian, and it makes even heavier use of altruism and cooperation than biological evolution does. None of this was well understood at the time (Darwin's and Einstein's time)."

"Many of us believe that self-organization is a general property - certainly of the universe..."

Scientists became aware that the laws of the physical worlds are different from the laws of the living world.

Fritjof Capra was a physicist. He wrote in his book 'The Web of Life': "Physics has now lost its role as the science providing the most fundamental description of reality. However, this is still not generally recognized today. Scientists as well as nonscientists frequently retain the popular belief that 'if you really want to know the ultimate explanation; you have to ask a physicist', which is clearly a Cartesian fallacy. Today, the paradigm shift in science, at its deepest level, implies a shift from physics to the life sciences." (Deep Ecology- A New Paradigm)

Nobel Laureate, Erwin

Schrodinger, a physicist, wrote a science classic 'What is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell with Mind and Matter.' He wrote that the laws of Life Sciences are different from the laws of classical physics. The material world is governed by the second law of Thermo-Dynamics - the law of entropy. Accordingly every order changes into disorder, all the heat contained in matter dissipates, all energy disappears, leading to a dead world of matter. In the birth of life and its progress, anti-entropy triumphs, disorder leads to order, heat and energy go on increasing. He wrote "It is by avoiding the rapid decay into the inert state of 'equilibrium' that an organism appear so enigmatic...How does the living organism avoid decay? The obvious answer is, by eating, drinking, breathing and (in the case of plants) assimilating." (It feeds on 'Negative Entropy').

Christopher G. Langton is a computer scientist, visiting professor at the Santa Fe Institute, director of the institute's artificial-life program and editor of the journal Artificial Life. He wrote: "We don't specify the selective criteria externally. Rather, we let all the "Organisms" interact with one another, in the context of a dynamic environment, and the selective criteria simply emerge naturally. To any one of these organisms, "nature," in the computer, is the collective dynamics of the rest of the computerized organisms there. When we allow this kind of interaction among the organisms - when we allow them to pose their own problems to one another - we see the emergence of a Nature with a capital "N" inside the computer, whose "nature" we can't predict as it evolves through time...If you look at the architecture of most of the complex systems in

nature immune systems, economies, countries, corporations, living cells - there's no central controller in complete control of these systems. There may be things that play a slightly centralized role, such as the nucleus in a cell, or a central government, but a great deal of the dynamics goes on autonomously. In fact, many of the emergent properties that such systems get caught up in would probably not be possible if everything had to be controlled by a centralized set of rules. Nature has learned how to bring about organization without employing a central organizer, and the resulting organizations seem much more robust, adaptive, flexible, and innovative than those we build ourselves that rely on a central controller." (A Dynamical Patten)

Nature needs the existence of all organisms to act spontaneously. Some may fade away without any interference by other organisms because they fail to find the proper ecological niche for their nourishment and existence.

Andrew Glikson is Earth and Paleo-climate scientist of Australian National University. He wrote: "A good death is often envisaged as a slipping away, in advanced age, surrounded by family. In such circumstances, society goes on undiminished. We can think of a good extinction in similar terms. A species slowly flickers out, surrounded by newer, better adapted species. This is not the kind of extinction that is occurring at present...These extinctions destabilize ecosystems in the way that such deaths destabilize society." (Evolution of the Atmosphere, Fire and the Anthropocene Climate Event Horizon)

(Continued on Page 16)

## Balancing Samskara Dynamic and Socialist Dialectic

M. Sivaramkrishna

The spontaneous response to Professor Ananthammurthy's passing away is immense grief. But, in his case the natural need not be rational. Grief is not the residue. His invaluable contribution - versatile, varied and original - mocks, defies death itself. "Death, be not proud!" comes to mind. He suffered enormously from health problems. But, for all I know, he may have followed the wise way: "Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional." And "the sorrow that sorrow is," is the root of all imperishable creativity. In whatever form and field it manifests. The mark of a first-rate intelligence, they say, is the ability to hold two apparently opposed ideas and experiences, and yet retain the ability to keep their bifurcation at a distance. Hence the enduring core of this remarkable personage - it seems to me.

One looks at the paradox: educated in English - "the other tongue" - he enriched and expanded the creative potential of his "mother" tongue. He refused to be a victim of having - to use R. Parthasarathy's theme of his classic poem - his "tongue in English chains." Perhaps, he never had the delusion which many have that English is "the lie of the land", an agenda of colonial hegemony. Can we say, that socialism and his inescapable *samskaras* jostled for space which he allotted without any undue strife. More simplistically, can we characterize it as "tranquility in turmoil"? The tranquility of tradition and the turmoil of contemporaneity blended in him

without any privileging. The post-post-modernists may wince: but Professor Ananthammurthy's concerns, in one way or the other, hovered over the four values identified by tradition: ethics, economics, enjoyment and emancipation.

Let me now recall my experiences not many, but quite significant to me. I saw him, for the first time, in a seminar held by the Osmania University's Department of English. [Professor Isaac Sequiera, my colleague, used to say: Hyderabad is famous for minars and seminars!]. The theme was, broadly, "The social aspects of literary texts" - an area which had special interest for us, notably for Professor Satyanarain Singh. When we learnt that AM (from now on) was one of the participants, our expectations ran high. His classic SAMSKARA was very much in the critical air! I, for one, had premonitions about the text which were not wholly positive. I think I sensed disquiet about the 'climactic' "scenario"!

As expected, he was urbane, polished and conviction about what he was saying [and sometimes showing through his metaphors] rang high. If I recall correctly, those were the days of "Emergency". But AM's contribution was scintillating, specially his critique of restriction on the freedom of expression. As far as I remember. But even now I have no doubt: one "affirmation" he made puzzled, indeed startled me. The gist of it was - to put it in a sanitized way - "without social



awareness as an integral element, no text can be called a literary text.” He most probably put this idea/axiom in a more sophisticated manner.

I thought I heard wrong. But I became alert. It was an ideological assumption. Why should I object to his views? This “passionless good sense” I couldn’t command at that time. My conviction, even now, is social critiques and their solutions, however real and relevant, are only raw-materials for art. First, we (I) have to check whether they come into being as an aesthetic text – a perennial contribution. Overcoming my innate self-consciousness about debate, I placed this issue before AM. The audience’s reaction to my question, I think, was not, I suppose, positive. But, then, AM though showed a little surprise, responded in a sensible, sensitive way: texts need not have exclusively “social” or other orientations. But, then, we do require to be holistic: other cultural aspects and faiths and beliefs do constitute the overall text. And yet the focus can be the choice left to the writer. There could be a visible or underlying centre for the text. The only ‘condition’ is not to “marginalize” anything: (The winds of ‘decentering’ and ‘deconstructing’ were not very cyclonic at that time, I assume).

But let me recall what struck me most: AM’s grace and openness to listen and surely perception of the validity of any perspective (without, of course, its acceptance, in toto). This was more significant to me: for, later, there were one or two colleagues who felt I was ‘rude’ in raising the issue with such a stalwart as AM. I laughed and said: “otherwise, they won’t notice me: I am short, only 5’2” with hair!” That was that.

The next time I saw AM was not a seminar context. It was a selection committee meeting for our promotion as Professors – in Osmania University. Lest you make the mistake - not in University of Hyderabad. When my turn came and I entered the room with an unmanageable lot of books to impress the examiners, I had a surprise in store. AM was one of the subject experts. (Another was Professor Seturam with whom, earlier, I shared an intense interest in Sri Aurobindo). I could see that both recognized me and their body language was evidently friendly: “don’t be tense”!

The interview was about to end. The Vice Chancellor was on the point of closing the ‘session’. But AM suddenly intervened: “Just a minute, Dr. Sivaramkrishna! Can I ask one final question?” My imminent relief from the turmoil of the interview was scotched. AM asked, “Can you tell me how you respond to Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable*?” Without batting an eyelid – literally – I answered: “It was a *novel*, then; it is a *classic* now”. I thought I gave a brilliant answer. But AM continued: “Can you elaborate?” Instinctively, I recalled my ‘social awareness vs. literature’ conundrum. And also some insights of my post-doctoral research work on “facets of consciousness and creativity”. I framed an answer roughly in this way: “*Untouchable* has achieved transcendence of the apparently peripheral Indian problem but the essentially perennial predicament of humans, facing various forms of oppression globally.” This is the gist.

I still recall. The word “transcendence” lit up AM’s eyes. “Yes, yes. It’s transcendence. That’s the magic of the classic.” That was my most memorable moment. We

had no interview, only precious moments of inner views which coincided. I met him again in “Dhanvaloka”, the centre in Mysore which Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah founded. It was again a *Vidwat Goshti* on T. S. Eliot (my more than literary guru). It was brief and there was nothing worth recalling. Except the founder’s remark: “Your presentation is interesting but your post-modern concerns are...” “Irritating?” I completed the remark.

It was again the context of a seminar in Delhi which focused on Viswanatha Satyanarayana, the Jnanapeeth Awardee and a towering personality in modern Telugu literature. A classicist to the core, he was a balanced modernist. If I recall it was Professor Bhadriraja Krishnamurti who was the director of the seminar. The area I was given concerned Viswanatha’s characters in his *Ramayana Kalpavrikshamu*.

After the inaugural I met AM who was the then President of the Sahitya Academy and conveyed my regards, thanking him for the opportunity to participate in such an invaluable *goshti*. “I would certainly like to listen to your presentation – though I have to leave immediately after your paper” he said. It was a privilege. I presented my paper focusing on Kaikeyi, substantially from some verses which I translated into English. It was a tough job and I don’t think they measure up to anything acceptable. But I enjoyed wrestling with the great classic.

I again met AM in Delhi. It was also a seminar and I was the convener. AM was then the President of the National Book Trust. I went to the Trust office and met him. He was serene, relaxed and in a mood to spend some time. I cannot recall all that he spoke: but one thing he

mentioned was: “Telugu literature does not seem to figure in translation into English much! That’s something which needs to be looked into!” I agreed but bypassing any comment, I made a general remark “we seem to lack inwardness in English and many translations from Telugu seem to be hastily done!” I was reluctant to fully admit the truth of AM’s observation. “Why don’t you try your hand at translation?” he asked. I laughed away the question.

Perhaps, it was this conversation which resulted in AM making me a member of the NBT. But, alas, in spite of stalwarts like Professor Bhadriraja Krishnamurti, the NBT board for Telugu met, during my tenure, rarely in the Telugu University. Professor Krishnamurti chaired the session and many of the books which we were supposed to examine for or against recommendation were never sent to us. I, of course, made my choice of books clear. Professor Krishnamurti was sympathetic to my list. But in the finals, it was a hasty retreat. AM gave me an opportunity, but alas, ‘constraints’ of omission and commission crippled what little we could do.

AM’s last link with me took place in the form of reviewing his small book entitled Tradition and Modernity. This was sent to me by the editor of Bulletin of the CIEFL (now EFLU). (It perhaps happened most probably because I was a member of the Academic Senate of CIEFL, a position which the UGC chairman at that time, recommended.) The tradition-modernity pamphlet reflected the core of AM’s ideology, though, surprisingly, the whole argument hardly emerged clearly. (It was, I recall, a lecture he gave). At that time, he was Vice-Chancellor of Gandhi University in Kerala.

To sum up my impressions: most of us are both beneficiaries and victims of ideological bifurcations (admitting the political one as the most powerful). One hesitates to call it “split personality”. One of the most brilliant writers with socialism as the core, subject to an intolerable physical ailment and yet retaining the sharp awareness of a global nature? Can we then call it bifurcation - the body has its own logic which does not, generally, tamper with or terminate the intellect. And Professor AM’s intellect could explore the realities today, by and large, free from, divisive disruption. We should also explore the factors which went into the novel specially the paradigm of Samskara as the key

to understanding his overall writing. “Samskaras” innate, unchangeable or losing their identity become material for creative exploration? The dialectic is as fascinating as annoying.

More intensive study of what he left for us – without self-styled frames of reference – is the greatest manner of paying our debt to him. The so-called globalization and its manifest forms give us insights which are extremely valuable but not always valid. Once we think of them as only a political/social phenomenon, we move away from AM. That is not his *SAMSKARA* in every sense of the word.

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## Socialists demand action on rivers programme

Eco-activists, scientists, academics, socialist thinkers and river-lovers dopted the Muzaffarpur Declaration, after two days of hectic discussions at a national meet on Indian rivers, calling for drastic and urgent steps to save the rivers which were not only carriers of water resources but living repositories of culture, heritage and a means of economic sustenance.

On the eve of the world rivers day, the activists made a fervent appeal to the governments to “Give us our river back (lauta de nadiya hamar),”

Saving the Ganges means saving lives from Gangotri to Bay of Bengal, they said. Octogenarian Socialist thinker Sachdinand Sinha who opened the meet, said we need an alternative growth model on Gandhian principles that aimed at sustainable development and caused least damage to environment.

The meet expressed its concern over government’s plan to construct 16 to 40 barrages on the Ganges. This move will not only destroy the river but cause innumerable problems to agriculture, aquaculture, lead to floods and disturb the ecology, the participants warned, pointing to experiences in the US of the Mississippi river. The activists suspected the hand of private players in promoting plans for cleaning of rivers and construction of barrages which would halt the free flow of water and affect bio-diversity. Plans are also afoot to ensure that private sector benefits from sale of water, they alleged.

The main speakers were economist Bharat Jhunjhunwala, west Bengal water activist Vijay Sarkar, ex-DGP Bihar Ram Chandra Khan, Dr Qaisar Shamim senior, Patna’s Prof Imam Qadri, Afsar Jafrey, activists Anil Prakash and Kishan Kaljayee, Himalayan ecologist

Jayant Bandopadhyay, Vijay Pratap of SADED, Dr Amrendra Narayan, Sanmay Prakash and a large number of fishermen from the Ganges basin region, engineers, writers, artists and cultural activists. A number of participants were from Nepal and Bangladesh.

The rivers are dying because of the heavy discharges from city of effluents, sewage and municipal garbage, untreated waste and toxic pollutants, the speakers said. According to Central Pollution Control Board figures, "each day 2723 million litres of waste and sewer were being released in the Ganges by cities on its banks." "The decision makers are not concerned with the problems that millions of fishermen, farmers, potters, and so many other semi-skilled workers in a myriad of professions so vital for agriculture," convener Anil Prakash said. "First grow cancerous vegetables and fruits, drink contaminated water and then announce health schemes. People have to be allowed to take their own decisions and enjoy free and safe air and water," Prakash said. But unfortunately the rulers' priorities are opening tourism spots along the rivers, and making money.

The two-day meet concluded asserting the rights of the common man on air, water, forests and other natural resources. "We need to establish harmonious relations with elements of nature. Instead of fighting with nature we need to live in symphony and rhythms of nature to derive lasting spiritual pleasure," activists said.

They decided to release a comprehensive plan of action to bring together the activists on a common platform to save our rivers on December 26.

—Brij Khandelwal

## Narmada project controversy

The decision to raise the height of Sardar Sarovar dam by 17 meters can prove highly distressing and traumatic for thousands of dam evictee households who have still not been rehabilitated. The condition of the evictees based in Madhya Pradesh is the worst as very few of them have received cultivable land.

Matters have been worsened by massive corruption in the so-called encashment of rehabilitation entitlements. This corruption is now under the inquiry of Justice S.S. Jha Commission.

Many of the villages facing submergence are known for their prosperous agriculture and fertile land, not to mention sites and buildings of cultural, religious and historical importance. Therefore given the existing situation the possibilities of avoiding submergence of these villages should be kept alive. Submergence and displacement is acceptable only if it is unavoidable. As far as possible, the prospects of avoiding submergence and displacement should still be explored. If even at this stage the land and livelihood of about two lakh or so people can still be saved, it'll be a great achievement.

The Sardar Sarovar Project was originally budgeted at Rs. 4200 crore (Rs. 42 billion). Its cost has already gone up to over Rs. 60000 cr. and may eventually reach up to Rs. 90000 cr. Also the benefits have turned out to be much lesser than what was promised while social dislocation and trauma is much higher.

The number of displaced and adversely affected people due to the reservoir has turned out to be much higher than anticipated earlier.

In addition the number of farmers who have to surrender some of their land for canal construction has also turned out to be very high.

The project was justified mainly on the basis of the quenching the thirst of drought-prone villages in Kutch and Saurashtra region, but water hasn't reached here yet and the prospects are not at all good, as a lot of water is being diverted to industries and cities. Due to the same reason the prospects for adequate water reaching Rajasthan are also dim and distant.

Now that some of the costs and benefits are clearer this is the right time to conduct a social cost and benefit analysis of raising the dam height by 17 meters. Such an appraisal, if conducted in an honest and unbiased way will reveal clearly whether the recent controversial decision to raise the dam height can be justified.

It can be explored in such an unbiased analysis that to what extent the benefits can be realised even at the present height by better planning and implementation while at the same time making the best efforts possible to save thousands of families from available submergence and displacement.

It has already been pointed out in several official policy statements and documents that efforts should be made to minimise displacement as much as possible. This principle and policy should now be applied in the specific context of Sardar Sarovar Project, a huge project involving massive displacement, so that the maximum number of people can still be saved from displacement even at this late stage.

—Bharat Dogra



## Nationwide Fast in Support of Irom Sharmila

Irom Chanu Sharmila is fighting against Armed Forces Special Powers Act (Assam and Manipur) 1958 (AFSPA), amended in 1972, which provides the armed forces down to the rank of a non-commissioned officer, the power to shoot and kill, to enter and search and arrest without warrant, any person against reasonable suspicion that he/she has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence.

14 years ago on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 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, after three days, started her fast against the AFSPA that shields the security forces even after such indiscriminate firings on innocent people.

She was released by the court in August this year saying that there is no case for attempted suicide against her. 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.” She has been following the non-violent path of Gandhi and keeps a statue of legendary Meerabai by the side of her bed in the hospital ward. Despite this, the police arrested her again after three days of her acquittal.

Driven by love and compassion, Irom Sharmila is not aligned with any organization or ideology. She is not using any violence. She is not even shouting any slogan nor is she holding up any banner. She has decided to subject herself to torture for the sake of others. She

doesn't want to hurt anybody, not even the state that she is fighting against. She only wants to help her fellow brothers and sisters of northeast so that they stop facing police and military excesses. The protest of Sharmila represents the most ideal form of peaceful struggle for a democratic demand. Her life is in danger considering her already fragile health due to the forced feeding for 14 years.

The AFSPA in northeast has been synonym for extra-judicial killings, extra-judicial deprivation of liberty to people by illegal imposition of curfew, long periods of detention at army posts and camps and use of churches and schools as detention or interrogation centers. Stories of rape and molestation of women are common. Who can forget the stunning sight of about three dozen naked women protesting on the street outside the then Assam Rifles headquarters at Kangla Fort in Imphal carrying placards saying ‘Indian Army rape us,’ outraged by the rape, torture and murder of 32-year old unmarried Thangjam Manorama?

There can be no denying that violence breeds more violence.

–Dr. Prem Singh, Hidam Peter, Faisal Khan -

*(Continued from Page 12)*

Fritjof Capra writes: “Whereas the old paradigm is based on anthropocentric (human-centred) values, deep ecology is grounded in eco-centric (earth-centred) values. It is a worldview that acknowledges the inherent value of non-human life. All living beings are members of ecological communities bound together in a network of interdependencies. When this deep

Presence of armed forces in emergency or special situation is understandable, but its continuous presence has alienated people to significant extent. The number of insurgent groups has increased during the application of AFSPA in Manipur. Hence AFSPA must be repealed. The state, which complains about violent struggles, is not even comfortable with the most peaceful of all protests.

Sharmila's sacrifice must not go waste. Her victory is essential for the strengthening of democracy in India and for the respect for human rights around the world. Her victory will determine whether the voice of common citizen will be heard or the state will trample over people's rights with anti-people laws and policies. The Socialist Party demands that the Government of India must not let down Sharmila's confidence in democracy and immediately take positive steps towards resolving the imbroglio in Manipur and in other northeast states. All it requires is some political will to act.

Socialist Party (India) activists will go on fast on October 12, the death anniversary of Dr. Lohia, in support of Irom Sharmila.

ecological perception becomes part of our daily awareness, a radically new system of ethics emerges.”

“If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would be left four years to live” - Nobel winner Maurice Maeterlinck (‘the Life of the Bee’, The Hindu Young World 01.07.2014)



## Resisting POSCO

On 20th September 2014, villagers of Dhinkia made unanimous resolution in their Palli Sabha (legally empowered village council comprising all the electorates of one or two wards) not to divert their forest land for non-forest purpose. We believe our villagers will approve the same resolution in the forthcoming Gram Sabha which will be held in the month of October, 2014.

When we are facing untold sufferings because of pro-POSCO attitude of the administration and police and we are struggling hard to get out of the situations as major mainstream parties have decided to remain indifferent very few people and civil society groups come and express solidarity with us risking their own life and work. Our people got a shock when the news reached the villages that even the supporters and sympathizers of our struggle have been targeted in some IB report. We believe that this move through the IB is aiming to keep these people and groups away from us so that they make unleash more repression and atrocities on us. We strongly condemn such unethical and undemocratic moves of the state and corporate nexus.

Seven years back under veiled threat and false allurements 54 families from our villages had been taken to a transit camp built by the company. They suffered a lot in the last seven years and 42 families out of the 54 came back to their houses in the villages on June 7, 2014. We treat this as an achievement as they have made resolve to strengthen our fight against POSCO. The PPSS members also have helped them rebuild their damaged structures and houses.

The Nuagaon gate crisis has been resolved which was created by company supported goons when they made an attempt to break it resulting in high tension in the area. However, it was resolved by the dynamic fighters of the movement who rebuilt the gate. Presently, the Nuagaon villagers are on a 24 hours duty guarding the check gate against the entry of POSCO and government officials.

By the call of PPSS, villagers of Polang of Gadakuganga Gram panchauayat have reoccupied the land and started the restructuring of their betel vines. In the year 2011, these lands were forcefully occupied by the Government of Odisha and handed over to POSCO. Recently POSCO has filed cases against 32 persons in the local police station mostly belonging to Dhinkia, Nuagaon and Gadakujang Panchayats. Simultaneously the villagers of Govindpur started the operation to reoccupy the land and restructure the betel vines was forcefully occupied by the Government of Odisha in the year 2013 for the Korean company.

Juel Oram's ( Union Minister of Tribal Affairs) opposition to mining of Khandadhar is being targeted by POSCO. He said that the Khandadhar should not be handed over to anyone for mining purpose. Local people are opposing the move, and we have to respect their sentiments. Khandadhar is a beautiful hill and several perennial streams are also originating from there. How long his opposition will hold ground in the cabinet no one knows as the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fully with the corporations and another Modi colleague in the ministry has already

said that POSCO is a necessity for Odisha.

On September 13, 2014, PPSS made a representation before the high level committees constituted by the Union of Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate change at the state capital Bhubaneswar. The committee was mandated to review progress of implementation of important acts in the state. PPSS strongly demanded to withdraw all clearances forest, environment and CRZ to POSCO and review all the files. PPSS also urged to send a central level fact-finding team to the area.

Peasants of six blocks of Jagatsinghpur district made a demonstration before the district collector office against the diversion of water from agriculture from Hansua River to POSCO. The four parties - CPI, CPI(M), Forward Bloc and SP - in a joint statement said they would not allow POSCO to use the water meant for farmers and used for drinking by the people of undivided Cuttack district.

The MOU between state government and POSCO has lapsed since July 2010. But the Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO), a state government's agency have acquired 2,772.05 acres of land and handed over to POSCO. IDCO has invited expression of interest (EoI) to conduct socio-economic survey for rehabilitation of displaced families affected by the POSCO project. It may be recalled here that the CAG report of 2012 has clearly opined against IDCO's middlemanship.

On the occasion of the World Environment Day, observed as

Save Khandadhar Day, a public meeting was organised by the Khandadhar Suraksha Sangram Samiti (KSSS) where thousands of tribal communities including the particularly vulnerable tribal groups like Paudi Bhuiyans, gathered at Budhabhui village of Sundhargarh district. They vowed, taking water in their hands, to protect Khandadhar and the bounty of nature it endures from all kind of corporate invasion till their last breath. The head of Paudi Bhuiyan, Bilua Naik administered the oath in this regard. Abhaya

Sahoo, Prafulla samantaray, Mr. Prashant Paikay and other PPSS leaders addressed the gathering. There is a proposal to organise another public meeting in the hill up-area.

It's learnt that in the month of July/ august 2014, Industrial corporation of Odisha ( IDCO) has filed a notice to the four villages of the two panchayats of Luhunidpuda block in Sundhargarh district. The IDCO has sent notice for acquiring 100 acres of land for POSCO mining

area. Villagers have reacted to this notice and made a resolution in their Gram Sabha against the acquisition and sent the notice back to the concerned authority.

It is not our area alone. Corporations are eying the land, forest and water in most part of forest rich Odisha. But if we succeed, all others will be inspired to carry on the struggle and if we don't succeed it will certainly demoralize all others.

**-Prashant Paikray .E-Mail - prashantpaikray@gmail.com**

Why are we so insanely besotted with America? The reverence for shared values in the two largest democracies did not stop Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger sending the Seventh Fleet to our shores ready to fire. More recently, it did not stop officially sanctioned spying of our political parties that included spying on the current PM.

The US thinks so highly of India, it forgot to post a proper ambassador to New Delhi since June 2011, when Timothy Reimer left. For all the big talk, bilateral trade between the two countries falls behind China and the UAE. And the way the wind is blowing, Japan will soon overtake the US. Yet, in the public imagination,

Once more the US has launched a notorious aerial bombing campaign on Iraq and Syria. The justification: to stop the genocide committed by the caliphate. With this move Washington is securing the broadest possible support ranging from Israel, the European Union, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq (with tacit support from Iran, Russia and even Assad),

America is the land of milk and honey and the future.

Now, before the reader thinks I am a frustrated Trot or America-hater, let me quickly add I yield to no one in my love for Humphrey Bogart, Levi's and popcorn. I'm, however, challenging the wisdom of investing so much in a relationship that yields so little.

Our distorted relationship with the US results from two factors. Ninety per cent of our civil servants, academics, politicians and industrialists ensure their children are educated in the US and imbibe American values, chiefly individualism. Thus, we are madly pro-America because those who make and influence policy have a

**- Vinod Mehta, *Economic Times***

including all Kurdish factions, even the PKK and extending to a major part of the European left. Against the spectre of Jihadism a monstrous front is in the making encompassing political forces from the far-right to the far-left.

- a) Iraq: The fox set to keep the geese
- b) Kurds: self-determination by

vested interest in that country. The Indian elite is sold out to Uncle Sam, who occasionally throws some crumbs.

And then we have the three-million strong NRI and PIO community. I have yet to meet a more smug, self-serving, patronising, opinionated lot. Ideologically, they are a little to the Right of Yogi Adityanath. Till a decade ago, these superior folk could not stand India: it was dirty, corrupt, lazy, poor and inefficient. Third-rate, in other words. Today, they queue up to buy luxury apartments in gated colonies in Gurgaon saying they always wanted to return home.

- means of imperialism?
- c) Syria: Assad as the midwife of the caliphate
- d) Israel: Zionist extremism detrimental to the US order
- e) Islamic State leading a reactionary popular revolt
- f) Is there any space left for a democratic, social and supra-confessional anti-imperialism?

**-by Wilhelm Langthaler, Anti-imperialist Camp**

## Mischievous Act

There are three holidays in the country which are not religious oriented—15th August, Independence day and 26th January, Republic day and then most important 2nd October – Gandhi’s birthday. The 2nd October reminds one in concentrated form the sacrifices and the morality in politics in the fight for independence of the country. Any tinkering with grandeur and sobriety of this day is sacrilege. But this is what Modi Government is doing by emphasizing the day as a day of cleanliness. What cheek—that Gandhi believed in cleanliness is

no reason for the mischievous act to lessen the sobriety of Gandhi’s birthday. The programmes associated with the birthday must not be diluted by this so-called fad of cleanliness day. Cleanliness has to be actually maintained and not by unnecessarily calling to duty all the government servants and make them go through the hypocrisy of arranged photo opportunity item.

I would therefore strongly demand that government should observe Gandhiji’s birthday in the same sober, respectful manner as

before. And as government servants and ministers have been called let them repeat what was Gandhiji’s main philosophy which he expressed in 1921 and again repeated in 1947, thus; “I would say that Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of mother India just as the trouble in one eye affects the other too, similarly the whole of India suffer when either Hindu or Muslim suffer.” This sober reiteration would alone symbolize the real significance of Gandhiji’s philosophy – a proper tribute to his memory.

–Rajindar Sachar

Following comments from the Dalai Lama came in response to questions on Chinese President Xi Jinping’s three-day visit to India.

“I have faith in the new leadership. He (Xi) is open-minded and his way of working is quite realistic,” the Dalai Lama said while addressing a gathering to mark the 108th Foundation Day of Indian Merchants’ Chamber and its ladies’ wing in Mumbai.

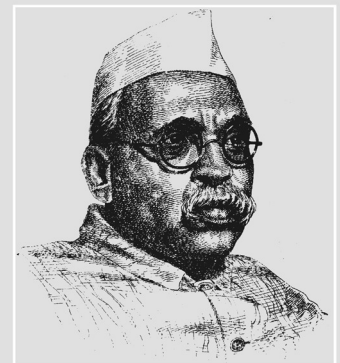
“Previously, I told Hu Jintao that he could learn some good things from India. I shall say the same thing again. Xi Jinping’s thinking is realistic and he is more open minded so he can learn more from India. He should gather experience from what he notices in India. Both India and China are heavily populated. But India is a democratic nation where people sharing different languages and scripts live with stability and harmony since 1947,” he said.

“Sino-Indian relations on the basis of mutual trust are very important. Not only the whole of Asia, but the entire world can benefit from their relations. Harmony can be brought by trust and not fear”. On the contentious border issue, he said it should be resolved through understanding and not by use of force. “Tibet’s problem is also India’s problem. Before 1950, there was not a single soldier on the northern border and it was peaceful. Sooner or later, you have to solve the problem but not by force,” the Dalai Lama said.

“India is a vast country with a huge population. Different parts of the country speak different languages, yet there is a sense of one-ness among Indians. Democracy is practised strongly in the country and there is a free media. The Chinese President should learn these values from Indians,” he said.

–A. B. Sharma

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# janata

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## What price cease-fire?

S. Viswam

**Suspicion against Sikhs**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Modi government underplayed  
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Rajindar Sachar

**Islam in India:  
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**Environmental Disasters**  
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**Gujarat N-power plant**  
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Many theories are being offered to explain, or explain away, the persistent cross-border violations and rising civilian casualties on either side of the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border dividing India and Pakistan. Significantly, along with border violations, there has been a spurt in Pakistani infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir, with Islamabad pushing terrorists and disruptive elements across the border. The spurt is explained by the Pakistani keenness to push jihadis into the Valley well before snows block the passes. In October alone, as many as 63 violations have been committed by Pakistani troops along the border. There have been civilian casualties in Jammu, and Pakistan also has claimed casualties on its side resulting from Indian violations. In any case, the noteworthy point is that after serving both the countries well for 18 years, the cease-fire agreement of 2003 now lies in tatters. Each country blames the other for the development. One is reminded of the days before 2003 when cross-border firing and reports of deaths on either side were a daily occurrence. We are back to those old bad days again. Thousands of villagers have fled their homes in three districts along the International Border and a few thousand are

currently lodged in make-shift camps that have come up overnight.

Students of India-Pakistan relations are not surprised by such developments. There has always been a pattern to the sequence of events. That as many as 40 Indian outposts are being targeted indicates some planning on the Pakistani side. It is also significant that the mechanisms put in place to monitor and oversee the cease-fire terms have worked well all these years but have suddenly become ineffective. Officers of the Directorates-General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan spoke to each other but failed to resolve the issue. This is par for the course when each country resorts to the blame game. Pakistan accuses India of starting shelling unmindful of Eid celebrations, India accuses Pakistan of resorting to heavy shelling in civilian areas in Akhnoor, Arnia, Mendhar and R.S. Pura areas causing casualties and forcing hasty evacuation of many villages.

It is possible to deduce from the unexpected intensification of anti-Indian stances that the Nawaz Shariff government is now being pressured by the military to provoke India into creating a crisis situation

*Between the lines*

## Suspicion against Sikhs

**Kuldip Nayar**

in order to turn world attention back to Kashmir. The Pakistan Prime Minister tried to implement this strategy in his speech to the UN General Assembly by calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir. However his speech was largely ignored and the global media took no notice of the Pakistani call. Interestingly, Indian defence experts trace the incidence of unprovoked firing to Islamabad's attempt to revive the Kashmir debate in international institutions with a view to testing the mettle of Narendra Modi. The firings across the LoC is part of the process. According to the former Indian diplomat and Pakistan expert, Vivek Katju, from the time of Modi's election, Pakistan's army has been testing him. Islamabad, he says, seems to be signaling two things, one for drawing attention of the global community, and second a message to India that it cannot continue to ignore Pakistan which can cause enough trouble to India and force it to come to the negotiating table. The current strategy is provoked by the cancellation of the foreign secretary-level talks. In Pakistan, the army has always dictated official policy on India and it is not surprising that the latest warning message to India comes not from Nawaz Shariff but from ex-president Gen. Pervez Musharraf!

Whatever may be the motives of the government and the military in Pakistan, India cannot allow the escalation of cross-border tensions. Pakistan favours such tensions since it enables it to intensify intrusions into Jammu and Kashmir and reaching material and manpower help to the militants. In other words, as Indian experience suggests, cross-border violations camouflage militant infiltration from Pakistani

*(Continued on Page 14)*

The Sikhs are a small, sturdy community in India. Since it is limited in size it is very protective about its identity. It often overreacts, but that is the sign of its assertion that it does not want to be taken cursorily.

Punjab, the community's, home state, has witnessed many morchas (movements) of the Sikhs. But if one were to probe every movement of theirs one would infer that its search for identity had propelled the community to defy the authorities.

Punjab Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal has said that he will take up Sikh "black list" with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to conclude the cases against them and to get the release of Sikh "convicts" who had served the sentence awarded to them.

No one will take exception to that. But one would think that the point which was settled in 1990 was being unnecessarily raised. I mean the demonstrations by the Sikhs abroad against the Operation Blue Star which led to the entry of Indian armed forces in the Golden Temple the Sikhs Vatican. Some other methods should have been adopted to flush out the militants from the Akal Takht, the Sikhs' highest authority. Sending forces inside the temple was a wrong step. And even though the government has apologized for it but that does not condone the mistake. Some heads should have rolled at the political as well as the administrative level.

But since the top Congress leaders were involved in ordering the armed forces to go inside the temple, none was punished. Even the official reports on the subject are biased and one sided.

Badal has raised the question of "Sikh list" to tell the community that when it comes to the question of justice to the Sikhs, only a Sikh can help them. This is unfair and the purpose is to garner the Sikh vote. Badal heading the Akali Dal is understandably placating the Sikh community. But in the process, he is polarizing the society, neither in the interest of Sikhs nor that of Punjabis.

I do not think that there is any Sikh list now. This was true till 1990 when as India's High Commissioner I scrapped the list with the help of official from the Home Ministry and the Intelligence Bureau whom I invited to London. The officers spent one week in London and practically scrapped the list.

I recall scrapping the list of one hundred odd Sikhs who were on the list, merely because they had raised the slogan of Khalistan in front of India's High Commission at London.

The front gate was closed on June, 1984 following operation Blue Star, when the army entered the Golden temple at Amritsar. A British policeman stood guard outside while an Indian Security man responded from within to whoever rang the bell, by opening a little window in

the gate and sizing up the caller. The turbaned ones were often asked to come by the back door and not necessarily treated well.

I do now know how digging the past serves any purpose except that the matter gets more tangled and more communalized. There is enough of bad blood between the two communities. The effort should be how to oust the poison that has got injected into the blood of the two communities. It is a pity that very little effort is being made these days in this field.

In the late eighties, there was a Punjab group, headed by Inder Kumar Gujral before he joined the government, to make concerted efforts to bring the two communities closer. In fact when Gujral offered me the assignment at London, he said that he was keen to fill the cleavage that had developed between Hindus and Sikhs following the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

I had never been part of official diplomacy because I was an active journalist. But when he said that I could do something to bring the two communities together I thought that I should try to do whatever I could do in this direction.

Therefore when I occupied the position of High Commissioner, my job was to explain that New Delhi was prepared to transfer all subjects to the state except the three. And the impression about New Delhi against the Sikh community was not correct. It did not trust me because there was no love lost between the High Commission and the Sikh community.

When I became the High Commissioner, I found to my horror  
*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Modi government deliberately underplayed Gandhiji's Birthday

**Rajindar Sachar**

Modi government has, by not so a clever sleigh of hand, converted the most important day in India, October 2, 2014 - Gandhiji's Birthday - into a cleanliness day. Of course this is buttressed by repeating Gandhiji's exhortation of "cleanliness is next to Godliness". No one can be against spreading awareness about cleanliness. But when attempt, and not so subtle is made by RSS dominated Modi Government to sidetrack the real message of Gandhiji, one can not ignore this mischievous move. Days before Modi was to do the cleaning act at Valmiki quarters in New Delhi area, the whole area was security checked (rightly no objection to the security angle). But what was hypocritical was the fact that the whole area was cleaned by regular sanitation staff regularly for days earlier. Have we not seen in the newspapers how ministers in order to show their extra loyalty took photographers along with them, and had empty bottles thrown by the

sanitary staff without any embarrassment and then, making a mockery of cleaning, sort of swept them while especially getting themselves photographed.

My objection is not against observing Cleanliness Day – by all means – provided it is on another appointed day. But I do have serious objection to converting Gandhiji's birthday as cleanliness day, as if that is the most important message of Gandhiji. If one watched TV, it was Modi and his cohorts waving

the broom. Gandhiji's real message of communal harmony was totally missing. Gandhi's stature of being the tallest Indian was reduced to a small mention and overwhelmed by Modi holding a broom. If Modi government denies this, will it explain why it never mentioned the real message of Gandhiji which he used to consistently emphasize. Let me reproduce the pledge which Gandhiji wanted Indians to take in 1919 :

“With God as a witness we Hindus and Mohamedans declare that we shall behave towards one another as children of the same parents, that we shall have no differences, that the sorrows of each will be the sorrows of the other and that each shall help the other in removing them. We shall respect each other's religion and religious feelings, and shall not stand in the way of our respective religious practices. We shall always refrain from violence to each other in the name of religion.”

That communal harmony was his foremost concern was emphasized again in 1921 and repeated on 24<sup>th</sup> march 1947 at a prayer meeting at Rajghat in Delhi thus:

“I would say that Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of mother India – just as the trouble in one eye affects the other too, similarly the whole of India suffer when either Hindu or Muslim suffers.”

Gandhiji's emphasis against communalism was again shown

in the letter he wrote in Harijan in January 1948 in Gujarati and said:

“I think it is proper to address a few words to the people of Gujarat”.

Modi as a Gujarati should have in all propriety, claiming to be spreading the message of Gandhiji, reminded the nation of what Gandhiji wrote in 1948: “Delhi has always been the capital. It would be the limit of foolishness to regard it as belonging only to the Hindus or the Sikhs. All Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this country from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam and who have lovingly and in a spirit of service adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it. No one can say that it has place only for the majority and the minority should be dishonoured.”

Modi went to pay homage at Rajghat on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014 morning. Surprisingly no one told him about this solemn pledge taken by Gandhiji. But then Modi could not have taken this pledge in all conscience considering that BJP was shamelessly busy in congratulating BJP workers accused of violent crime against the Muslims in Muzaffar Nagar (U.P.) even, when they are being prosecuted in a court of law. Such open demonstration in favour of the accused is a clear case of contempt of the court. I am surprised that U.P. Government is a silent spectator to this gross violation of rule of law. Has communal poison even affected U.P. Government which claims to be secular and pretends to give security to the Muslims?

Also equally how can Modi spread the message of Hindu-

Muslim harmony when his mentor RSS Chief Bhagwat was provided the services of Door Darshan to spread communal poison against the Muslims by falsely bringing up the question of Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam, West Bengal and Bihar and creating a panic by the canard that it had the potential to endanger the life of Hindu society there – very mischievously ignoring the fact that hundreds of Muslims were killed in recent flare ups in Assam-Bodoland.

Modi’s claim to be secular is unacceptable in the context of his silence at the crude thinking of some of the BJP diehards who are planning to celebrate the birthday of Hemu, employed as a army general in the army of Afghan ruler Sher Shah who vainly chose to describe himself as “King Vikramaditya” and challenged King Akbar’s army but was defeated. The diehard in RSS are so perverse that they are claiming it as a very big battle of Hindu King against the great Akbar who has been praised in the U.N. Human Development Report 2004 for his pronouncements on religious tolerance such as “no one should be interfered with on account of religion, and any one is allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him.”

Modi in his radio speech has rightly referred reverentially to Swami Vivekanand one of the greatest Indians. But would Modi tell his RSS followers to remember and follow Swami Vivekanand, who believed in total Hindu-Muslim unity and profusely praised Islam and in a letter to his friend Mohammed Sarfraz Hussain ( 10<sup>th</sup> June 1898 ) without any hesitation wrote

“therefore I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of vedantism,

however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems Hinduism and Islam - Vedanta brain and Islam body - is the only hope... the future perfect India.”

There thus can be no real progress in India which does not include minorities like Muslims, Christians... as equal stakeholders. This is the real message which Modi should have spoken of on Gandhiji’s Birthday, if he meant to pay a genuine respectful tribute to Gandhiji.

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

that the Sikh were not allowed to enter the building premises through the main door. The explanation given by the Commission’s official was that they did not want the terrorist to enter the building.

When I asked that it was not written on anybody’s face whether he was terrorist or not, the reply was that the Sikhs could not be trusted because many among them were militants and supporters of the Khalistan demand.

I ordered the opening of the gates straightaway. Pat was the protest by the committee of secretaries to the Government of India that I would be personally responsible if anything happened to the staff. Nothing happened after the opening of the gate. It was a bogey which the biased officials had created against the Sikhs community in the UK.

The problem is not as simple as Badal Sikh list. Both communities have to find the reason for suspicion and bias. Its removal will serve the purpose, not any particular list.



# Environmental Disasters

**Joy Mazoomdar**

We get it: India reposed faith in a leader who promised *achhe din*—"good times," good governance, transparency, development, jobs, jobs, jobs.

Now nobody can argue that prime minister Narendra Modi does not mean business. So his government has gone about eliminating the policy paralysis that many claimed ailed the previous regime. This meant dismantling roadblocks that hamper economic growth. But what also happens to be under fire: laws and rules that safeguard India's environment, forests, wildlife, and tribal rights.

Consider what all the new government has achieved (or undermined, depending on which side of the growth-versus-green debate one stands) in just about three months:

- Environmental and forest clearances have been delinked to allow work on linear projects, such as highways, on non-forest land without waiting for approvals for the stretches that require forest land. Defence projects get priority along China borders up to 100km from the Line of Actual Control in the sensitive eco zones of the higher Himalayas. The government has decided to soften some rules in the Forest Rights Act and Forest Conservation Act to step up economic activities in Naxal-affected states which account for some of the country's best forests and the majority of our tribal population.
- The height of the Narmada dam will be raised. Irrigation projects requiring 2,000-10,000 hectares are now exempt from the scrutiny of the Centre and can be cleared by state governments. Those requiring less than 2,000 hectares will require no green clearance at all. Separation of power generation components from irrigation projects has allowed promoters to project smaller requirement of land, making clearance easier.
- Changes in the pollution classification now allow mid-sized polluting industries to operate within five km of national parks and sanctuaries (instead of the 10-km restrictive limit ordered by the Supreme Court).
- Ban lifted on new industries in critically polluted industrial areas, such as Gujarat's Vapi. Pollution index-based moratoriums were lifted and a review of the index has been ordered. Norms for coal tar processing, sand mining, paper pulp industries, etc. were eased.
- National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) reconstituted by slashing the number of independent members from 15 to just three. This truncated NBWL cleared most of the 140 projects before it on August 12. On August 25, the Supreme Court questioned the Centre's move, ruling that "any decision taken by it (NBWL) shall not be given effect to till further orders".
- The process of reviewing the National Green Tribunal Act to reduce the judicial tribunal to an administrative one has been initiated. Headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a high court chief justice, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) hears all first challenges to environmental and forest clearances. "Laws keep changing," Modi's environment minister Prakash Javadekar has famously justified.
- The new government has also diluted the Forest Rights Act that requires the consent of the local tribal population for diverting forestland. Instead of gram sabhas (village councils) certifying that their rights had been settled and that they had consented to projects, the district administrations have now been asked to do the same. This exercise must be completed in 60 days, irrespective of the number of project-affected villages or the complication of the process. Moreover, prospecting for minerals in forests are now exempt from having to acquire the consent of local gram sabhas or settling tribal rights.
- No public hearing for coal mines below 16 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) that want to increase output by up to 50% and those above 16 mtpa wanting to expand by up to five mtpa. Instead of individual clearances, now mines can seek approvals in clusters.
- To turn the clock back, the new government is considering as many as 19 amendments to the new Land Acquisition

Act. These include dilution of the local consent requirement for public-private-partnership projects, removal of the social impact assessment requirement, delinking compensation for land from market value, relaxing the time limit for completing acquisition, not returning unutilised lands to the original owners, giving states overriding discretionary powers, etc.

- The Ken-Betwa river-linking project that will drown more than 40 sq km of the Panna tiger reserve has been revived.
- The new government also approved field trials of 21 genetically modified (GM) crops, including rice, wheat and maize (before putting it on hold under pressure from the RSS).

To be fair, the process of undermining green concerns to facilitate unbridled growth was initiated by the previous regime. For whatever little ground he stood, the rhetorical Jairam Ramesh was kicked out of the environment ministry and even his more pliant successor Jayanthi Natarajan had to make way soon for Veerappa Moily. The oil minister cleared more than 100 big-ticket projects during his short stint at the environment ministry. With Modi watching The prime minister, of course, has the mandate. He won on the promise of nationwide development along the lines of the Gujarat model. As the Yamuna in Delhi or the Ganga in Varanasi gets artificial facelifts like the Sabarmati in Ahmedabad, one could possibly blame ignorance for selling concrete riverfronts as the cure for choking rivers. But for good times' sake, will India be able to rationalize embracing Vapi—among the world's most polluted places—as the model of growth?

## Gujarat N-power plant

Rajiv Shah

In an important breather to farmers of Bhavnagar district of Gujarat protesting against the proposed nuclear power plant near Mithivirdi on South Saurashtra coast, the Expert Appraisal Committee (Nuclear) of the Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) has asked the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) to “revise” and “resubmit” its Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the project, as it lacks clarity on a large number of issues. The panel, simultaneously, criticized the NPCIL for an inordinate delay – for taking three long years to submit proposal for environmental clearance following “site clearance” of the project by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

Suggesting that the delay has led to a situation where the new land acquisition law – Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 – came into force, making it difficult for acquiring land now, the committee wished to know about the “status of rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) as per the new Act”, and whether any land has at all been acquired. Under the new law, 400 per cent compensation to the market value of the land would have to be paid.

Asking the NPCIL to provide details of how much land is now available following the decision to drop the original proposal of township attached with the power plant, the committee asked the NPCIL to see if any new commitment

has been taken for the township, and what is the status of the 21 hectares (ha) land to be acquired from the state forest department. It also wanted the NPCIL to submit a copy of the coastal regulatory zone (CRZ) clearance for the foreshore facilities, and a note on safety aspects, as seen by the Gujarat Coastal Zone Regulatory Authority.

Pointing towards major shortcomings in the EIA report, the committee said, it does not contain any “base-line radioactivity data for milk samples”. Wanting the new report to mention the model used for radioactivity dispersion, the committee insisted, the report must also detail “impact of two hills near the site on atmospheric dispersion.” It particularly took strong exception to the fact that only eight water samples were collected, and even “season of collection” was not mentioned, asking the NPCIL to “collect data for three seasons and submit.”

The committee further wanted the NPCIL to submit the location of the Near Surface Disposal Facilities (NSDF) for radioactive waste on the map, along with “its impact on land and groundwater”, current status and a detailed study of “effect of historical tsunamis”, and a copy of the no-objection certificate (NOC) from the state irrigation department “since the project is located in a command area”.

Then the committee wanted documents of the marine impact assessment, study of the thermal  
*(Continued on Page 15)*

# Islam in India: Challenge or Promise

## Wajahat Habibullah

On the subject of my address let me start by quoting from amongst the most distinguished and learned amongst India's Muslims in the recent past, Maulana Azad, who as Congress President stated, in the 1940 Ramgarh Session of the party, the role of India's Muslims in the making of India :

"I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious traditions of the last thirteen hundred years...I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total makeup, without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete... This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it."

This is a sentiment not unique to the Maulana although rarely so lucidly expressed. But in today's environment, with the rise of ISIS in West Asia, the extremism sweeping across several Muslim countries, and apprehensions blatantly voiced by elements even within our own country, that Islam and democracy are irreconcilable, the subject "Challenge or Promise" needs to be placed in context. Is our own society also riven by divisive impulse and can our country survive such

internal infraction? Or will our inherent agelessness, nurtured over the centuries, absorb the impact and help lead the world into an age not simply of tolerance, nor even of co-existence but indeed of harmony springing from convergence?

As argued by Alastair Crooke, British diplomat and founder and director of the Conflicts Forum, an organisation that advocates for engagement between political Islam and the West, in his article 'You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia' "After all, the more radical Islamist movements were perceived by Western intelligence services as being more effective in toppling the USSR in Afghanistan -- and in combating out-of-favour Middle Eastern leaders and states". To understand this phenomenon it is necessary to be clear on what Islam is and the responsibility that it places on its followers.

### Concept of Allah

The very first Chapter of the Quran explains the Islamic concept of God - the worship of Allah being the determining factor of whether or not a person is Muslim; belief in La Ilaha Illallah -There is no God but God. And what exactly is God? The opening lines of the opening Chapter of the Qur'an 'Surat al Fatihah', described by Maulana Azad as the gist of the Quran declares:

"Praise be to God, Master of all creation, the Compassionate, the

Merciful, the Ruler of the Day of Judgement"

God is therefore universal and just, and the embodiment of compassion. But how did Islam spread to its present proportions particularly in South Asia, where the largest section of the world's Muslims abide? There are several explanations, each of which is examined exhaustively, particularly with regard to Bengal in Richard M Eaton's "The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760" :

- The Religion of the Sword -The role of military force. But how 'force' was exercised and 'conversion' affected has never been defined. Persian works talk of the submission to Islam of the defeated State, but this is a reference to their military submission to the Indo-Muslim state, not to the faith.
- Religion of Patronage-Conversion to receive favours from the State. But why was the concentration of Muslims in the Muslim Indian empires most wide in its furthest reaches, where the hold of the empire was at its most tenuous?. Why did the first realisation that Bengal had a Muslim majority concentrated in East Bengal, wherein Dacca had remained capital only for one century of Mughal rule and Chittagong became part of the empire, seized by the Emperor Aurangzeb from the Arakanese only in 1660, come only with the census of 1892?

- The Hindu caste system and the social liberation theory is the most widely accepted explanation. No conclusive evidence has been produced in support of this and presupposes that what are described as the lower castes had already some aspirations of equality and hence resentment against the Brahmanic order. Also, as the Christian experience has shown, unless the 'convert' then left his neighbourhood, he continued to occupy the same status in his society. And this theory fails to explain the fact that Islam's most dramatic expansion in Bengal was not within a stratified social hierarchy reeking with injustice, but in the densely afforested areas of the east where the influence of the Brahmanic order was minimal and the population largely animist.

What then is the explanation? Islam has no missionary institution as does Christianity. It also has no concept of 'conversion'. To be a Muslim, you need simply to accept Islam as comprised in what is called the Kalama: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his Prophet" Hence the question raised by Eaton: what is 'forced conversion'? The question then naturally follows, what becomes of existing religious beliefs for one who has accepted Islam? The answer to that is simple: Islam does not renounce other faiths, but if one is a Muslim one is enjoined to follow the interpretation given by the Quran. Again with reference to Eaton's book on Islam in Bengal it is easy to trace the means of the spread of Islam in relatively recent times. This passed through four phases:

**Inclusion**, during which Islam and Islamic figures are included among traditional deities; a pronounced example of this is found in Kashmir's

Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (1377-1438), popularly known as Alamdar-e-Kashmir whose wooden shrine was tragically incinerated in Charari-Sharif in 1996 and has since been rebuilt in grand proportion, known to Hindu followers as Nund Rishi. Sheikh Nooruddin was spiritual heir to the Saivite Yogini Lal Ded (known as Lal Ishwari among Hindus and Lal Arifa among Muslims).

**Identification** in which the Muslim cosmology is identified with the Hindu. An example is the bilingual Arabic and Sanskrit inscription in a thirteenth century mosque in Veraval, Gujarat. In the Arabic version the deity of the mosque is described as Allah, whereas the Sanskrit text describes Him as Visvanath (Lord of the Universe) Sunyarupa (in the form of emptiness) and Visvarupa (a form that is universal)

**Displacement.** This would mean the supplanting of Hindu entities from religious cosmology with Islamic ones. This was a consequence of Islamic reform movements led by the clerics

**Conforming to the Monotheistic ideal** In this final phase Muslims would be encouraged to identify themselves as a distinct community. Whereas the first two faces owed much to India's Sufis the next two saw the active participation of the clerics. But it must be remembered that the two are not in contradiction.

This is not to deny each of the explanations described earlier. Indeed, historical examples can be found in support of each. But none of these explains the movement of entire sections of the community into becoming Muslims. I have explained to start with the concept of Allah in Islam as the embodiment

of compassion. Although Buddhism, as explained by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, believes in no God, the fountainhead of the faith comprised in the Four Noble Truths, is dukkha or compassion for suffering, a concept springing from the Sanskrit concept of karuna. And the Qur'an, in the opening verses of its second Chapter, describes to the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) what the Quran means:

"2. This Book there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty

3. Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them

4. And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee, and of the Hereafter they are sure"

Placed in this context, it is easy to see how the phases described above led to the spread of the faith. Indeed the remains of earlier tradition are recognisable in Muslim ritual to this day in Muslim majority areas of Kashmir and Lakshadweep. So the Islamic belief that every community has been graced by a Prophet, that there is no compulsion in religion and that Allah has innumerable names falls into place. Like the Buddhist concept of cause and effect being the basis of human impulse, Islam itself is the consequence of evolution through the ages. It is then easy to see how India, in "This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality", absorbing Islam as "a vital factor in its total makeup, without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete". Also clear in Islam is that Allah is a concept, not a form; hence stern restrictions in what is perceived as reducing him



to a human image.

### **Building a nation**

India represents an unprecedented experiment in nation building after centuries of being part of empires that have laid the foundations of its economic, social and geographic boundaries. This experiment is unprecedented because it differs radically from the idea of a Nation State based on European experience which based national boundaries on the strength of ethnic, linguistic and religious commonalities. Switzerland indeed presents a successful experiment but that is restricted to successfully holding three nationalities together in a form of State based on maximum autonomy in a minuscule geographic expanse. The concept of 'nation' was no doubt disseminated across the world in an age of colonialism, when subject people looked with envy upon the concept that had fuelled such domination. US President Wilson's insistence at the time of drafting the Treaty of Versailles that the concept be respected gave a formal basis to such an approach. And so small states, emerging from colonial rule, often ethnically diverse with these diversities sometimes hostile were, as in the division of the Ottoman empire, sought to be molded into nation states, with, as we can now see, lasting resentments or, in breaking the yoke of colonial power, seeking themselves to build nations. Yet South Asia with its sustained engagement with Islam has built a unique identity both for itself and for India's Islam which carries significance for a world moving into an era of globalization. In this region, a consequence of colonial rule was the birth of Pakistan, inspired by an outstanding Indian lawyer with a solid background in English law, seeking to build a nation on grounds

of religion. Malaysia sought to build a secular State, with a bias towards the 'bhoomiputra' (indigenous Malays, overwhelmingly Muslim) in a nation with two dominant ethnic communities. The Philippines and Indonesia, ethnically more homogeneous but with differences in religion have also sought, with varying degrees of success, to build their nations by recourse alternating between democratic and dictatorial means.

India on the other hand, has been a cultural and economic multi-ethnic entity for centuries, of which the Taj Mahal can be described as apotheosis. This mausoleum (a concept not in keeping with orthodox Islam) built by a Muslim Sunni Emperor, son and grandson of a Rajput mother and paternal grandmother, in memory of his Shia Muslim Empress, is, in the tradition of India's temple architecture, located on a plinth, and is built of marble from the Sind-Rajasthan region, semi-precious stones from the farthest reaches of a vast empire, yet to reach its zenith, patterned into mosaic on its walls and ceiling by artisans drawn from India's rich crafts tradition in gems, stonework and sculpture, silver and gold smithy, mostly Hindu, and calligraphy of majestic proportion, all coalescing into what is the highest achievement of Indian artistry, crowned with a gold plated finial; rising from an inverted lotus on its dome, surmounted by an Islamic crescent reminiscent of the Hindu Shiva trident kalash.

But where did this convergence break? Why indeed did a separate state of Pakistan emerge as detritus of the British Indian empire? In framing its Constitution, India, describing itself as a 'Union of States' gave to itself a Federal Constitution with a strong unitary bias. Emerging

from a bloody Partition amidst doubts, most famously voiced by former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill that India was even a nation, India sought to weave itself together, while acknowledging diversities, particularly of religion, education, culture and language, into a cultural fabric that allowed for minimum political autonomy to ethnic diversities. "India is an abstraction," said Churchill, "India is no more a political personality than Europe. India is a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the Equator." "None knows," pondered Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India 1943-47 "where the partition of India, once it starts, will end, short of Balkanisation."

To this day there is a view that multiethnic states cannot become nations. In a closely argued essay "Us and Them" in *Foreign Affairs*, Jerry Z Muller, Professor of History at the Catholic University of America has so argued. "In short", Muller argues, "ethno nationalism has played a more profound and lasting role in modern history than is commonly understood, and the processes that led to the dominance of the ethno national state and the separation of ethnic groups in Europe are likely to reoccur elsewhere. Increased urbanization, literacy and political mobilization; differences in the fertility rates and economic performance of various ethnic groups; and immigration will challenge the internal structure of states as well as their borders. Whether politically correct or not, ethno nationalism will continue to shape the world in the twenty-first century." His conclusion, remarkable in the light of India's history: "Partition may thus be the most humane lasting solution" How has India's experiment worked?

What then is the challenge? India's Planning Commission's *India Human Development Report 2011* focuses on Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, which have traditionally been regarded as the excluded groups, and Muslims. The report has focused primarily on income, poverty, education, employment, health and infrastructure. The findings, then give at best a partial picture of status. Most notably, it does not cover a sense of physical insecurity felt by sections of the community.

Although the report shows improvement on a few indicators as regards Muslims, the increase is only marginal and the rate of growth much lower than for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The situation has improved little since a report of 2006 of a committee set up by government known as the Sachar Committee. Muslims live primarily in urban areas, making the incidence of poverty more visible there. According to the 2011 report, in 2007-08, 23.7% of Muslims in urban areas and 13.3% in rural areas were poor, down from 34.2% and 26.8% respectively based on the National Sample Survey (NSSO) of 1999-2000. Compared to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and other social and religious groups, whilst urban poverty is in 2011 highest amongst Muslims, rural poverty amongst Muslims is also higher than that of other religious groups and, indeed, than that of other backward classes (OBCs). Besides, as will be evident from these statistics the rate of decline in poverty has also been slowest in the Muslim community, whereas for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes community urban poverty has declined by as much as 28.2 points and 19.5 points respectively.

Literacy shows a similar trend when we compare 2004-5 with the 2007-8 reference period of the report; urban literacy in general (from 1999-2000 to 2007-8) is indeed found to have increased from 69.8% to 75.1% and rural literacy from 52.1% to 63.5%. Nevertheless, if we compare the rate of increase of literacy amongst Muslims with other social and religious groups, it is once more the lowest. Urban literacy in the Scheduled Castes has increased by 8.7 points and among the Scheduled Tribes by 8 points. Amongst Muslims, it has increased by only 5.3 points. Similarly, with health indicators, the decrease in the under-5 mortality rate for Muslims between 1998-9 and 2005-6 is 12.7 points, whereas it is 31.2 for Scheduled Castes and 30.9 for Scheduled Tribes.

The gap, therefore, in the rate of decrease in poverty, illiteracy, infant mortality rate (IMR), etc., when compared to other social and religious groups, reiterates the Sachar Committee's stark findings in its report of 2006 that the Muslim community has not benefited from national development in terms of socio-economic status at the same rate as other social and religious groups. This realization led the government of the time to set up the Sachar Committee.

The Sachar Committee report was the first that went beyond the coverage of minorities in general to specific reference to the Muslim community. It revealed the failure of India's policy, declared since Independence, of inclusion of the Muslim community, designed to counter what were looked upon as the specious arguments that had precipitated Partition. The diligently reasoned report established extreme deprivation of

Muslims in India and the demeaning status that the community had been reduced to, laboring under numerous exclusionary situations of violence, insecurity, identity crisis, discrimination in the public sphere, and, in the inevitable aftermath of India's bloody Partition, suspicion from other communities, of being 'unpatriotic'.

The subsequent Ranganath Mishra Commission report (2007) recommended 10% reservation for Muslims in central and state government jobs and 6% within OBC quotas for Muslim OBCs, and the inclusion of Muslim and Christian dalits among scheduled castes, are yet to be implemented. Many argue that a large section of Muslims is already covered under reservations meant for other backward classes (OBCs). However, Sachar's report has put paid to that myth. In the context of Muslim OBCs, the committee concluded that their abysmally low representation suggests that any significant benefits of entitlements meant for the backward classes are yet to reach them. The committee also concluded that "the conditions of Muslims in general are also lower than the Hindu OBCs who have the benefits of reservations". Recent efforts by government of India in introducing a 4½ % reservation within OBC quotas for Muslim OBCs have met with resistance.

The report shows that up to the matriculation level in education, Hindu OBCs trail behind the national average by 5%, while the figure for Muslims in general and OBC Muslims is 20% and 40% respectively. When it comes to education up to the graduate level, general and OBC Muslims trail by 40% and 60% respectively. In the field of employment in formal

sectors, general and OBC Muslims trail the national average by as much as 60% and 80% respectively. Even in landholdings, Muslims are far below the national average: general Muslims: 40% and Muslim OBCs: 60%, whereas Hindu OBCs is approximately 20% below the national average. General and OBC Muslims are poorer by 30% and 40% respectively than the national poverty level, while Hindu OBCs are less poor by 10%. So the reservation policy meant for OBCs has not impacted Muslim OBCs.

What were the major findings of the Sachar Committee report? Muslims record the second highest incidence of poverty, with 31% of people below the poverty line, following Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who are the most poor with a Head Count Ratio (HCR) of 35%. Not only was the literacy rate for Muslims far below the national average in 2001 but the rate of decline in illiteracy has also been much lower than among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. According to the Sachar Committee's findings, 25% of Muslim children in the 6-14 age-groups either never went to school or dropped out at some stage.

In no state of the country is the level of Muslim employment proportionate to their percentage in the population, not even in the State of Jammu & Kashmir with a 66% Muslim population. West Bengal, which has recently emerged from over three decades of communist rule, where Muslims constitute 25% of the population, and where the left had consistently had Muslim support, the representation in government jobs, is as low as 4%. Not only do Muslims have a considerably lower representation in government jobs, including in public

sector undertakings, compared to other excluded groups, Muslim participation in professional and management cadres in the private sector is also low. Their participation in security-related activities (for example in the police) is considerably lower than their population share, standing at 4% overall. The exception to this is the State of Gujarat, where Muslims account for 10%, against a population percentage of 9.1. Other figures on Muslim representation in civil services, state public service commissions, railways, and the department of education, are discouraging.

The Sachar Committee therefore recommended as follows:

1. While there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states, the community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development.
2. Mechanisms to ensure equity and equality of opportunity to bring about inclusion should be such that diversity is achieved and at the same time the perception of discrimination is eliminated.
3. Creation of a National Data Bank (NDB) where all relevant data for various SRCs are maintained is recommended.
4. An autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) is needed to evaluate the extent of development benefits which accrue to different SRCs through various programs.
5. While equity in the implementation of programs and better participation of the Community in the development process would gradually eliminate the perception of discrimination, there is a need

to strengthen the legal provisions to eliminate such cases.

6. It is imperative that if the minorities have certain perceptions of being aggrieved, all efforts should be made by the State to find a mechanism by which these complaints could be attended to expeditiously.
7. The Committee recommends that an Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should be constituted to look into the grievances of the deprived groups.
8. A carefully conceived 'nomination' procedure should be worked out to increase inclusiveness in governance.
9. The Committee recommends the elimination of the anomalies with respect to reserved constituencies under the delimitation schemes.
10. The idea of providing certain incentives to a 'diversity index' should be explored. A wide variety of incentives can be linked to this index so as to ensure equal opportunity to all SRCs in the areas of education, government and private employment and housing.
11. Relevant functionaries should be sensitive to the need to diversity and the problems associate with social exclusion.
12. The Committee recommends that a process of evaluating the content of the school text books needs to be initiated and institutionalized.
13. The University Grants Commission (UGC) should be encouraged to evolve a system where part of allocation to colleges and universities is linked to the diversity in the student population.



14. To facilitate admissions to the 'most backward' amongst all the SRCs in the regular universities and autonomous colleges, alternate admission criteria need to be evolved.
15. Providing hostel facilities at reasonable cost for student from minorities must be taken up on priority basis.
16. Teacher training should compulsorily include in its curriculum components which introduce the importance of diversity/plurality within the country and sensitize teachers towards the needs and aspiration of Muslims and other marginalized communities.
17. Given the commitment to provide primary education in the child's mother tongue, the State is required to run Urdu medium schools.
18. Work out mechanisms whereby Madrassas can be linked with a higher secondary school board so that students wanting to shift to a regular / mainstream education can do so after having passed from a Madrasa.
19. Recognition of degrees from Madrassas for eligibility in competitive examinations is desirable.
20. The Committee recommends promoting and enhancing access to Muslims in Priority Sector Advances.
21. The real need is of policy initiatives that improve the participation and share of the Minorities, particularly Muslims in the business of regular commercial banks.
22. It is desirable to have experts drawn from the Community on relevant interview panels and

Boards.

23. The country is going through a high growth phase. This is the time to help the underprivileged to utilize new opportunities through skill development and education.
24. Government should provide financial and other support to initiatives built around occupations where Muslims are concentrated and that have growth potential.
25. The registration of trusts set up by the Community, such as Waqf institutions and mosque committees should be facilitated.
26. Lack of access to crucial infrastructural facilities is another matter of concern for the Muslims.

The report concludes with the comment that *"issues relating to disparities across socio-religious communities are of utmost importance to our nation today. If this Report contributes in any way in constructively dealing with these issues and in facilitating a more informed discussion on them, the Committee's efforts would be well rewarded."* This conclusion summarises the answer to the question that is the subject of my address today

A subsequent report by the Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission, published in 2007, which examined the conditions of all minorities, further emphasized the deplorable condition of Muslims on socio-economic indicators and endorsed the findings, arguments and recommendations of the Sachar Committee report. These statistics show that Muslims have been denied equal participation in the development process (evident

from poverty and discrimination indicators), have been denied fair and equal access to justice in the case of both targeted violence during communal riots as well as day-to-day, and identity-based discriminatory practices in accessing rights and entitlements.

### **Exclusion from development schemes and non-implementation of policy suggestions**

Government response to the Sachar Committee report was to launch the Multi-Sectoral Development Program (MSDP) in 2008, aimed at upgrading infrastructure in 91 districts spread over 20 states of India where minorities comprise 25% or more of the population, classified as minority concentration districts (MCDs). These 91 MCDs identified after an examination of districts throughout the country are also relatively backward, falling behind the national average in terms of indicators for socio-economic status and access to basic amenities. Under the MSDP, district-specific plans focus on provision of better infrastructure for schools and secondary education, sanitation, secure housing, drinking water and electric supply, besides beneficiary-oriented schemes to create income-generating activities.

Nevertheless, it was the exclusion of Muslims that stood out in the planning, design and implementation thus far of the Multi-Sectoral Development Program. Muslims are not the target group and instead the scheme is under the larger umbrella of "minorities", contrary to the recommendation of the Sachar Committee report that the Muslim community needed targeted interventions to bring it socially and economically at par with the mainstream. Nevertheless, This has been recognized by the



Planning Commission which notes in its Steering Committee on Empowerment of Minorities, sine included in the final draft Plan, that *“Since the entire scheme rests on the suitability of the district plans prepared by the District level committees, these must be preceded by prior dissemination of information throughout the minority concentration areas (hamlet/ward). Such information dissemination must include traditional and locally accessible forms of communication, and not remain restricted to placement of information on the website of the concerned department/ government”*

But the original MSDP was also flawed inasmuch as it left out large numbers of Muslims from its schemes by concentrating only on districts which have an ‘economically backward’ minority concentration. Thus the MSDP covered only a small percentage of the minority population of India, entirely ignoring them in non-MCD districts . Another major shortcoming was that it took the district as the unit of planning rather than villages or blocks with minority concentrations, which would have made benefits accessible to more if not all. How did the government justify its claim of improving the condition of its minority populations when Muslims, who constitute the largest minority (over 70% of the total minority population) and who fare abysmally on socio-economic indicators, were significantly ignored in a development program meant specifically for minorities?

In fact, Muslims experienced exclusion in the identification of areas for development, allocation and delivery mechanisms even in the MCD districts. This identity-based discrimination was highlighted in

a study by the Centre for Equity Studies (CES) in 2011, entitled ‘Promises to Keep’, which evaluated ‘flagship programs’ for minority development initiated as a response to recommendations by the Sachar Committee . The study, which selected three districts in three states - South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, Darbhanga in Bihar, and Mewat in Haryana - says that despite the focus on minority districts, the Muslim community was not benefiting much as officials were often under orders to avoid Muslim villages, hamlets or urban settlements in plans designed by them. This conclusion is substantiated by reports of India’s National Commission of Minorities on Districts Bagpat of UP and Araria of Bihar, with a Muslim population of 25% and 41% respectively. In consequence, although money from this modestly funded program is spent on districts with a greater proportion of Muslims, these studies have found that the programs selected were neither located in nor benefited Muslim populations. In Mewat district in Haryana - with a Muslim concentration of 80%, most of the Meo community, in a state in which Muslims constitute barely 5% of the total population -- there are less than 5,000 Muslim students in secondary school. When the author visited a Muslim village in the adjoining Meo area of Palwal District I found the primary school had, in the words of the CES on schools in neighboring Mewat District, “a dilapidated building, barren courtyard and dingy classrooms”. Instead of spending MSDP funds to upgrade the school, the government preferred to spend money on a neighboring wealthier non-Muslim village. This pattern was repeated in all the other districts visited by the CES. In Darbhanga, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan - a scheme to

universalize education - in 2009-10, 66 new primary schools were opened ostensibly to enhance access for children from minority backgrounds. Curiously, only seven of these were in minority concentrated areas. The Mewat, Araria and Bagpat cases also establish that even when funds do go to a district with a high concentration of minorities, the money fails to reach the community as the authority’s negligence or outright discrimination makes them divert funds to other villages.

A seeming prejudice is exposed by the Sachar Committee when it talks of discrimination and practices of exclusion in government structures, especially in security-related jobs - defence, police and security forces - where the percentage and number of Muslims is highly skewed. In recognition of this flaw the Report of the Steering Committee of the Planning Commission for Empowerment of Minorities recommended that direct targeting of minority populations and minority habitations should be made a specific condition for approval of all plans under PM’s 15 Point Programme and MSDP.

Minority-related schemes like the Prime Minister’s New 15-Point Program, replacing a similar programme dating from the time of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, covering issues of education, employment, housing and credit have, except notably in the school scholarship program, but that too only in some states, also failed to address minority deprivation, or deliver any benefits to the bulk of poor communities. The programme is clubbed with existing welfare schemes like the Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY), which aims to provide housing to the rural poor, Integrated Child Development Scheme

(ICDS), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), etc., wherein it aims to locate a certain proportion of development projects in minority concentration areas and, wherever possible, earmark 15% of target and outlays under these schemes for minorities. Clearly, this suffered from the same drawbacks as the MSDP wherein the unit for planning is the district and projects can be located anywhere, not necessarily in minority concentration areas. Also, vagueness in terms like "certain portion" and "wherever possible" allows for prejudice to be sustained. Moreover, individual beneficiary schemes like the MGNREGA or SGSY - a scheme launched in 1999 to provide sustainable income to the rural poor - are demand-driven; therefore, 15% cannot apply to them in practice. In the 12th Plan government decided that the administrative unit of a Block, a sub-unit of a District devised in the '50s to channel development finance, be made the deciding factor in assignment of finance under the MSDP rather than the District. This will also bring Muslims in states like Rajasthan, which has Blocks with a Muslim population of as much as 70%, but not a single District qualifying as an MCD, under the spread of the MSDP; and exclude such areas, in existing MCDs, that do not have the minimum requirement of population. These recommendations find place in the report of the Planning Commission Steering Committee discussed above.

What emerges then is that institutions and development programs meant for minorities have not thus far delivered much by way of addressing bias and discrimination faced by minorities.

And apart from faring poorly on development indicators, Muslims live in an insecure environment where they face targeted and communal violence, coupled with day-to-day discrimination in accessing rights and entitlements. In this background can the Muslim community of India contribute effectively, in keeping with its size, in the growth and development of India?

### **Communal violence and response of the government**

Targeted communal violence like the Mumbai and Gujarat riots of 1993 and 2002 are heavily publicized. However many less known riots regularly take place in India. All recent cases of communal violence have seen the trend of police complicity wherein they have colluded not only with the dominant community but also with right-wing groups to perpetrate violence against the Muslim minority.

India has faced communal riots ever since the onset of colonial rule. But since Independence, on most counts, victims have failed to get justice and the perpetrators have never been held accountable despite the rule of law, in the absence of any strong and exclusive legislative tool to address this violence. In all these cases, existing provisions of India's Penal Code (IPC) have proved inadequate in addressing targeted violence. Yet, the trial of policemen charged with murder at the instance of no less than the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in the killing of 40 Muslim youth in Hashimpura in western UP, while in police custody after riots in Meerut in 1986, still lingers in the Sessions courts, and the criminal policemen have continued with regular service, including promotion, many by now having retired with honors.

These limitations were sought to be addressed in the pending Communal & Targeted Violence (Prevention) Bill. The most remarkable aspect of the proposed legislation was that it held public servants accountable for their negligence or willful failure in controlling riots. An officer could be prosecuted if he failed to act without adequate reason. Not only the complicit officer, his superior officer too could be punished for failure in command, if it were proved that the superior had information about the situation and he failed to issue appropriate orders and directions to his subordinate. The bill gave rights to victims to be heard during the trial, and make the trial procedure more flexible and victim-friendly. This included witness protection. Relief, restitution and compensation become the right of every victim of communal and targeted violence. The bill also defined the new offence of sexual assault which goes beyond a narrow definition of rape.

*(to be concluded)*

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

side to the Indian side. The issue however is not who is right and who is wrong, but that escalation of tensions can lead to the cold war drawing heat and becoming a hot war which neither wants or can afford. Cease-fire must return and must hold so that the situation de-escalates and normalcy returns. The top leadership of the two countries must intervene and direct the two armies to implement the truce-ensuring mechanisms so that border incidents can be stopped. India must not regard this exercise lightly. It can initiate the process of bringing truce back and give peace a chance. Jaw-jaw is better than war-war any day.

(Continued from Page 6)

dispersion of condenser cooling seawater discharges from proposed nuclear power project at Mithivirdi, details of high tide line/low tide line and CRZ, demarcation of Mithivirdi coast by the Institute of Remote Securing, Anna University, Chennai, baseline environmental data of flora and fauna carried out by the by the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, and pre-operational radiological survey of the site by the Health Physics Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

The committee simultaneously wanted “action proposed for conservation of endangered species, proposed conservation plan for the conservation of Schedule-I species observed within 10 km radius prepared in consultation with the State Wildlife Department, Government of Gujarat under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972”, and a summary of all the representations received, along with the NPCIL’s “comments, clarifications and commitments, if any, along with budget provision for implementing the commitments made”.

On top of all this, the committee which held its meeting in May but finalised finer details a few days back, suggested constituting a sub-committee under Dr AR Reddy, chairman, Atomic Energy Commission – Nuclear Power Projects; AR Sundararajan, vice-chairman; Dr PB Rastogi, director and member-secretary; and Dr A Mehrotra, director, MoEF, regional office, Bhopal, which it wanted to “visit the project site of the project to assess sensitivity in the surrounding environment and suggest protection measures to further improve the environment.”

## Modi’s mental model

Narendra Modi, just as his ally in Andhra Pradesh - Chandrababu Naidu -, fancies himself as the CEO of India Inc.. No wonder his mental model directs him to view the country as a market, people as consumers, and public policy as a supply chain. In the same spirit he fancies himself as the ultimate authority in decision making, his cabinet as his management, and other political parties as competition that needs to be crushed ruthlessly. In this model of thinking development flows to people who can afford to pay. There is also a place for a token contribution for corporate social responsibility. Brand management is a big part of corporate thinkin Modi brings to the table. “Ends justify the means” is a tacit moral framework

of his market driven mental model. India indeed is going through a fundamental shift in thinking. Social justice is not trending anymore.

The trends from Gujarat model of development suggest that investment in Modi’s dreams produces exponential returns for business partners. Measurable results delivered in time bound manner will receive support from Modi. He is committed to invigorating the market and enhancing investor confidence. Towards that goal, he will use his power to remove any barriers to development such as environmental activism, trade unionism or unauthorized corruption at ground level that gets in the way of projects that he will bless.

–Uday Dandavate

## Government Advertisements

A report in the *Malayala Manorama* under the title ‘No minister’s face in government advertisements’ made interesting reading. The suggestion is reportedly by a three member committee appointed, in April 2014, by the apex court in a PIL filed 10 years ago! The following questions arise:

Why should the government give advertisements at all? Isn’t it the duty of the fourth estate to act as the link between the government and the people? I believe it to be so and unless the media, both print and visual, fulfills this duty diligently not only will it be failing in its primary responsibility but also stand to lose readership/viewership over a period of time. So, even about employment opportunities,

it may only be necessary for the government to issue press releases and not advertisements.

Next, why should there be exemptions for the President, PM, Governors and Chief Ministers?

Next, why only photographs in advertisements? Why should projects executed by the governments using tax payers’ money be named after politicians?

And why should the projects executed out of MPLAD Funds bear the name of the MP? Why should it be ‘Project executed with M B Rajesh, MP’s MPLAD Fund for the year 2014-15’ instead of just ‘Project executed with MPLAD Fund for the year 2014-15’?

–P. M. Ravindran



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# janata

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## Disastrous disasters

**S. Viswam**

**Rural innovator's turbine can greatly reduce farming costs**  
Bharat Dogra

**Islam in India: Challenge or Promise - II**  
Wajahat Habibullah

**Malala's Pakistan**  
Khaled Ahmed

**Class is a mobile caste**  
Sankara Narayanan

**Remembering Captain Abhas Ali**  
GGP  
Anand Kumar

There are natural disasters and man-made disasters, and both result in deaths of innocent human beings, large-scale destruction of property and dismantlement of infrastructure put in place at great cost. We have had visitations of both varieties. In Jammu and Kashmir people were taken unawares of impending floods caused by a rain-swollen Jhelum river. In Vishakhapatnam and neighbourhood, nature's fury in the form and shape of a severe cyclonic storm Hudhud made landfall last Sunday and has left the port city and the entire coastal neighbourhood in ruins. A merciful providence saved Odisha from Hudhud but in that state too lakhs of people have had to be shifted to safer places. All in all, the disasters have had a painfully demoralizing impact on public morale.

However, even amidst chaos, there are some reasons for gratification. The people and the authorities are able to say that "it was bad enough, but it could have been worse" after suffering hardship for three days. First, precious lives were saved because of timely and organized evacuation of people. Unlike in Jammu and Kashmir, where nobody knew that floods were about to hijack the government itself and leave vast

areas of urban and rural dwellings water-logged, ISRO's satellites had warned Odisha and Andhra Pradesh where Hudhud would strike and at what time. Disaster management teams of the Centre and the state governments could join hands with the security forces and volunteers to evacuate people and thus minimized casualties.

Second, the fact that such large-scale evacuation was possible at all shows that the efficiency level of disaster management personnel has vastly improved. This is not to be scoffed at. Disaster management as a concept is fairly new in India and there are still states which have not set up disaster management authorities. Large deaths had resulted from high-velocity storms in the past. The National Disaster Management Authority is not one hundred percent staffed as yet, and the Centre seems uncaring about its responsibilities in this regard. Hudhud swept vast areas at windspeed of more than 200 kms per hour, and only those who have experience of facing storms can know what a challenge it is to face upto such fury of nature.

Third, the authorities have learnt to respond more speedily to such

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disasters. Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu, already beseeching the Centre to fund the new state's development, made camp in Vishakhapatnam immediately after Hadhud left the coast. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an aerial survey and assessed the damage. Against Naidu's demand of Rs. 2000 crores as relief, Modi sanctioned Rs.1000 crores.

Whatever relief comes from the governments will be too meager to take care of the needs of people. In Jammu and Kashmir, the disaster was so huge that the state government was paralysed at the very sight of devastation on the ground. The impact of floods on Srinagar and neighbourhood was so devastating that despite a month having gone by, normalcy is yet to return. The Chief Minister has repeatedly declared that the state is not ready for the assembly elections and called for the cancellation of polls. In Vishakhapatnam, it will take months before normalcy is restored. The damaged building of the port city's civilian airport gives you an idea of Hudhud's mischief and the kind of challenge inherent in rebuilding the city which is to serve as Andhra Pradesh's capital. The city has lost most of its trees, and a better part of infrastructure. A new city has to be built on the ruins of the old. This is a challenge not to be left to the government alone. The civil society will be called upon to rise to the occasion.

Whatever the government's efforts, in the final count it is the people and leaders of the civil society to decide what kind of a city to raise on the debris of the present one and that too, a city

*(Continued on Page 9)*

*Captain Abbas Ali*

## A life worth remembering

Captain Abbas Ali, who died on Saturday October 11, the day on which many were remembering JP, should be remembered for his passionate urge for Socialist unity, even though there is much more in his life that is worth remembering and can be an inspiration to younger socialists.

When he turned 90, and there was a function to celebrate it, he made a fervent appeal for socialist unity and those who were present on the stage – all the who's who of the socialist movement were there – concurred. All of them felt that what he was urging was worth doing and when they assured that they would do it were not hypocritical, but sincere. The urge to unite, among the socialists, is as serious and persistent as, some say in half jest, the urge to split. Unfortunately after the function, those socialists who were in a party which was in power got busy with their routine of keeping the party going and remaining in power and those who were in parties that were not in power, felt the past experience so daunting that they despaired and did not pursue. It is not that some of them were not important enough in the movement who could have pursued this Captain Saheb's injunction and if they had done it as single-mindedly as he wanted may have even succeeded, but the failure of the past efforts had such demoralizing effect that his plea was not taken seriously. Net result is that the socialists have remained as scattered as ever. It is this which hurt the Captain. He was forever impatient with socialists for not doing enough to unite, not enough to take up the issues of the masses, the poor, the deprived. His commitment to socialism and his experience of

the movement as an active worker, an office bearer, a leader made him feel, and certainly rightly, that if socialists could be on one page the myriad problems that the country faced would get solved. He was as much committed to equality as to communal harmony and he felt very strongly that the socialists, and also perhaps communists, could ensure peace and harmony between the two communities. He believed that the fight against oppression, against injustice, against inequality would be better waged by socialists than other forces. Ageing and with the frail body, he ruminated in the evening of his life over his own past, the problems of the socialist movement, and felt helpless, in fact, frustrated. Frustrated because he could not do much to pursue what he believed to be the need of the hour. Anyone who met him would get a feel of his passion and the desire to see that socialists were restored to their past glory and also get singed for their inaction.

On August 9, in 2011, he was in Mumbai to pay homage to the martyrs at the August Kranti Maidan and to flag off the Saptkranti Vichar Yatra organized by the Yusuf Meherally Centre with the help of Rashtra Seva Dal. There too, while wishing the yatra success, he told the yatri to create a climate for unity. He repeated this at Dadar, immediately afterwards, where the yatri and the socialists of Mumbai had assembled. As it happens, George Fernandes too was there, perhaps that was his last visit to the city and the last public assignment. And he made it a point to be at the Yusuf Meherally Memorial Lecture in the Gandhi Peace Foundation on September 23.

Captain Sahab joined the Socialist Party in 1948 and remained the part of socialist movement till his last breath. Abbas Ali joined politics under the influence of socialist leaders, including Rammanohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan. In 1966, he became the State General Secretary of Sanyukta Socialist Party. He played an important role in the formation of first non-Congress government (*Samvid Sarkar*) in Uttar Pradesh in 1967.

Captain Saheb was arrested and kept behind the bars during the entire period of the Emergency. He was kept in Bulandsahar, Barailly and Naini Central Jails. In 1977, when the Emergency was lifted and national elections were announced, Socialist Party merged with the Janata Party and he was elected to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council and was appointed as the first President of Uttar Pradesh unit of the merged party.

Shortly before his death, while attending a public function at Aligarh on the eve of August 15, Captain Sahab remembered Subhashbabu and said, "There is only one unfulfilled wish of my life and that is that the true story behind the last few days of my leader Subhash Chandra Bose should see the light of the day".

He was born on January 3, 1920 in Kalandar Gadhi near Khurja, in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh. In his early life he was inspired by Shaheed Bhagat Singh. An alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University, Abbas Ali joined the British Indian Army in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of World War II. In 1945, when Netaji raised the

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## The critical optimist

Anand Kumar

One of the leading lights of the socialist movement, Captain Abbas Ali, is no more. It is a great loss for the nation, as Indians will be deprived of the wisdom and encouragement of a selfless socialist leader who gave his all for the cause of freedom, justice and equality. Such elders are needed today more than ever, for resisting the forces that dehumanise people and for working to build an egalitarian society. We need Abbas Ali's sage-like guidance in these times, when we witness a politics of hate and greed. He was a unique and towering figure who represented the convergence and continuity of the traditions of 20th century Indian mass movements - from the freedom struggle to the socialist struggles and the JP movement - as well as anti-authoritarian resistance.

Abbas Ali was initiated into the anti-imperialist struggle against the British Raj by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. After Independence, accompanied by Partition, he refused to migrate to Pakistan even when several members of his family took the exit route due to the humiliation and violence perpetrated by communal forces in 1946-47. He joined Narendra Dev, Rammanohar Lohia and Raj Narain and became an important socialist/kisan leader of northern India, leading historic marches in Delhi and Lucknow in the 1950s and '60s. He was one of the major voices behind the popular slogan "*Bhukhi janata chup na rahegi; Dhan aur dharti bant ke rahegi*".

The fearlessness of the very affectionate Captain Abbas Ali was legendary. Along with Lohia, he was one of the architects of non-

Congressism in 1964-67. But Abbas Ali disagreed with the push for the common civil code. He went to prison several times, with Raj Narain and George Fernandes. At the same time, he always remained committed to socialist principles when these colleagues tried to pursue political pragmatism after Lohia. At the time of the "Indira wave", he did not care for the forces of authoritarianism and answered the call of Jayaprakash Narayan, which landed him in jail for 19 long months during the Emergency. The failure of the Janata regime did not discourage him from remaining engaged with and active in progressive initiatives for the rest of his life. He was one of the guiding forces behind the socialists in organising the Lohia Centenary in 2009-11 across the country.

Abbas Ali lived a life of pragmatic idealism and optimistic activism. He symbolised the courage of conviction for four generations of democratic, patriotic and secular forces. Therefore, it was not surprising that it was Abbas Ali who was requested to light the torch and hand it over to the founding leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party at Jantar Mantar on November 26, 2012.

A person has three levels of being - biological, ideological and spiritual. Abbas Ali reached the biological limits of his illustrious life on October 11 - the birth anniversary of one of his heroes, Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan - in Aligarh. But his remarkable triple role - as freedom fighter, socialist leader and the voice of hope, reason and courage - will be part of our folklore for generations to come.

His autobiography is going to be a great source of strength for the large family of his admirers spread all over India and the rest of South Asia, as it presents the fascinating narrative of a legend who represented a unique balance of optimism and critical thinking. He remained cautious and modest in the periods of success and jubilation. At the same time, he was never disheartened by political realities. Listening to him always motivated one to move further.

In the last few years, he had become weak and infirm. But he never missed invitations to programmes to remember the heroes of our times or think together about the challenges and tasks before democratic forces and socialist activists. Who can forget his call for the unity of progressive forces given in New Delhi as recently as June 5, 2014, in a programme organised to remember the promises of the Total Revolution Movement? Who will not miss him from future initiatives and gatherings for the cause of the working masses and people living on the margins of market society?

*(Continued from Page 3)*

banner of armed revolt, Abbas Ali left the British army and joined the Indian National Army. Shortly thereafter, he was arrested, court marshaled and sentenced to death and was imprisoned in Multan Fort. When India gained independence, he was released along with Captain Manjit Singh (Jullandhar), Captain Abdul Aziz (Rawalpindi) before the death sentence was meted out. His memoir in Hindi under the title “*na rahun kisi ka dastnigar-mera safarnama*” was published in 2009 by Rajkamal Prakashan, a book worth a read, capturing not just his life, but the events of those days.

–GGP

## Rural innovator’s turbine can greatly reduce farming costs

**Bharat Dogra**

Mangal Singh has created the potential of saving millions of litres of diesel per year and the accompanying reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, apart from helping millions of farmers to irrigate their crops at a low cost. This can become a reality very soon if the government takes the necessary steps for installing Mangal Turbines (MT) wherever these are useful.

The basic use of this device is to lift water from streams without using diesel or electricity. Mangal Singh has received the patent for this invention which has been admired by several highly placed officials and scientists.

B. K. Saha, former Chief Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh, has written about this device, “I made a detailed analysis of the economic viability of the ‘Wheel’ and its comparative advantage vis-a-vis alternative methods of pumping water from streams and small rivers for irrigation. The system is extremely cost effective even after taking into consideration the cost of the Stop Dam. Where the Stop Dam is already available the system is even more cost effective. Installation of this device is strongly recommended wherever there is flowing water in small streams by constructing a stop dam and installing one or two water wheels as designed and developed by Mangal Singh. It saves on energy like electricity or diesel and is ecologically completely benign.”

Dr. B. P. Maithani, former Director in the National Institute of Rural Development, says about MT, “it is undoubtedly unparalleled in its simplicity and utility. Its cost

benefit cannot be restricted to the extent of area irrigated and increase in production and income on account of that. Its benefits are multiple and multidimensional.

A report titled ‘Problems and Potential of Bundelkhand with Special Reference to Water Resource Base’ was prepared in 1998 by the Centre for Rural Development and Technology IIT Delhi and Vigyan Shikshan Kendra. This report examined MT carefully and recommended it for its great utility. This report said, “This turbine is a fine example of common people’s inventiveness, and should be encouraged by all means for people’s benefit. It is unfortunate that in the pervasive atmosphere of “foreignomania”, this device has not got the recognition it deserves.”

This technology is described by Mangal Singh in the following words - “The water wheel turbine machine consists of a water wheel which is firmly mounted on a steel shaft and supports on two bearing blocks fixed on foundation supports. The shaft is coupled with a suitable gearbox through universal couplings for stepping up speed of rotation. Output shaft of the gear box is coupled on one end with a centrifugal pump for lifting water and the other end is mounted with a suitable pulley for deriving power for operating any machine.

Apart from lifting water the Mangal turbine can also be used for several additional tasks such as operating atta chakki, sugarcane, crushing, threshing and winnowing, oil expelling, chaff cutting, etc.

*(Continued on Page 8)*



## Islam in India: Challenge or Promise - II

Wajahat Habibullah

The draft bill, never debated in Parliament, was also attacked calling it “anti-Hindu”. But Hindu minorities too are covered under the bill in states where they form a minority population. Kashmir’s Pundit community that had been forced into a massive exodus in 1990-91, and is still to be rehabilitated, although its security stands restored, was covered in the category of ‘internally displaced persons.’ Further, it covered all religious and linguistic minorities in India and includes scheduled caste and scheduled tribe groups. Under the bill, relief shall be granted to all, including minorities, non-minorities, SCs, non-SCs, STs and non-STs affected by communal and targeted violence. The new bill had been drafted along the lines of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act - which protects particular social groups like dalits and tribal.

### Reservation or Affirmative Action?

Does the answer then lie in reservation in government employment for Muslims as recommended by the Ranganath Commission? For decades, the issue of affirmative action for Muslims has been a politically fractious one in India. But these arguments have been steadily eroded by an undeniable and worrisome by-product of India’s democratic development: Muslims, as a group, have fallen behind in education, employment and economic status, partly because of persistent discrimination. Muslims are more likely to live in villages without schools or medical facilities, as the Sachar Committee report

found in 2006 and less likely to qualify for bank loans.

In Uttar Pradesh, the country’s poorest and most populous state, with the largest Muslim population, all of India’s caste and religious demarcations are on vivid display. It was here that one of India’s most searing acts of religious violence occurred in 1992, when the Babri Masjid, built at the time of the Mughal conquest, was destroyed by right-wing Hindu activists.

But Uttar Pradesh has also witnessed the political rise of the Dalits. Before losing the recent election, Mayawati, the state’s powerful Dalit chief minister (who uses one name), dominated Uttar Pradesh and used her position to reward many of her supporters with jobs, housing and other benefits. Dalits still remain overwhelmingly poor and marginalized in many parts of India, but Ms. Mayawati’s extensive use of the reservation quota system and other preferential policies in Uttar Pradesh provided opportunity to many Dalits.

As discussed earlier, most Muslims in India are the descendants of Hindus, many of whom were engaged in professions considered lowly in the then increasingly hide bound caste system, which turned to Islam over the centuries, often to gain social status. Yet class affiliations never fully disappeared, meaning that a hierarchy lingered among Muslims in India, in extreme cases with a rigid caste structure subsisting into the twentieth century as in the coral islands of Lakshadweep off the coast of Kerala. Two

government commissions sought to include “backward” Muslims in the quota system by using their former professional identity, along with educational and economic indicators.

India’s four southern states have extended some affirmative action benefits to Muslims, if not explicitly along religious lines, but elsewhere Muslims have largely been excluded. And in the State of UP particularly, many Muslims have watched as Dalit neighbours have on jobs, or college slots, through quotas that, over time, brought better jobs and salaries. But many Muslims concede that they were also to blame because for too long they did not push their children to stay in school. That has changed. There is today a yearning in the community for education, particularly for girls

What then should be clear is that there is in government not only a consciousness, but indeed a roadmap for addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim community, and the means of amelioration. The instrumentalities for affecting this are also in place. Yet, the progress in advancing along that roadmap has been tardy. As for political will, as has been discussed, the subject and the extent to which government might address it has indeed been the subject of vigorous debate. And the federal structure of the administration, particularly inasmuch as it applies to investment in development work, has consistently worked to the disadvantage of the Central government accounting for the foundering of many of its major initiatives in the field of

infrastructure and development. This has been exacerbated by the end in the 1980s, of what had been in effect a nation with the same political party ruling at the Centre and in most if not all States. Thus States with competing political ideology have often jostled with assertion of policy, without either the determination or the strength to enforce implementation

But this in turn has sparked rising initiatives in whole sections of minorities, including Muslims, both intellectual and working class who, in partnership with others but who understand the issues, have taken recourse to civil society initiatives. The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), born in Rajasthan in 1990, an NGO credited with having taken the lead in conceiving of and formulating India's path breaking Right to Information Act, 2005, sought to use modes of struggle and constructive action for changing the lives of its primary constituents, the rural poor. In the period leading up to its formation it had taken up issues of re-distribution of land and minimum wages. These were seen as the two basic issues of the rural landless and the poor of the area. But this endeavor was launched with a declared consciousness that the Muslim community were prominent among the targeted constituency and required a concerted effort at inclusion.

A Dehradun based NGO, the Rural Litigation & Entitlement Kendra (RLEK) has been working for nearly 4 decades in Uttarakhand. This was set up by a group of vibrant and enthusiastic youth who started development work in the tribal area of the then State of Uttar Pradesh and is now part of the State of Uttarakhand. Today RLEK is working in 6 states Uttarakhand,

Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Haryana. RLEK has, through its work realized how vital human life is to the conservation and sustenance of the environment. This has led RLEK to play a positive role in furthering the cause of human rights and environmental protection within the vast forest areas of Uttarakhand and UP, the habitat of the Muslim Van Gujjar, with whom it has been striving to secure the rights of the community as forest dwellers. In the process RLEK has helped greatly in promoting awareness of the community through education, both adult and child, legal literacy, human health, veterinary health, milk marketing-which is the basis of the earning of van Gujjar-and informal adult literacy

The opening decade of the 21st century has seen the rise of a number of NGOs with a leadership of Muslims, but consciously reaching for the support of civil society in general. ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy) is an Indian socio-cultural organization established in March 2003, as a response to 2002 Gujarat riots. Shabnam Hashmi, sister of a slain young Marxist Safdar Hashmi and founder of SAHMAT, Marxian historian Prof. K N Panikkar and social activist and Harsh Mander, an IAS officer who took his retirement from service consequent to that event, were the founding members. Based in Delhi, ANHAD works in the field of secularism, human rights and communal harmony.[1] ANHAD's activities include secular mobilization, sensitizing people about their constitutional rights, research and publication of books and reports, welfare programs for marginalized sections of society, launching creative mass mobilization campaigns. It has sought to address issues through convening People's

tribunals. It also works as a pressure group among political circles to take action against communalism. Members are often the first to arrive in response to reports of communal clashes. Most recently this was the case in Araria District of Bihar, where three civilians died in police firing, and in Bharatpur District, site of the communal clash between Muslim Meos and Hindu Gujjar.

The Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), chaired by Justice Ahmadi, former Chief Justice of India, was established in the year 1986 with a view to promote empirical and conceptual research. Research is carried out on ideologies and problems relevant to Indian polity, society, economy, religion and culture. Attention has been focused on the problems of Muslims and other minority groups. The studies include the problems of development processes, community relations, social tensions, status of women etc. Within this period the Institute has established itself as a Centre of research and intellectual activities, which is known for its objectivity in the academic world. Its achievements and program have received recognition from the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. The IOS is in Consultative Status (Roster) with ECOSOC of UN.

The Institute has, since its initiation tried to fill the academic vacuum in approaching societal issues faced by the Indian people in general and Muslims in particular. It has in the opening decade of the 21st century increasingly provided a platform for serious intellectual endeavor in the areas of Social Sciences and Humanities, and became a trendsetter in the fields of conceptual and investigative research on the Qur'anic approach to human problems and the problems

of Muslims in India. Various survey projects, which focus on the problems of Muslims and other weaker sections of Indian society, are fulfilling a long felt need for statistical information and analysis in different areas.

MEGA-Sky (Minority Education for Growth and Advancement-Skills for Youth), operating out of New Delhi, on the other hand focused on educational opportunity for disadvantaged Muslim children. This program was initiated in 2009 with the assistance of USAID and now covers children both in and out of school in selected blocks in four states, Bihar, Rajasthan, UP and Delhi, mobilizing local charitable organizations to access outlying and conservative Muslim neighborhoods. An interesting feature of their curriculum is providing education in English through Madrassas.

This may be placed in the context of the decentralization now mandated by the Constitution of India, wherein it makes every village a self-governing unit: Section 243 (d) of the Constitution of India reads: "Panchayat" means an institution (by whatever name called) of self-government constituted under article 243B, for the rural areas. The objective of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in bringing this amendment was to give voice to those without voice in the governance of their own neighborhoods. But the decentralization sought has not thus far become a reality. Given that the Gram Sabha under the Constitution is expected to be a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level, it was hoped that this provision would give each individual in his own habitation the power of a legislator; Hence the importance for the minority community, the

challenges before whom have been described. But this fact should illustrate that the instrumentalities for rectification exist, and although they have not been widely adopted thus far, for a host of reasons, not least among which is resistance from the existing establishment, these have begun to be used. "Social audit" has become a catch phrase and its exercise has invariably been effective although admittedly this has been limited.

### Conclusion

I have referred repeatedly in my lecture to Partition and described the present predicament of the Muslim community. But does this predicament stem from that Partition? Why then the communal confrontations that preceded the Partition, in fact were in many ways a cause for it. The answer lies in 1857 and a war that shook the British Empire like nothing that came before. Hence the cultivated idea, as Indians grew to be conscious of nationhood after the European fashion, that eminent Hindus like Veer Savarkar and Muslims like Sir Saiyed Ahmed Khan, became convinced that Hindus and Muslims were in fact two nations, each beholden to the British for its survival. India's own quest in building a multi-ethnic nation state, the fundamental rights of equality and equal opportunity, guaranteed under its Constitution, have not been fully realized, in different measures, in the context of the minorities in India, where various exclusionary forces are entrenched deep in the systems and mechanisms that have kept sections of the minorities, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist, on the fringes of the development process. Here then lies both the challenge and the promise of Islam in India. I have sought to describe the challenges faced by India in its struggle, complicated by an evolving democratic framework, with the

dictates of the Union increasingly looked upon as an intrusion by the States, themselves increasingly politically self-sustaining, even if not, thanks to India's financial structure, not so financially. To address this, the government at the Centre and in each State, has to act proactively to create an environment where, first and foremost, all the minority communities feel protected and confident of access to strong legal tools and redress mechanisms already extant in the system, to address specific forms of exclusion and protection of its human rights. Emerging instruments of governance provide the leverage. We have decentralization of governance through the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution making Panchayat Raj, an instrument of local self-government, a constitutional imperative, thus making every registered voter a legislator for his own village or township. To ensure accountability and transparency in governance India has among the world's strongest laws on the subject, the Right to Information Act 2005, failure to comply with which has often brought government to grief. As India emerges as a major force in the world for freedom and public participation in governance, Islam in India can flaunt its legacy of harmonious growth. But it can at the same time not be denied that the community has in itself not capitalized on its heritage of inclusion or availed of these levers in governance, largely from a lack of knowledge. But within civil society the glimmer of consciousness is already discernible.

I might conclude with an exact replication taken from the internet, of a letter received by me by e-mail on Friday, April 13, 2012, which will, I hope, demonstrate the access to authority that a Muslim, like every

Indian today enjoys, and sums up the gist of my own presentation:

To,  
The Chairman  
National Commission for Minorities  
New Delhi

**Sub: PM's New 15 point program is not properly enforced in Bihar state**

Sir,

*I humbly submit that the PM's New 15 point programme is not properly implemented in letter and spirit as per guidelines .*

*Infect there is no such committees are constituted neither in the state level nor in district level for the benefits of the minority communities.*

*As because it has been initiated by the P.M.O, the govt of Bihar is not seriously interested to implement the same on political bias perhaps . The govt of Bihar issued a notification No.456 dated 17/07/2007 in this regard without proper and proportionate representation of the minorities .*

*According to the Govt's notification No 456 dt.17/07/2007 only the govt. officials of the concerning department are included in such committees since last 5 years .*

*Hence virtually there is no progress at all in this regard.*

*I therefor request your kind honour to look after the same as it will change the face and status of the minority people at large economically, educationally and morally.*

Thank,s

Your's Faithfully  
(Haji) Zafeer Ahmad

References :

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2. Foreign Affairs March/April 2008, Council on Foreign Relations, NY
3. NSSO of 1999-2000 percentages: ST Rural 45.8%, Urban 35.6%; SC Rural 35.9%, Urban 38.3%; OBCs Rural 27.0 %, Urban 29.5%
4. Arunachal Pradesh; Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Kerala, Karnataka, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand
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8. Section 302 IPC

**(Continued from Page 4)**

It has been estimated that if one unit of Mangal Turbine runs for 11 hours in a day, then it saves 44 litres of diesel in a day (on the basis of use of 4 litre diesel per hour by 25 HP diesel pump). Again assuming irrigation by MT on 190 days in a year, a single unit of MT can save 8360 litres (44x190) in a typical year. Over a lifetime of 15 years one unit of MT can potentially save 125400 litres (8360x15). In terms of greenhouse gas emissions (using assumption made in US Environment Protection Agency fact sheet) this works out to 335 tonnes. This estimate by Dr. Jai Shankar Singh is made on the basis of the assumption that one unit of MT will lift water from a stream which is equivalent to 25 HP diesel pump set and irrigate a command area of 50 ha.

Reduction in diesel consumption and related GHG emissions can further increase significantly to the extent that the M.T. is used also (in addition to water lifting) for processing of various farm produce and other work.

Despite suffering so many adversities and against so much hostility, apart from installing MTs at several places (or doing the initial work necessary for this) in his native district (Lalitpur, U.P.), Mangal Singh has also travelled far and wide in Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and other states to help in the installation of Mangal Turbines at various places. All this work has been in very difficult conditions. At the time of writing this, Mangal Singh is a broken man. Therefore there should be no further delay in immediately supporting his work. Also at a policy level the Government should take a decision to spread Mangal Turbines at suitable locations.



## Kashmir issue

A few years ago, Wajahat Habibullah, a senior IAS officer and the current chairman of the National Commission for Minorities made a chilling disclosure about the assassination of senior cardiologist and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) ideologue Dr Abdul Ahad Guru. Habibullah was the divisional commissioner of the Kashmir Valley in 1993, the year in which Guru was killed, and in his book, *My Kashmir Conflict and the Prospects of Enduring Peace*, Habibullah has claimed that Guru's assassination was orchestrated by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, who were in league with a detained Hizbul Mujahideen militant.

"The Police made an arrangement with Zulqarnain, then in custody, who agreed to kill Guru in exchange for his release. But to ensure that this collusion remained a secret, Zulqarnain was killed shortly thereafter," Habibullah wrote in his book. As peace returns to Kashmir, the locked lips of sleuths, officers and informers are opening up, revealing chilling accounts of cases that have dogged media and diplomats. One such case is the kidnapping of six western tourists by the militant group al Faran from the South Kashmir Mountains.

The award winning British journalists Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark have already earned fame by investigating United States' secret assistance to Pakistan's nuclear programme, exposing scientist AQ Khan's nuclear network and routes of proliferation in their earlier book *Deception*. Their latest book - *The Meadow*, published by Penguin - has surpassed the confines of journalistic

investigations. It not only explicates the nuances of the al Faran case, but it also reveals how Indian security forces and their agents had scripted a ceasefire with a dreaded Pakistani outfit Harkat-ul-Ansar to jointly wipe out Hizbul Mujahideen from the region.

The al Faran episode is an apt prism that helps one see India's handling of Kashmir, and the West's response to the conflict. It is also clear that after the kidnapping, the West took a different view of Kashmir, seeing it no longer as a struggle for self-determination, but as a theatre for terrorism with potential global consequences. The militants are said to have carried out their atrocities to secure the release of some of their more hardcore counterparts, but for the Narasimha Rao government, this incident was an opportunity to maximise an infliction of pain on Pakistan, fulfilling a key plank of the Rao doctrine: to frame Pakistan as a state sponsor of terror. Finally the end of the western backpackers came not in a terrorist hole, but with government forces, claims the book. Though it pays lip service to 'finding a political solution', in practice the counter-insurgency doctrine in India has been to "get them by the balls, and the hearts and minds will follow".

Though voluminous and detailed, the 500-page book is a gripping real-life thriller, unveiling the games

sleuths and security agencies played in Kashmir. The authors also disclose rivalries between the Indian army, intelligence and police outfits. They reveal the reluctance of New Delhi to allow either the Jammu and Kashmir Police or Scotland Yard or FBI to pursue investigations that could have ended the hostage crisis. Levy and Scott-Clark write, "Anywhere else in the world, the fraternity of police would have shared intelligence and war stories. Here (in Kashmir) everything was infused by politics, shrouded in secrecy and predicated by control." The brutal kidnapping of the Western hostages is clearly the tip of an iceberg. The region waits for more storytellers like Levy and Scott-Clark.

It is also in the interest of justice and New Delhi's democratic credentials that it should institute impartial inquiries into such incidents. The trust of the Kashmiri people needs to be restored and getting them by their balls will never translate into peace. Over the past four centuries, Kashmir has been ruled through a lethal combination of force and fear. The outpouring of resentment in 2008 and 2010 has conveyed that the fear may have dissipated, but force still remains. We need to build a combination of democracy, compassion and understanding to settle the issue of Kashmir. We need to take into account people and not territory.

—**Iftikhar Gilani**

*(Continued from Page 2)*

which has raised its stake to be the capital. At the end of the second world war, although the US doled out funds under the Marshall Plan, it was the people, who, through

their industriousness, hard work and unity, that raised huge cities out of the ruins of the war. A city like Dusseldorf for instance, was built on an old city which was razed to the ground by allies' bombardment.

# Malala's Pakistan

**Khaled Ahmed**

A girl from picturesque Swat Valley — once visited by the Chinese traveller, Hsuan Tsang, in search of ancient Buddhist scriptures — has won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2014. At 15, Malala Yousafzai, who had openly objected to the Taliban's policy of destroying girls' schools, was shot in the head at close range by a Taliban terrorist. The Taliban's psychopath chief, Mullah Fazlullah, had ordered her execution from his hideout in next-door Afghanistan. Unfortunately, a popular TV channel in Islamabad aired a "morning view" on October 13, saying Malala's Nobel was a Great Game conspiracy aimed at Pakistan.

Pakistan has, by and large, welcomed the award but many who denounced her as an American agent are silent. For its part, the state has honoured her with all kinds of medals and awards, in the face of a rising storm of opinion which wanted Malala set aside in favour of Aafia Siddiqui, an al-Qaeda agent doing 86 years in an American prison, whose release has been demanded by the Islamic State. Pakistan's then army chief, General Kayani, saved Malala from death by dispatching her post haste to the UK, where permanent damage to her brain could be prevented.

After her departure for the UK, a pro-Taliban Pakistan went crazy. Some expat Pakistanis in the UK announced that they had recognised Malala for what she was: a renegade from the Muslim cause. A Britain-based Islamic group decided to meet at the infamous Lal Masjid in Islamabad to issue a religious decree against her, accusing her of supporting the "occupying" US forces in Afghanistan. Most people in Pakistan did not believe she had been shot in the head.

"There will be a fatwa issued regarding Malala Yousafzai, taking into account the full story of her injury, including her public statements in support of the occupying US army in the region and mocking of key symbols of Islam such as hijab and jihad," said Abu Baraa, a senior member of Shariah4Pakistan. You guessed it. This was a cell linked to Anjem Choudhary, a British-Pakistani currently in trouble for abetting terrorism, and with a reputation that stinks a mile, because of his association with Arab cleric Omar Bakri, now ousted from the UK, and the latter's radical outfit, al-Muhajiroun, as well as for his links with the Britain-based al-Ghurabaa, whose leader has been hiding in Karachi, where Daniel Pearl was killed trying to meet him. Abu Baraa had further stated: "Malala is one of the issues we are going to be addressing because she is being used as a propaganda tool by the enemies of Muslims".

Malala was guilty of defying a warlord possessing unopposed power. Swat was at his feet, honourable men were humbled and women made to surrender their jewellery to the mullahs. The Taliban governed through the spectacle of death in a district known for its soft tribal identity, welcoming tourists as guests. Swat suffered the destruction of schools but there was more that left a deep wound: floggings of alleged thieves and fornicators, beheadings, suicide attacks and target-killings while the local administration stood aside and watched. Objecting to this Islamic governance was akin to signing your own death warrant.

And the state of Pakistan was going through its rabidly anti-

American phase, which looked like an abject surrender to al-Qaeda and the Taliban. An anti-Malala wave gripped the middle class and families were split over whether she was a good Pakistani or a renegade who deserved to be killed. Facebook was full of incredibly filthy charges against her and her father, a schoolteacher who had recognised the genius in her quite early.

Politician Imran Khan, leading his party Tehreek-e-Insaf, which rules in the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, did the right thing by welcoming the Nobel to Malala. It was understandable because he is also an educationist funding a university in his native city, Mianwali. But it should not be forgotten that his government has banned Malala's book from the premises of Peshawar University. The director of the Area Study Centre at the university, Sarfraz Khan, was made to stop the book launch that he was organising. He told the press: "I have received a message from Imran Khan through someone that whatever happened should not have happened."

People retreat in the face of threat of violence. Malala was the victim of this mass pathology. She is only the second Pakistani to have got the Nobel. The first was Abdus Salam, who got it for physics in 1979, for his work on characterising what is now known as "the Higgs boson particle". American scholar Ziad Haider wrote: "For just as Malala's mistake was being a girl, Salam's was being a member of the Ahmadi sect — a religious group declared to be non-Muslims in a 1974 constitutional amendment." After Salam's death, the word "Muslim" in the "first Muslim Nobel laureate" engraved on his tombstone

was painted over by a posse of semi-literate policemen enforcing the law, rendering the inscription absurdly as “First Nobel Laureate”. Haider added: “To be sure, many Pakistanis are ambivalent about Yousafzai. In an environment rampant with anti-American sentiment and conspiracy theories, some view praise for her a way of shaming Pakistan”.

TV anchors scared of getting bumped off by terrorists if they praised Malala or supported the way the West was lionising her, staged discussions to find fault with her. One TV talk show trapped Pakistan’s nuclear physicist, Pervez Hoodbhoy, into praising her book and then attacked him for condoning her for not writing “Peace be Upon Him” after the name of the Holy Prophet. They called him “jahil (illiterate)”. Hoodbhoy got an MSc in solid-state physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1973 and a DPhil in nuclear physics in 1978 from the same institution. The discussants, primed with questions without reading Malala’s book, chided Hoodbhoy on two other scores that no Pakistani can forgive Malala for: she praised Salman Rushdie and favoured Ahmadis as Muslims. When Hoodbhoy told them they were lying he was called “jahil” by a bearded guest who happens to be the chief reporter of a national daily. Needless to say, the discussion was “staged” and no one had read the book except Hoodbhoy. At the official level, one detail went against Malala: the book was narrated to Christina Lamb, whose own book on Pakistan, *Waiting for Allah*, was not liked by the country’s costive bureaucrats. Lamb, a resident foreign correspondent in Pakistan, was made to leave the country.

Abdus Salam fled Pakistan and came back dead to be buried with a defaced tombstone. Malala, too, won’t be able to return to the country she wants to serve. She is far too mature for Pakistan to accept. She

## Satyarthi’s India

Two months ago, when a 20-year-old Hindu woman alleged she was kidnapped, gangraped and forcibly converted to Islam, it had all of Uttar Pradesh on the boil. Her story became grist for the mill in the run-up to the state bypolls, fuelling a BJP campaign against what it calls “love-jihad in which Muslim men trick Hindu women into marriage and force them to convert”.

Ten persons, including the man she accused of tricking her, were arrested.

On Sunday, that story collapsed. The woman landed at a police station and retracted her statement, admitting she had eloped with the Muslim man she loved.

In a statement to city magistrate Satya Prakash Rai, she said she now feared for her life. Since she refused to return home or stay with any of her relatives, she was sent to a Nari Niketan.

The centrepiece of their campaign in tatters, Hindu outfits refuse to give up. They see a “conspiracy” in the U-turn by the woman. Ajay Tyagi, convenor of the Hindu Behen Beti Bachao Sangarsh Samiti, claimed that “the district police are operating at the behest of the ruling party to save the culprits”.

“They want to spare them charges for serious offences. This is why the woman was forced to make such a statement. A Muslim man had been threatening her and her family that

her brother would be killed if she did not make such a statement,” Tyagi alleged. On Monday, the woman’s father turned up with his younger daughter at the Nari Niketan but they were not allowed to meet her.

The father demanded security cover for her saying she may be killed and that he would be accused of honour killing. “My daughter was forced to give such a baseless statement. We apprehend that she may be killed, and I could be booked for honour killing. The police are working to to weaken the case of my daughter’s abduction, forcible conversion and gangrape. A complaint was lodged against ten persons on August 2,” he said.

The Hindu Behen Beti Bachao Sangarsh Samiti is backing the father. “Hum Hindu beti ko kisi keemat par police ke dabao mein doosre dharm ke logon ko nahin saunp sakte (We cannot hand over a Hindu girl to members of the other community under pressure from police),” Tyagi said. “It was our samiti that moved court to seek police cover for the family. The local police were directed to provide them security,” Tyagi said. He alleged that two policemen, who stood guard, were withdrawn on Sunday morning to let the woman leave the home with a Muslim man. SP (Rural) M M Baig, however, said that the security cover was withdrawn after the family made a request in writing to police.

has asked Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to be present in Oslo in December, when she is to receive the medal, and requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be with him.

There is embarrassing symbolism in all this. There is this extraordinary

little girl, who was almost killed by the Taliban, receiving the world’s highest peace award and bringing together two prime ministers who are busy hurling challenges at each other while their countries need peace to carry out their well-known “pro-business” agendas.

- *Indian Express*



# Class is a mobile caste and caste an immobile class

**Sankara Narayanan**

Caste-based reservation was introduced centuries ago by an ingenious theory called Varna Vyavastha. It is a 4-storied building without staircases. Manual labour was assigned to the 4th varna; mind work, administration and trading were reserved for the first three varnas. Top three varnas have powers and responsibilities. But the 4th varna (Sudras and Mlechhas) has no powers and only responsibilities. Chanakya's Arthashastra clearly states that it is the religious duty of the Sudras to serve the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. So caste-based reservation is nothing new to Indians.

Quota or no quota, caste is here to stay. If a person thinks that quota alone will eliminate caste system, he lives in a fool's paradise. He grossly underestimates the stranglehold of caste and overestimates the efficiency of quota. Quota has not created castes. Even when there was no reservation, caste system remained solid. That is the strength of Varnashrama system.

Even the lowest caste person wants to cling on to his caste. To say quota did this damage is falsehood. It was there before quota came into effect. It will be there even if quota is abolished. Let us not fool ourselves by blaming quota for perpetuation of caste system.

De-reservation (to detach job from caste) is a small step to eliminate the caste discrimination and to pave the way for a casteless society. Quota alone is not the solution. Public jobs under quota are just one crore in number while the oppressed castes

are nearly 90 crores. It is just a speck in the ocean.

It requires religious, social, economic and political struggles to abolish caste system. A large number of social reformers (Buddha, Vivekananda, Gandhi, Rammohan Roy, Phule, Subramania Bharati, Periyar EVR, Ambedkar, Narayana Guru, Lohia, etc) made significant contributions in this regard. Only politics brought forward a constitution to give equal rights to all and quota to give some relief to the oppressed castes.

Judicial verdicts ensured egalitarian values. A historic judgment declared that even a Dalit, if qualified, could become pujari in any temple. Barring a few, Hindu religious gurus have hardly made any contribution in abolishing caste system. Rather they just continue the hegemony of a particular caste only.

Quota bashing civil society did almost nothing in elimination of caste system. Though I won't agree to the view of Ambedkar that "Elimination of caste demands elimination of Hindu religion that sanctioned caste," Hinduism cannot have the cake and eat it too forever. Lower castes are accused of sticking to their castes to avail the benefits of quota. For argument sake accepting this as true, the lower castes at least have some justification for this. Upper castes have nothing to gain from the caste quota. Why are they sticking to their respective castes steadfastly? The matrimonial advertisements (given by the upper castes and published by the media mostly under upper castes) speak

volumes about this society's mind-set towards caste.

Blaming only the lower castes for clinging on to their caste identity just for enjoying the quota-benefits is nothing but hypocrisy. The willingness of upper castes to share the spoils with oppressed castes was well exhibited by their hostile reaction to Mandal implementation. What is the contribution of industry and trade, predominantly owned by the upper castes, in uplifting the lower castes? Inclusive culture has been alien to Hinduism. And that attitude marches ahead even now.

Social reforms in Tamil Nadu started much before 1947. Dropping caste names in a feudal society is a significant step. Recently a few Brahmins shamelessly re-started this system in Tamil Nadu by writing Sankara Aiyar, Meera Aiyangar, etc. They just don't realise such a luxury is not available for the oppressed castes. While the adjoining southern states are still clinging on to caste titles like Nairs, Menons, Reddys, Gowdas etc, less said about Northern states the better. Upper castes studiously maintain their superior caste identity by asserting their surnames. Honourable exceptions: Rajnarain, Sushma Swaraj, Lingaraj, Sunil, etc.

Available data clearly now establishes that class elsewhere is caste in India. Percentage of people below poverty line: STs - 80 per cent, SCs - 66 per cent; OBCs - 50 per cent and others - 35 per cent. Even if economic criterion, as tirelessly demanded by the upper classes, is adopted for preferential treatment,



the majority of the beneficiaries will be from lower castes. Upper castes also hardly realise social backwardness is different from economic backwardness.

Whites are the majority in America and Blacks the minority. But American Federal and State governments are giving tax subsidies to those private companies that employ eligible Blacks in their workforce. Consciously they don't want 'Whites only' workforce in private sector too. None in America says that poor among Whites also must get this benefit. In India, this is just the reverse. Majority are Sudras. But the minority upper

castes don't want to lose their hegemony. American Whites don't want social disturbances due to Blacks' backwardness. Indian classes need not worry about any social upheaval because they are certain that Karmic retribution hoax will save them forever. And those upper caste Indians who oppose quota in India have no shame in enjoying the benefits aka quota available in USA for immigrants.

Mandal Commission has two very significant recommendations: 1) If an OBC candidate's parents are matriculates, that person is not eligible for quota 2) OBC quota can be availed only if the women

in the family undertake manual work. Social justice warriors gave a decent burial to these progressive recommendations. They also inflict self-destruction by refusing to fix limit for quota benefit for a particular family. But that cannot be a scapegoat for upper castes to abuse quota. In spite of the shortcomings, it did bring in some relief to the Sudras after suffering for centuries under a racist and exclusive society.

Caste system will go only through a multi-pronged attack. It will be a very long struggle, may be stretching to many centuries. To expect quota alone will usher in a casteless society is just a mirage.

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## Police action against Forward Press

India is a country of many faiths, thoughts and beliefs. It is a land of diversities and therein lies its strength. Democracy has strengthened our diversity. After Independence, the Indian Constitution duly recognized this diversity and provided for protection and preservation of the same.

In different parts of the country, various religious and folk myths are prevalent. In some places, Ravana is worshiped and among the worshipers are Saraswat Brahmins. In Maharashtra, Raja Bali is worshiped, which is something Vaishnavites may not agree with. India is also home to the Asur tribe, which believes that Mahishasur and other Asurs were its forefathers. Several religious functions celebrated with great gusto rely on the image of Asurs, as created by some religious texts. This may be hurtful to those

who do not view Asurs as demons.

The Delhi-based FORWARD Press magazine, in its October 2014 issue centered on Bahujan-Shraman tradition has brought to fore several such traditions, cultural functions, beliefs and thoughts. And these included a re-rendition of the 'myth' of Durga.

In 2011, a group of students of JNU started celebrating 'Mahishasur Martyrdom Day' and over the last four years, the celebration of this Day has started in many places in the country.

On October 9, a group of extremist students lodged an FIR against FORWARD Press in Vasant Kunj police station of New Delhi. We strongly condemn the police action. The police has confiscated the copies of Forward Press. Now the writers and contributors of the magazine are

also on target. This, coupled with the police raids on the homes of the editors of the magazine and the surveillance mounted at the office and the residences of the editors seems to be aimed at disrupting the publication of the magazine.

This is also a wanton assault on the fundamental right to freedom of expression and the tradition of free discourse in our country.

Intellectual debates are not finalized in the police stations or court room. If anyone has any issue with the published materials, he should express his own opinion in words.

We demand that the BJP government should order immediate withdrawal of the case and order the police to stop its illegal action against the magazine and its editorial staff.

**—Uday Prakash, Arundhati Rai, Shamshul Islam, Sharan Kumar Limbale, Kanwal Bharti, Giriraj Kishor, Anand Teltumbade, Manglesh Dabral, Anil Chamadia, Apoorvanand, Veerbharat Talwar, Ram Puniyani, S.Anand, Himanshu Pandya and others**

## Income inequality

It's widely known that income inequality varies a great deal among advanced countries. In particular, disposable income in the United States and Britain is much more unequally distributed than it is in France, Germany or Scandinavia. It's less well known that this difference is primarily the result of government policies. Data assembled by the Luxembourg Income Study (with which I will be associated starting this summer) show that primary income — income from wages, salaries, assets, and so on — is very unequally distributed in almost all countries. But taxes and transfers (aid in cash or kind) reduce this underlying inequality to varying degrees: some but not a lot in America, much more in many other countries.

So does reducing inequality through redistribution hurt economic growth? Not according to two landmark studies by economists at the International Monetary Fund, which is hardly a leftist organization. The first study looked at the historical relationship between

inequality and growth, and found that nations with relatively low income inequality do better at achieving a sustained economic growth as opposed to occasional "spurts." The second, released last month, looked directly at the effect of income redistribution, and found that "redistribution appears generally benign in terms of its impact on growth."

At this point someone is sure to say, "But doesn't the crisis in Europe show the destructive effects of the welfare state?" No, it doesn't. Europe is paying a heavy price for creating monetary union without political union. But within the euro area, countries doing a lot of redistribution have, if anything, weathered the crisis better than those that do less.

But how can the effects of redistribution on growth be benign? Doesn't generous aid to the poor reduce their incentive to work? Don't taxes on the rich reduce their incentive to get even richer? Yes and yes — but incentives aren't the

only things that matter. Resources matter too — and in a highly unequal society, many people don't have them.

Think, in particular, about the ever-popular slogan that we should seek equality of opportunity, not equality of outcomes. That may sound good to people with no idea what life is like for tens of millions of Americans; but for those with any reality sense, it's a cruel joke. Almost 40 percent of American children live in poverty or near-poverty. Do you really think they have the same access to education and jobs as the children of the affluent?

In fact, low-income children are much less likely to complete college than their affluent counterparts, with the gap widening rapidly. And this isn't just bad for those unlucky enough to be born to the wrong parents; it represents a huge and growing waste of human potential — a waste that surely acts as a powerful if invisible drag on economic growth.

—Paul Krugman

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# janata

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**November 2, 2014**

## Patently unethical

**S. Viswam**

**Suspicion against Sikhs**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Cleanly Dress Drive**  
**More Show than Substance**  
Sandeep Pandey

**Fundamentalism Unchecked**  
Sankar Narayanan

**What Ails Left Movement**  
K. S. Chalam

**Review Sardar Sarovar Dam**  
**Don't Dilute MGNREGA**

**Closure of Government Schools**  
**Repeal AFSPA**

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The Supreme Court deserves the nation's gratitude for bringing pressure on the Centre to restore electoral democracy to the State of Delhi which has been under the Governor's rule, with the state assembly in suspended animation, for the last eight months. "In a democratic polity," the court said, "people have the right to have a government and not be ruled by the governor."

Despite frequent urgings by the Supreme Court, the Centre has shown no inclination to resolve the political stalemate. With none of the parties commanding a majority, options before the Centre were limited but they were open. The least controversial and politically with a rewarding potential was to hold fresh elections to the state assembly. The other, but controversial option, was to ask any one of the parties with a majority to form a government. This option was not feasible since despite being the largest single party, even the BJP had no majority. Elections would have been the litmus test, but the Centre shunned that option for reasons best known to itself.

Now, suddenly out of the blue, the apex court is informed that President Pranab Mukherjee has

given assent to the Lt.-Governor Najib Jung's proposal to invite the BJP to explore the possibility of forming government. This is patently unethical because it is an open invitation to horse trading and blatant political manipulation. It is strange that the governor hit upon this idea to end the crisis. Was it on his own? Obviously the suggestion has emanated from the BJP central leadership. It is even more incredulous that the President should have endorsed the idea.

Pranab Mukherjee has created a new precedent by his decision, a precedent which might well be utilized by other parties to promote their own interests. The President should have rejected the proposal at once and not assented to it, more so since he is an experienced politician. And then, the timing. The Supreme Court rightly commented that the governor could have, or should have, done this exercise much earlier. What was the significance in the timing? It is stated on behalf of the BJP that after Haryana, the party was sure of winning the elections if one were to be held now in Delhi also.

The President's action has not been welcomed by anyone other than the BJP supporters. The Supreme

*Between the lines*

## Suspicion against Sikhs

**Kuldip Nayar**

Court was unhappy, and when it expressed its displeasure, the additional solicitor general said that no time frame can be fixed to resolve such political deadlocks, since the attempt to install a popular government was time-consuming! Besides, he argued, the Supreme Court, in the famed S.R. Bommai case had mandated president to explore all possibilities to install a popular government. It was argued by the counsel for the BJP, that when such a stalemate prevailed, the president had the powers to keep the assembly in suspended animation for a year when no party could form a government. The AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal has said that the BJP was trying to induce AAP and Congress MLAs defect or support the BJP through dishonourable means. He was thus confirming the fears that horse-trading would follow the governor's invitation to the BJP to form a government.

In the final analysis, it can be said that the Centre has missed an opportunity to uphold democratic traditions by ruling out fresh elections and resorting instead to underhand politics and manipulations. A re-poll was the best option. It is sheer political expediency that has made the Centre reject it. An unhealthy precedent has been set. Not good for our democracy.

The next issue of *Janata* will carry articles on and by Acharya Narendra Deva to mark 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary year of Acharyaji

—Editor

In the midst of debate on the illegal foreign account holders, the names of those, who were given amnesty a few days before the debate, have been forgotten. Apparently, they are from the both main political parties, the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party. Otherwise, the shouting would not have stopped in such a short time. One other noticeable point is that there has not been even a cursory mention of how the account holders came to accumulate so much money and what steps have been taken to stop the practice.

Stacking money abroad is a crime. Therefore, all those who have hidden money in foreign countries are guilty. The government's hesitation in making their names public is not understandable. Obviously, both the Congress and the BJP are guilty and they do not want their image to be damaged if and when the names are out. Both parties have a lot to hide.

The fact remains that the political parties, which spend crores of rupees during elections, have foreign countries as a safe haven for accumulating the illicit money. In this way, they not only escape public attention but also the amount of large sums which they would have otherwise paid in the shape of taxes.

The people in India should however thank Germany which put the names in the public domain. One German bank got hold of the list of names unwittingly and handed it over to the Government of India. No

intelligence agency in the country can take credit for the list. Why Germany gave the names is not understandable. If it was a pressure of sorts on New Delhi it has worked.

The public was understandably up in arms when it came to know that 800 odd people have money abroad. There must be many other names which have not come out. The amount of money stacked abroad is said to be six lakh crore of rupees.

I recall that when I was India's High Commissioner at London, the stringency of money had made New Delhi to write to its envoys to raise money from the Indians settled abroad. I also made a fervent appeal to the people of Indian origin. But I was surprised when the German ambassador told me that the Indians had so much money deposited in the Swiss banks that they could easily finance many five-year plans.

In any case, the government has now names of foreign account holders. They were reportedly received many months ago when the Congress government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh was at the helm of affairs. Because of political considerations, it took no action against anyone. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who promised to book the guilty in one hundred days of his regime, has begun action only after seven months of coming to power. The Manmohan Singh government sat over the names which were received during its

regime. Why no action was taken has not been explained by the Congress spokespersons. The uncomfortable questions are never answered. The disclosure of names is in the same category.

The Modi government too has sacred cows. It has preferred to name some companies in the corporate sector to others. The three names announced from the corporate sector are probably of those companies which the Modi government has not been able to mulct. Also, the concentration on the corporate sector is meant to divert the people's attention from the political world. The effort is to convince the society that the illicit money is the doing of the corporate sector. This may be true because the money spent on elections, running into thousands of crore comes from the corporate sector. But this is the black money, earned through the illicit means. The politicians, whether in or out of power, have to bear the guilt. They look to the other side than when the corrupt means are used to accumulate money.

That Modi would fight against the vested interests, who have polluted the politics, was expected, particularly when he talked about cleanliness from every public platform. But unfortunately he has not kept his promise. He has made businessmen and bureaucrats more careful in going about their corrupt practices. But the corruption has in no way lessened.

Even now it is not too late to retrieve his reputation if Modi puts all the names on the net. Who among them can be prosecuted depends on the evidence gathered. The disclosure of names will at least absolve him from the responsibility  
*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Cleanliness drive – more show than substance

Sandeep Pandey

Are we any cleaner than before Narendra Modi and all the people who wanted to be photographed with the broom took to sweeping? What happened to the garbage which they cleaned? Where was it disposed? Most of the photographs of people with the broom did not show any garbage. This implies they were cleaning at an already clean place. None was, for example, shown cleaning a toilet. The whole campaign was initiated on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and the insignia used with the campaign clearly marks it being inspired by Gandhian philosophy. But Gandhi made people clean toilets whenever somebody went as a volunteer to him. If the people who came out to sweep clean roads were really serious about cleaning they should have gone inside public toilets, especially the unclean ones and should have cleaned them. How many people who participated in Narendra Modi driven cleanliness campaign actually cleaned any garbage or waste? Was it a one time show or people will do it regularly? Do they ever clean their own homes? Or they depend on the women of the family or domestic helps to do this?

No credit has been given to the community of sweepers, mostly belonging to scheduled castes, who perform the cleaning for us every day. We forgot to thank them. In fact, the task of cleaning is so stigmatized, that most people other than the castes which traditionally perform this task would not do it under

normal circumstances. Persons from other castes who get employed as sweepers sub-contract their job to somebody belonging to castes which traditionally do this work by offering a small share of their salary. This job is considered a thankless job. The second question which needs to be asked is whether there has been any qualitative change in the lives of people traditionally engaged in cleaning work for the whole society? Have we found an alternative to a human being directly entering a sewage drain? It is not uncommon to hear of workers dying because of suffocation due to toxic gases like hydrogen sulphide when they enter sewage drains. Which civilized society would allow its citizen to perform an inhuman task like entering sewage drains? But the practice continues without any remorse on part of the civilized society. Modern technology makes the lives of people comfortable and has come up with many devices to reduce drudgery. But it is not considered necessary to employ technology to clean the sewage drains without human beings entering it.

The worst among the community who does the cleaning jobs are manual scavengers, and among them mostly their women. In 1993 Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act was implemented which made employment of manual scavengers or construction of dry or non-flush latrines illegal. How

serious is the government about implementing this Act is clear from the fact that nobody has been found guilty under this law during the last two decades.

Now the government has come up with Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act in 2013 which clearly implies that the practice still exists. Most DMs would deny that the practice exists in their districts or most CMs would deny that it exists in their states. But the reality is quite different. According to a 2001 census about two crore people are engaged in this employment in 29 states, extending from Tamil Nadu to Jammu and Kashmir and from Gujarat to Mizoram, which implies it is truly an all-India menace.

Manual scavenging will go away only when people have improved sanitation. According to 2010 data only 34 per cent of Indian population has access to improved sanitation; while in Sri Lanka, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Bhutan, respectively, 92, 64, 56, 48 and 44 per cent of population has access to improved sanitation. Only Nepal fares poorer than India with 31 per cent population having improved sanitation. During the two decades from 1990 to 2010, while China went up from 24 per cent of its population having access to improved sanitation to 64 per cent, India rose merely from 18 per cent to 34 per cent during this period. The percentage increase in China was almost double that of India.

Finally, the crucial question is: how is the garbage being disposed? In most cities it is sent to landfills, which are actually agricultural

*(Continued on Page 6)*

### *Appeal to Shri Narendra Modi*

## **Calling for a Review and Discussion on Sardar Sarovar Dam in National Interest**

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing this letter with much agony and enormous concern regarding the formidable impact increase in height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam on river Narmada will have. It will adversely impact the lives of adivasi (tribal) and rural communities, submerge precious natural resources - land, water, tree cover, fish and kill the pure and pious river, Narmada. Narmada – home to the oldest of human civilizations with rare archeological monuments. We request your personal attention and intervention to stop this wanton destruction.

We know and most of us have witnessed the fact that at the present height of the dam, 122 m, itself there are 35,000 and more families residing in the submergence area and hence yet to be rehabilitated. The decision to raise the height of the dam further, erecting 17 meters high gates, to the full reservoir level, i.e. 138.68 meters, will affect 44 additional village communities and one whole township, upto 214 kms long area in the Narmada basin, with 45,000 families. Submergence of highly fertile agricultural land, thousands of houses, wells, schools and other amenities, temples, mosques and at least a million trees, should not be imposed without full, fair and legal rehabilitation. The adivasis, dalits and others in the Valley should not be evicted, and their property should not be evicted without complying with the Supreme Court's directive and NWDT Award. Moreover this human tragedy and man-made disaster cannot ever be acceptable.

We are further informed that immediately after the decision was announced by the NCA on 12th June, the oustees and their representatives met the concerned Ministers at Delhi and appraised them of all the facts, ongoing legal and judicial processes, pending litigation, inquiry into corruption and non-compliance of the orders of the Grievance Redressal Authorities; urging them to put the decision on hold. The Ministers were not fully aware of the project and the ground realities but assured review of the matter.

We realize that the decision is to keep the gates open for the time being, however, erecting the gates itself is akin to raising the height of the dam, which is to be unlawful. The backwater levels now shown to be reduced, after 30 years since the original surveys before 80's, are not scientifically drawn and hence any construction beyond the present height cannot be pushed today as drowning and destruction of houses and fields in the large farming belt of Nimad, M.P. has also begun since last few years and will be worse.

We are not unmindful of the fact that completion of this particular project has been priority for you. However, as the Prime Minister of the nation, you are now expected to look after the welfare of all the citizens, and ensure that the lakhs of oustees, especially in Madhya Pradesh, belonging to the farming, fishing and working classes do not face destitution. You must be aware that your predecessor, former Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh Ji, committed to the Hon'ble Supreme



Court in 2006 that rehabilitation, as per law, would precede any further construction and you are certainly bound both by virtue of your good office and by law to keep up this promise.

Dear Prime Minister, we hope you are aware of the fact that Justice Jha Commission, appointed by the High Court of Madhya Pradesh is investigating thousands of land registries which are forged and fake, and also corruption in payment of grants to thousands, allotment of house plots and construction at the resettlement sites. Fraud in all these has been proved, and the final report is soon likely, that crores of rupees are wasted and rehabilitation is far from complete.

We are also informed that the Report by the expert committee appointed by the Ministry of Environment till 2012 clearly concluded that most of the conditions related to the severe impacts on the natural resources in the Narmada Valley and compensatory measures are not fulfilled. Those include impacts on the health,

forest, fisheries, seismically risky region, the catchment and siltation as also the command area in Gujarat. Without compliance on these, the Dam cannot and should not be pushed ahead, as you will agree.

You are certainly aware that the waters in Sardar Sarovar are also being used for the industries and new projects, such as Coca Cola plant (30 lakh liters/day), the car industry in Sanand alone (60 lakh liters/per day) and many others. Also that a few lakh hectares of land in the command area is now being diverted and reserved as industrial areas. All this indicates the change in the original plan and that there is absolutely no urgency to raise the Dam at the cost of people and the nature. Let the people receive all entitlements and natural losses be prevented and mitigated and then the Dam can be raised to completion.

You may have also been informed that the oustees in the SSP-affected areas are now legal owners of the acquired lands and houses, as per Section 24(2) of the recently passed "Right to Fair Compensation and

Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013"; since they continue to remain in possession of the acquired properties, till date. It would thus be unlawful to continue with further construction that is bound to lead to submergence and interference with the property and human rights of the owners.

We, therefore, urge you Sir, to hold a multi stakeholder consultation at the earliest, involving the people in the Valley, struggling since decades who have made a difference to the struggle by the Project affected people for their rights, across India. We expect that you will take a new democratic initiative, to know the truth and respect law, democracy, human values and human rights.

We call upon you to withhold the decision to raise the height until such a review exercise is concluded, and not to carry out any construction at the dam site.

We hope you will take a just and fair decision and respond to this appeal at the earliest.

Thanking you,

Yours' Sincerely,

**Justice (Retd.) Rajinder Sachar**, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court; **Aruna Roy**, Former National Advisory Council member; **Swami Agnivesh**, Bandhu Mukti Morcha; **Admiral (Retd.) L Ramdas**, Chief of Naval Staff; **Madhu Bhaduri**, IFS (Retd.); **Dr. B.D. Sharma**, IAS (Retd), Fomer Commissioner SC/ST Commission; **Harsh Mander**, IAS, former National Advisory Council Member; **Ramaswamy R. Iyer**, IAS, Secretary, Government of India (Retd.); **Pushpa Bhave**, Feminist, Socialist, Maharashtra; **M. Illango**, Chairperson, National Fishworkers Forum; **Prof. K.B. Saxena**, IAS (Retd.) Secretary to Government of India; **Sandeep Pandey**, Asha parivaar, Magsaysay Awardee; **Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy**, Jawahar Lal Nehru University; **Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty**, Council for Social Development, New Delhi; **Prof. Jean Dreze**, former National Advisory Council Member; **Arundhati Dhuru**, Uttar Pradesh State Advisor to Supreme Court Commissioner on Right to Food; **Sanjay Kak**, Filmmaker, New Delhi; **Kumar Ketkar**, Political Analyst; **Sahas Borkar**, Working Group on Alternatives, **Sumit Chakravarty**, Editor, Mainstream; **Prafulla Samantara** - Lok Shakti Abhiyan Odisha; **Prof. Rohan D'souza**, Jawaharlal Nehru University; **Dr. Sunilam**, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, MP; **Gautam Bandopadhyay**, Nadi Ghati Morcha, Chhattisgarh; **Geetha Ramakrishnan**, Unorganised Sector Workers Federation; **P Chennaiah**, Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU) ; **Jatin Desai**, Journalist, Mumbai; **Sister Celia** - Domestic Workers Union, Karnataka; **Vimal Bhai**, Matu Jan Sangathan, Uttarakhand; **Sahas Kolhekar**, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan; **Mahendra Yadav**, Kosi Navnirman Manch; **Ashish Ranjan and Kamayani Swami**, Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan (Bihar); **Rohit Prajapati and Anand Mazgaonkar**, Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti, Gujarat; **Swati Desai**, Editor, Bhumiputra; **Jyoti Bhai Desai**, Senior Gandhian; **Vilas Bhongade** - Gosikhurd Prakaalpgrast Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Maharashtra; **Gabriele Dietrich**, Pennurium Iyakkum , Tamilnadu; **Sanjeev Kumar**, Delhi Forum

## Stop the Dilution of MGNREGA

Dear Prime Minister,

We are very disturbed by impending moves of this government to undermine the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the support it provides to crores of vulnerable rural families. We write this letter to seek your immediate assurance that these retrograde, anti-poor and anti-labour measures will be withdrawn, and that every attempt will be made by your government to implement the MGNREGA in its true spirit.

Based on recent public statements from Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Rural Development, and other available information, we learn that the Central Government has initiated the following changes under MGNREGA:

Restriction of NREGA to tribal/backward districts of the country through an amendment to the Act.

Reduction of the minimum labour-material ratio from the current level

of 60:40 to 51:49.

Severely restricting the MGNREGA through a budget squeeze. There have been unprecedented communications by the Central Government to States capping MGNREGA expenditure for the rest of the financial year, undermining the fundamental principle of demand-driven employment.

These changes are inimical to the spirit of the Act and compromise its basic objectives. They will only benefit the contractor class and other middlemen, and severely undermine the employment generating potential of the MGNREGA. The changes are also being undertaken without any public consultation. The MGNREGA was passed unanimously by all parties and all members of Parliament. We fundamentally object to this critical social legislation being undermined through casual use of executive powers and even a parliamentary majority.

The illegal and unwarranted budget squeeze has led to widespread reports of employment rationing and acute delays in wage payments. Even as MGNREGA workers are struggling to be paid for work already done, the Central Government is sending the message that money is going to be further rationed.

The undersigned demand that your Government immediately revoke the above decisions and renounce any dilution of MGNREGA. We urge you to ensure that MGNREGA employment remains a legal right of every rural household across the country and that there is no dilution of any MGNREGA entitlements. The MGNREGA budget should be based on work demand, keeping with the spirit of the act, without any discretionary cuts.

Through this letter we also wish to convey our resolve to work together to protect the MGNREGA and defend the rights of MGNREGA workers.

With regards,

**Aruna Roy** (Member, MKSS); **Jean Dreze** (Visiting Professor, Ranchi University); **Annie Raja** (National Federation of Indian Women); **Jayati Ghosh** (Professor JNU, New Delhi); **Harsh Mander** (Special Commissioner to the Supreme Court); **Nikhil Dey** (Member, MKSS); **Kamayani Swami** (Member, JJSS)

*(Continued from Page 4)*

fields. In Lucknow the landfill is next to Gomti river in Dubagga. It is polluting our land and water. In Varanasi the garbage is being deposited next to Varuna river which joins Ganga and sewage flows directly into Ganga, half of it untreated.

Narendra Modi's campaign will do more harm than good because people will feel a sense of

complacency after picking up the broom without realizing that their act has not had an iota of difference on the actual state of affairs of cleanliness. This appears to be part of Narendra Modi's style of politics where he makes people feel better without changing the ground reality. This style may be good for his politics and will help keep him in power but is it going to solve any real problems of people?

The cleanliness drive is simply sweeping the garbage under the carpet. The carpet is the illusion created by Narendra Modi that something is happening. We need concrete solutions in terms of safe garbage disposal, waste treatment, recycling projects and improved sanitation, about which there seems to be little discussion. Such a superficial campaign will fritter away in no time leaving people disillusioned.

## Closure of government schools in name of merger

All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) condemns the move of Rajasthan government to close 17,000 government schools in the state under garb of merger and rationalisation. The justification offered by the state government that the step is being taken due to low enrolment of students in these schools is misleading and cynical. It betrays complete apathy of the present regime to actual conditions of government schools and their students coming mostly from disadvantaged sections. Enrolment in government schools has come down due to the fact that students and their parents/guardians are forced to migrate to profit-mongering and often low-grade private schools because the government school system has been systematically downgraded by the state government over the last two decades and more by a series of anti-education and anti-child policies. The move of Rajasthan government is not in benefit of the students or the government schools at all but only in benefit of the profit-hungry private school sector.

Closure of government educational institutions most adversely affects children of disadvantaged sections including girls, dalits, minorities and the disabled. Instead of rectifying the misconceived policy framework, that is increasingly jeopardising the educational rights of these already disadvantaged sections, the state government is altogether abdicating its Constitutional obligation of providing equitable and fully-free education to every child without discrimination and in doing so it is also violating the Right to Education Act, 2009.

AIFRTE would like to point out that what is happening in Rajasthan is not an isolated phenomenon. Government schools are facing a systematic policy assault across the country. In name of merger, rationalisation and other such pretensions, governments schools are being closed or auctioned to private players in Maharashtra (more than 13,000 schools), Karnataka (more than 15,000 schools), Andhra Pradesh (more than 7000 schools), Uttarakhand (more than 2200 schools), New Delhi (55 schools), Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and many other states. Closure of government schools across the country on such a vast scale is an outcome of a long-drawn withdrawal and policy-led negligence by successive governments (at the centre and states). The crisis of government school system has been particularly exacerbated by

*(Continued on Page 3)*

of hiding corruption from the people.

This may not be an instance of corruption but it is quiet appalling. Some 3,000 crore rupees are estimated to have been spent on fire crackers during the diwali. The money, again in crores, during the Dussehra, is separate from this amount.

A country where one third of the population goes to bed without food is a sad spectacle of insensitivity to the conditions the common man faces. I have not found the activists coming on the streets protesting. The society is indifferent because those who lead the voice and mould the public opinion are part of the problem. They can hardly offer a solution.

the diktats of 'Structural Adjustment Policy' imposed by World Bank since economic reforms of 1990s. In the last nearly two and half decades, government school system has been systematically starved of funds, teachers, and infrastructure except a handful of Central Schools, Navodaya Vidyalayas and elite schools run by state-governments. This has been done with a clear intent of discrediting and ultimately destroying the government school system altogether so that an unbridled market for private schools is established. It is ironical that instead of reversing this trend and strengthening the government school system, the much hyped but misconceived Right to Education Act, 2009 has only sped up this decline by legitimising multi-layered school system and profit-oriented private schools.

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- We, the people, are forced to pay huge sum of our hard-earned money to buy education while, at the same time, we are also compelled to pay taxes and additional education cess for this very Constitutional Right.
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- Discriminatory and multi-layered education system is imposed on us whereby the rich can buy their place in elite and expensive private schools, colleges and universities, while the poor are forced into low grade ill-funded schools, colleges and universities, either government or private.
- The nation's teaching cadre at all levels of education has been destroyed by massive contractualisation of teachers and misconceived teacher education.
- Campus democracy in colleges and universities is being cynically eroded with a view to depoliticise the nation's youth.
- Instead of creating democratic and humane citizens to fulfil social-economic-cultural needs of our country and build an egalitarian and just society, the meaning of education is distorted to prepare slavish skilled workforce for the global market.
- Rather than instilling secular values, critical consciousness and scientific temper, the education system is being allowed to be infected with hateful, sectarian and divisive agenda by the communal forces working to thwart our united struggle against neoliberal assault of the corporate capital, as they also did during India's freedom struggle against British imperialism.

***Can we keep quiet in face of such deep-seated conspiracy against India and her people?***

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# Fundamentalism unchained and unbound

Sankara Narayanan

After BJP's spectacular victories in succession since last December, fringe Hindutva elements are having a field day openly challenging the Constitution. In the Love Jihad issue, they stoutly opposed any marriage between adults (Muslim boy and Hindu girl) even if the couple wants such a union. But, I have never come across their opposition to a Muslim girl marrying a Hindu boy or the conversion of the girl to Hinduism as a precondition for such a marriage.

Two weeks earlier in the alleged "love jihad" case in Meerut, the girl had accused her family for forcing her to cook up a story about gang-rape and forcible conversion at the instance of a political leader who was giving money to her parents. In a further twist, Narendra Tyagi, the father of the girl has said she can marry the Muslim youth she claims to love. He told the media, "She is a grown up girl. Who are we to force her? Even if it is a case of 'love jihad' she can marry Kaleem if she loves him."

However, members of Hindutva groups like Meerut Bahan Beti Bachao Andolan reached Tyagi's house and asked him not to change his stand over his daughter being lured by a 'love jihadi Muslim'. Ajay Tyagi the chief of the Hindutva outfit told the media that "he won't allow a

Hindu girl to marry a Muslim man". How dare this Ajay Tyagi say that he won't allow a Hindu girl to marry a Muslim man! Do we have anything called Rule of Law in the state ruled by a foreign educated CM who often utters names of Lohia and JP?

Immediately after BJP's victory in Haryana, a self-styled Swamy Chakrapani of Hindu Mahasabha (a comrade of Asaram) and a few khap panchayat leaders gave dictates to the girls in schools and colleges not to wear 'improper' dress as it attracts rape. They also issued a fatwa against girls wearing jeans pants as it is against the Hindu culture. Another mad khap went farther to insist that girls should stop using cellphones as boys contact them over the phone and all dirty conversation and its consequences flow after that.

In a TV debate on 28 October the fringe elements stoutly defended their shameful dictates. Lalita Kumaramangalam, the chairperson of National Commission on Women (NCW) squarely condemned the behaviour as out-dated and promised NCW would issue notice to the sadhu and khaps soon. Other panel members insisted the new CM of Haryana to initiate criminal prosecutions against the thugs. But when media persons asked the CM, he evaded the queries initially and said feebly later that he would act in the best interest of Haryana. What does it mean? Please note, Khattar had earlier expressed similar views like Mulayam, many other politicians, policemen, etc. that improper dressing by women

encouraged men to molest them.

In spite of the outrageous dictates of Chakrapani and a few khap chiefs, not a single woman politician from BJP condemned their utterances. A day after her assurance, NCW chief is absconding from the scene. A few women lawyers and activists wanted to know why the Central government is also keeping quiet. What all happened to PM's assurance on girls' safety? Other political parties and most of the mainstream media also maintained a studied silence.

Chakrapani was asked to clarify what is a 'proper dress'? He explained that it is the dress acceptable to the parents. A lawyer asked him to explain in case an adult girl wants to marry a person outside her caste or religion and if her parents object to such a marriage, what should the girl do? He promptly told that the parents' writ should prevail. This khap mentality is responsible for the gruesome murders of youth going on in the name of honour killing in several states in general and Haryana in particular. Former CM of Haryana Hooda and ex-MP Navin Jindal also glorified khap system as an institution, like an NGO. Less we say about Chautala & Co, the better.

In another bizarre incident, one RSS member and grain trader S.S.K. Jain from Katni, Madhya Pradesh in a letter written to HRD Minister Smriti Irani has accused the IITs of giving "*kusanskar*" or "bad culture of the West to students through

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## **Socialist Party's one-day fast for repeal of Armed Forces Special Power Act (Assam and Manipur) 1958**

Socialist Party observed one-day token fast on 12 October, 2014 in all the states demanding the release of Irom Sharmila and repeal of the Armed Forces Special Power Act (Assam and Manipur) 1958. Socialist Yuvjan Sabha activists joined the fast along with several like-minded people and organizations. Socialist Party workers observed fast or held special meetings at various places in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. Dr. GG Parikh, special invitee to national executive, Socialist Party, observed the fast in Mumbai extending his moral support to the cause. Dr. Sanmathanath Ghose, senior member, national executive, observed the fast individually in Sukchar (West Bengal). A pamphlet was distributed and speeches were made by prominent socialists and civil liberty activists during the programme.

Former Chief Justice Rajindar Sachar, speaking on this occasion at Jantar Mantar in Delhi said that the AFSPA must be repealed to facilitate the release of Irom Sharmila who has been protesting against this draconian law for 14 years. All Indians who believe in democracy and non-violence should unite in support of this demand. He urged the President and the Supreme Court to intervene in this one of the most serious issues of our time.

ND Pancholi, vice president, PUCL, said that Socialist Party should take the issue of Irom Sharmila to common people in cities and villages to apprise them the anti-democratic nature of AFSPA. Social activist Bina Lakshmi Nepram in compassionate speech lauded Irom Sharmila and her non-violent struggle. Terming the AFSPA as anti-Constitution, she demanded its immediate repeal. Placing the issue of Irom Sharmila and AFSPA in a broader context she expressed regret that the mainland people know very little about the north-eastern states and citizens. She revealed to the audience the history and cultural richness of the north-eastern states, with special reference to Manipur. She told that the woman who was kept in jail for the longest period during freedom movement was from Manipur. Gaidinliu, she told, was arrested by the British in 1932 and released in 1947. Jawaharlal Nehru met her in jail in 1937 and gave her the title of 'Rani'. Arun Kumar Srivastav, general secretary, Janata Dal (United), said that he had met Sharmila two-three times, however, he feels sad and helpless about her release. We all should put our efforts together to get her released at the earliest. Dr. Apoorvanand, professor Delhi University, said it is significant that the Socialist Party has held this programme on the death anniversary of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia who was a great champion of civil liberties and individual freedom. Further, he brought up north-east on the political map of the mainstream Indian politics. Dr. Vir Bharat Talwar, ex-professor, JNU, expressed his solidarity with the cause and praised

the courage of conviction of Irom Sharmila. He suggested that it would have been more appropriate if the Noble Peace Prize was given to Irom Sharmila. Senior journalist Arun Kumar Tripathi said that the anti-democratic forces are gaining more and more strength in the Indian polity and society. In such a scenario release of Irom Sharmila and repeal of AFSPA is a uphill task. A consistent and firm struggle by the democratic forces is a need of the hour for the release of Irom Sharmila.

PC Hamzha (secretary, Welfare Party), Rafiq (secretary, Social Democratic Party), Sharif Ahemad (member, Congress), Faisal Khan (president, Khudai Khidmatgar), Imamur Rehman (representative, Jamate Islami), scholars Prof. VP Srivastav, Dr. Bhagwan Singh, Prof. Jagmohan Verma, social activists Dr. Onkar Mittal, Virendra Lobo, Devendra Bharati, Rakhi Gupta, Ratan Chandra Manav, journalists Dinesh Tiwari, Baba Vijendra, Rajesh Mishra, Rajiv Singh, socialist leaders Shyam Gambhir, Sultan Qureshi, KP Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ramavtar Swami Baba, Shaur Khan and others attended the fast and extended their support for the cause. Sumit Chakravarty (editor, Mainstream), Prof. Anil Sadgopal (educationist), Anil Nauriya (senior fellow, NMML) and Surendra Kumar (secretary, Gandhi Peace Foundation) sent their messages of support.

Programme was chaired by Dr. Prem Singh, general secretary, Socialist Party. In his presidential

## Memorandum

His Excellency  
Shri Pranab Mukherjee  
President of India

Respected Sir

14 years ago on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 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 Chanu Sharmila, after 3 days, 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. In her protest she has been following the non-violent path of Gandhiji and keeps a statue of legendary Meerabai by the side of her bed in the hospital ward.

She was released by the court in August this year saying that there is no case for attempted suicide against her. But the police arrested her again after three days of her acquittal. Driven by love and compassion, Irom Sharmila is not aligned with any organization or ideology. The protest of Sharmila represents the most ideal form of peaceful struggle for a democratic demand. Her life is in danger considering her already fragile health due to the forced feeding for 14 years. The state, which complains about violent struggles, is not comfortable with the most peaceful of all protests.

Sir, the AFSPA in northeast has been synonym for extra judicial killings, extra judicial deprivation of liberty to people by illegal imposition of curfew, long periods of detention at army posts and camps and use of churches and schools as detention or interrogation centers. Who can forget the stunning sight of about three dozen naked women protesting on the street outside the then Assam Rifles headquarters at Kangla Fort in Imphal carrying placards saying 'Indian Army rape us,' outraged by the rape, torture and murder of 32 year old unmarried Thangjam Manorama?

Presence of armed forces in emergency or special situation is understandable, but its continuous presence has alienated people to significant extent. The number of insurgent groups has increased during the application of AFSPA in Manipur. Hence AFSPA must be repealed.

Demanding the release of Irom Sharmila and the repeal of AFSPA, the Socialist Party has observed a day of fasting in all the states on 12 October (death anniversary of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia) 2014.

Sir, through this memorandum we request you to please intervene in this long-pending contentious issue so that the spirit of democracy and non-violence can be upheld.

With best regards

Yours faithfully

**Bhai Vaidya**  
(President)  
**Dr. Sandeep Pandey**  
(Vice President)

**Dr. Prem Singh**  
(General Secretary)  
**Justice Rajindar Sachar**  
(Senior Member)

remarks he cautioned the political and social activists against the neoliberal-communal nexus that propels a false sense of patriotism. Irom Sharmila is a true patriot and responsible citizen of our country. Her victory is essential for the strengthening of democracy in India and for the respect for human rights around the world. Her victory will determine whether the voice of common citizen will be heard or the state will trample over people's rights with anti-people laws and policies. Dr. Singh reminded that the SYS had held a dharna at the Rajghat on completion of 12 years of Irom Sharmila's fast. The Socialist Party, in its political resolutions, has demanded release of Irom Sharmila and repeal of AFSPA and also included this demand in its manifesto for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Stating about the follow up, Dr. Prem Singh informed that Justice Sachar, Kuldeep Nayar, Dr. Sandeep Pandey and Pannalal Surana would meet the President to whom a memorandum was submitted at the end of the fast.

Renu Gambhir, president, socialist Party Delhi Pradesh, presented the vote of thanks.

–**Hiranya Himkar-Hidam Peeter**

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# What ails a left movement in India?

K. S. Chalam

There are series of meetings of the so-called left in different parts of the country reportedly to introspect on their present irrelevance at the hustings. It would be a very interesting topic for academic study by scholars to pursue without anticipating any funding or sponsorship. The left parties that agree with Parliamentary form of democracy as in India seem to be in a dilemma now. This has been hanging for quite some time after 1990 Soviet dismantle and the Chinese shift to market socialism along with several communist countries like Yugoslavia declaring their faith in market. The Indian communists appear to have introspected and have come to grips with reality and continued their business as usual with reduced significance in the Indian political arena. The situation in India after the defeat in West Bengal and 2014 elections is similar to that of the 1990 world situation but with Indian characteristics. The umpteen number of political parties with communist tag however could not get a new lease of life or found to have given any promise or understanding that they are different and will be able to deliver the promised moon to the poor and downtrodden. It is alleged that even the Pope and the church are changing their outlook by accepting openly evolution rather than creation, but not the devout Marxists? In this context we may look at the following issues for an understanding of the situation.

1. Indian communists like many others have adopted the ideology of class war and the significance

of working class as the vanguard of people's struggles for liberation from exploitation. Have they really examined the classes in India and the transformation of capitalism along with the new classes that it generated? The role of technology in reducing muscle power or hard labour and the emergence of a middle class based on technology and improved productivity that facilitated the living standards of the people and their outlook towards life and leisure. What is the situation in India? It is mockery to say that there is no change in India after 1991.

2. Class in Europe is different from the Indian caste, based on graded inequality supported by rituals. It is not the British who invented the caste through the Census, it was there from time immemorial as depicted in shudrakamalakaram and in other puranas. It has also affected the belief systems like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikh etc. Indian Marxist understanding of equating class with caste and allowing higher castes to occupy positions of power including the party posts citing declassification on ideological grounds seem to have not convinced the real voters who come from the socially deprived. Caste analysis by Marxist scholars is allegedly seen to gain lip sympathy from ex-untouchables, very limited understanding of OBCs, little empathy for artisan castes among Muslims and other sects with no deep practical knowledge of their lived experience. Naturally it has impacted the thinking and working of the cadres. It seems that these

groups have considered the left parties as front organisations to get their economic demands met; and go to other parties where they can find their caste people as leaders at the time of elections. This has happened over a period of time and has severely dented the support base of the left once the caste-based parties emerged to rule in states. Each state has become a borough of a particular caste conglomerate and what Prof K S Chalam calls 'the oligarchy of castes'. The non-left parties have used the situation in such a way that they manipulated the parties and people with false promises and subsidies, schemes to co-opt groups for electoral gains. The left were made to support such short term programmes and the whole time is spent on that while the ruling classes used the time and space to privatise and loot the economy. It seems that the left lost the cadre as in Bengal to those who could also do the same kind of politics with glamour and little sacrifices. What is it that the left has learnt from their so-called arrogance of power in two states and intellectual dishonesty of some who never presaged the imminent?

3. The Congress –UPA and BJP-NDA with the support of the MNCs and Indian caste corporations of few families have introduced economic reforms to help dismantle the so-called Nehruvian socialism and introduced doles to gain political power. Doles are temporary and do not need an ideology or policy. It has worked well starting with Narasimha Rao and continuing with Modi. It is tactical and perhaps tutored by the

World Bank, MNC experts and some of their colleagues in civil society to get some relief in the name of human face of reforms, to minimise and eliminate militancy among the disadvantaged groups. Left is not seen in this game plan and is thrown on the periphery to work for the doles with no substantial support from the working and disadvantaged groups to wage a protracted war against the class enemies except to gain temporary breathing space. This has totally changed the morale of the working class and the disadvantaged and marginalised groups who became what Lenin called the social chauvinists. Some of the so-called comrades who are in the left parties without ideological conviction but due to chance factors do carry the spirit of chauvinism and bring disrepute.

4. It is reported that the entry of new cadre in to the left parties has declined or dried up due to the perception of some that there is no career in left parties or there are very few opportunities here while in the bourgeois parties there are plenty of opportunities and chances of becoming rich. This is how the younger generation reason out, devoid of any ideology. In fact, ideological debates of the left and democratic forces were completely blacked out during the last two decades. Along with this, the recruitment to the left is a lacklustre affair as the student and youth wings are defunct without any serious activity on the campuses and no elections to the student bodies. It is found that except the children or friends of the comrades, who are in the left parties, fresh candidates with conviction in the ideology of left stopped entering parties. The lure of the electronic media, mobile phones particularly the temporary

help like NAREGA made the youth to work and earn in the rural areas and migrate to urban zones where casual jobs are available due to expansion of private sector. Once they are in the urban areas and under the influence of the glamour of MNC commodification together with the continuous annexation of religious traps of Hindu, Muslim, Christian fundamentalist forces with around RS 20000 crores foreign mostly MNCs aid (official data) or indirect aid annually, the youth is not within the ambit of any left parties. The advent of BJP as a single largest party at the centre and slowly in states is not a sudden outcome. It seems that there is a scheme of tacit agreement of peaceful transition of BJP as that of UPA III in terms of economic policies and hidden agenda of soft Hindutva of Congress with little space for secular groups. It is noted that some commentators have remarked that both the parties (even allegedly some on the left) are managed by the same social groups with implicit arrangements. It is with the support of UPA schemes like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, NGO aid of thousands of crores of rupees, the Hindu front organisations have been working fulltime not only in the rural areas but in remote Adivasi regions. One may look at the modus operandi of the fundamentalists to compare the working and living conditions of cadres in the left. The fundamentalist uses the temple/church/mosque, the devotees and the faith of the gullible to feed on in any location, while the cadres of the left need to work in hostile conditions without support.

5. The ideological commitment for working in the Left for the amelioration of the conditions of the poor and weaker sections based on emotional passion to serve is totally absent now in India particularly

after the fall of Soviet Union. The left seem to have also failed to show that there are others in Latin America, Europe and in some small countries that are persisting with left ideology. Some in the left do not recognise the achievements of the social democrats and consider them as bogus. The undemocratic attitude of critiquing anyone who is not in agreement with one version of the left and targeting them as people's enemies seem to have created more splinters bringing about a situation where all are going to be drowned. One may also scrutinize and trace out such critiques that once enjoyed the patronage of the left, but ultimately not found nearer to any organisations of the left and jump out. There seems to be now little scope for discussion or ideological debates and critical analysis of issues in the mainstream media that supports the MNCS and market values. No serious discussions as to how the everyday issues of the poor and marginalised are sidelined with petty matters and cheap temptations are taking place either in the party forums or otherwise at the lower level habitations. There is no creative attempts to reach out to the people with innovative cultural forms without tactfully criticising religious beliefs, but at the same time bringing out our ancient past and people's culture as described by D P Chattopadhyay in 'What is Living and What is dead in Indian Philosophy'. There are several issues that are bothering the common man like rape, discrimination, lack of public space and play grounds, privatisation of education and health care, onslaught of Western culture, etc. The fundamentalist is giving one point solution to the disillusioned by saying that go to the temple or to a Guru/Baba or use that philosophy in creating new forms of worship

with the support of media and attract them. The hegemony of the media is total and is under the control of few reactionary and fundamentalist forces who have been systematically working under camouflage to help survive the orthodox. The social media is used by the same forces to hoodwink the half-hearted semi-literate and the motivated communal forces and mobilise them under the pretext of saving the sanatana dharma. In fact the content and drama of the fundamentalists are so vague and would collapse once the basics are questioned and by telling people the linking of these forces with the MNCS and their capitalist agents that are really ruining our composite culture. It is time to review the opinion that open opposition to fundamentalists do not help secure votes? Did this really help or marginalise the left who compromised on certain issues?

### Some Suggestions

- a. Initiate mass contact programmes with innovative ideas of pointing out the myth of NDA government as agents of capital and MNCs where Modi is a stooge with data and information
- b. Systematically develop cadres among the BC, SC and Muslim poor and give them leadership roles with seniors continuing as advisers to train and mould them on ideological grounds
- c. Create opportunities to the young and committed within the small assets created by parties like press, buildings, media and create hope for every one and not necessarily those privileged few
- c. It is possible to draw from the

government subsidy schemes meant for NGOs (like the RSS) to maintain cadre and to reach out the people?

- d. Organising regular training classes for the cadre with demonstration of strength with processions wherever possible to give confidence to people and the cadre
- e. It is necessary to work with other democratic and socialist progressive forces to break the hegemony of the fundamentalists by branding them as lackeys of MNCs and suppressers of freedom exposing their fabricated falsehood in the media with scientific spirit and open enquiry. Cultural troupes are to be strengthened.
- f. Expose pseudo-secularism and create alternative media by creating new structures with

our low cost methods that challenge the mainstream business corporate media that support capitalist values. It is necessary to develop small debate groups that question the mainstream media values and content to expose the rogue media. Repeating what others are telling or echoing the rhetoric of the past in the left media may not help to attract cadres of marginalised artisans, dalits, adivasis, women, people displaced by projects, etc. Innovative ideas and methods are to be encouraged and deliberately promoted to project that the left is distinct and different highlighting the supreme sacrifices of comrades for the common good of the poor and exploited.

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### (Continued from Page 10)

food.” “The children who have started practising non-vegetarianism have saddened their parents by their ‘tamasic’ behaviour? It is the call of the parents of India that IITs and other institutions segregate their dining halls for vegetarians,” Jain noted. It is within his right to demand a separate mess for vegetarians. He went far beyond that to denounce non-vegetarianism as an evil.

The letter was promptly forwarded by Union HRD Ministry to the Directors of all 16 IITs on 15 October. It asked the Directors “to keep the Ministry informed of action taken on the above letter”. Neither Smriti Irani nor Higher Education Secretary Satyanarayan Mohanty responded to queries from the media. Jain told a newspaper on

the phone later that he had admitted his son, who is studying accountancy in Indore, in a dharamshala that serves vegetarian food. “We see many families which are all mixed up. There are Sindhi fathers and Punjabi mothers in the same family and their children get married to Muslims. It all starts when you mix up food. Wrong food spoils one’s mind. That’s why I made this request as I am a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and a supporter of the BJP. I knew that this government would understand,” he said.

You are dead right, Jainji. Your understanding of RSS and BJP is par excellence. All the three of you are super khaps and deserve to live in 7<sup>th</sup> century.



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## Melting pot in TN

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India is a federal polity and has a multi-party political system, but there are still some states where a two-party system prevails in practice. A two-party system is considered an ideal one in a parliamentary democracy. Most countries aim at a two-party arrangement but because of diverse political compulsions and realities they are forced to accept multi-party politics. Britain has had a two-party system for ages, and the United States boasts of one too, although the Liberal Party under Norman Thomas made an unsuccessful attempt decades ago to gatecrash into the system as a party aspiring to power.

Although there are many parties in Tamil Nadu, most, barring the Congress and the BJP, are regional parties, the two major ones being the original Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and its off-shoot Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam which later, under Jayalalithaa, expanded into AIADMK (the prefix All India) was meant to convey a message to the nation that a regional party was all set to enter the national scene.

The two DMKs used to share power alternately, and the poor Congress, which held sway from independence

and headed governments was pushed aside and banished from the state's mainstream politics. It became an irrelevant party not taken seriously by the major parties, and alas by the electorate. Like in neighbouring Kerala, where power was shared alternately by the Congress-led and the Communists-led fronts, it was either the DMK or the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. The Congress ceased to count, and it has stayed in the wilderness for the last four decades but kept going thanks to some Nehru-Gandhi loyalists like G. K. Moopanan who was known for several years as the state's voice in the national polity. Lately, it has had the benefit of hosting some well-known Tamil Nadu politicians, like P. Chidambaram, Jayanti Natarajan, V.K.S Elangovan and G.K.Vasan, son of Moopanan. The current tremors in the usually sedate TN Congress result from Vasan's attempt at what Sonia Gandhi's supporters and admirers would describe as adventurism. They prevailed upon Sonia Gandhi to expel Vasan from the party for anti-party activities. Mukul Wasnik, AICC general secretary in charge of the state, predictably bad-mouthed Vasan attributing his exit from the party as an act of betrayal and bad faith. Those who wanted a share in

*Between the lines*

power were with us, the moment we are in the opposition, they have left us, he bewailed. Wasnik should ask himself whether or not many Vasans in the party in other states wanting and waiting to ditch the Congress.

The two DMKs have figured in central set-ups, by supporting either of the ruling alliances. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance when in power accommodates the TN Congress even when it has DMK as an alliance partner. In the last few months, Tamil Nadu politics has experienced much turbulence, with all the three major groupings caught in bad times. Some DMK members, close to the chief, Karunanidhi face trial on corruption charges. Their impending trial is an embarrassment to the DMK which was swept out of power by Jayalalithaa who has inflicted further hurt on her rival by winning 37 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the 2014 polls. The AIADMK also has had its share of political mortification with Jayalalithaa being sentenced to imprisonment after her conviction in an 18-year-old case of amassing wealth disproportionate to her income. Jayalalithaa is currently on bail and has installed one of her loyalists as chief minister. These are bad times for both the DMKs, and the field has now been opened up for the Congress and the BJP to step into the “vacuum”.

Vasan has decided to step into the breach by breaking away from the Congress in Tamil Nadu and floating a party of his own. He is thus following in the footsteps of his father Moopanar who surprised one and all by leaving the Congress and setting up the Tamil Maanila Congress in 1996. His new-founded party subsequently merged into the parent party a few years ago and Vasan made his peace with the

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## Pandit and Sardar

**Kuldip Nayar**

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel are the two icons of the freedom movement. One was left of the centre and the other right of the centre but they sank their ideological differences to win freedom.

After independence, the Nehurian thoughts came to influence the country because he was the most popular leader and his thoughts fitted into the general sentiment of pluralism in the country. Naturally, the name of Sardar Patel receded.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has refurbished the past and brought Patel's name to the fore by celebrating his birthday as Rashtriya Ekta day. It however goes to the credit of Modi that unlike his party, the BJP, he has not devalued the role which Nehru played in freeing and building of the country. The BJP has not mentioned in its manifesto Nehru among the freedom fighters and builders of the nation.

There are people who believe that India's interests would have been served better if Sardar Patel, in place of Jawaharlal Nehru, had been the country's Prime Minister. This hypothetical possibility had been voiced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he was Gujarat chief minister.

Of all the leaders, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Nehru's guide and philosopher, came to the same conclusion after watching Nehru as an administrator. Azad was

in Nehru's cabinet and saw him from close quarters. Azad told his secretary, Humayun Kabir, that they should have made Nehru the country's president and Patel its prime minister.

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

He would say before partition that the Muslims could walk proudly in the country with their heads held high that they were equal partners, even though they were fewer in numbers. Once India was divided on the basis of religion, the Hindus would tell the Muslims that you had taken your share and should, therefore, go to Pakistan.

Even after 67 years of division, this approach has not been disowned either in India or Pakistan. The latter, Pakistan has ousted practically all Hindus. However, the Muslims in India continue to be a target of fanatics. When there is a tension between the two countries, many Hindus refer to Muslims as

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Convergence of people's movements on December 2

In the backdrop of brutal murder of three members of a Dalit family in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district; recent communal violence and frenzy in Delhi ahead of by-elections (as seen as part of strategy of BJP in election bound states); and significant dilutions and proposed amendments in land and environmental laws to facilitate corporate loot of natural resources; and move to amend NREGA, labour laws, RTIs etc., NAPM's 10th biennial convention ended on November 2nd at historic Rashtra Seva Dal campus in Pune.

The Convention was attended by over 1000 persons from 18 states and marked 20 year-long journey of NAPM against neo-liberal economic policies, religious fundamentalism, patriarchy and casteism. The Convention ended with a call for united action by the secular, socialist and progressive forces to combat the rising fundamentalist and fascist forces in the country today. The draft **'Pune Declaration'**, read out at the Convention noted that,

“The fundamental character of our Constitution is sought to be beaten out of shape and the very social fabric of our society is sought to be destroyed to perpetuate rule by a fundamentalist-religious-corporate cabal. Our journey to establish a democratic socialist politics in this country faces major challenges today as the crisis of capitalism in developed world is looking for new markets and hobnobbing with the corporate and political elite of our country to establish crony capitalism here. In last twenty years two major political camps (UPA and NDA) have come in unison to implement the agenda of neo-liberal capitalism and most of the political parties

have come to accept that. This needs to change and only people's movements in collaboration with other political forces can do that.”

### Significant resolutions

- The Convention passed the following resolutions
- condemning and demanding punishment for those responsible for the atrocities against dalits and adivasis and bring changes in SC/ST Act making it more effective;
- demanding punishment for murderers of Mohsin Sheikh and Narendra Dabholkar;
- Centre to stop immediately the increase in height of Sardar Sarovar Dam and also stop illegal construction of Statue of Unity without statutory clearances;
- government must take action against illegal land grab by thermal power plants in Eastern MP and other places;
- need for protection for RTI activists and punishment to those responsible for death of several RTIS activists in past many years and enact Whistleblowers Protection Act soon;
- stop illegal evictions in cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad and implement Rajiv Awas Yojana;
- ensure fair prices for farm produce and appropriate compensation to farmers for crop failure due to natural disasters;
- social security for migrant and unorganized sector workers and roll back changes to labour laws derecognising right to form union and promoting hire and fire practices;
- rolling back of significant

change in labour laws, land laws, state highway act and halting of illegal mining in Rajasthan;

- Stop amendments to the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act in Jharkhand;
- withdraw false cases against journalists in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh;
- withdraw field trial of GM cops at Rahuri Krishi Visyapeeth in Maharashtra;
- implement Prohibition Act of 1956 in Orissa and ensure prohibition across the country;
- cancel proposed dam on Painganga river in Yavatmal

National Fishworkers Forum in a resolution demanded enactment of 'Fishers Rights Act' on line of Forest Rights Act, strict implementation of CRZ notification and enactment of CRZ Act to ensure stopping illegal constructions, rampant violations in name of creating infrastructure for tourism promotion and a large number of thermal and nuclear power plants and PCPIRs alongside the coast of India.

The Convention also demanded that Indian government initiate steps to withdraw death sentence awarded to five fishermen from Tamil Nadu in Sri Lanka and ensure their immediate release. The Convention condemned large scale land grab by Indian corporations in African countries and committing of human rights violations in garb of business promotion and trade.

The Convention expressed solidarity with the ongoing, 'Standing Struggle' of Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha in front of Kerala Secretariat for last 120 days

demanding land rights and their right to dignified livelihood.

The Convention demanded withdrawal of 'coal ordinance' which is in complete violation of the recommendation of the SC judgment canceling the licenses given to many corporate houses. It also demanded that government must recover huge loans given by the public sector banks to these corporations, who must not be allowed to default, nor be sanctioned new loans or allotted new coal blocks.

### **Forthcoming events**

A number of actions and programmes were finalised after intensive discussion over the course of three days in 15 thematic group and plenary sessions. It was decided that,

- NAPM would mobilise for the massive convergence of people's movements on December 2nd in Delhi protesting move by NDA government to amend the Right to Fair Compensation, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and Transparency in Acquisition Act, 2013, NREGA, RTI Act, Forest Rights Act, NGT Act, EIA & CRZ Notification, labour laws and so on. Rally would demand implementation of the National Food Security Act, new Land Act, NREGA, Rajeev Awas Yojana in its current form and enactment of laws to ensure decent pension to all;
- hold programmes across the country opposing changes to new land act before the commencement of Winter Session of Parliament;
- participate in the Coastal yatra from Mangalore to Trivandrum starting from November 21st organised by National Fishworkers Forum;
- support public hearing on domestic workers in Delhi on November 11;
- participate in 30th anniversary programmes organised by Bhopal gas disaster survivors;
- join ongoing rashtriya shiksha yatra demanding education for all and common schooling system;
- join 24th November programme by Maharashtra organisations at Chaitya Bhumi to defend democratic principles and rights enshrined in Constitution;
- campaign against GM field trials in Maharashtra;
- join ongoing 100 days foot march demanding prohibition in Tamil Nadu;
- participate and support 29-30 November national convention in defence of democracy in Dhinkia, Orissa;
- join Janjagan rally on January 30, 2015 in Odisha demanding implementation of Prohibition Act 1956;
- Join Repeal AFSPA yatra organised by Save Sharmila Solidarity campaign;
- take part in religious harmony yatra and programmes organised by Khudai Khidmatgar
- Organise regional and national meetings on Industrial Corridors and start campaigns to protect agricultural land and conserve environment;
- organise a national tribunal on atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis;
- 3-day national convention on violence and discrimination against women and sexual minorities.
- Organise five regional and one national level yuva shivirs in coming year with specific focus on political training of youths and establish Janvikas Kendras in each of the regions
- Activate in next six months working groups on key issues concerning people's movements, as was decided at Thrissur Convention in 2012.
- organise 'Lawyers for Social Justice' programme in every major states and constitute lawyers team to support ongoing struggles and fight fabricated cases against activists;
- organise regional and national meetings on electoral reforms to push for proportional representation system;
- establish a working group on finance to ensure greater accountability and transparency on Indian banks' development and infrastructure funding;

### **New national committee**

The onvention also reconstituted the National Committee, comprising of Advisers, National Conveners and National Organisers. The new team has the following members:

**Advisers :** Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy, Dr. B.D. Sharma, Dr. Binayak Sen, P Chennaiah, Geetha Ramakrishnan, Sister Celia, Anand Mazgaonkar and Dr. Sandeep Pandey

**National Conveners :** Prafulla Samantara and Lingraj Azad (Odisha), Dr. Sunilam (Madhya Pradesh), Gabriele Dietrich (Tamil Nadu), Suniti S R (Maharashtra), Arundhati Dhuru (Uttara Pradesh), Sujato Bhadra and Amitava Mitra (West Bengal), Dayamani Barla (Jharkhand), C R Neelakandan (Kerala), Ramakrishnam Raju (Andhra Pradesh), Kamayani Swami and Mahendra Yadav (Bihar), Krishnakant (Gujarat), Kailash Meena (Rajasthan), Rajendra Ravi and Madhuresh Kumar (Delhi), Rukmini V P (Karnataka) and Faisal Khan (Haryana). Gurwant Singh



and Ko Sugumaran will be contact points for the state of Punjab and Pondicherry respectively.

**National Organisers:** Meera (Madhya Pradesh), Kanika Sharma (Delhi) and Jabar Singh (Uttarakhand)

National Committee will co-opt more members in its next meetings to ensure broader regional, community, religious and thematic representations to be able to respond to the new challenges and implement the programmes as decided. A Jan Sahyogi manch consisting of eminent supporters and professionals will be created who would support the various initiatives and programmes of the alliance.

**Medha Patkar**, thanked the outgoing national convening team and while congratulating the new team said that “in the next two years we must strive to put halt to the corporate plunder of land, water, forests, minerals, fight back brazen attack on secular and plural framework of society, on freedom of expression and criminalisation of dissent, and arrest the growth of fundamentalist forces and rising violence against dalits, adivasis, women and minorities. There is a growing need to work for bringing credible political and electoral reforms to break the increased hegemony of business over politics and ensure proportionate representation to various sections and communities and work for building alternative politics in the country.” She also added that NAPM must continue to support the genuine efforts for building a political alternative in the country towards achieving the goal of democratic socialist republic. She expressed her hope that new team will carry forward the mandate given to it by this convention in all its earnestness.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Pakistanis. Little purpose will be served in pursuing this point because the wounds of partition are far from healed and the people in both the communities continue to be exploited in the name of religion.

Left to Patel, he would have had an exchange of population before accepting partition. Nehru was different. He did not mix religion with politics or the state. The distance in separation in their approach made Mahatma Gandhi, who led the non-violent war of independence, to nominate Nehru as his successor. The Hindu-Muslim unity was a matter of faith with Gandhiji, not part of the policy.

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

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

Gandhiji was also confident that his secular ideals would be safer in the hands of Nehru. This was proved when Patel refused to release Rs. 64 crore to Pakistan.

This sum was part of assets which India had agreed to transfer while agreeing to the partition details. Patel argued that how could he release the money when India and Pakistan was engaged in a war over Kashmir. Gandhiji had to go on fast unto death to make Patel relent.

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

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

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

## Shiksha Yatra

Prof. K. M. Shrimali (formerly with the Delhi University) and M. K. Raina (renowned theater director and filmmaker) flagged off the All-India Shiksha Sangharsh Yatra 2014 on Sunday, 2nd November from the Delhi University North Campus. About 200 students, teachers, employees and activists representing 20 organizations participated in the launch, which also included a large number of students from the Delhi University's School of Open Learning.

Prof. Madhu Prasad (formerly with Delhi University and now member of AIFRTE's presidium) informed the assembly that the Yatra is convened by All-India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) in opposition to the commercialization and communalization of education (and various other forms of prejudices and discrimination in education) and in support of a common and free education system from KG to PG (including neighborhood schools) directly funded by the state and governed in decentralized and participatory manner with mother-tongue as medium of education placed in multilingual context of the child. The Yatra will culminate in Bhopal on 3rd and 4th of December where more than 15000 participants are expected to gather from every corner of the country.

The School of Open Learning students represent the most perceptible example of the glaring inequalities present in our system in the form of different layers of education from school to college. The activists of Krantikari Yuva Sangathan pointed out that these students (forming three-fourth of

enrollment in Delhi University mostly come from poorly maintained ordinary Government schools and from working class family background; but in the name of merit are relegated to irregular/open learning with minimal classes, iniquitous facilities and much delayed exams and results. The regular seats in DU colleges are filled mostly by the students coming from better-maintained schools of elite categories (both Government and private) and better off families.

Observing the presence of a large number of open school students, Prof. Shrimali said in his opening speech that once admitted, all students must receive equal treatment, as they are the different organs of a body. He also felt alarmed to observe that our education system is rapidly passing away into the hands of very dangerous people, who have no appreciation for rational training, but who are interested to disseminate only a xenophobic mythological ideology as contained

*(Continued from Page 2)*

High Command. Moopanar enjoyed tremendous political clout but his son is but a political light weight. His timing however is correct. Now an opportunity has opened up which he has wisely decided to exploit.

All his rivals, who are experienced regional parties who are trying to ally with the BJP, have some pockets of influence which Vasan will be called upon to penetrate. He will have to make an impact powerful enough to marginalize first the two DMKs, then the numerous other Kazhagams. A formidable challenge indeed.

for instance in the textbooks written by Deenanath Batra. Prof. Nandita Narayan (president, DUTA) further sensitized the assembly about the communal danger through her melodious and moving singing of lyrics.

Prof. Prem Singh of Delhi University underlined the connection between corporate houses and communal forces and emphasized the need to protect public education system from both.

Dr. Rajeev Kunwar of Delhi University/Democratic Teachers' Front welcomed the initiative of various groups and organizations to come together for the defense and further improvement of public education system when the corporate and communal forces are trying to capture it for their greedy and anti-constitutional motives. After the public meeting, the activists organized a march passing through various colleges.

—Sarwat Ali

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In this 125th birth anniversary year of Acharya Narendra Deva, socialists will do well not only to remember him but also to study in some depth, his life, what he stood for, and how he led the socialists.

Acharyaji was predominantly a Marxist. He interpreted Marxism in the context of the Indian reality at the time, as a British colony, and played an important role in working with the founding fathers of the Indian socialist movement to lay down their fundamental tents. To him, both freedom and democracy were essential to socialism. He also believed that peasants could play a revolutionary role. He was a scholar of Buddhism and his Marxism was influenced to an extent by its philosophy. Initially he advocated a doctrine of limited violence, but reversed his position later – to complete rejection of violence. He accepted the need for power to achieve socialism, but he also warned the socialists to be aware of the totalizing tendency of the state and exhorted them to build countervailing forces. And on the issue of ends and means, like the Gandhians, he advocated unity of means and ends.

Acharyaji's politics was ethical. When the socialists left the Congress in 1948, he along with other colleagues, resigned their membership from the legislature, underlining as well as teaching by example, how the socialists should behave.

In these days when all that the freedom movement stood for is under attack, there is a need for a broad understanding between Gandhians, socialists and communists, Acharyaji's life and his thought can become perhaps a bridge. It will be good for the country and for the toilers in the fields and factories.

We fervently hope that remembrance of Acharya Narendra Deva will trigger off a movement that will halt the denigration of the insights of our freedom movement and rejuvenate socialists to do what they did during the freedom to boaden its social base and to radicalise it.



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ठळक वैशिष्ट्ये

- ६४ वर्षांची अभिमानास्पद ग्राहक सेवा
- भारतातील एकमेव बहुराज्य ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था
- एकूण विक्री दालने ३०
- वार्षिक उलाढाल ₹ ११६ कोटी
- २० लाख निष्ठावंत ग्राहक
- दोन वेळा जमनालाल बजाज उचित व्यवहार पुरस्कार प्राप्त (१९८९-२००१)
- **आरोग्यसेवा**
  - ☆ दादा सरफरे आरोग्य केंद्र, नायगांव
  - ☆ होमियापथिक चिकित्सा केंद्र, भौतिक उपचार केंद्र व नेत्ररोग चिकित्सा केंद्र
  - ☆ आरोग्य मार्गदर्शन शिबिरे
- **सामाजिक उपक्रम**
  - ☆ कुटिरोद्योग, ग्रामोद्योग व शेतमालाला मार्केट उपलब्ध
  - ☆ खरेदी बचत योजनांना प्रोत्साहन
  - ☆ अशी भेसळ अशी चलाखी प्रात्यक्षिके
  - ☆ ग्राहक शिक्षण आणि संरक्षण मेळावे
- **सभासदांना खरेदीवर वटाव**

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# Indian Socialists and Non-violent Struggle : Narendra Deva in the Freedom Movement

Anil Nauriya

The socialist and pre-socialist Congress contribution to political, economic and social struggles in India requires enhanced attention as this contribution is not as widely acknowledged or as adequately appreciated as it might be. The dynamic that linked non-violent movements for Indian freedom in the first half of the twentieth century with socialist participation in these movements along with socialist initiatives in peasant and workers' movements is reflected in the understanding that socialists led by Acharya Narendra Deva (1889-1956) developed especially on prevailing national and international class relations, particularly those between the imperial regime and dominant landed interests. While not wishing to confine themselves within a theoretical frame of truth and nonviolence, Socialists theorized their participation in the non-violent movements. As the pre-eminent theoretician of the Congress Socialist Party established in 1934, Narendra Deva's understanding is of significance in critiquing the telescoping of Indian Communism with Marxism and in providing an alternative Marxist understanding of the Indian movement for freedom. In writings on possible areas of agreement between Marxism and the Gandhi-led movements, Narendra Deva addressed matters concerning possibilities of convergence of the two strands of thought and method. This discussion traversed a fascinating range of issues, including matters concerning the ideological or organizational 'ownership' of Marxism itself, ultimately confirming active socialist participation in the Gandhi-led movements including the constructive programme of the Congress in the pre-independence period.

Narendra Deva, born in the same year as Jawaharlal Nehru, was a scholar of ancient India and of Buddhism, a lawyer and, after the Bolshevik Revolution, a keen student of Marx and Lenin. He presided over the founding convention of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) held in Patna in May 1934. The early Indian socialists did not nurture an allergy towards the erstwhile Soviet Union or towards Marxism. The Congress Socialist Party came into being within the Congress as a Marxist party. Julius Braunthal notes, quite perceptively, that "(i)n its origins... the Congress Socialist party was not simply

a Marxist party in the tradition of the European Social Democratic parties, but rather a party of the Bolshevik version of Marxism".<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the party organ in Punjab even during the Second World War was called the Bolshevik. Narendra Deva stands at the head of the particular Indian Marxist tradition which was not part of the communist movement, associated itself organically with the national struggle while remaining for long open to explore possibilities of co-operation with other Left groups, including the communists. Narendra Deva remained a Marxist throughout his life. Even as late as 1950 the Socialist Party was seen as a Marxist group having, in the words of Braunthal, "evolved from the Bolshevik version of Marxism to a Marxist version of humanitarian democratic socialism".<sup>2</sup> In May 1952 at the Pachmarhi Convention of the Socialist Party, when Narendra Deva was away in China, Dr Rammanohar Lohia was voted to the chair; Dr Lohia took the opportunity of expounding his doctrine which was seen as the departure from Marxism. In the ideological ferment and the political developments that followed, Narendra Deva shared his thoughts on 3 September 1952, in a letter to Asoka Mehta, his party colleague, making it clear that he would rather give up the party than abandon Marxism.<sup>3</sup> The position adopted by Narendra Deva, who was to live only for another three and a half years, was in contrast to that of other leading figures, like Jayaprakash Narayan, who had by this time already turned their back on Marxism.

Narendra Deva's place in the history of Marxist socialism in India may be gauged from the remarks made by E M S Namboodiripad, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader, at a function held at Teen Murti in New Delhi on 19 February 1989 to observe Narendra Deva's 33rd death anniversary. At this function, held around the time also of Narendra Deva's birth centenary year 1989-1990, Namboodiripad recalled that it was with Narendra Deva's speech at the Foundation Conference of the Congress Socialist Party held 1934 that he had first been exposed to Marxist socialism.<sup>4</sup> Later he read Jayaprakash Narayan's "Why Socialism?" which was published in 1936.<sup>5</sup> Another speech by Narendra Deva that influenced Namboodiripad was the one Narendra

Deva made while introducing the election manifesto at the All India Congress Committee in 1936.<sup>6</sup>

Narendra Deva was drawn simultaneously to the Indian National Congress and the Home Rule League. In 1916 Narendra Deva was secretary of the Home Rule League in Faizabad District, United Provinces where he practiced as a lawyer.<sup>7</sup> He suspended his practice after the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1920 and joined the non-co-operation movement.<sup>8</sup> No pre-independence Congress movement thereafter was without some significant contribution or participation by him.

In early 1921 an agrarian agitation culminated on 7th January in police firing at Munshiganj in the Rae Bareilly district of the United Provinces.<sup>9</sup> In this, and the incidents which led up to it, at least seven persons were killed and many wounded. The kisans had been demanding restrictions on evictions and on forced labour and elimination of illegal cesses and exactions. The movement spread from Pratapgarh to Rae Bareilly and in many districts of Oudh. Narendra Deva did not see the non-co-operation movement and the peasant risings as competing phenomena. He saw the dialectic between the Kisan movements and the non-co-operation movement: "The strongly organized kisans compelled the Oudh officials to reconsider the rent-revenue legislations. Evictions by notice were stopped.... At that time the non-co-operation movement was at its height. The Government did not want the Kisan agitation to get linked up with that movement. For this reason also the Government became more responsive to the Kisan demands".<sup>10</sup> Narendra Deva's involvement with the non-co-operation movement was expressed also in his association with the "national schools" that emerged at the time. At the behest of Jawaharlal Nehru, he joined the faculty of the Kashi Vidyapith, the national university founded in Benares in 1921, which would emerge as a famous seminary of the Indian freedom struggle. Of this institution he became Principal in 1926.<sup>11</sup>

In the midst of his commitments as an educationist, Narendra Deva played a leading role in the agitation against the Simon Commission in Benares in 1927-28. Associated with the Independence of India League established in 1928 by Jawaharlal Nehru, Bose and others, Narendra Deva became, towards the end of the year, secretary of the UP provincial branch of the League. In early 1929 Narendra Deva suggested to Nehru that a primary need was to provide intellectual food for people; towards this end he suggested that

Independence of India League should have a weekly paper, organise study circles and the like and also have a clear economic programme.<sup>12</sup> The United Provinces Trade Union Conference was held under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru at Kanpur on 7 September 1929. At this conference Narendra Deva urged that "the future constitution of India should pay due regard to the rights of labour and laying special stress on guaranteeing a minimum living wage, free education and medicine and declaring that land should be the property of the community and not of any individual".<sup>13</sup>

**H**e was arrested at Basti in the United Provinces on 24 June 1930 in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Subsequently he was jailed again during the No-rent Campaign in 1932 and imprisoned in Benares District Jail. He had led a batch of his students to participate in the no-rent campaign. Anxious that the struggle be resumed early after the resignation of the Congress governments in 1939, Narendra Deva was keen on the Civil Disobedience programme conceived in the following year. He raised questions about Gandhi's Individual Satyagraha programme which he found wanting in some respects.<sup>14</sup> He felt that the proposed agitation ought not to be confined to a mere expression of India's right to oppose the war, as Gandhi's statement had suggested, but be directed against the utilization of Indian human and material resources for the war. Be that as it may, Narendra Deva was arrested and imprisoned in the course of this agitation in January 1941. The following year found Narendra Deva in Gandhi's Sevagram on the eve of the meetings leading to the Quit India movement and he was involved in the drafting of some of the preliminary resolutions. Of one of these, Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru: "Acharya Narendra Dev has seen the resolution and liked it."<sup>15</sup>

Given the state of his health, Narendra Deva's presidential address at the All India Kisan Conference at Bedaul, Muzaffarpur in June 1942 had to be read out in his absence. He questioned the People's War thesis canvassed by the Communist Party of India and asserted that the war could cease to be an imperialist war only if India could "feel free and obtain a charter of freedom for her millions of Kisans and labourers".<sup>16</sup> A day after the passing of the Quit India resolution at the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay on 8 August 1942, Narendra Deva was arrested and detained in the Ahmednagar Fort. He would not be released until 1945 after being moved in March of that year first to Bareilly Central Prison and next, in June, to Almora Jail.

It was Narendra Deva's view that the "The Zamindari system in India could not be destroyed unless British Imperialism in India was destroyed."<sup>17</sup> The essential unity between Narendra Deva and other socialists lay in their understanding that the socialist tradition could not cut itself off from or be at cross purposes with the national movement but should instead be in the vortex of it. As Narendra Deva would put it at a party conference held at Hardoi, UP, in 1952: "...our party moulded Marxism to the conditions of our country and enriched it. Our party maintained that keeping distance from national movements in the colonies was not Marxist but opportunistic and reactionary; later the communists also accepted this".<sup>18</sup> (*My translation*).

In an article and pamphlet written in 1950-1951 Narendra Deva observed that "no injustice is done to any Marxist principle by accepting Satyagraha. Neither does it amount to a synthesis of Marxism and Gandhism. Marxism has never been fond of violence. If the objective can be achieved by non-violent means, Marxism would give it (non-violence) topmost preference."<sup>19</sup> Narendra Deva's position was well-founded in his study of Marx and Marxism. In his speech at a meeting held in Amsterdam on September 8, 1872 at the time of The Hague Congress of the International Working Men's Association, Marx had said: "We know of the allowances we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries; and we do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means. If that is true, we must also recognize that in most of the continental countries it is force that will have to be the lever of our revolutions; it is force that we shall some day have to resort to in order to establish a reign of labour."<sup>20</sup> Even the democratic socialist Asoka Mehta seems to agree with the Narendra Deva's interpretation when he writes: "As I have already said, this is true of negative states (ie states without democratic traditions: A.N); in their case there is no other alternative. Surely, you cannot capture Nepal from the infamous Ranas by winning elections, for there are no elections! You have to resort to extra-parliamentary, even insurrectionary methods in Nepal".<sup>21</sup>

For a multiplicity of reasons, the socialist and the pre-socialist Congress contribution to the peasant and workers' movements has generally been neglected. In the more prominent Indian universities, many scholars tended to employ a vocabulary that denied a prominent place to the socialist and pre-socialist Congress traditions.

The expression "Left" even now is occasionally used, incorrectly, for the communist tradition alone. Many members of the Communist parties are not even aware of the socialist contribution because their party literature seldom mentions it.<sup>22</sup> Many socialists themselves now use the term "Marxist" interchangeably with "Communist". That there was a strong and vigorous Marxist tradition outside the Communist parties is seldom acknowledged.

There is also a tendency on the part of many scholars to identify the socialist movement in India almost exclusively with the Lohia tradition. While Lohia was a prominent socialist leader before independence, the ideology associated with his name is largely a post-independence development. In fact, the Congress Socialist Party was defined expressly in Marxist terms. The socialist retreat from Marxism came much later, and largely after 1947. As we have seen, Narendra Deva, the doyen of Indian socialists, never gave up his commitment to Marxism.

Another reason for the neglect of the socialist contribution to Indian political development prior to 1947 has been the mechanistic nature of the prevailing anti-Congressism in the major Indian universities. Thus, if one is to take a contemporary political position in relation to the present-day Congress-I (that is the faction of the undivided Congress which since the 1969 split has owed allegiance to Smt. Indira Gandhi and those who followed her) this position is prone to be mechanically back-projected to the pre-independence Congress. A fair presentation of the socialist contribution would involve acknowledging that the movement for Indian freedom, as led by the Congress, did in fact help mobilize and raise peasant, worker and subaltern consciousness.

As we have noted, Narendra Deva's speech and later Jayaprakash Narayan's *Why Socialism* brought E M S Namboodiripad to Marxism and Congress socialism.<sup>23</sup> Another speech by Narendra Deva which, according to Namboodiripad, had an influence on him was the one he made while introducing the Congress election manifesto at the Bombay AICC in August 1936.<sup>24</sup> The text of the 1934 speech by Narendra Deva was published in Yusuf Meherally's classic compilation.<sup>25</sup> Narendra Deva's address at the founding convention of the Congress Socialist Party, in Yusuf Meherally's words, caused "quite a stir".<sup>26</sup> Narendra Deva stressed that "The Russian experiment is slowly though surely helping the masses to take the centre of the world stage".<sup>27</sup> He urged that working class struggles and Congress struggles must synchronise: "All the great national struggles that have

been conducted by the Congress have been preceded by strikes and other forms of industrial unrest. It is only when the two struggles have synchronized with each other that the national struggle has reached its highest water-mark.”<sup>28</sup> In 1919, for example, the agitation against the Rowlatt Act had coincided with railway workers’ strikes.<sup>29</sup> The same had been the case during the non-co-operation movement in the early 1920s especially in the South.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, when the workers of the Assam-Bengal Railway went on strike in 1921 Gandhi had lent support to them.<sup>31</sup> Explaining the benefits of policy co-ordination, Narendra Deva argued: “One more advantage would have accrued to us as a result of such a policy. In India where the labour force is drawn from villages and where the industrial worker remains a villager at heart the worker can act as a standard bearer of revolution in villages”.<sup>32</sup>

The 1934 speech is a basic and foundational document of Indian socialism, frankly Marxist in approach and hailing the Russian experience as “slowly though surely helping the masses to take the centre of the world stage” – a point Narendra Deva reiterates in 1939 at Gaya – and yet firmly locating the socialist forces in India in the vortex of the Indian national movement. This was in accordance with the precepts initially set out in 1920 by Lenin,<sup>33</sup> whose writings had been studied very closely by Narendra Deva. The 1934 speech also charted out the key role that peasants were expected to play in the Indian struggle. In the August 1936 speech, mentioned by Namboodiripad, Narendra Deva described the Congress Election Manifesto of 1936 as a revolutionary and not a reformist document.<sup>34</sup>

He made a point here also about the communal award made by the Colonial regime in 1932: He was aware “that a few Hindus who had been strongly opposing the ‘award’ would be the first in the field demanding separate electorate as against joint electorate.” On “office acceptance” (in the provincial governments under the Government of India Act of 1935), Narendra Deva differed with the election manifesto, saying that the question should be decided by the Faizpur Congress rather than after the provincial legislative elections were over.

A few weeks before the Bombay session of the Congress, Narendra Deva advised that “mere diffusion of knowledge of socialist theories would not do” and it was necessary to move beyond a mechanistic approach: “We have also to study the Indian problems in a new light, i.e. from the Marxian point of view. We should not

lose sight of the Indian background.”<sup>35</sup> That is, Marxism had to be applied to the specific conditions of time and place.<sup>36</sup> Significantly, he opposed the proposal at the Bombay Congress in 1934 that “truth and non-violence” be substituted for “legitimate and peaceful means” in the Congress creed.”<sup>37</sup>

Four years later, in 1938, we find Narendra Deva lamenting: “...our Communist friends were not prepared to concede the Marxist character of our party. Efforts at unity hence prove futile but they show that the CSP has ceaselessly striven for unity in (the) socialist movement from its inception.”<sup>38</sup> Problems of socialist unity continued to frustrate Narendra Deva throughout his career. He often made the point that the Nazis in Germany had benefited from disunity among socialists and communists.<sup>39</sup>

Narendra Deva delivered the presidential address at the Gujarat Congress Socialist Conference held at Ahmedabad on 23rd and 24th June 1935. He addressed the criticism that as internationalists Socialists cannot be depended upon in the fight for independence. He asserted that there was “no antagonism between independence and socialism.”<sup>40</sup> He continued: “As a matter of fact, socialism cannot be built without the conquest of power and in the present conditions of India the anti-imperialist struggle is only a prelude to socialism. We are not lacking in national pride either. Of course we hate chauvinism and do not subscribe to the notion of ‘my country right or wrong’...Lest it should be doubted in certain quarters whether I am correctly stating the socialist position, I would like to fortify myself with the following passage from the writings of Lenin: “Is the emotion of national pride foreign to the Greater Russian Class-conscious proletariat? Certainly not. We love our language and our native land and it is for that reason specially that we regard with a peculiar hatred our past serfdom...and)... our present serfdom”.<sup>41</sup>

He responded also to another concern, raised “from the right”, about the socialist role in the national struggle: “The other criticism is that we are disrupting the struggle for independence...by raising the issue of class struggle at this stage. We may be forgiven for pointing out that under present conditions it is impossible to win independence without mobilizing the workers and peasants for the political struggle....”<sup>42</sup>

To the Congress he urged that it pay greater attention to the working classes, while to the working class he issued the reminder that it was still weak. He advised that



“... the working class can extend its political influence only when by using its weapon of general strike in the service of the national struggle it can impress the petty bourgeoisie with the revolutionary possibilities of a strike....Unfortunately some of the working class leaders do not seem to accept this point of view.”<sup>43</sup> Narendra Deva identified 1928 as the juncture from which the working class leadership initiated its isolationist policy: “Ever since 1928 they have followed a policy of isolation and it is this suicidal policy which has isolated them not only from the working masses but also from the national struggle...”<sup>44</sup> Opposing such sectarianism, Narendra Deva asserted that “A party which that wants to establish its hegemony over the national movement must send its members to all the classes...”<sup>45</sup>

With the enforcement of the Government of India Act, 1935 and particularly as a sequel to the provincial elections that followed in which Congress governments came to power in several provinces, peasant expectations from the new dispensation grew exponentially. The constitutional and political background to these developments was set out prior to government formation in a note by Narendra Deva, K T Shah and Jawaharlal Nehru.<sup>46</sup> This reiterated the Congress Working Committee resolution of 7 July 1937 which had observed that although the Congress would accept cabinet responsibilities, it did not subscribe to the doctrine of partnership and had stated that “the proper description of the existing relationship between the British Government and the people of India is that of exploiter and exploited...”<sup>47</sup> Narendra Deva was conscious of the limitations of the political and statutory framework in which these governments functioned. In his presidential speech at the Gujarat Congress Socialist Conference he had made a thorough criticism of the 1935 Act and particularly for its protection of vested interests.<sup>48</sup> In his speech on the Tenancy Bill in the United Provinces Assembly on 11 November 1938, Narendra Deva attacked the Zamindari system. The Zamindars had been given rights not based on equity and these rights must now go. “The Zamindars were not doing anything for promoting the good of the society. They were merely tax gatherers. The Congress was out to kill imperialism and since landlordism was the creation of Imperialism both of them must perish. In fact landlordism would live in India so long as Imperialism lasted. There should be no sympathy for the landlords who had all along joined hands with Imperialism to crush national movements.”<sup>49</sup> Pleading for abolition of Zamindari (which happened later) Narendra Deva declared that the Kisans were not satisfied with the Tenancy Bill.<sup>50</sup>

Although various Kisan demands were pressed on the Congress, it is quite evident, as we have seen, that Narendra Deva was conscious of the statutory constraints within which the Congress governments were functioning. In his tour of UP in the following month Narendra Deva criticized “Organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Nationalist Agriculturist Party” as “dead organizations which had failed. That was because they had no programme for the uplift of the masses, who were being ruthlessly exploited by capitalists and taluqdars and the zamindars with the help of British Imperialism. They had also failed because the leadership of those bodies was in the hands of capitalists and wealthy persons who hardly found time to attend to the needs of the masses”.<sup>51</sup> In April 1938 Narendra Deva spoke at the Delhi Provincial Congress Socialist Conference. He stressed the need to build class organizations and was equally firm that these organizations must not lose their anti-imperialist thrust by getting into an antagonist relation with the Congress. On the contrary, they must strengthen and reinvigorate it. They must also “quicken the pace of the social struggle in this country”.<sup>52</sup> As President of the All India Kisan Conference in 1939, Narendra Deva returns to the theme at the Gaya conference acknowledging that it is the peasants’ support which had placed the Congress in power.<sup>53</sup> He was able to add now that “Kisans constitute the bulk of the Congress”. Narendra Deva’s brief survey, in his presidential address, of the growth of peasant organizations across the country and the origin of the All-India Kisan Sabha is significant as one of the socialist accounts of the growth of the Kisan movement. In an article in November 1936 and in the Gaya address of 1939, the role of the non-communist and even pre-socialist peasant organizations is mentioned and acknowledged by Narendra Deva with a frankness that is somewhat rare in Left-wing literature of a certain kind. Many of the writings of N G Ranga, a leading socialist and peasant leader in the pre-independence years, have till recently been in only limited circulation – as, for example, his *Revolutionary Peasants*, in which he has, like Narendra Deva, written lucidly about the path-finding struggles by peasants in South India and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>

Interestingly, Narendra Deva, in his 1939 address, identifies Bengal as “a weak spot” in kisan organizations. He advises kisan organizations there to work with the various socialist parties and as far as possible with the Krishak Praja Movement. In his speech at the Kisan conference at Motihari in February 1940, Narendra Deva made a critical point, often lost sight of in many later

studies of pre-independence peasant struggles: “The Zamindari system could not be destroyed unless British Imperialism in India was destroyed.”<sup>55</sup> According to him, “(i)t was impossible to remove poverty and unemployment without first removing British domination over India”.<sup>56</sup>

From this essential understanding certain corollaries followed. The Congress, as the “biggest anti-imperialist front working in India for the last 54 years” had to be strengthened: “We have great expectations from the Congress. If a few Zamindars manage to enter into this great organization, there is no danger; but, when the number is large and the Congress organization is captured and its policy and programme guided by the Zamindars then the danger becomes grave. It would be a bad day when Kisans and Kisan Sabha workers would sever their connection with the Congress. They should continue to be with the Congress in spite of the grave provocation. *They could not alter the Congress programme by walking out of the Congress.*” (emphasis added)<sup>57</sup>

Narendra Deva was eager for the resumption of the anti-colonial struggle particularly as he found it odd that the United States, otherwise closely aligned with England, “is neutral while India is dragged into the war!” He attributed this to India’s status as a “slave country”<sup>58</sup>. While deploring the delay in resuming the struggle he criticized “attempts to lower the Congress in public estimation “: “We have full confidence in the Congress. We can make our voice intensely heard and its influence keenly felt through this great organization of ours. We can change its leadership if required, but we should not disturb the solidarity of the same. Let us strengthen the Congress. Let the organization feel our strength. It is a bad policy to have a separate organization other than the Congress. The Indian National Congress is the only all-India Indian political organization on national lines. This is the only national organisation. The Kisan Sabha is a class organization but class organization is not the only thing which is wanted; what is wanted is a truly national organization competent to speak in the name of the nation as a whole and this is the Congress.”<sup>59</sup>

Congress initiatives on reform of land relations at this time were not inconsiderable. The reform Bill in Orissa in 1938 was reserved by the Governor for consideration by the Governor General under Section 299 of the Act of 1935 and assent was withheld. The Bill had sought to reduce rents in Zamindari areas in parts of Orissa to the rate of land revenue payable in the nearest ryotwari areas with a compensation for the zamindars to be computed at

2 annas in the rupee.<sup>60</sup> In Madras province the Congress government was considering that in the areas under the Permanent Settlement the ryot was the “owner of the soil” and also opted for restoration of the levels of rent existing in 1802 when the Settlement was made.<sup>61</sup> This could not be implemented because the Ministry resigned. The UP Tenancy Act provided for security of tenure by giving all statutory tenants hereditary rights and restrictions were placed on resumption of lands by the zamindars.<sup>62</sup> Provisions for arrest on failure to pay rent were done away with.<sup>63</sup> In the Bihar legislation rent increases made since 1911 were done away with, as were provisions for damages on arrears; interest was also reduced by 50 per cent.<sup>64</sup> Occupancy tenancies were protected and ejection could not take place for non-payment of rent.<sup>65</sup> The debt relief legislation enacted by the Congress governments was fairly drastic. Caps were specified to the rates of simple interest at 6.25 per cent in Madras (as in the North West Frontier Province) and 9 per cent in Bihar.<sup>66</sup>

The full text of his presidential address at the All India Kisan Conference in June 1942 which had to be read out in his absence due to bad health is not available in Yusuf Meherally’s compilation or indeed in any other published work of Narendra Deva. A report with some details of the Bedaul address has been reproduced in the second volume of his Selected Works.<sup>67</sup> According to Narendra Deva, the Second World War could cease to be an imperialist war only if India could “feel free and obtain a charter of freedom for her millions of Kisans and labourers”. However, such differences cast their shadow over the Kisan Sabha. Tall leaders like N G Ranga and Indulal Yagnik had dissociated themselves from the Sabha by 1944. After the 1942 movement in particular, with the arrest of those then engaged in the struggle against British rule, the Kisan Sabha had come to be dominated by those who were affiliated with the communist movement. Narendra Deva expressed his deep disappointment with this state of affairs at a meeting of kisan leaders at Bombay after his release in 1945. A short report of this is reprinted in his Selected Works.<sup>68</sup> It is based on M.A. Rasul’s account.<sup>69</sup> Narendra Deva’s concern was understandable. The implications of this disarray in the kisan movement were serious, especially considering the then CPI line on ‘Pakistan’.

Humayun Kabir, representing the Krishak Praja Party of Bengal, put his finger on the crux of the problem when he said: “Our party is the strongest organisation composed of Kisans alone. It has been there since 1936-1937. Our party fought the elections in 1936 and is going to do

so this time (1946 elections were in the offing). When Swamiji (Swami Sahajanand – *A.N.*) visited Bengal, we told him we were ready to affiliate with his AIKS but not now. We will do so after the elections. We have to fight the League in the elections, and affiliation at this moment will have an adverse effect on us. The question of Pakistan is to be decided in Punjab and Bengal.”<sup>70</sup>

N G Ranga has written about the anti-sectarian struggle that had to be waged in the kisan movement.<sup>71</sup> Narendra Deva and Humayun Kabir likewise understood the critical role that the kisan movement could have played at this time by strengthening the forces that could have helped keep the country together. In fact Congress Socialists waged a spirited struggle among peasants and workers in the 1946-47 period against divisive ideologies.

**R**eligious-sectarian questions became important and would have a bearing on aspects of both the political and the Kisan struggles. Narendra Deva was forthright on the religious-sectarian question. In June 1934 he demanded that no member of any communal party should be a member of the Congress. He stressed the economic factor in resolving the Hindu-Muslim question. Speaking at New Delhi, he was reported to have “.....attacked the Hindu Mahasabha who had no following and whose only aim seemed to be straining the relations between the communities”.<sup>72</sup>

The UP Provincial Hindu Sabha and National Agriculturist Party, he saw in 1936 as being the “bulwark of reactionary forces”.<sup>73</sup>

According to M Hashim Kidwai, among others, the proposal for a coalition government between the Congress and the Muslim League in UP in 1937 fell through on account, inter alia, of the opposition of “Congress-Socialists” and “Congress Communists”, both of whom feared that the land reforms programme of the Congress might be stalled as a result of such a coalition.<sup>74</sup> This question, of whether to oppose the League or to ally with it, remained a classic Congress dilemma. Hashim Kidwai names Narendra Deva from among the Congress-Socialists, and Dr Ashraf and Dr Z A Ahmad from among the “Congress Communists” as being partly responsible for the alliance proposal not coming through. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Rajendra Prasad on the subject on July 21, 1937. Nehru referred to a meeting between himself, Maulana Azad, Narendra Deva, Govind Ballabh Pant and others in which it was decided to “offer stringent conditions to the UP Muslim

League group...”.<sup>75</sup> Interestingly, the autobiography of Dr Ahmad is silent on the subject.<sup>76</sup>

On 10 December 1937 Narendra Deva suggested in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru that in the elections to the local bodies due in 1938 possibilities might be explored for a common “bloc of the Congress and the League for the specific purpose of these elections on the basis of a common ... programme.” The letter is noteworthy for many reasons. Narendra Deva wanted to avoid a clash with the League in the elections to the local bodies. He was wary of Congressmen doing anything that might give a “handle” to the League to alienate the Muslims from the Congress. He would have preferred Congressmen not to contest these elections at all. Hence the loud thinking on a possible ‘bloc’ with the League. The proposal is not made without reservations; he was not sure if the arrangement would be ‘feasible’ and was not quite clear even about its desirability. Narendra Deva shared his doubts with Nehru over the question of a larger alliance: “It is clear in my mind that there can be no question of a compromise with the Muslim League as it is constituted today. That will mean compromise with the fundamental principles which govern us today for although the League has changed its creed and broadened its programme the truth is that there is no fundamental change either in its objective or in its programme. The leadership continues to be reactionary as before and unless it is altered no one can believe that the new programme will be put into action or honest efforts will be made to achieve the new objective.”<sup>77</sup>

The suggestion made by Narendra Deva in December 1937 with regard to local bodies (in contrast to his position in June-July 1937 when Ministry-making in the province as a whole was being discussed) appears to have been based on the expectation that the rest of the League could be isolated from its leadership. Ironically, while this may have been a possibility in UP in and around June 1937 it was perhaps no longer so in December 1937 even on a limited local body scale.

Narendra Deva questioned the position of the Muslim League and other communal organizations with growing emphasis in the next few years. The crunch appears to have come with the land reform legislation of the UP Government. By November 1938 the Tenancy Bill was before the UP Legislative Assembly. Narendra Deva made some hard-hitting points. Continuing a theme he had dwelt on in May 1938 when he questioned the Muslim League’s commitment to independence, he saw the League as being the “props and pillars” of the Zamindari system. He argued that if the League was



really in sympathy with the *kisans* as claimed in its manifesto, there was no reason why it should not support the proposals made.<sup>78</sup>

A month later Narendra Deva was in Partapgarh, declaring that organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the National Agriculturist Party were being exploited by Zamindars with the help of British imperialism. Yet, while criticizing the Muslim League, he had still not lost hope. He was reported to have said that “the day was not far off when both the Congress and the League would march hand in hand, forgetting all communal differences, with the common object of fighting British imperialism and capitalists alike.”<sup>79</sup>

A year later, in October 1939, he was moved increasingly to stress the similarities between the League and the Hindu Sabha, both of which he saw as representing vested interests.<sup>80</sup> In a lecture in February 1940 on communal problems, Narendra Deva observed that the League’s demands “were not only increasing but were being changed from time to time with the result that the League....was seriously thinking of dividing India....”<sup>81</sup>

Unlike the organized communist movement, he saw through the fallacy of defining ‘nation’ on the basis of religion. As a Marxist, he realized that this was not secular nationalism. He therefore emphasized other factors in addition. For example: “The language of the communities was not different, and in provinces, like Bengal and the Punjab, Hindus and Muslims spoke Bengali or Punjabi. Even in UP, where the problem of Hindi and Urdu was more acute, the two languages were really one, possessing the same grammar, the same style and the same vocabulary. In any literature *which had to be written for the masses*, this difference had to cease and neither of the tendencies to enrich Hindustani with Sanskrit or Arabic words would succeed.”<sup>82</sup> (*emphasis added*)

Narendra Deva emphasized the role of other Muslim organizations apart from the League. He noted, for example, that the “Shias had disclaimed the Muslim League and so also (had) the Momins”.<sup>83</sup> Earlier, in May 1938, he had observed that the Shias led by Wazir Hassan disfavoured separate electorates because with Sunni predominance they “had no chance of being returned”<sup>84</sup> Later, in June 1945, he reiterated the authority of the Shia Conference to speak in the name of Shias.<sup>85</sup> The British authorities, in their bid to strengthen the League, never conceded this and similar facts. In his lecture on

the communal problem in 1940, Narendra Deva stressed the British Colonial role in dividing the communities – a factor now somewhat neglected, especially in current scholarship. This is, however, a continuing theme in Narendra Deva’s writings and speeches.

Narendra Deva differed sharply from the communist line after 1940 of equating Hindu-Muslim unity with “Congress-League unity”. According to him, “...unity between communities is essentially the result of a long process of integration. Pacts are, however, temporary expedients to serve temporary ends. But the unity of communities is a different affair. It is a slow and painful process.”<sup>86</sup>

Pakistan, he maintained in June 1945, was no solution: “Pakistan or no Pakistan, the communal problem will have to be tackled all the same and can be tackled only by laying emphasis on the economic issues which equally affect the Hindu and Muslim masses of the country.”<sup>87</sup>

He added: “I shall no doubt welcome a settlement of the communal question with the League, but this does not mean that I should advocate unity of action in the political field. Without identity of outlook and objectives such a unity will be either short-lived or will only end in strengthening the reactionary forces in the country. Congress-League unity in the political sphere will prevent a new orientation in the League itself and will stabilize the present reactionary leadership. This, of course, does not exclude a joint front with the League on specific issues on which an agreement is possible.”<sup>88</sup>

In October 1946, he repeated this position.<sup>89</sup>

At the Meerut Congress, in November 1946, Narendra Deva spoke at length on the nature of the League and characterized it as a “fascist body” with “gangster methods”. Narendra Deva asserted: “The present hate complex must be ended. Mr Jinnah on the one hand says that he deplors riots but in the same breath says if Pakistan is not conceded the present riots will continue.”<sup>90</sup>

Subhas Bose’s understanding of the League was similar. He had described it as a backward clique with plutocratic vested interests.<sup>91</sup>

While agreeing with Abul Hashem of the Bengal Muslim League that “the British imperialistic hand was behind the Bengal riots” (of August 1946), Narendra Deva was not willing to exculpate the Muslim League Ministry.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, speaking at the Meerut



Congress, Narendra Deva warned Hindus against a tit-for-tat policy. The Bihar riots had taken place only a few days before the Meerut session.<sup>93</sup> Narendra Deva's critique of British policy on the communal question and of communal parties including the League and the Hindu Mahasabha was relentless.<sup>94</sup> He criticized the Hindu Mahasabha as a preposterous movement "launched by a group of reactionaries to mislead the masses in the name of religion".<sup>95</sup>

"Where were these people," he asked, "when Mahatma Gandhi launched his campaign against untouchability and rejuvenated about six crores of Hindus?" And further: "Will these reactionaries support the economic programme of the Congress Government for abolition of Zamindari and nationalization of the industries, which would ameliorate the lot of 98 per cent of the Hindu masses who are at present being exploited by barely 2 per cent of supporters of the Sabha?" And that: "The Sabha is trading on communalism of the middle classes who were fighting for the crumbs of petty offices for amongst the masses there was no difference between a Hindu Kisan or Muslim Kisan as both were equally exploited by Hindu and Muslim Zamindars."<sup>96</sup>

Independence was round the corner. What kind of India was to be built? Narendra Deva's critique extended to Sardar Patel, with whom the Congress Socialists were usually in dissonance. Barely eight or nine weeks after Gandhi's assassination, the socialists resigned from the Indian National Congress. On the eve of this decision, there was a conference of the socialists at Nasik. Narendra Deva spoke his mind: "There is a vast disparity between what the Congress stands for and what the Congress governments do. The Congress claims that communalists have no place in it. And yet rank communalists are members of the government. Sardar Vallabhai Patel assures the capitalists by telling them that Shanmukham Chetty (the Union Finance Minister – A.N.) is their representative and therefore they need have no apprehensions. He wants the Leaguers to disband the League and join the Congress. He welcomes Hindu Mahasabhaites into the Congress. He pats the RSS and welcomes them too. By one door the Congress expels the socialists. Through another, it admits in capitalists and communalists. God alone can save the Congress."<sup>97</sup>

One who was a strong defender of the Congress as the country's premier anti-imperial organization was now severing his ties with it. His strategy of 'moving the entire Congress' had come to naught. For this turn of events he was perhaps not entirely responsible. There

are aspects of these events that remain unclear and unexplained till today. The Congress breach with the communists and the later, post-independence, breach with the Congress Socialists are usually discussed as unconnected developments. Prior to the breach, personal relations between Congress Socialists and others in the Congress were generally warm and friendly. As regards the Communists, there is material to suggest that the Congress leadership was in talks from 1945 itself to bridge the gulf with the CPI and suggestions had been made by both Nehru and Sardar Patel that if the CPI's Pakistan line could be given up, the past, such as differences over the Quit India movement, would be forgotten and there would be little left to hinder normal relations between the CPI and the Congress.<sup>98</sup> These were suggestions were, of course, spurned. The relevant point for our present purposes is that when the Congress was apparently prepared to re-build bridges even with the CPI, the usual narrative of a perceived resentment against the Congress Socialists needs closer scrutiny and further research. What were the real reasons for this? The conduct of the Communist Left in relation to the Pakistan scheme had certainly hardened the attitude of the 'organisation men', who ran the Congress party machine, against the Left as a whole. Could it be therefore that the socialists were collaterally damaged for the ideological waywardness of others?

Narendra Deva's positions in relation to Subhas Bose provide yet another interesting study in his political perspectives. Some facts leading to the split in the Congress in 1939 are not very well known. Gandhi had in fact suggested the name of Narendra Deva, among others, for the Congress President towards the end of 1938. In January 1939 Subhas Bose also offered to withdraw from the contest for the Congress President if Narendra Deva were chosen.<sup>99</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in February-March 1939: "Indeed, so far as Gandhiji was concerned, he expressed his wish repeatedly in my presence that he would like a socialist as President. Apart from my own name, he mentioned Acharya Narendra Deva's name. But...I did not like the idea of a socialist President at this stage."<sup>100</sup>

Evidently, the contest between Bose and Pattabhi Sitaramayya in 1939 had been avoidable. It weakened the Congress at a critical time in India's history. Narendra Deva's sympathies were initially with Bose. In a statement issued in January 1939 he said "...when elders are not ready to take up the burden, Mr Subhas Chandra Bose seems clearly marked out for the Presidential *gaddi*."<sup>101</sup>

At the Tripuri Congress, Narendra Deva had his differences with both groups. He was not prepared to go along with either of the groups. He was reportedly not prepared to go along with the Bose group's description of certain members of the Working Committee as "Rightists": Defining the Rightists, he said that they were those who were prepared to align with British imperialism and if anybody could think that a member of the old Working Committee could be called a Rightist in that sense, there could be no hope of freedom for this country. They were not Rightists, they were anti-imperialists to the core and revolutionaries. The question of Rightists and Leftists could only arise after there was a social revolution.<sup>102</sup>

Yet Narendra Deva had misgivings at the time about the Congress "high command", which he set out in a letter to M R Masani written a week later, on 19 March 1939: "Undue condemnation of Subhas Bose and praise of the High Command should be ruled out. I do not understand why we should go out of our way to praise them when we know that they have no consideration for us. Is it not clear to you that when they talk of purge they mean to eliminate the left-wing from the Congress?"<sup>103</sup>

But Narendra Deva became increasingly critical of the positions taken by Subhas Bose thereafter. A year later, in March 1940, in an important tract written at that time of the Ramgarh Congress, we find him making this sharp comment: "It is difficult to grasp the theory that underlies the activities of Shree Subhas Chandra Bose... He talks of an immediate struggle and does all that lies in his power to make it difficult... If one were to believe him, the greater obstacle today is the present leadership of the Congress and not British imperialism."<sup>104</sup>

There is in this tract a passage which I quote at length because it represents a valid point of view, now seldom referred to, let alone represented, in writings on the subject:

"It is difficult to say how much of his (Subhas – A.N.) anti-compromise talk is serious. It may, of course, just be a good stick to beat the Congress High Command with. Shree Subhas Chandra Bose has not always stood out against compromise like this. During his Presidentship he was for negotiations with the British Government over the issue of the war. Today, he asserts that the Constituent Assembly can only be convened after the conquest of power.

But he conveniently forgets that he wrote in his organ, the Forward Bloc on September 9, under the

caption 'Lead from Wardha'. He says there that the 'Congress must press the national demand on the government and insist on its immediate fulfilment'. In the same article he proceeds to observe: 'Let not our leaders who are now deliberating at Wardha ask for a whit less than what is our inherent birthright. If they are called on to negotiate, let them do so honourably.'

A year back at the Malda Divisional Conference and the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Jalpaiguri, Subhas Babu framed a resolution which foreshadowed the possibility of the government conceding the demand of the Congress, in which event a Constituent Assembly was to be convoked for framing a Constitution to be embodied in a treaty of alliance between India and Great Britain. This, according to him, could happen very well without recourse to a struggle. How can he now condemn Gandhiji for meeting the Viceroy or negotiating with him?

It is [sad?], however, that such things appeal to the average Leftist. He has been fed upon slogans and his political education has been neglected. He is politically immature. He acts, therefore, as an unwise ally. Proper schooling of political workers and youngmen is the greatest need."<sup>105</sup>

Towards the end of the thirties, Bose desired that the national struggle be resumed early. As the Congress gradually veered around to this position in the next three years, Bose, and also Gandhi, came to a relatively greater appreciation of each other's role. This is reflected in their statements and particularly, on the part of Bose, from the time of his broadcasts from Tokyo and Bangkok on June 24 and October 2, 1943.<sup>106</sup>

**I**n the 1940s, how did Narendra Deva view the struggle being conducted overseas? For much of this period Narendra Deva himself was in prison successively in Ahmednagar Fort, Bareilly and Almora (1942-45). But we have his perspective on the war through a pamphlet written in 1942<sup>107</sup> in which Narendra Deva refutes the people's war thesis: "A genuine people's war should lead to the destruction of both imperialism and of capitalist democracy and of fascism. But he will indeed be a bold man who would say that the present war is being fought to destroy imperialism. That would mean that the British and the American governments are waging war to destroy themselves."

He refers to a similar argument made at the time of the First World War and Lenin's refutation of it.<sup>108</sup>

Narendra Deva reiterated this view three days after his release from prison on June 15, 1945. Two months later we have his statement on the report of Subhas Bose's death. The whole nation mourned him, he said: "Though they did not agree with some of the methods of Mr Bose, nobody could question the purity of his motives. India would feel strengthened in the idea that the memory of Mr Bose would be cherished and the lessons of his life learnt."<sup>109</sup>

For Narendra Deva the 'Quit India' Movement of 1942, was an advance in the national struggle. In November 1945, he remarked: "...had the revolution of August 1942 not taken place, there would not have been so much enthusiasm in the country... He made particular reference to Mr Jai Prakash Narain, Dr Lohia and others... (who) were subjected to various forms of torture... (He) made a feeling reference to the INA men and said that there was widespread resentment amongst all sections of people against their trial."<sup>110</sup>

While opposing the proposal at the Bombay Congress that "truth and nonviolence" be substituted for "legitimate and peaceful means" in the Congress creed,<sup>111</sup> Narendra Dev argued that no one has ever suggested that falsehood ought to be part of our creed. Nonviolence, he maintained was subject to varying interpretations and was a metaphysical concept. If in substance and meaning it did not differ from "peaceful means", there was no need for the new phraseology.

Narendra Deva says in his letter of 10th December 1937 to Jawaharlal Nehru: "Truth and nonviolence are noble ideas and as such every decent man must have high regard for them. But I feel that they are so much being misused today in India that the day is not far distant when they will begin to [stink] in our nostrils".<sup>112</sup>

Narendra Deva's approach to the question of relations between the Congress and the kisan movement was different from that which characterized the movement in places like Bihar. He thought that both violence and consequent tensions between kisan organizations and the Congress could be avoided with some tact, sensitivity and vigilance. In his letter to Nehru, Narendra Deva remarks: "So far as the agrarian situation is concerned I have every hope that with a little goodwill combined with firmness we can succeed in avoiding a conflict with the peasant organizations. The way in which some of our Behar Congressmen are proceeding is the sure way of inviting trouble which is bound to weaken the Congress organization. We can also easily prevent outbreaks

of violence in the countryside if we only tighten up our organization and keep a watch on the activities of our workers."<sup>113</sup> Yet, so far as the colonial power was concerned, Narendra Deva was prepared to countenance a degree of violence. In his reminiscences Narendra Deva recalls telling Gandhi when he met him in Poona in 1945, after being released from Almora Jail, that while truth was fine, he did not think that state power could be snatched from the British without resort to a modicum of violence.<sup>114</sup>

Although Narendra Deva had been involved with the educational aspects of the national movement, even as late as 1929 he had observed that "the constructive programme of the Congress is regarded as dull and tame" by many who "cared more for a live programme of immediate work".<sup>115</sup> It was Gandhi who had in 1934 initially drawn the attention of socialists through Narendra Deva to what he described as "glaring omissions" from their draft programme. These omissions included, according to Gandhi, removal of untouchability, communal unity, khaddar and prohibition.<sup>116</sup> Having been more attentive to Gandhi and the evolution of his ideas than many writers and ideologues of the communist tradition, Narendra Deva, like most socialists of his time, was aware of Gandhi's critique of caste.<sup>117</sup> He noted that Gandhi advocated "interdining and intermarriage not only between different castes but between different communities". He pointed out that Gandhi was "in no sense an orthodox Hindu. On the contrary, he breaks almost every rule and practice enjoined by orthodox Hinduism."<sup>118</sup>

The "constructive programme" formulated by Gandhi gained the support of Narendra Deva who urged also that the educational system to be remodeled "on the lines suggested by the Wardha scheme".<sup>119</sup> This was the scheme drawn up, on Gandhi's inspiration, by a committee appointed in 1937 with Dr Zakir Hussain as the president, for free and compulsory education and with emphasis on handicraft/vocational training.<sup>120</sup> Narendra Deva's work on Basic Education in the United Provinces and the report of the UP Primary and Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee, 1938 which he headed had significant ramifications. By a resolution dated 4th August 1939, the UP Education Department recorded that "Govt have already accepted the proposal of the Committee regarding the introduction of Basic Education – a term embracing education through concrete life situations and co-related with one or more forms of manual and productive work and the social and cultural environments of the child". And further: "Among the



several recommendations made by the Committee one of the most important is that compulsory primary education should be imparted on a nation-wide scale free of charge and should extend for a period of seven years beginning from the age of seven". In the South, N G Ranga too accorded great significance to the constructive work movement. In Orissa, Malati Choudhury and Rama Devi, had been active in the salt satyagraha and the former played an important role in establishing a branch of the Congress Socialist Party; Malati Choudhury was active also in the Kisan movement, presiding over various peasant conferences in January 1938.<sup>121</sup> This positioning fitted well with Narendra Deva's perspective. He appreciated and supported constructive work but felt that unless these activities were supplemented by mass organizations they could not lead to mass action.

On the inter-communal aspect, apart from his work within the Congress, Narendra Deva speaking in September 1946 at a meeting of residents of Faizabad, emphasized the need to organize Mohalla Committees: "...it was the poor people who suffered most during a communal riot. *Educated gentlemen goondas, more than anybody else, were responsible for riots.* It must be the concern of every Mohalla Committee to prevent communal disturbances from breaking out or extending to that Mohalla." (*emphasis added*)<sup>122</sup> The importance of such neighbourhood groups has been neglected in recent decades as was evident yet again in the events in Muzaffarnagar in 2013 when neighbours were incited to turn upon neighbours.

Rammanohar Lohia was, in post-independence Indian socialism, the principal figure associated with the socialist retreat from Marxism and the attempt to offer another ideological framework which came to be associated with most of the later Indian socialists. The Panchmarhi Convention of the socialists in May 1952 can be said to mark the socialist retreat from Marxism. Yet Narendra Deva and Lohia had close personal and family relations. In December 1945 Rammanohar's father, Hiralal Lohia, had passed away. Narendra Deva had seen Hiralal a day earlier. We learn from Narendra Deva's tribute that Hiralal Lohia had participated in the Dharasana raid during the Namak Satyagraha of 1930, and was jailed in every important national struggle.<sup>123</sup> On their geopolitical perspective the differences between Narendra Deva's ideas and those of Lohia were marked not so much in stated ideological positions as in the actual post-Narendra Deva political trajectory of the socialists. Narendra Deva was not inclined to embrace the Western alliance even as a response to some grave provocations

to Indian nationalism and Indian socialism from the pre-independence Indian communist movement which had sought simultaneously to assert a monopoly over Marxism. Narendra Deva's article in Janvani warning against American imperialism was written in 1947 but remains of some relevance. A translation was published in 1989 by Janata.<sup>124</sup> Nor was Narendra Deva prepared to compromise with the sectarianism of any religious community. Here too he has an obvious contemporary relevance as a pathfinder for many sections of Indian socialists who need to step back from identification with caste and religion-based politics and return to the ideological drawing board.

Meanwhile, current scholarship is in need of a greater recognition of the pre-socialist Congress role and also the socialist role in the pre-independence period. A growing body of such scholarship could perhaps help also in consolidating the progressive forces in the country and in repairing and strengthening the broad Gandhi-Nehru-Socialist framework. This framework, and the pre-independence constructive programme, should be seen not in a sectarian way but as an achievement of the entire Indian people. A further and corresponding duty will attach to the socialists. They need to review the indiscriminate 'anti-Congressism' (as distinct from 'anti-Congress-I-ism') and specifically, in their case, the mechanical anti-Nehruism that came to be associated with some of them, particularly after the death of Narendra Deva in February 1956. It is not entirely an accident that the current propaganda of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh targets Nehru. The work and writings of Narendra Deva will also be of some assistance in this context in helping to arrive at a proper historical understanding of the Congress, Gandhi and Nehru.

1. Julius Braunthal, *History of the International*, Volume 3, (1943-1968), London, Victor Gollancz, 1980, p. 224
2. *Ibid.*, p. 236
3. Madhu Limaye, *Age of Hope*, Delhi, Atma Ram & Sons, 1986, p. 335
4. Based on notes taken by the author at the meeting.
5. For text see Jayaprakash Narayan [Bimal Prasad (ed.)], *Selected Works*, Vol 2, New Delhi, Manohar, 2001, pp. 1-89
6. A report of this speech is available in Hari Dev Sharma (ed.), *Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva*, (hereinafter SW-AND), Volume 1, New Delhi, Radiant Publishers, 1998, pp. 76-77.
7. See Mukut Behari Lal, *Acharya Narendra Deva*, Varanasi, Acharya Narendra Deva Samajwadi



- Sansthan, 1967, p. 1
8. Yusuf Meherally, "Acharya Narendra Deva", in Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*, Bombay, Padma Publications, 1946, p. xi
  9. "Kisan Movement in the U.P", *Congress Socialist*, 28 November 1936; reproduced in Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 56-61 at p. 60. See also H.N. Mitra (ed.), *Indian Annual Register, 1921-22, Volume 1*, {Reprint}, New Delhi, Gian Publishing House, 1990, p. 6 and p. 156
  10. "Kisan Movement in the U.P", in Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*, op.cit., p. 60
  11. Yusuf Meherally, "Acharya Narendra Deva", in Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*, op. cit., p. vii
  12. SW-AND-1, p. 3
  13. SW-AND-1, p. 8
  14. Acharya Narendra Deva, "Vyaktigat Satyagraha Aur Azadi ki Ladai : Mahatma Gandhi Ke Vaktavya par Ek Drishti", *Sangharsha*, 28 October 1940
  15. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Vol 76)*, New Delhi, Publications Division, 1979, p. 66
  16. SW-AND-1, p. 28
  17. SW-AND-1, [Speech at Kisan Conference in Motihari, 29 February 1940], p. 212
  18. Acharya Narendra Deva, "Hardoi Socialist Sammelan Mein Bhashan", Acharya Narendra Deva Vangmaya, Khand 3 (1947-1956), New Delhi, Nehru Smarak Sanghralaya Evam Pustakalaya (NMML), 2004, p. 386
  19. Prem Bhasin, "The Heritage of Acharya Narendra Deva", *Janata*, 21 February 1971. Bhasin quotes from Mukut Behari Lal, Acharya Narendra Deva : *Yug Aur Netritv*, p. 290. See, however, Acharya Narendra Deva, "Marksvaad Aur Socialist Party", Acharya Narendra Deva Vangmaya, Khand 3, op. cit., p. 241
  20. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works, Volume 2*, Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1977, pp. 292-294 at p. 293
  21. Asoka Mehta, *Democratic Socialism*, Hyderabad, Chetana Prakashan, 1954, p. 63
  22. For example, in his *The History of the Kisan Sabha*, Harkishan Singh Surjeet makes short work of the All India Kisan Conference held at Meerut in January 1936 at which the decision to establish an "All India Kisan Congress" was taken. He does not even mention that this conference was held under the presidentship of the socialist Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. Surjeet writes: "The formation of AIKS was preceded by a meeting in Meerut in 1936 where the necessary preparations were made..." (see Surjeet, Harkishan Singh, *The History of the Kisan Sabha*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1996, p. 25)
- Some academic work displays a similar tendency. In Sumit Sarkar's 'Popular' Movements and Middle Class leadership in late Colonial India: Perspectives and Problems of a "History from Below", (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, K.P. Bagchi & Co., Calcutta, 1983) the CSP is mentioned twice in 95 pages, though about half the work is concerned with the 1930s and 1940s. These passing references are at page 54 and page 63. In the latter reference, the CSP is mentioned as a 'legal cover' for the activities of P. Krishna Pillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and A.K. Gopalan. There are some other stray references to socialists at page 44 and page 49.
23. In his book, *How I became a Communist* (Chinta Publishers, Trivandrum, 1976), EMS Namboodiripad mentions the Patna Socialist Convention and Narendra Deva's address. (p. 163) He does not mention its influence upon him. He, however, acknowledges further on the fact that Jayaprakash Narayan's *Why Socialism* "became our guiding document in our day-to-day activities for quite some time". (p. 166).
  24. For a report of this speech see SW-AND-1, pp. 76-77
  25. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*; Padma Publications, Bombay; 1946, pp. 8-29.
  26. Yusuf Meherally, "Acharya Narendra Deva", in *Ibid.*, p. xii
  27. Acharya Narendra Deva [ Meherally (ed.)], op. cit., p.6
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 10
  29. See, for example, Lajpat Jagga, "Colonial Railwaymen and British Rule: A Probe into Railway Labour Agitation in India, 1919-1922", in Bipan Chandra (ed.), *The Indian Left : Critical Appraisals*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1983.
  30. See, for example, C.S. Krishna, *Labour Movement in Tamil Nadu*, New Delhi, K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1989, especially pp. 173-177
  31. "Speech to Railway Workers, Chittagong", 31 August 1921, CWMG, Vol 21, pp. 24-28
  32. Acharya Narendra Deva [Meherally (ed.)], op.

- cit., p.11. Interestingly, when in the aftermath of the Maliana incidents in Uttar Pradesh in the late 1980s this writer along with some others met the CPM leader, B T Ranadive, to urge a working class intervention, the latter echoed a similar thought about the Indian working class being only “half a working class”, that is, rooted in the peasantry. The difference was that while Narendra Deva saw this fact as a basis for revolutionary mobilization in the villages, Ranadive used it to explain or plead for non-intervention by the working class in an inter-communal conflict. However, the mobilization done in the 1980s under the leadership of Shankar Guha Niyogi in the Chattisgarh area appeared to exhibit the possibilities that Narendra Deva had outlined in his 1934 speech. See also Anil Nauriya, “What Chattisgarh Movement Means”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30 November 1991, pp. 2735-2736
33. See G. Adhikari, (ed.), *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India, Volume-I, (1917-1922)*, People’s Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971 for Lenin’s. Theses on National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 and also for M.N. Roy’s supplementary theses and the changes made by Lenin in the latter. See also M.N. Roy, *Memoirs*, Ajanta Publishers, Delhi, 1964 (Reprint 1984), p. 379. There is some discussion of Lenin’s and M.N. Roy’s views on the role of Communist parties in relation to nationalist movements in colonial countries, in my articles “Gandhi and the Indian Resurgence”, *Janata*, Bombay, 27 February 1983 and “Criticising Gandhi”, *Mainstream*. New Delhi, 27 January 1996.
  34. SW-AND-1, pp. 76-77
  35. Acharya Narendra Deva, “The Task Before Us”, *Congress Socialist*, 29 September 1934, SW-AND-1, p. 36
  36. This point was made repeatedly by Narendra Deva till the end of his life. In June 1952, speaking at a provincial party conference at Hardoi he argued: “...our party moulded Marxism to the conditions of our country and enriched it. Our party maintained that keeping distance from national movements in the colonies was not Marxist but opportunistic and reactionary; later the communists also accepted this.” See my piece, “The Ideology of Narendra Deva”, and translation of Narendra Deva’s speech in *Janata*, Bombay, 25 April 1993. Nor did the early socialists nurture an allergy towards the Soviet Union or Marxism. The CSP organ in undivided Punjab during the Second World War, for example, was known as the Bolshevik and was produced by socialists like Yamin Dar. (See K.L.Johar, *Unsung Torchbearers: Punjab Congress Socialists in Freedom Struggle*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, pp. 368-370)
  37. SW-AND-1, p. 38
  38. SW-AND-1, p. 120
  39. Narendra Deva, “Fascism ka Vastavik Roop”, in *Rashtriyata aur Samajwad*, Banaras, Gyan Mandal Prakashan, 1949, p. 719
  40. Narendra Deva, ‘Presidential Address at the Gujarat Congress Socialist Conference’, Ahmedabad, 23-24 June 1935 in Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and National Revolution*, Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946 , p. 67
  41. Idem
  42. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], op. cit., p. 68
  43. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], op. cit., p. 70
  44. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], p. 70. A similar idea was expressed by Narendra Deva in his Presidential address at the First Session of the All-India Congress Socialist Conference at Patna on 17 May 1934; see “Socialism and the Nationalist Movement” (1934) in *Ibid.*, p. 10
  45. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], p. 72
  46. “Note on the Constitutional Impasse”, SW-AND-1, pp. 250-253.
  47. *Ibid.*, p. 252
  48. Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], pp. 78-84
  49. SW-AND-1, p. 141
  50. *Ibid.*, p. 142
  51. *National Herald*, 17 December 1938
  52. SW-AND-1, p. 124
  53. SW-AND-1, p. 163
  54. N.G. Ranga, *Revolutionary Peasants*, Amrit Book Co., New Delhi, 1949
- In North India, not merely the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha but also the UP Kisan Sabha was in active existence by 1928. Both were represented at the All Parties National Convention held at Calcutta in 1928. The activities of the Bihar Sabha are more readily acknowledged, perhaps on account of its association for example, with Swami Sahajanand,

than those of the rather more progressive UP Kisan Movement from the twenties. Generally scholars in the current phase of anti-Congressism happily concede the fact of pre-Congress peasant mobilizations (that is, say, pre-1917 mobilisations) but are less inclined to admit the fact of simply Congress or even Congress Socialist mobilizations of the peasants prior to independence. A somewhat rare reference – to the role of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in relation to the Punjab peasantry – is to be found in Master Hari Singh, *Punjab Peasant in Freedom Struggle*, Vol. 2, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, p. 187. The Frontier Gandhi's visit to rural Punjab in August 1931 drew more than a lakh persons, mostly peasants. Bilga came to be known as the 'Bardoli' of Punjab.

Ryot Sabhas were set up in several Assam districts by the 1930s largely on Congress initiative. (See K.N. Dutt, *Landmarks of the Freedom Struggle in Assam*, Lawyers' Book Stall, Gauhati, 1958, pp. 69-70) Also, Purshottam Das Tandon, identified in scholarship in later years primarily as a 'Hindiwallah' and conservative, emerged on the political scene in UP as a mobiliser of the peasantry. (See, for example, Majid Hayat Siddiqi, *Agrarian Unrest in North India : The United Provinces, 1918-22*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1978, pp. 121-122). Narendra Deva acknowledges Tandon's role in taking up the cause of the Kisans. (SW-AND-1, p. 171) Similarly, socialist leaders like Yusuf Meherally were also constantly on the move in later years. Meherally "had presided over a big Kisan conference held in Central Punjab in mid-1936." (See Prem Bhasin, "Yusuf Meherally", *Janata*, Bombay, Annual Number, 1997) The Utkal Congress Samajwadi Karmi Sangh was formed February 1933. See Prem Bhasin, "Malti Chowdhury", *Janata*, Bombay, April 1988. This later became the provincial branch of the All-India Congress Socialist Party and the promoter of the Krushak Sangh in the province.

55. SW-AND-1, p. 212
56. Idem
57. Idem
58. SW-AND-1, p. 213
59. Idem
60. Reginald Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, [Part II: Indian Politics, 1936-1942], London, Oxford University Press, 1944, pp. 137-138.
61. Ibid., p. 137
62. Ibid., p. 138
63. Ibid., p. 139
64. Idem
65. Idem
66. Coupland, op. cit., p. 140
67. SW-AND-2, pp. 27-28
68. SW-AND-2, p. 89
69. M.A. Rasul, *A History of the All India Kisan Sabha*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1989, p. 339
70. Ibid, p. 340. Swami Sahajanand had himself parted company with the All India Kisan Sabha on account of differences related to such issues as the CPI's policy on Pakistan.
71. See note 54 above.
72. SW-AND-1, p. 34
73. SW-AND-1, p. 80
74. M. Hashim Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1986, p. 104.
75. See Valmiki Chowdhury, (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. I, 1934-38, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 63-67.
76. Z.A. Ahmad, *Mere Jeewan Ki Kuch Yadein*, Sankalpa Systems, Lucknow, 1997.
77. SW-AND-1, pp. 108-9
78. SW-AND-1, p. 141
79. SW-AND-1, pp. 142-3
80. SW-AND-1, p. 200
81. SW-AND-1, p. 207
82. SW-AND-1, p. 208
83. SW-AND-1, p. 209
84. SW-AND-1, p. 135
85. SW-AND-2, p. 69 Wazir Hasan's concern at the propagation of the idea that there were very few Muslims in the Congress and that the League was the true representative of the Muslims was set out early in his letter dated February 11, 1938 to Jawaharlal Nehru. (See *A Bunch of Old Letters*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960, pp. 276-277)
86. SW-AND-2, p. 68
87. Idem
88. Idem
89. SW-AND-2, p. 121
90. SW-AND-2, p. 133
91. T. R. Sareen, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Nazi Germany*, Mouto Publishing House, Delhi, 1996, p. 301. See also, *Subhas Chandra Bose: Pioneer of Indian Planning*, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 138-139.
92. SW-AND-2, p. 130

93. Report of the 54th Session of the Indian National Congress, Meerut, 1946, pp. 80-81 (Microfilm) Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
94. For example. SW-AND-2, p. 130 and pp. 141-6
95. SW-AND-2, p. 191
96. SW-AND-2, p. 191
97. SW-AND-2, p. 225
98. Javeed Ashraf, "Pakistan Movement and the CPI", *Secular Democracy*, March 1997, pp. 13-18.
99. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1952, Vol. 5 (first edition), pp. 29-30.
100. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India: Collected Writings, 1937-40*, Lindsay Drummond, London, 1948, p. 127.
101. SW-AND-1, p. 148
102. SW-AND-1, p. 148.
- Jawaharlal
- Nehru wrote similarly to Subhas Bose on February 4, 1939: "There has been a lot of talk of Leftists and Rightists, of Federation etc., and yet, so far as I can remember, no vital matters affecting these questions have been discussed by us in the W.C. during your Presidentship. I do not know who you consider a Leftist and who a Rightist. The way these words, were used by you in your statements during the Presidential contest seemed to imply that Gandhiji and those considered as his group in the W.C. are the Rightist leaders. Their opponents, whoever they might be, are the Leftists. That seems to me an entirely wrong description. It seems to me that many of the so-called Leftists are more Right than the so-called Rightists. Strong language and a capacity to criticize the old Congress leadership is not a test of Leftism in politics." (Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old letters*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Second Edition, 1960, p. 318)
103. SW-AND-1, p. 151
104. SW-AND-1, p. 219
105. SW-AND-1, pp. 223-224. The source has "said" in place of "sad" and is probably erroneous.
106. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1962, pp. 170-173 and pp. 200-204.
107. SW-AND-2, pp. 8-23
108. SW-AND-2, p. 18
109. SW-AND-2, p. 80
110. SW-AND-2, p. 97
111. *Congress Socialist*, 29 Sept 1934, SW-AND-1, p.38
112. SW-AND-1, p. 106
113. SW-AND-1, pp 107-8
114. "Mere Sansmaran", *Rashtriyata Aur Samajwad*, Banaras, Gyan Mandal, 1949, p.691
115. Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 9 February 1929, SW-AND-1, p. 3
116. Letter to Narendra Deva, 2 August 1934, CWMG, Vol 58, p. 274
117. SW-AND-2, p. 119. See also Madhu Limaye's outstanding work, *Manu, Gandhi and Ambedkar, And Other Essays*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995. One may make an instructive comparison between this work and B.T. Ranadive's *Caste, Class and Property Relations*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1982. While Ranadive's understanding of Gandhi's position on untouchability, caste and on varna distinctions remains frozen in the early thirties, the socialist Limaye makes an attempt to understand the evolution of both Gandhi's and Ambedkar's ideas. In his *Atmakatha*, (Bharatiya Prakashan Sansthan, New Delhi, 1998, p. 229), Limaye makes the point that the weaker Dalits, even in Maharashtra, which was Ambedkar's base, were not against the Congress. Surely their direct participation in anti-imperialist struggles throughout the country, needs to be more adequately recognized. The socialist interaction with Gandhi on dalit and caste questions makes a fascinating story.
118. SW-AND-2, p. 119
119. SW-AND-1, p. 140
120. The report of the (UP) Primary and Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee, 1938, headed by Narendra Deva, is a document of abiding relevance, even today, more than six decades later. Its observations on (i) compulsory and primary, that is, basic education, (ii) the unnatural distinctions between education intended for rural and urban populations, (iii) the examination system, and (iv) the high drop-out rate in schools, could have been made with today's situation in mind.
121. See also Bina Kumari Sarma, *Indian Historical Review*, Vol XXI, Numbers 1-2, pp. 78-112 at p.94
122. SW-AND-1, p.117. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Shah Nawaz Khan make similar suggestions. See (i) *Harijan*, April 2, 1938, June 18, 1938, and September 15, 1940; extracts compiled in Gandhi, M.K., *The Way to Communal Harmony*, Navajivan Trust 1963, pp. 288-291; and (ii) Jawaharlal Nehru's and Shah Nawaz Khan's statements after the Calcutta riots in 1946, *Indian Annual Register*, 1946, Volume-II, pp. 112-113.
123. SW-AND-2, p. 98
124. See Narendra Deva, "American Imperialism", *Janata*, Bombay, 15 January 1989. The article, *America Ka Naya Samrajyavad*, was translated from Hindi by H.B. Mehndiratta.



# Education for All

Narendra Deva

Democracy is not only a form of government but also a way of life and, therefore, the ideal of democracy is not to be confined to the political sphere only but has to be extended to every other sphere of human activity. Newly-born nations that borrow foreign democratic constitutions only in imitation or simply in the belief that this is a sign of being regarded as progressive cannot succeed in establishing a truly democratic form of government if they have not developed democratic sentiments in them. Democracy is a matter of habit and tradition and is the result of a long and painful effort. The democratic tradition has to be built up and the democratic sentiment cultivated. The people who are torn by castes and creeds and who recognize privileges built on birth or wealth, race or creed will have to make conscious efforts in all possible ways to achieve the democratic way of life. Democracy must become a creed and a living faith with the people and it must direct and govern their entire life and behavior.

It is a truism that unless we develop the social and political consciousness of the people, we cannot make democracy function successfully. Democracy means an intelligent and active participation of all the section of the people in the political life of the country. People's apathy towards political and economic problems of the country has to be fought and their interest has to be stimulated in the public affairs of the country.

Universal education is, therefore, the first requirement of democracy. Our culturally backward classes and areas must receive special attention and no efforts should be spared to bring them speedily in line with the more advanced countries. Without socialization of culture we cannot have a community of free men in our country who are capable of co-operating with one another for promotion of the common good.

But a knowledge of the three R's is not enough. It is only the first step. It simply opens the portals of knowledge. It enables a man to read only cheap novels and stories but does not enable him to educate himself or to develop an intelligent social behavior. He is also unable to make a study of the social, economic and

political problems that may agitate the country from day-to-day. A commercialized world exploits these literary projects for its own ends. It produces cheap and vulgar literature in tons to pander to the baser instincts of mankind in order to make enormous profits and the book trade makes phenomenal progress not in educating the masses but in leading them into false ways of life. A merely literate community also stands in great danger of being misled by dictators and lovers of power. As Graham Wallace has put it, "politics is the exploitation of the sub-conscious". These misleaders of men use the various instruments of propaganda in arousing the instinctive urges of mankind for fomenting national wars and programmes with a view to gaining their narrow political ends. The Press of every country is a powerful instrument of public education. For the masses this is the only source of information and they solely depend upon it for the information of their views on public questions. In every free country political parties run their party papers to propagate their ideology and party programme. These organs are not conducted for profit but simply to provide political education for the electorate. Generally, they are run at a great financial loss and the deficit is made good by public contributions or by party funds. But when vast masses of people become literate, a new type of newspaper enters into the field as a serious competitor. Its object is not to give any political education to the people. Its object is just to make money and for sordid gain it appeals to the baser instincts of men and gives them exciting and thrilling news about love affairs, murders and other crimes. It does not ennoble and uplift but only debases human nature. It is not interested in giving education to the masses. It professes no such aims. It is interested in the political exploitation of the weaknesses of human nature. This type has yet to emerge in our country but it will not take long to come into existence. There is another type also which has begun to make its appearance in our country. It is the type which represents industrial interests of the country. Our industrialists do not form a political party of their own. It pays them better to control the Press and influence both the Government and the people in so many direct and indirect ways. Several chains of newspapers have come into existence in our country which are owned by industrialists. Political

\* *Broadcast from Lucknow on 18 November 1948, in the series "Democracy in Action".*

parties are finding it more and more difficult to run their papers. Advertising agencies are becoming more and more class-conscious and are less willing now to give their advertisements to papers of the Left.

Proper political education of the people is possible only when a variety of opinions is presented to it and it is asked to apply its critical judgment and make its choice. The State should, therefore, aim at imparting basic education to the people so that they may develop their critical faculties and acquire a capacity for self-direction. Civic education which does not stop at the nation but is comprehensive enough to include international obligations must receive a high priority. We should not forget that we are moving towards a world community and, therefore, all our educational projects should be prepared from that point of view. We cannot be indifferent to what is going on in other parts of the world and live in isolation. Our education should be such as may enable us to live happily and securely in the world of today. We must cultivate international goodwill and fellowship and should always be prepared to work for peace and to fulfill our international obligations.

It may be said that the task is stupendous but whatever the magnitude it has to be attempted and accomplished if we want to live a full and rich life. A glorious destiny awaits all of us only if we are conscious of our responsibilities and are wise and courageous enough to discharge them.

With this in view, our educational system needs overhauling. It needs a new orientation and a new philosophy to secure international peace and co-operation for the promotion of human welfare. Coming nearer home, the education for the masses should be so planned as to developing in them a healthy, non-communal outlook on life. New democratic and human values have to be inculcated and a new pattern of social behavior has to be emphasized. Moreover, education should not stop at a particular age but should be a continuous process. We are living in an ever-changing world and, therefore, our minds need reconditioning from time to time. Apart from imparting literary education, an effort should be made on behalf of the State to educate the people from time to time on important public issues. To take an illustration. It was the duty of the Government to see that the draft Constitution prepared by the Constituent Assembly was discussed publicly in every town and village. That would have been a really wholesome education for our people. Though the Assembly has not been elected on

the basis of adult suffrage and, therefore, does not derive its authority from the people, yet, if the Government had made adequate arrangements and afforded proper facilities for a public discussion of the draft Constitution on a nationwide scale and had thus created a vital and genuine interest in it among the people, it would have made some amends for the initial defect. The Soviet Constitution, before its adoption in 1936, was discussed by the Russian people in the village society and the workers' unions and it aroused keen and lively interest among them. In this manner, the State provided a really valuable piece of political education for the people. On the other hand, in our country the new Constitution is being finalized and people do not seem to be interested in it. The political apathy and indifference of our people is no valid excuse for this sad state of affairs. The masses are ignorant and they cannot be blamed for not taking any interest in the framing of the new Constitution. It was the primary duty of the Government to take all necessary steps to stimulate public interest in such a vital matter. In the words of Disraeli: "It is our paramount duty to educate our masses and we are certainly failing in our elementary duty towards them if we do not tell them how their destiny is being shaped before their eyes and what charter of rights and obligations is being prepared for them." It is only thus that they can be made conscious of their new status and of the new objectives for which the State of free India will stand in future.

This is just an illustration in elucidation of my point that all opportunities of mass education on important questions should be taken advantage of by the State. This is a much more powerful instrument of education than the mass literacy campaign can ever hope to be. Besides, all media of instruction should be pressed into service by the State.

In India, however, we shall have to do much more than merely formulate an educational programme for the masses. The spirit of democracy symbolizes a desire to achieve equality. Democracy as it grows does not remain confined to the political sphere only. It has a tendency to permeate other spheres of life as well. It demands equal opportunities for education and employment, it demands social equality and abolition of all privileges based on birth or wealth and gradually comes to insist on eliminating economic differences as well. The sphere of democracy is ever enlarged, until the conception of full democracy dominates the life of the people.

We are in the initial stages of democratic progress.

The Hindu social organization is a hierarchy of castes and perpetuates social inequalities. We have also placed vast sections of our people beyond the pale of civilization and we treat them as sub-human beings. Again, there are aborigines who are at a very low level of culture and we have done practically nothing to elevate their moral and material condition. These social and cultural inequalities constitute a great barrier to the growth of the democratic sentiment among our people, and unless we start a crusade against these institutions and customs which perpetuate inequalities and sanction inhuman treatment to our fellowmen, we cannot hope to make any progress towards the realization of our new objectives.

Side by side with the extension of mass education and the enactment of laws which tend to remove social inequalities, we want a powerful co-operative movement in the countryside to develop democratic habits among the rural population. The co-operative movement is not only an economic movement which eliminates

the middleman's profit and makes agriculture more remunerative, but is also the initiator of a new pattern of social relationship which is based on co-operation in place of competition and which promotes a spirit of fraternity and fellow-feeling among the people.

Whatsoever non-official efforts may be made in this direction, the State is under an obligation widely to diffuse and disseminate among the people a knowledge of the basic assumptions of its political philosophy and to create a new form of human behavior which may be more in consonance with these assumptions. It is only in this manner that an intelligent social behavior from the people can be guaranteed and it is only this education which can serve as a protective armour in a moment of crisis against those dark and reactionary forces which from time to time raise their heads and threaten to destroy those values of human existence which the State is committed to conserve and promote.

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# A beacon light

**Achyut Patwardhan**

Acharya Narendra Deva has a special place of honour in the saga of national regeneration. I came into close contact with Acharya Narendra Deva during the years 1934-1955. Thus, I had an opportunity of seeing him work with his colleagues at the University. He was a very erudite person and there was hardly any other leader in our public life who was gifted with such deep learning.

He had studied western philosophy as well as Indian philosophy but Acharyaji was quick to see that the tradition of Brahmanic learning had almost lost its soul and was riddled with conventional methods of study, and the persons themselves, who espoused this precious learning, were blinded by superstitions.

It is not a surprise that he turned to the deep insights and ethical message of the Buddha. His work on Buddhism is a testimony to his deep and critical research in the teaching of the Buddha as well as the subsequent philosophical developments. His study of the Theravada was based on original Pali texts including the Tripitaka. Further, he took the trouble of learning French to study some of the Mahayana texts which were not readily available in Sanskrit.

It is a magnificent exercise of intellectual research that a person so steeped in learning should put his learning aside for a time because he recognized that the regeneration of the Indian citizen had a priority over academic learning and research. It is not that he valued the teaching of the Buddha less but his insights had led him to recognize the supreme urgency of political regeneration of man and society.

Therefore, his political initiation, which began early in his life, took him along paths of organized political action for the emancipation of India from British domination. And he considered no suffering too great in meeting this challenge.

Needless to say he realized that the caste system was the greatest enemy of the spiritual heritage of this noble land. He was deeply involved in efforts of loosening the fetters of casteism. Acharya Narendra Deva had discovered that a social system which holds people in its

bondage for centuries and saps their vitality and freedom is, at its roots, a mental obsession.

For Narendra Deva, political freedom was not an end unto itself; it was the beginning of a new crusade against the avoidable exploitation of man by man, in the rural areas as well as in modern industrial towns. Acharyaji turned to the study of Marxism in the mid-twenties and became deeply versed in Marxist philosophy.

But what drew him to Marxism was Marx's insistence on relating his philosophical theories to his contemporary economic situation - 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization. It is useful to note that Marx had a set of views on the economic system as it had emerged during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Communist Manifesto represents a landmark in communist thought and was published in 1848. Narendra Deva was much impressed by the materialist interpretation of history and the postulate of class war.

However, after all his deep study of Marxism, Narendra Deva stoutly denied two postulates of Russian Communism, one, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and two, the suppression of democracy. Writing in 1951 Acharyaji said, "The revolutionary intelligentsia alone can provide the right leadership to the proletariat... The labour-peasant class in India is weak and illiterate, it needs the leadership of those who have had the benefits of education and modern knowledge. There is no wisdom in extolling the masses to the skies. The peasant and worker find it hard to comprehend the theoretical aspect of revolution."

Therefore, Narendra Deva always believed that the vanguard of Indian's radical social change would be the lower middle class intelligentsia.

"These revolutionaries come to form a new class unrelated to the property ownership or job security because of their common commitment to the cause of the disadvantaged section of the society."

As the head of Kashi Vidyapeeth and in later years, Narendra Deva noticed that there are thousands of young

men coming from the lower middle class who braved lathi charges and jail in 1920 and again in 1932 and yet again in 1940-42. These were the most dynamic elements who responded to Gandhiji's call for self-sufficiency. Their only need was to put them through an educative course of social studies and social work, a commitment to serve the poor, a new sense of kinship and loyalty to the cause of the dispossessed. The distinguishing character of this team lay in its unqualified defiance of caste prejudices. They would be a most potent force for radical social change not only for removing economic injustice but even more for liberation of this unhappy land from the shackles of untouchability and casteism. With the training of such cadres in a proper understanding of India's precious cultural heritage and the demands of modern condition of industrial society, India would forge for itself a new path for social change without the use of violence and force.

These ideas have been formulated with great clarity by Acharya Narendra Deva in his programme of the Nav

Sanskriti Sangha.

The course of events during the last forty years compels us to discover the relevance of Acharya Narendra Deva's political and social perspective through the tragic decline in our public life, particularly in political life all over India.

We must restate his primary postulate, that the concept of the sovereignty of common people can only be expressed faithfully through a democratic government committed to the emancipation of our unfortunate lower classes from the nightmare of economic insecurity and unemployment and to pave the way for political stability.

For me Narendra Deva is a beacon light inviting the best brains of the land to dedicate themselves afresh to an effort to discover the lost direction in our advance.

*abridged by Naveen Tewary from the memorial lecture delivered on 30th July, 1992 at Lucknow*

## 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.

**R.C. Sharma**  
President

**J. R. Bhosale**  
President

We should try to broaden the social basis of our movement by bringing into our fold workers and peasants. I hope we will not rest satisfied with initiating the educated classes into the mysteries of socialist thought. I do not belittle the importance of the formation of socialist study circles and the creation of a body of socialist literature in Indian languages. That is good work and most essential too. But we must not forget that the real task before us is the political education of the masses, the carrying on of day-to-day agitation amongst them on economic issues and their organisation into a politically conscious class. It is only by working amongst the masses that we can emancipate ourselves from reactionary influences and shall be able to develop proletarian outlook. The great mistake that we members of the intellectual classes are apt to commit is to relegate the people to the background. The truth is that we are always willing to teach masses but never to learn from them. This attitude of mind is wrong. We should try to understand them and to act as faithful interpreters of their desires and needs.

*—from Acharya Narendra Deva's  
presidential address to the  
founding conference of the  
Congress Socialist Party  
at Patna in 1934.*





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No political development in recent years has influenced national politics to an extent that the steady saffronisation of India has done. Within six months of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, which in itself was an eye-opener, the political complexion of many states has changed. Erstwhile Congress states have overnight come under the BJP control, amid widespread apprehension that the march of the BJP towards further electoral triumphs is unstoppable.

Five states are slated to go in for assembly elections in the coming years, well before the next Lok Sabha round in 2019. These states are: Bihar(2015), West Bengal and Tamil Nadu (2016) and UP and Punjab (2017). There is no need for eyebrows to be lifted at seeing that PM Narendra Modi is strengthening and expanding the membership of politicians from these states in his council of ministers. There are now a total of 13 ministers from UP and eight from Bihar in the Union Cabinet. In the latest cabinet expansion exercise he has ensured that his selection of ministers has been done with an eye on caste and community and social considerations. The BJP cabinet is 66 strong now, and there is room for more if the BJP gets to be in an expansive mood. The latest cabinet revamp was done in style and has sent clear messages of Modi's determination to steer the BJP to only successes and no failures electorally. In this he is apparently succeeding, as Maharashtra and Haryana told us. We cannot blame Modi for proceeding on the assumption that the five states whenever they go to the polls will vote solidly for his party. For the present, the BJP juggernaut is rolling on...

But even while the BJP marches on to no one's surprise and consistent with the clout Modi currently enjoys, there are jitters in other camps. Leave alone the savagely-mauled Congress, which with just 44 members in a house of 543 which was once under its control, does not count, regional parties also have the shivers. After a long time a single party is calling all the shots, and other parties are not able to digest this development with the required political savvy. They decided to have a closer look at the situation in which JD finds them at the receiving end in a dispensation dominated by the BJP, and in some cases, even its allies. It is typical of Indian politics that whenever smaller parties feel oppressed, suppressed or depressed, they think of forming an alternative to the two top parties. The exercise has been made famous by the term Third Front which gets over-used before it fades away into political oblivion. This time too, drawing

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*Between the lines*

## AFSPA requires another look

**Kuldip Nayar**

inspiration from the Third Front idea, six regional parties woke up one fine morning to get themselves organized into an entity that can stand up to the BJP within and without parliament.

However, this time they pushed the Third Front idea aside and in its place hit upon the idea of reviving the old Janata Party and bring in together all the smaller regional parties that were born of the parent Janata Party. A number of parties which were born out of the Janata Party took on the name of Janata Dal which was the first offshoot of the JP. There are a handful of Janata Dals floating about here and there, each with a prefix or suffix to give themselves a distinct identity. Mulayam Singh Yadav, whose Samajwadi Party itself was born of another party, got together other leaders of the Janata Parivar in a solemn conclave to raise the banner against the BJP. He hosted a meeting to which the response was quite encouraging. Those who attended were JD (United), JD (Secular), RJD, Samajwadi Janata Party and Indian National Lok Dal. The JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar said that the six had come to a consensus decision they should unite. The aim is to become one entity with the merger of the political parties that came out of the Janata Party and later the Janata Dal.

The need for such a united party, with a left-of-centre ideology, opposed to the communalization and saffronisation of India is obvious. But before they get into stride, they need to disaffiliate themselves with the Congress in such states where they have an understanding (in Bihar for instance). Any kind of alliance with the Congress will sink the merger. Secondly, the

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Two boys have been killed in Kashmir. The incident itself is bizarre. A white-coloured car is mistaken for a similar one which used to scurry the terrorists back and forth. As many as 115 bullets are fired on the car at one go. The only surviving passenger, a boy, tells how the incessant fury did not stop even after the car hit a tree to come to a halt.

The army has accepted the mistake. The agility with which it has done so indicates that the gun crazy among them was spotted immediately. A full inquiry, already ordered, may serve the truth. Yet it would not go beyond telling who killed who. The bigger picture may still not come out. The truth is that New Delhi does not want to face the facts.

Two things emerge from the incident. One is the continuous use of the armed forces for internal security and, two, the cursory manner in which the cases are handled. The alienation of the valley is loud and clear. But this is nothing new. Nor is the laxity of the administration. However, what is new is that the hard or soft administration has made little difference. The malady is deeper.

One development is that the people are confused over the status of the army in their midst. They have hated it as if it was a sort of an occupational army. Its support to the bumbling administration has been a

point of contempt. Yet, the manner in which the army helped the people during the unprecedented floods has won their hearts.

The army not only rescued them and saved their belongings but also gave medical aid to thousands of those affected by the floods. It even fed them for weeks and reached the cut off areas to help hundreds of people from their sequestered places.

Their picture of being tyrant has, no doubt, receded a bit. But their presence is a point of criticism. Chief Minister Omar Farooq Abdullah is, indeed, trying to strengthen the state police to cope with the internal law and order problem. Yet, whenever the army is used to curb the unruly situation, New Delhi gets a bad name and much is made about it.

Both Srinagar and New Delhi have depended for too long on the army to suppress a situation of a larger proportion. They will have to ensure that the army is used for protection of the border, not for untoward incidents within the state. This is a negation of democracy which we should be ashamed of. The constitution which rules the country provides equality to all citizens without recognizing identity, caste or creed.

The still uglier situation is that scores of young people are not traceable. The terrorists can be blamed for picking up some for the purpose of brainwashing or exacting

ransom. But the number is said to be limited. The people's perception is that there is New Delhi's hand behind the disappearance of these young people. This impression gets deepened when the cases relating to disappearance are not convincingly explained when the overall supervision is the responsibility of the central government.

All these require transparency, particularly when there are cases which never came to light or were half-heartedly pursued in law courts. Had there been an institution of Lok Pal, which is non-existent because of political manoeuvres, the matter would have found some verdict. We now have to depend on the sensitivity of political parties for action. In fact, they are the ones who have their representatives in parliament, the ultimate authority.

Alas, that is very much missing. Engaged as they are in political manoeuvrings, the parties have forgotten the immediate requirement of the country. The lower half needs to be brought into the mainstream so that it would feel that the country as much belongs to them as to the upper half. The betterment without distinction was promised during the independence struggle.

I recall it was said from rooftops that independence will bring food, shelter and employment to all the people in the country. Mahatma Gandhi had said that the rich would only be the custodians of the wealth meant for all. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, another icon of the freedom struggle, talked of socialism.

Nehru, who ruled the country for 17 years, promised that the public sector undertakings would attain

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## Run for Unity: Modi playing with fire

Sandeep Pandey

Narendra Modi continues to use Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to promote his brand of politics. It is interesting that he has not chosen any of the Hindutva leaders from the past – Savarkar, Golwalkar, Hedgewar, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Atal Behari Vajpayee or anyone else – as an icon. By using Sardar Patel's image of an iron man he wants to cast himself in the same mould, send a message that he is not just a BJP leader but a national leader and at the same time can embarrass Congress who have belittled the role of everybody except members of Nehru family.

On the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel Narendra Modi organized a 'Run for Unity.' But the government advertisements made it very clear that people should share the spirit of unification of country which was made possible by the vision and actions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

This is a significant departure from the concept of 'Unity in Diversity' which the citizens are used to since the time of independence. Earlier slogan of 'Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai, Apas me hai bhai-bhai' was almost automatically raised whenever call for national unity was given. Narendra Modi has changed the meaning of 'unity' in a very subtle manner. Now unity means that if required force should be used to keep people together. The earlier concept of unity was inspired by Gandhian philosophy and Modi's concept of unity is inspired by Hindutva ideology but he is very smartly using not a RSS icon for this but Congress'

own leader Patel so that it doesn't appear to be an overtly Hindutva project.

His concept of unity doesn't include Muslims or anybody who doesn't agree with his idea of nationalism. He is talking of unity of people who believe in Hindu nationalism. That is why he has to talk of security of nation along with concepts of unity and integrity. Gandhi's concept of unity was to promote communal harmony. Modi's concept of unity is meant to protect country's security. There is a basic difference in character of two concepts.

Celebrating Sardar Patel's 139<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary as '*Rashtriya Ekta Diwas*,' Narendra Modi went a step further and expressed regret that on this day "our very own people" were killed in reference to the genocide of Sikhs after Indira Gandhi's assassination on this very day in 1984. According to him this incident was not a wound in the hearts of people of one religion but a dagger into the heart of thousands of years of country's heritage and culture.

Narendra Modi must realize that today it is his day. Tomorrow when he'll be no longer the PM the same words can be used by somebody against him in the context of Gujarat genocide of people of one religion in 2002.

Narendra Modi has announced a compensation of Rs. 5 lakhs to the families of riot victims of 1984.

It is important to consider implications of the two ideological frameworks, since there is a craving in India for a fundamental shift from the past socialist versus capitalist ideological polarization to a fresh perspective that can liberate India from the stagnation it feels at the mercy of corrupt politicians and hypocritical ideological positions.

I would start with the concept of Swaraj championed by the AAP. The concept was introduced and popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. The idea is grounded in his impulse for rebellion against the oppression of the state and growing immorality in personal as well as public life. His idea of Swaraj was motivated by a desire to inspire common citizens with a dream and empower them with tools that allow harnessing of individual imagination, creativity and entrepreneurship through systemic participatory innovations. Gandhi possibly had the vision of seeing the advent of open source development that is fast becoming a model of contemporary technological revolution. Gandhi believed that open source tools would check the immoral and exploitative functioning of monolithic government and private enterprises. He called this liberation from the tyranny of the state - Swaraj and called himself an anarchist. It must be understood that several philosophers and modern day innovators in the digital enterprises worldwide have pursued anarchic state as a goal for open source innovation. Such systems have indeed given people the opportunity for participatory experiences.

The ideology propagated by the BJP is marked by a frenzied nationalistic hysteria that promotes cultural revivalism and top down governance to achieve a fast track and ruthless pursuit of development under the watch of a strong leader. The new Chief Minister of Maharashtra took pride in calling himself "Rutless" in his first interview with the media. This system promises progress by by-passing procedures, it promises greater security by suppressing civil liberties, it promises nationalistic pride by fomenting chauvinistic prejudices. It promises super power status through increased participation in global trade as a primary purpose of political leadership. Such a framework has indeed produced fast economic results and at the same time compromised social justice. Of course with this mindset people don't care - when consumerism becomes the preoccupation of citizenry, social justice is delegated to the background.

Moving forward, India will need to reflect over the two paths before us - a participatory democracy (Swaraj) often dismissed as a misunderstood interpretation of anarchy and radical authoritarian nationalistic governance that inevitably leads to a pied piper downing his followers in the ocean of fascism.

– Uday Dandavate

Why should the families of victims of 2002 or families of victims of any of the riots which have taken place more recently in UP or Trilokpuri should not be compensated?

Although Narendra Modi is saying that country should not be

divided, his own actions are divisive. He is playing a very dangerous politics of communal polarisation. The nation and society will have to pay a heavy price for this.

Already some radical Sikh groups are planning to petition United

Nations for a resolution on 1984 genocide similar to that adopted by UNHRC against Sri Lanka for rights violations of the Tamil population. Although the genocide of Sikhs can't be compared with those of Tamils because in the case of Tamils the government of Sri Lanka was involved that put the entire state machinery at work against the Tamils. In the case of Sikhs it was some members of a political party, not even the whole party.

Sikh groups like Damdami Taksal, Dal Khalsa, and a faction of Akali Dal are joining hands with other religious minorities like Muslims, Christians, Kashmiris, Tamils and Nagas to submit a memorandum against the Indian government at UN. The aggrieved Sikh groups think justice has not been done to their community and they have decided to reject the monetary compensation announced by Modi. The injustice done to Muslim and Christian groups during other communal riots is also being raised by them.

This is probably going to be the first jolt to Modi government. He has been trying to woo the followers of Sikh religion. Sikhism is not so much of an anathema to him as Islam because the Hindutva world view is that religions born in India can be subsumed under Hindutva. But followers of Sikhism or for that matter Buddhism will resist any attempt by Hindutva to coopt them. They consider their religions to be more progressive, and hence better, than Hinduism. Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism have tried to get rid of the oppressive Hindu caste system. Hence any idea welcoming them to Hindutva fold will be unacceptable to them.

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# Political mobilisation of Muslims in India Changing pattern

**Irfan Engineer**

Muslim votes in post-Partition India have traditionally been mobilised by the politicians on three tropes – security, religio-cultural identities and fair share of Muslims. The recent victory of two All India Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) MLAs in Maharashtra Assembly elections held in October 2014 shows that Muslim votes could be mobilized on a fourth trope in the times when Hindu Nationalists are aggressively asserting themselves – that of counter assertion aiming at communal unity to take on the Hindu Nationalists. These tropes have been pursued through three different strategies – 1) withdrawal from electoral politics, 2) joining political parties not dominated by Muslims and 3) forming Muslim dominated parties.

## Political strategies

Maulana Maududi, just before migrating to Pakistan, said that efforts of the Muslims to pursue their rights would invite prejudices of the Hindus. Hence, his recommendation was, to try to persuade Muslim community to keep its distance from government and administration, and assure the Hindu nationalists that there was no competing Muslim nationalism. This, according to the Maulana was the only way to remove the extraordinary prejudices that the majority had against Islam. For communal nationalists, there is either hegemony or subjugation, no middle ground of living peacefully together as equals. Maulana Maududi soon migrated to Pakistan and the Jamat-e-Islami that he established did not participate in electoral politics. However Maulana's advice was

not much of use to Muslims facing various challenges in their daily existence.

During the Constituent Assembly debates, initially representatives of Muslim League strongly demanded separate electorates, but after partition their voices weakened. The dominant discourse during the discussion employed by the members coming from non-minority community and even by some from minority communities was that minorities can survive only on the goodwill of the majority (and therefore accept only those "rights" which the majority is willing to "grant" to the minority). The minority community which chose India as their country of domicile and nationality rather than Pakistan were implicitly reminded that if they were unhappy with the rights "granted" to them by the "majority", they could choose Pakistan.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, an organization of the Deobandi Ulemas had always opposed Pakistan. The Jamiat supported the Congress led freedom struggle whole heartedly hoping that Muslims would be free to practice their religion and would be at liberty to follow Muslim Personal Law. The Deobandi Ulema believed that despite different religions, Indian nationalism was shared and composite. The Jamiat perceived the threat to Muslim cultural identity from the Britishers rather than non-Muslim fellow Indians. Congress's creed of secular nationalism and idea of India assured them in this respect. Jamiat was not interested in negotiating fair share of power of the

Muslim community in the political arrangement and their concerns were limited to preserving Muslim Personal Law. For Jinnah and other Muslim nationalists on the other hand, a fair share of the Muslim community in political arrangement was their objective even while they were open to modernity. The Deobandi Ulemas were eager to carve out religio-cultural space and unite the community to defend that space even though they accepted that all Indians constituted a political community. Jinnah and Muslim nationalists on the other hand wanted Muslims to be an exclusive political community and a separate nation state for the community.

With Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad at the helm in post-Independence India, Muslims felt reassured and enthusiastically supported the Congress. Security, after the post-partition riots subsided, was not yet a major concern worrying Muslim leaders. Discourse of "minorities could survive only on the goodwill of the majority" dominated. Hence, seeking fair share for Muslim community in the social, economic and political affairs was unthinkable by the community overwhelmingly comprising of artisans, labourers, landless and backward classes left behind after the partition. The Jamiat and Muslim political leaders mobilised the community behind the Congress on the trope of religio-cultural identity on three issues. These three issues were – non-interference in Muslim Personal Law (MPL) by the Indian state, promotion of Urdu language and warding off any threat

to minority character of Aligarh Muslim University. In 1980s another issue became prominent symbol of religio-cultural identity – defence of Babri Masjid, which however was demolished in 1992.

The leadership was less inclined to work for educational achievements and economic advancement of the community. Reclaiming religio-cultural space needed to harp on a glorious past of the community – contribution of Muslim rulers towards India's greatness and achievements like Taj Mahal and contribution of the community during freedom struggle. However, the leadership also needed to overcome the challenge of rich diversity within the community, not only sectarian based, but also in terms of that of caste based *biradaries*, language, cultural traditions, customary practices and even ethnic diversity. MPL is not codified law applicable to all Muslims uniformly. Priests of different Muslim sects and *maslaqs* (schools of jurisprudence) implement the law differently. The leadership nevertheless mobilized the community around the issue of *non-interference by the state* in MPL.

The Muslim leadership within the Congress party was oblivious to the fact that carving out a cultural space for themselves by emphasising cultural differences between Muslims and non-Muslims helped the Hindu nationalists, who were otherwise marginalised for their non-participation in the freedom movement and their role in assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The Hindu nationalists could play on apprehensions in the people that carving out religio-cultural space would promote separatist tendencies. In fact, assurance of religio-cultural freedom drew the Deobandi Ulemas

towards the concept of composite Indian nationalism; and to oppose partition and communal nationalism of Muslim League. Muslim League had instrumentalist view towards culture. Their objective was not to preserve religio-cultural space but to use culture to redefine essentially a religious community as political community and to demand its “due” share in any political arrangement. The Hindu nationalists played on the fears and exaggerated the threats portraying Muslims as inherently having separatist tendencies, that they would be loyal to Pakistan and practice polygamy to over-populate the Hindus in India and convert it into an Islamic state. The Congress party was unwilling and unable to counter such gross misrepresentations. The growing feeling of insecurity among the minority would benefit Congress as it would compel Muslims to rally them behind it. The Congress party did not work for extending equal opportunities to the Muslims in education, bank loans, in public employment, government contracts etc. and to include Muslims in welfare schemes as equal citizens. It is only after the Sachar Commission Report in 2006 that some very minor steps were taken to formulate some welfare schemes to include minorities. However, it was more of tomtoming and less benefits to the community with very poor record of implementation by the bureaucrats.

After the Jabalpur Riots in 1961, Muslim faith in Congress received first jolt. Despite Nehru's intervention, the violence engulfed many. For the Muslim leadership reclaiming their religio-cultural space, Jabalpur riots were a warning which they chose to ignore. In the 1952 elections, Congress Muslim candidates polled 64%, 72%, 56% and 57% of the votes polled by all Muslim candidates in Bihar, UP,

WB and India respectively. In the 1957 elections, Congress Muslim candidates polled 65%, 58%, 51% and 52% of the votes polled by all Muslim candidates in the same states and in India respectively. In the 1962 elections, Congress Muslim candidates polled 52%, 47%, 52% and 52% of the votes polled by all Muslim candidates in the said states and India respectively. In the 1967 elections, the Muslim votes in favour of Congress declined drastically in those states to 39%, 36%, 47% and 40% in India. With the anti-Congress mood growing in the country in the late 1960s and Congress on decline, the Muslim votes too declined as is evident from the above percentages of Muslim votes polled by Congress in the three states with higher percentage of Muslims.

Muslim voters were drifting away from the Congress, as the party had utterly failed in ensuring security to Muslims on one hand and in including Muslims in governance and ensuring their fair share. Their emphasis was only on ensuring religio-cultural space as demanded by the patriarchal Deobandi Ulemas. *Satanic Verses*, a novel by Salman Rushdie was banned. Judgement of the Supreme Court in the Shahbano case was overturned through an enactment by the Parliament. These are some of the instances of political mobilization on the trope of religio-cultural space.

The consequences of mobilizing the community assertively and almost exclusively on the trope religio-cultural space were telling. Hindu nationalists could proclaim such an assertion as a threat to “Hindu culture” and therefore justify using violence to “curtail” anti-national Muslims and their appeasers – the Congress. They could din in prejudices against Muslims through

their networks and prejudices led to exclusion of Muslims and increased discrimination. The community experienced decline in their economic status. Hindu nationalists used communal violence to put in place what Paul Brass calls *institutionalised riot system* which helped them mobilize non-Muslims across caste and region and politically consolidate Hindus progressively on the trope of nationalism – a Savarkarian project. The decade of 1980 saw communal violence in most towns with Muslim population of 10 per cent or more, starting from Godhara in 1981 and culminating with Bhagalpur in 1989. After the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992, the Muslim voters by and large deserted Congress as the demolition signified that the party could not even secure the religio-cultural space.

### The Backward Muslims

While the Deobandi Ulemas defined religio-cultural space around the issue of MPL, status of Urdu and minority character of Aligarh Muslim University, the concept of cultural space of the backward classes among Muslims who constituted more than 85 per cent of the community was different. Their notion of religio-cultural space was based on their experiences of social oppression on the lines of caste based hierarchy. While Islam promised them equality and justice, they were denied equality in status by the Ashraf Muslims – converts from upper castes or those who believed they had royal blood. Political-cultural space for the Ajlaf (low caste converts), also referred to as *Pasmanda* (backwards) identified culturally with their Hindu counterparts. Islam and their biradari culture were both their inheritance. Ali Anwar from Bihar, Shabbir

Ansari from Maharashtra and other leaders were sponsored by regional parties. The *pasmandas* were mobilized on the issue of social inclusion and social justice. The issue of Urdu did not appeal to them much. Neither was minority character of a far away university when their children were struggling to get themselves admitted into a neighbourhood school, nor the Wahabi-Deobandi family code. Their focus was livelihood and education. In the South, particularly in Tamil Nadu and rural areas of Karnataka and Telangana, the Muslims identified with their Dravidian identity and with the social justice movements.

### The security trope

The Muslim voters after the demolition of Babri Masjid drifted away from Congress as it utterly failed in securing the religio-cultural space. In 1990s, the trope of security had precedence over the trope of religio-cultural space. The Samajwadi Party in UP, Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar and other regional parties mobilized the community on the trope of security. Witness that the Muslim political leadership did not respond to many Supreme Court Judgments as their religio-cultural space was slowly being encroached upon. E.g. the judgment of Supreme Court that AMU is a university established by state legislation and therefore cannot be an educational institution established by minority went unprotected vociferously. Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen were given visa, this generated some debate in TV studios but not on streets. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986 which was passed by the Parliament to overturn the Shahbano judgment was interpreted

by the Supreme Court to ensure even better regime of maintenance for a divorced Muslim Woman by her former husband and the judgment went unprotested. We could list several issues wherein the religio-cultural space that was being defended by the Deobandi Ulemas was encroached upon and went unprotected in 1990s.

The 15-year rule of RJD in Bihar was practically free from communal riots. During Mulayam Singh's Chief Ministership too the intensity and frequency of communal violence went down drastically. However, the Samajwadi Party as well as the RJD found it convenient to negotiate with the Ashraf leadership as spokespersons for the entire community. Muslims in their imagination meant a homogenous religio-cultural community. Such a conception was inbuilt in the M-Y alliance propounded by them. Mulayam Singh even went to the extent of announcing Friday as weekly holiday for Muslim students in school but the circular was quickly withdrawn after the members of the community too protested.

The issue of security too did not mean reparations for the past violence but prevention and control of future violence. Reparation would not only guarantee security but deterrence on one hand and justice to the victims on the other hand. However, reparations would mean punishing the guilty and there were substantial number of them from the caste that supported them. What was necessary to guarantee security was a more accountable and inclusive system and regime that was blind and neutral to cultural preferences of not only the Muslims, but all citizens within the Constitutional framework.

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So far as human rights violations are concerned Sikhs will prefer to make a common cause with other minorities mentioned above. They know that they alone will not be able to mount pressure on Indian government but together all these groups can make a difference.

Modi has probably underestimated the pro-Khalistan groups which already exist outside India. While the movement has died in Indian Punjab, some of the pro-Khalistan groups continue to be active, especially in West and are in a position to influence opinion of people voting at UN. It'll be difficult to counter this propaganda just through the Indian diplomats in US.

By stoking the communal sentiments of Sikhs Modi has invited problem for himself. Now he'll have to manage the debate at UN. He thought that he'll be able to use Sikhs against the Congress party and probably make a permanent vote bank among them for his party. His strategy has backfired but his ultimate embarrassment is reserved for the day when similar questions will be raised regarding the 2002 Gujarat genocide and some government will compensate the families of victims of this riot.

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merged entity should make serious effort to rope in the other influential and stronger parties like the two DMKs, Mayawati's BSP, Mamata's Trinamool and Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal. If the merged entity gets the support of such parties, it has more than a fair chance to take off. It will start with an built-in asset of like-mindedness and common opposition to the BJP and Congress.

## Nightmare of first week of November, 1984

**Rajindar Sachar**

On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1984 evening I was coming back after inspecting Shahdara Courts when I heard the tragic news of killing of Indira Gandhi. The killing was done by two bodyguards posted at the Prime Minister's residence. The court found that there was conspiracy only by these three persons to kill Smt. Gandhi. No other outside person was found to be involved in the conspiracy. But what followed the assassination is a nightmare which will ever haunt the nation – it was the calculated murder plan generated by Congress party in power resulting in about 3000 Sikhs being butchered in cold blood. This unpardonable crime by a political party, will remain a permanent scar of shame on those who participated and encouraged it.

I was then still a judge in Delhi High Court. The situation outside was so horrible because the mobs were going round Delhi targeting Sikhs – there was total absence of law and order. Such was the unchecked situation that one of my colleagues in Delhi High Court, a Sikh judge and his family were accommodated in the lounge of High Court, as we could not assure them safety and protection in their home which was hardly less than 1 km. from the High Court. The shame of this helplessness still haunts me.

Police was not recording FIRs and placing all kinds of hindrances in the process. An application was moved complaining about this before me. It is correct that normally FIRs

have to be registered in the police station which has jurisdiction over that particular locality. But in that fearful situation it was impossible for Sikhs from various areas to go to separate police stations to get FIR recorded. So I issued notice and told the Government Advocate that "I am ordering that all FIRs which had already been collected throughout Delhi by Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) will be taken to one police station (which the Government may designate) and filed there. After this it will be for the government to distribute these FIRs to the respective police stations." To be honest, I knew my order may not have been strictly legal – but then circumstances were so extraordinary that not to have so acted would have been worse; it would have cast a shadow on the strength of the courts which are expected to come to the aid of oppressed at all times.

Another instance arose when people were demanding the appointment of a Commission to enquire into 1984 killings. A PIL was filed which came up before my Division Bench. The then Attorney General appeared for the Union Government and argued against PIL. I however felt that it was an important matter and needed to be examined at regular hearing. My colleague Wad J. was also of the same opinion. So we fixed the matter for regular hearing after a short vacation of High Court when it was to reopen. But such was the panic in the Government circles



that undue pressure was put on the then High Court Chief Justice. The result was that when High Court opened after vacation, I found that my roster had been changed. I was now put on criminal side; the result was obvious – the matter could not be heard by me. The matter was then heard by another Bench and the petition dismissed. But so great was the public pressure that the Government itself appointed Justice Ranganath Misra Commission. But its findings shocked every impartial observer. As a matter of fact the conduct of Union Government was such as to infuse no confidence right from the beginning.

The P.U.C.L. had formed a committee of eminent citizens to oversee this matter. Its members included Justice S. M. Sikri, former Chief Justice of India and Govind Narain, former Home Secretary, Union of India. The Committee wrote to Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister seeking a meeting so as to discuss important points with a view to see that the Enquiry Commission complied with all legal norms so as to instill public confidence. But surprisingly Rajiv Gandhi did not give interview to such an eminent committee nor even reply – you can imagine the Government's sickening partiality – so in disgust the committee resigned. The expected hollowness of the Ranganath Misra report corroborated the fears of all of us about the partisan role played by the then Congress Central Government.

The various questions raised by PUCL in its report of 1984 have not been answered even up till now. "Men at the top in the administration and the ruling party displayed repeatedly a curious lack of concern often bordering on

deliberate negligence of duty and responsibility throughout the period of October 31, to November, 4. The newly sworn in Home Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was said to have assured the BJP leader Atal Behari, Vajpayee on October 31 evening that "everything would be brought under control within a couple of hours". But the PUCL committee has commented bitterly: "Soon after the assassination (October 31), we heard from a reliable source, a meeting were held at 1 Safdarjung Road, the Prime Minister's official residence where the then Lt. Governor P G Gavai, a Congress(I) leader M L Fotedar and the Police Commissioner among others, met. A Senior Police Officer present at the meeting expressed the view that the army should be called as otherwise there would be a holocaust. No attention was paid to the view."

The report continues "as already mentioned earlier, till late night there were no signs of either curfew

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the commanding heights so that the small-scale industries in the country get a fillip. But all these have remained only on paper with the bungling bureaucrats and greedy politicians making a mess of the whole concept.

The subsequent governments, whether belonging to the Congress-led front or the BJP, promised a lot but delivered very little. The plight of the common man did not improve. And the same result emerged: the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also assured a lot during his election campaign. With 282 seats in the Lok Sabha, an absolute majority,

or army, while miscreants were on the rampage in front of the police. In the heart of the city – Cannaught Circus – Sikh-owned police pickets. We later heard that the DC of Faridabad had asked for army on November 1, but troops arrived only on November 3."

None of the questions arising from these observations have been answered up till now. So when Nanavati Commission was appointed, I had hoped that its terms of reference would be on the pattern of "Truth and Conciliation Commission" appointed in South Africa by Nelson Mandela. I still feel that this aspect should be followed by the Central Government because I am of the firm opinion that apart from punishing the guilty, it is important to know the real truth which is hidden in Government files. Human Right principles and justice to the families of victims demand this course.

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he should be able to take some steps to transform the country. His spell is receding but people are still hoping against hope that he would do something. Changes requiring legislation may be a bit late to come. But the administrative measures can be taken straightaway so that there is some difference in governance.

Understandably, Kashmir will take time. But at least the Modi administration can convey that there is a change in the offing. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act requires reconsideration. The powers given to the armed forces to kill on suspicion are too sweeping for a democratic country. The killing of two boys should at least goad the government to have another look at the act.

# Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism: V

**Bhagwat Prasad Rath**

Science helps in building a sane, peaceful, nonviolent society in a very big area (an area equal to the sum of the areas of the two ancient civilizations: Egyptian and Mesopotamian).

The Mahabharata says that no sacrifice (Yagna) was existing in *Satyayuga* (The age of the Sindhu civilization). The elite of society accepted *Yoga* as the most important philosophy and practice of life. *Yoga*, *Samkhya* and *Lokayat* were considered so important in society that Kautilya in his book *Arthashastra* called them the light of all systems of knowledge (Sastras) and the only ideal way to deal with all activities. He asserted that *Aanwikshiki* (*Yoga*, *Samkhya* and *Lokayat*) was the store house of the core material of all *Dharmas* (religions). *Aanwikshiki* was a perfectly rational system of knowledge. Kautilya does not give a high place to the Vedas which he calls *Trayi*. *Aanwikshiki* was the guiding system of the Sindhu civilization. *Aanwikshikians* occupied the highest seat of honour in the Sindhu civilization. *Aanwikshikians* came from all tribes. Anyone could become a *Yogi*. Charvak talked with the Pandavas as a representative of a respectable group of Brahmins who did not accept gifts (*Santiparva*). *Lokayatikas* practiced *Yoga* and also may have come from low caste people (*Lokayata* by D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Indian council of philosophical research, New Delhi).

Non-violence was accepted as the main value by all *Aanwikshikians*. Only women could have discovered

such philosophies. No hunter society would have accepted non-violence as the supreme value of life.

R. Rajgopalan writes in his book, 'Indus Valley': "How was this vast and complex civilization managed? The earlier view was that there was a strong central authority like a ruler. Only then could they have had the common features we see. Public buildings like the granaries and the Great Bath also supported this view. It was also felt that different social classes must have existed for maintaining the whole system. Skeletal biology contradicts this view. If social classes had existed, then some people would have had better food and hence better growth. This would be shown in their teeth and bones. Now 350 skeletons from five major sites do not show any significant difference! There are also no royal tombs. It is possible that the Indus Civilization was maintained at an advanced level without social classes, central authority and warfare! If we can prove this, the Indus Civilization would be shown to have been a truly exceptional one – unmatched even by today's democracies and republics!"

The Mahabharata proves concretely that such a classless, casteless and war-free society existed in the Indus valley. This society was evidently a socialist society.

*Yoga* was the greatest discovery of the Indian scientists of the pre-Vedic period. Pre-Vedic *Yoga* does not accept miracles and mysticism.

*Yoga* should be subjected to all the tests of modern science and only those parts which pass the tests can be accepted. Human mind can be changed through *Yoga*. We cannot build a socialist society with the present decadent mind possessed by the elite (particularly the rulers) throughout the world. Eminent scientists interacted with the Dalai Lama and were surprised to find fully controlled noble minds among the Tibetan Yogis. Lamaism in Tibet got contaminated by the non-scientific Tantra and the theory of rebirth. Still its *Yoga* system retains its original vigour. How this system was tested in the laboratory makes interesting reading. We can hope for a better future for humanity if our elite accept this God-free *Yoga* system which abhors miracles and mysticism. The Buddha's mind was a gift of the *Yoga* system.

Below are given the results of some tests of the *Yoga* system by the scientists in the laboratory.

## **The Neuroanatomy of compassion**

While the fMRI findings were quite preliminary, the EEG analysis had already borne rich fruit in the comparison between Oser (a Lama *Yogi*) at rest and while meditating on compassion. Most striking was a dramatic increase in key electrical activity known as gamma in the left middle frontal gyrus, a zone of the brain Davidson's previous research had pinpointed as a locus for positive emotions. In research with close to two hundred people, Davidson's lab had found that when people have high levels of such

brain activity in that specific site of the left prefrontal cortex, they simultaneously report feelings such as happiness, enthusiasm, joy, high energy, and alertness...

In short, Oser's brain shift during compassion (Yoga) seemed to reflect an extremely pleasant mood. The very act of concerns for others' well-being, it seems, creates a greater state of well-being within oneself. The finding lends scientific support to an observation often made by the Dalai Lama: that the person doing a meditation on compassion for all beings is the immediate beneficiary. Among other benefits of cultivating compassion, as described in classic Buddhist texts, are being loved by people and animals, having a serene mind, sleeping and walking peacefully, and having pleasant dreams.

Like all reflexes, the *startle* reflects activity of the brain stem and is the most primitive, reptilian part of the brain. Like other brain stem responses - and unlike those of the autonomic nervous system, such as a rate at which the heart beats - the startle reflex lies beyond the range of voluntary regulation. So far as brain science understands, the mechanisms that control the startle reflex cannot be modified by any intentional act...

Paul Ekman, professor of psychology and director of the Human Interaction

Laboratory at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco, explained to the Dalai Lama: "When Oser tries to suppress the startle, it almost disappears. We've never found anyone who can do that. Nor have any other researchers. This is a spectacular

accomplishment. We don't have any idea of the anatomy that would allow him to suppress the startle reflex."

*(Destructive Emotions And How We Can Overcome Them by Daniel Goleman, co-chair of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University).*

To repeat, the Buddha's mind was not a gift of nature. By practicing Yoga he built the best known mind of the ancient world. Bertrand Russell had a life long struggle to discover whether human values were subjective or objective. Yogis were the only people in the world who discovered that human values were fixed by nature on the pleasure principle (*Sukha*) not of the limbic brain (the animal brain), but of the pre-frontal cortex. Freud's psychology was about the limbic brain only. Except the Yogis, no scientist or psychologist has applied nature's pleasure principle to the pre-frontal cortex.

To quote Dhammapada by the Buddha:

i. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mindwrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.

ii. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mindwrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.

In the book, 'Enlightenment: East and West', Paulos Mar Gregorios, president of the World Council of

Churches wrote: "Draw portraits of a tight-lipped Voltaire, of a morose and intensely self-preoccupied Kant or Schopenhauer, of a Locke or a Hume, a Kierkegaard or a Wittgenstein, a Nietzsche, a Diderot, a Sartre. Keep these portraits on one side. Draw portraits of Buddha, Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna, Dharmakirti, Chandrakirti, Dignaga, Vachaspati Misra, Sridhara and keep them on the other side.....' 'Ben-Ami Scharfstein, an Israeli philosopher at Tel-Aviv University, has done us a singular favour by trying to relate the thought of many of the Western philosophers to their personal lives. The picture that emerges is indeed fascinating. I cite a sample passage from the book: "Therefore, when I think of the atomism of Hume, James, Russell and Wittgenstein, I conclude that it must have been their inward experience that made them receptive to the atomic disintegration of the self. To Russell, body and mind were only logical constructions, and the whole person only 'relations of the thoughts to each other and to the body.' ...Hume, James, Russell and Wittgenstein underwent deep depressions, and all were tempted by suicide..."

As we follow Professor Scharfstein on a guided tour of the personal lives of the major Western philosophers, relating their life-experiences to their philosophical positions, one is impressed by the fact that very few of them had attained anything like the personal integration that we associate with our great Indian philosophers.

Can we prevent climate change without observing the Yogic value of *Aparigraha* (minimize your wants to the greatest extent possible) or establish a socialist society without accepting the Yogic value of *Asteya*

(the principle of looking after others' welfare before thinking of one's own welfare)? Can we save the animal world (read the chapter 'Deep Ecology' from the book. The Web of Life written by Fritjof Capra) without accepting the Yogic value of 'non-violence'? Can we save the world from wars of nations and angry communities if the Yogic values of Maitri and Karuna (Compassion) are not taken into consideration? To quote the Buddha :

*Dhammapada* (4) "He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me, he robbed me." Those who do not harbor such thoughts still their hatred.

*Dhammapada* (5). "Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By nonhatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a Law eternal."

Gandhi made these principles practical for large communities fighting for justice. Ambedkar was guided by Buddha's teachings and fought against the age old injustice done to a big disadvantaged community (Dalits in India). The Buddha was the only religious preacher in the world who stressed 'rationality' and the scientific principle of *fallibility* rather than 'belief' in the field of religion. His mission was to place religion on the same pedestal as science. Unfortunately the Buddhists the world over made the Buddha a God and violated his teachings. The belief-stressing religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Sikh have become war fields. So world thinkers like Einstein and Russell have lost their faith in all religions.

The Buddha and Mahavira's age in India was the twilight period

of the philosophy of the Sindhu civilization. Both the Buddha and Mahabira were inheritors of the patriarchal legacy of the past Vedic age. Fortunately they retained many matricentric values of the earlier past. Among these values non-violence, Aparigraha, Maitri and Karuna (compassion) were the principal ones. In the fifth and sixth centuries these values lost their importance. Might became right and even females were worshipped in the form of warriors. Today, all religions have lost their humanist outlook. The feudal value of loyalty (*Bhakti*) replacing the principle of Maitri for all living beings, the priests' embracing of extravagant rituals based on the trader's values of conspicuous consumption in the name of the deity, the superstitious fanatic attachment to obscure litanies, Mantras, miracles and mysticism, the indulgence in demonized violence and ruthless imperial exploitation, the making of women into male slaves - all combine to create a religious hell for humanity. However, religion is not the only opium for humanity.

Every predatory institution mentioned by Thorstein Veblen and also by C. Wright Mills, a product of the male brain and bolstered by patriarchal values, is like opium. Values fostered by feudalism and capitalism rule societies through decadent cultures. Human brain develops neural mechanisms consonant with these devastating cultures. Insanity of large groups of people is the result. The US spends 54 per cent of its annual budget for maintaining its war machines. All ideologies of angry people favouring violent revolutions fail because human brain accustomed to constant violence develops neural mechanisms that make the

revolutionaries unfit for democratic socialism.

Arrian, a Greek scholar, wrote: "Megasthenes described seven categories of Indian castes. The first one is that of 'the *Sophists*'... who are not so numerous as the others, but hold the supreme place of dignity and honour - for they are under no necessity of doing any bodily labour at all, or of contributing from the produce of their labour anything to the common stock, nor indeed is any duty binding on them except to perform the sacrifices offered to the gods on behalf of the state. To this class the knowledge of divination among the Indians is exclusively restricted and none but a sophist is allowed to practice that art.... These sages go naked, living during the winter in the open air to enjoy the sunshine... They live upon the fruits which each season produces and on the barks of trees..." (Scholars tell us that fear of death by Indra forced them to accept sacrifice as a ritual, otherwise Yoga was the only value they cherished). [*CASTE: The Emergence of the South Asian Social System* by Morton Klass.]

Acharya Javadekar



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# Army accepts responsibility for Chattergam firing

Sankara Narayanan

Two youths were killed and two others injured on November 3 when soldiers of 53 Rashtriya Rifles opened fire on the Maruti car they were travelling in at Chattergam village in Badgam district. An army statement says, ‘Based on specific intelligence reports about the movement of terrorists in a white Maruti 800 car on November 3 along Nowgam-Pulwama road, three mobile vehicle check posts were established. At about 5 p.m. a white Maruti 800 car approached the first and second check points where soldiers tried to stop the car, but it did not stop. At the third check point, the vehicle tried to break through the check point, resulting into a firing incident.’

According to the police, all the victims were in their twenties. They were civilians, none of them had any guns on them and they had no militant links. “We have registered an FIR under Section 302 against the Army and are going to take strict action,” IGP told the media. But immediately after the incident, the Army issued a statement that two of its men were killed and two others injured when militants opened fire. But it changed its version on November 4 saying “Army regrets the loss of lives and has ordered an inquiry into the circumstance leading to the incident.” Bullet marks on the vehicle on which the Army opened fire tell a different story. It is very strange that a Maruti 800 car could not be immobilised at all the three check posts manned by the army by shooting at the tyres.

Basim Ahmad Bhat, a Class IX student, was in the car with his four

friends when they were fired upon by army men. Basim survived unhurt to tell this story. He refuted the Army version that there were three checkpoints and the car sped past two and rammed into the third one. “There weren’t three checkpoints. Only a few soldiers were standing on the street and they whistled for us to stop, but Faisal, who was driving the car, did not hear it. We asked him to stop and he applied the brakes abruptly, trying to halt the car,” said Basim. And then it started raining bullets.

The Army on November 7 admitted its mistake over the firing incident and said that the inquiry into the same would be completed within days and action taken against anyone found guilty of violating the rules of engagement. Lt Gen. D S Hooda, told reporters, “We are targeting that the inquiry is completed within days and not months.” Hooda said that the Ministry of Defence has announced compensation of Rs 10 lakh each for the next of kin of the two deceased along with Rs 5 lakh each for the injured boys. As the army claimed it had initiated a speedy investigation, Defence Minister Arun Jaitley also assured a “fair inquiry” as well as action against the guilty.

The record of the army and paramilitary forces on probing offences committed by their personnel does not inspire confidence. From Bijbehara (1993), where 43 people were gunned down by BSF personnel and no one was held guilty, to Pathribal (2000), where the army gave itself a clean chit 14 years after an alleged fake encounter that killed five civilians,

military processes of justice have worked to protect, delay and acquit. In Machil (2010), the army invoked the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act to pull the case out of civilian courts, even though the police investigation pointed to murder and abduction, and it had not taken place in the “line of duty”.

According to an Amnesty International report, many men were maimed, tortured and women raped between July and October 1987 after the military launched the operation following an attack by Naga rebels on Assam Rifles’ Oinam outpost. The rebels killed nine soldiers and escaped with 150 guns and 125,000 rounds of ammunition. Operation Bluebird was ostensibly aimed at catching the rebels and recovering the firearms. But activists say the soldiers ended up exacting revenge on the innocent people of Oinam and 35 surrounding villages for more than three months. The villagers were also forced to make food for the soldiers for 65 days until they exhausted their granaries.

Nearly three decades on, many people in Oinam are still struggling to cope with the trauma of one of the darkest episodes in the revolt-hit state’s history. Several villages were turned into virtual prisons during this period as security forces, armed with the Armed Forces Special Powers Act of 1958, allegedly unleashed a reign of terror in the area. Human rights activist Irom Sharmila has been on indefinite fast for 14 years to demand the repeal of the archaic law, which gives security forces wide powers to shoot-at-sight, search and detain anyone suspected

to be involved in the armed revolt in Manipur. The military says the law is necessary for it to tackle insurgency.

Church deacon Ngaoni Shangne, now 94, says, “We were made to carry 50-kg loads from one village to the other without food or water. Some men were hung upside down and thrashed while women were buried up to their necks. Pregnant women, kicked and abused, were made to deliver in the field as the soldiers watched.” Some village headmen were blindfolded and executed with their hands tied behind their backs. Naga rights groups put the number of deaths at 27 but the official figure was 15.

The legal fight to bring the Assam Rifles personnel to book ended in March 1992 without the final hearing. One of the judges was transferred after recording thousands of pages of arguments from the petitioners and Assam Rifles. He has not been replaced, nor has the date of the next hearing been set in these 27 years. “If this country cannot provide justice, God will,” says 57-year-old Bluebird survivor Shangvao Rong. “They (the soldiers) will die too, hopefully not like the way they made our brothers and sisters die.”

Why do soldiers patrolling civilian areas in Kashmir and other NE states shoot to kill, so easily? The answer, in five letters, is AFSPA. The immunity that the Army gets under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act gives it the impunity to use what should be the last option first. AFSPA allows soldiers to “fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death” against those violating the law; it also says “no prosecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted,

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Doctoring history for political goals

Ram Puniyani

Caste hierarchy is the major obstacle to the goal of social justice and it continues to be a major obstacle to social progress even today. There are many theories that have tried to understand its origin. The latest in the series is the attempt of RSS to show its genesis due to invasion of Muslim kings. Three books written by RSS ideologues argue that Islamic atrocities during medieval period resulted in emergence of untouchables and low castes. The books are “Hindu Charmakar Jati”, “Hindu Khatik Jati” and “Hindu Valmiki Jati”.

The Sangh leaders claimed that these castes had come into existence due to atrocities by foreign invaders and did not exist in Hindu religion earlier. According to Bhaiyyaji Joshi, number two in RSS hierarchy, ‘shudras’ were never untouchables in Hindu scriptures. ‘Islamic atrocities’ during the medieval age resulted in the emergence of untouchables, Dalits. Joshi further elaborated, “To violate Hindu swabhimana (dignity) of Chanwarvanshiya Kshatriyas, foreign invaders from Arab, Muslim rulers and beef-eaters, forced them to do abominable works like killing cows, skinning them and throwing their carcasses in deserted places. Foreign invaders thus created a caste of charma-karma (dealing with skin) by giving such works as punishment to proud Hindu prisoners.”

The truth is contrary to this. The foundations of the caste system are very old and untouchability came as an accompaniment of the caste system. The Aryans considered themselves superior, they called non-Aryans *krshna varnya* (dark skinned), *anasa* (those with no nose), and since non-Aryans worshipped the phallus, they were considered

non-human or *amanushya*. (*Rig Veda*: X.22.9) There are quotes in the *Rig Veda* and *Manusmriti* to show that low castes were prohibited from coming close to the high castes and they were to live outside the village. While this does not imply that a full-fledged caste system had come into being in Rig Vedic times, the four-fold division of society into varnas did exist, which became a fairly rigid caste system by the time of the *Manusmriti*.

Untouchability became the accompaniment of the caste system sometime around the first century AD. The *Manusmriti*, written in the second–third centuries AD, codifies the existing practices which show with utmost clarity the type of despicable social practices that the oppressor castes were imposing upon the oppressed castes. The first major incursions of Muslim invaders into India began around the eleventh century AD, and the European conquests of India began in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries.

Over time, the caste system became hereditary. The rules for social intercourse as well as establishing marriage relations were laid down by the caste system. Caste hierarchies also became rigid over time. The shudras began to be excluded from caste society, and ‘upper’ castes were barred from inter-dining or inter-marrying with them. Notions of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ were enforced strictly to maintain caste boundaries. Shudras became ‘untouchables’. It is this rigid social division that Manu’s *Manav Dharmashastra* (Human Law Code) codified.

Golwalkar, the major ideologue of RSS ideology defended it in a different way, ‘If a developed

society realizes that the existing differences are due to the scientific social structure and that they indicate the different limbs of body social, the diversity (i.e. caste system, added) would not be construed as a blemish.' (*Organiser*, 1 December 1952, p. 7) Deendayal Upadhyaya, another major ideologue of Sangh Parivar stated, 'In our concept of four castes (varnas), they are thought of as different limbs of virat purush (the primeval man)... These limbs are not only complimentary to one another but even further there is individuality, unity. There is a complete identity of interests, identity, belonging... If this idea is not kept alive, the caste; instead of being complimentary can produce conflict. But then that is a distortion.' (D. Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism*, New Delhi, Bharatiya Jansangh, 1965, p. 43)

Social struggles to oppose this system and the struggles to escape the tyrannies of caste system are presented by Ambedkar as revolution and counter-revolution. He divides the 'pre-Muslim' period into three stages: (a) Brahmanism (the Vedic period); (b) Buddhism, connected with rise of first Magadh-Maurya states and representing the revolutionary denial of caste inequalities; and (c) 'Hinduism', or the counter revolution which consolidated brahman dominance and the caste hierarchy.

Much before the invasion of Muslim kings, shudras were treated as untouchables and were the most oppressed and exploited sections of society. The rigidity and cruelty of the caste system and untouchability became very intense from the post-Vedic to Gupta period. Later, new social movements like Bhakti, directly, and Sufi, indirectly, partly reduced the intensity of the caste oppression and untouchability.

## Gujarat's sanitation scene

Rahi Gaikwad

In an embarrassment for the Gujarat government, the Comptroller and Auditor General has observed that the State's sanitation coverage is only 46 per cent.

Picking several holes in the government's Total Sanitation Campaign, launched in 1999, the CAG found that Gujarat projected "inflated" figures of individual household latrines, based on the release of funds, instead of actual construction of toilets.

"The latest baseline surveys (October 2013) showed that the actual sanitation coverage in the State was only 46 per cent," noted the CAG report of local bodies for the year ended March 2013, tabled in the State Assembly on Tuesday.

In Dang and Panchmahal districts, with a large Adivasi population, "the sanitation coverage was low and ranged between 13 and 24 per cent

respectively."

In another major deficiency, the auditor pointed out that over 5,000 Anganwadi centres in Gujarat lacked toilet facilities. In the case of school toilets, the State fell short of 40,439 toilets.

The CAG also raised questions over the Gujarat government's lack of heed to the cases of manual scavenging in the State. The Census 2011 report noted 1,408 cases of manual scavenging in Gujarat "where night soil was being removed by human beings."

While assurances were made of verifying each case, "the fact remains that the [Social Justice and Empowerment] Department could not even verify on existence of the practice of manual scavenging even after a lapse of more than a year," the CAG noted.

- *The Hindu*

*(Continued on Page 14)*

except with the previous sanction of the Central Government". Had this protective umbrella not been provided, it is possible to imagine that the soldiers would have adopted less dire methods to stop the car in Chettargam; perhaps they would have shot at the tyres to immobilise the vehicle.

The Jeevan Reddy Committee recommended AFSPA be repealed and some of its provisions incorporated in other laws. Many in the civilian establishment see it as an obstacle to efforts to normalise the "disturbed" areas where it is now in force and at least want it amended. The Army dismisses all such

suggestions. But Monday's incident makes it clear that AFSPA cannot continue, certainly not in its present form.

Had this shoot out been executed in the night-hours, army would have stuck to its 3 November story of an encounter. National media also would have flashed out dutifully that terrorists from across the border were eliminated. The Army under compelling circumstances per force accepted the responsibility. Its alacrity also stems out from another important event namely the ensuing Assembly elections. Lest, Mission 44+ will be in jeopardy.



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## “Expired date” medicines?

**S. Viswam**

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 Kuldip Nayar

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 Arun Kumar

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 Swachh Bharat Industry**  
 Sankara Narayanan

**Political mobilisation of  
 Muslims in india**  
 Irfan Engineer

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As part of the ever-lively and no-holds-barred give and take of Indian politics, Ram Vilas Paswan has, not tongue-in-cheek, described Lalu Prasad Yadav as an “expired date” medicine. Paswan has thus questioned the political efficacy or effectiveness of his political rival in Bihar. Lalu may well retort that it was precisely because Paswan became an expired date medicine long ago that he has been flitting from party to party like a butterfly without finding a permanent anchor. Lalu has remained Rashtriya Janata Dal leader for years even though he has had precious little to show for it as an achievement more creditable than Paswan’s track record.

In a sense, all present-day Indian *Netas*, barring Narendra Modi and his senior partymen, fit in the description of “expired date” medicines. May be, strictly at the state or regional level, the expiry date of some medicines is yet to be reached, but signs are that the said date is near enough, for instance, in Jharkhand and J & K to take the examples of states which will face polls in the next few weeks. Thus, the still-current medicines are being prescribed for all ailments in the handful of states which are still under non-Congress, non-BJP control. Regional parties normally thrive under the benign shade of big

parties. Now, the Congress itself is in trouble, and the BJP has begun swallowing the smaller regional parties. Witness what has happened in Maharashtra where the Shiv Sena has been shown the way to wilderness. The BJP’s current strategy seems to be to befriend small parties and then ditch them by the wayside after weakening them by taking over their mass base. This is what has happened in J & K where the Big Brother BJP has swallowed all smaller parties, including the Congress, in Jammu and Ladakh. Now the BJP is aspiring to seize power in the whole of J & K on its 44+ slogan ( out of 87 seats in J & K assembly). If the BJP captures Jammu and Ladakh, it can over-ride the seats in the Valley.

Ironically, Paswan, himself an expired date medicine, is able to cock a snook at Lalu only because he has acquired some credibility by becoming a Union Minister thanks to the generosity of Narendra Modi who chooses BJP’s allies and partners according to his own whims and fancies. Paswan’s Lok Janshakti Party is presently a BJP partner but who knows, it can also go the Shiv Sena way in which case the Paswan medicine will expire even without reaching the expiry date! In his own state, Bihar, Paswan is no uncrowned

king or even king-maker. He has to be under the patronage of one Big Brother or the other.

*Between the lines*

## A status quo country

**Kuldip Nayar**

Whenever I return to Bangladesh, I find that one institution or the other has gone under. The last time it was parliament. This time it is the judiciary which, to quote a top lawyer, has been “decimated.”

Yet, what is disconcerting is that a country born out of people’s revolt against a distant exploitative government has become a status quo society. True, it is still living under the shadow of the army. The army does not interfere in the day to day affairs. But, to quote one top retired army official, “we ruled once, but we found the society preferring the confused people’s raj to the disciplined military rule.”

Today, the challenge is similar in a different form. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is concentrating power in herself and posting at key positions such officials who are loyal to her. She has become the law unto herself even though this goes against the grain of the people who are known for their defiance and independence.

Prime Minister Hasina controls parliament. Unthinkingly, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) boycotted elections leaving the field open to the Awami League, the party that Hasina heads. She “won” more than 60 percent of seats in parliament even before a single vote was cast. It was thought that a fresh election would be held to undo the farce of the polls the country had had. Instead, she found the house without the opposition to her liking. Even the faceless MPs have begun to believe that their “popularity” had “elected” them as members.

This is bad enough. Worse is the beginning of the thinking of the ruling party that elections are tedious, cumbersome and uncertain. Some other apparatus should be devised to ascertain people’s opinion. I am afraid that Hasina, who hates opposition, may consider doing away with the elections after enjoying the unbridled power. The people may resist that in the streets, but a determined, authoritarian administration can cope with the situation as it has done in the past.

In these circumstances the independence of the judiciary is a must. However, a Bangladesh journalist who has covered the courts for more than two decades told me that corruption has corroded every part of the judiciary. “The judgments are sold,” he said. That the sons of judges are practicing in the same courts where their fathers or uncles are on the bench. This has only aggravated the situation.

Prime Minister Hasina has played havoc with the appointment of judges. The Bangladesh constitution says that the President will appoint the judges in consultation with the Prime Minister. She has stretched the word consultation

However, the so-called expiry date medicines of Parliament need not to lose heart. At a recent get-together, some of them woke up to the reality that unless they hang together they may have to hang separately. Hence, they decided to shed their separate identities and merge into a single formation. These parties, all offshoots of the parent Janata Dal and identified as members of the Janata Parivar, are to meld into a single party. On November 25 the Janata Parivar parties are to choose a common floor leader in each house of parliament and chalk out their strategy and programme for the ensuing winter session. The new entity is to be headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav who will also be the parliamentary party leader in the Lok Sabha, with the post of leader in the upper house earmarked for Sharad Yadav. The overall strength of the new merged party will be 40, not a small number, the break-up being 25 in the Lok Sabha and 15 in the Rajya Sabha. And the new line-up: Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal (United), Janata Dal (Secular), Indian National Lok Dal, Samajwadi Janata Party. December 2 or 3, is tentatively the date set for the re-birth of Janata Dal 2, which will take place 26 years after V. P. Singh unfurled the Janata Dal 1 flag in opposition to Rajiv Gandhi’s Congress. Among these parties, it is the Samajwadi Janata Party headed by Kamal Morarka that has no parliamentary presence, but according to newspaper reports it will be a participant in decision-making.

The Janata Parivar parties are identified in the political marketplace as socialist groups, suggesting

*(Continued on Page 5)*

to mean concurrence. The result is that even brief-less lawyers, avowing loyalty to the ruling Awami League, have been elevated as judges.

The judgments are reportedly slanted and shoddy. None challenges the appointments because he or she would be shouted down as a supporter of “the enemy.” There is no doubt that the BNP is attracting large crowds. But those who come to hear the party leaders are not necessarily their followers. The criticism of the rulers is music to the ears of the people. They are groaning under the burden of ever increasing prices and the spiraling inflation.

The only faithful supporters are really the followers of Jamiat-i-Islami. Their fundamentalism still sells and surprisingly the pro-Pakistan elements are quite a few. One authentic report is that they number approximately 20 per cent. Without contradiction one can say that the solid supporters of Awami League will be many more, around 30-35 per cent.

I was happy to find relations between the India and Bangladesh friendly. It goes to the credit of Hasina that she has removed the irritants between the two countries. There are no anti-India militants operating from Bangladesh, a matter of concern for New Delhi until recently.

Alas, there is an absence of idealism of the days when Bangladeshis were fighting their liberation battle. People consider that as their finest hour. Surprisingly, there is no bitterness against Pakistan for having committed the worst atrocities in an attempt to suppress the liberation movement. “We have pity on them,” say many

Bangladeshis seeing that country beleaguered with many problems. And they take pride in citing facts and figures to show how an average Bangladeshi is better than an average Pakistani.

This may be true, but the dynamism which I witnessed in my earlier visits is lacking. It is as if the people are tired, if not reconciled to the authoritarianism of the rulers. Hasina has probably detected that. So, it seems that she has decided to re-establish the dynastic rule as is the suspicion that Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman, the father of the nation, was doing in the case of his daughter, Hasina.

Her son is the most powerful person today, although he resides in America for the namesake. She has even given him an official position in technical field and he is reportedly on a salary. No doubt, it smacks of dynastic rule. But then she seems to have torn a page from book of Indira

Gandhi-Rahul Gandhi dynasty.

The army, the country’s powerful chamber, is sitting pretty because it is more popular than any political party. Hasina has given the army personnel the best of perks and salaries to placate them and keep them on her side. This seems to work in her favour.

I asked a top editor why people did not revolt and throw out the armed forces. He said that they do not know what would emerge from the clash if there were to be a confrontation between the people and the armed forces. He said it may well lead to a situation of coming out of the frying pan into the fire. Maybe, the disciplined fundamentalists of the Jamiat might emerge victorious. This thought deters even the liberals who want a change. It only strengthens the idea of why Bangladesh should not disturb the status quo.

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# A few basic questions to the Swachh Bharat Industry

**Sankara Narayanan**

August 15, January 26 and October 02 are our special national days. Each has its own significance. PM Narendra Modi had chosen to launch Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on October 02, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, which reminds us in concentrated form the sacrifices and the morality in politics in the fight for independence of the country.

An impression is created that Gandhiji is all about physical cleanliness. He has been reduced to the level of a sanitary inspector. His advocacy on personal cleanliness is just a part of the colossus called Gandhism. Any tinkering with grandeur and sobriety of this day is sacrilege.

J.B. Kripalani once observed, "Gandhiji tried to clean the nation from its latrine to soul". Mahatma Gandhi considered Hindus and Muslims as the two eyes of our mother India. Just as the trouble in one eye affects the other too, whole of India suffer when either Hindus or Muslims suffer. To India, as to the world, Gandhi said, "I do not expect the India of my dreams to be wholly Hindu or wholly Christian or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant." No takers for this soul cleaning now.

Gandhi reminded us: "God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million (now 1 billion 300 million) took to similar economic exploitation,

it would strip the world bare like locusts." The world is being stripped bare by big business locusts. Climate change is not, for our generation, a challenge for the future but a here-and-now matter.

Gandhi's emphasis was for a better "Standard of Life" than a better "Standard of Living". He firmly believed in the oriental philosophy of "Sustainable Standard of Living for All" and he abhorred the occidental greed theory of "Ever Increasing Standard of Living for a Few." Gandhi and the latest call to the foreign companies to 'Make in India' are contradictory.

Back to Swachh Bharat Mission. Indians by and large keep their homes clean but litter their surroundings. Modi's latest mission can at best help curtail this bad habit. But a few fundamental issues are swept under the carpet with the photo op shows. Gandhiji not only asked the Indians to maintain cleanliness but also advised us to generate lesser waste by way of using least things. Swachh Bharat Mission is absolutely silent on lesser consumption and least waste generation. Any guess why?

**Here are few points for the protagonists of the Clean India Mission to ponder:**

1. Sweeping and depositing the litter and dirt in the dustbins is the first step. What do the corporations and municipalities do afterwards? Waste is not segregated. Organic and inorganic wastes including sanitary towels and poisonous hospital/factory rejects are

transported to the nearby countryside, dumped and burnt. State authorities deliberately bluff that it is fire accident. Toxic hazardous fumes are reserved for those who generate the least waste, while the better-off sections enjoy Swachh Bharat. Burnt and un-burnt wastes lie there to destroy the environment and water sources. The procedure adopted to bury the waste in landfill is anything except scientific. This faulty land-filled waste leaches into the land and water sources in course of time to destroy the voiceless. Please name one town or city in India that neutralises the municipal solid waste properly.

2. Flush-out toilet is unsuitable for India as it is a water killer. Building and maintaining millions of such toilets are economically unviable and unsustainable.
3. What happens to the human waste collected in individual and municipal septic tanks? Please identify one town or city in India that treats and disposes the human waste properly. Nearest water source is the dumping outlet.
4. Chemical agriculture aka Green Revolution is the single major source to poison our land, water and air across the length and breadth of our country.
5. Untreated toxic industrial effluents discharged into the nearest river or nallah has killed almost all our water sources.



6. What are the steps contemplated to tackle the above two mega wastes in the much tom-tomed mission? It is almost at the bursting point now.
7. We have limited resources. Aping the affluent nations, we want to make more and more goods and consume/use them. Make in India campaign and the media's frenzy for using more and more consumer goods and Swachh Bharat cannot go together.
8. Fresh water requirement for manufacturing a few goods is listed: Car - 3/4 lakh litres each; Sugar - 20,000 litres/kg; Egg - 196 litres each; Cola - 70 litres/litre; beer - 155 litres/litre, garment - 45 litres/kg, leather - 150 litres/kg. Less we talk about the thermal and nuclear power plants and the intensive fish culturing industry, the better. Needless to say that the water released after manufacturing or processing the above is not only not potable but dangerously poisonous. The untreated effluents are let out into the water sources without an ounce of guilt. Corporate houses, government owned enterprises to tiny industries are in fierce competition in this monumental crime duly abetted by the state.
9. Greedy businessmen import container after container of industrial and municipal wastes from Lisbon, London, etc. to throw them across our land. Tuticorin port is notorious for this crime. Will Swachh Bharat Abhiyan look at this direction?
10. The most lethal waste is the spent fuel/waste from nuclear installations and hospitals (X-ray). The irradiated muck's active half-life time is of the order of 35,000 years. This is going to affect several thousands of our future generations. How do you imagine a Swachh Bharat without knowing how to treat and neutralise the most dangerous waste known to man??
11. Indian Railway is soiling the length and breadth of this nation by steadfastly sticking to the dry latrines and consequent manual scavenging banned by a 1993 law. While Modi envisages a Swachh Bharat by 2019, Railway authorities are informing the National Human Rights Commission that all dry latrines will be replaced by 2022. Is it not a punishable crime perpetrated by the state? We are bombarded by the video and still photographs of Uma Bharti, Smriti Irani, Hemamalini and scores of other classy ladies sweeping the non-existent waste on the highways. Will they care to join the Dalit sisters engaged in all railway stations to handle human waste?
12. Clean Ganga is a catch word in the present government. Can you clean Ganga without stopping the sewage from hundreds of towns, cities, panachayats and factories flowing into the holy river? Along with the human waste, the poisonous effluents from "Made-in-India" factories including the Banarsi silk industry threaten the very survival of the river. How is the long handle broom & co going to prevent this sacrilege?

Incidentally the much touted 'Make in India' was programmed in Washington - 23 years ago. Quote: Lawrence Summers, the World Bank's Chief Economist to his colleagues in a confidential memo in Dec 1991: "Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs

(Less Developed Countries). The measurement of the costs of health impairing pollution depends on the foregone earnings from increased morbidity and mortality. From this point of view, a given amount of health-impairing pollution should be done in the country with the lowest cost, which will be the country of the lowest wages. I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-waste country is impeccable and we should face up to that." Unquote: Modiji was only an instrument to deliver the "Make in India" plan which is nothing but an old Manmohan wine in the new NaMo bottle.

We have to seriously think of using less and less materials and energy, reuse to the extent possible and recycle when it becomes unusable. The pernicious 'use and throw' culture and craving for more consumer goods, energy, minerals, etc are just not sustainable. But it will not be music to the ears of native and transnational corporations.

In spite of the Swachh Bharat hangama, we will simply be drowned in filth and perish soon if the fundamentals are not tackled on war footing. We are living on borrowed time.

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

that they are among the non-Congress non-BJP, non-communal groupings. Whether the public accepts them as socialist parties or socialistic parties depends upon the concerned public's definition of left-of-centre politics. However, given the current all-too-fluid political situation any new party opposed to the Congress and the BJP, and committed to democracy, socialism, secularism and inclusive economic reforms process, will be welcomed, and its performance watched with interest.

## Political mobilisation of Muslims in india: changing pattern - II

**Irfan Engineer**

In the previous part, we discussed that after independence, the Muslim leaders within the Congress party mobilized the Muslims initially on the trope of religio-cultural space. However, as the country had been partitioned along communal lines, Hindu nationalists would raise the spectre of India turning into an Islamic state even with minor attempts to secure cultural space for Muslims. Securing religio-cultural space for Muslims was proclaimed as encroachment on "Hindu" cultural space and threat to existence of Hindu culture itself. This led to unprecedented escalation in communal violence in the 1980s. Congress's failure to protect Babri Masjid signified that even the religio-cultural space was not secure and Muslims drifted away from the Congress. The regional parties mobilized the community on the trope of security; however they too did not see the community as diverse interests and diverse culture. Security meant preventing future outbreaks of communal violence, but not reparations to ensure justice to the victims of communal violence and guarantee of non-repetition of the violence. This was largely the scenario in the western and northern regions, also referred to as the cow belt of India. In the cow belt, Muslim population is rather spread out thinly.

### **Political assertion**

After the demolition of Babri Masjid, Muslim religio-cultural entrepreneurs moved away from Congress as it failed to secure that space. The community started

focussing on education and livelihood issues more than ever before. That seemed to be the way ahead. However, after the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, concern for security once again came to the fore, particularly in the cow belt. Muslim voters were slowly returning to the Congress. If periodical spectacular riots targeting Muslims was common strategy used by the Hindu nationalists till the year 2002, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, intelligence agencies proved to be useful tool to target Muslims and project them as anti-nationals, terrorists and enemies of the nation. Gujarat police enjoying the political patronage would frequently bump off some Muslim youth and call them as terrorists who came to kill Hindu hero Narendra Modi. Operations by intelligence agencies led to murder of Ishrat Jehan and Javed Sheikh in 2004, Sohrabuddin Sheikh and Kauser Bano in 2005 and his friend Tulsiram Prajapati in 2006 besides Jamal Sadiq and many others. These murders which were sought to be passed off as "encounter killings" and were followed by stigmatization of Muslim community through media. There were staged encounters in the Congress regimes too – the Batla House encounter stands out among many others. Large number of innocent Muslim youth were arrested after terrorist acts, including those which targeted the Muslim community. In the cow belt, Muslim voters were slowly returning to the Congress, particularly in the states where Congress and the

BJP were dominant political force with bipolar polity prevailing. The Congress won nine parliamentary constituencies from UP in the 14th Lok Sabha election held in 2004 and 21 parliamentary constituencies in the 15th Lok Sabha election held in 2009.

Though the Congress could rally a section of the Muslims, this time, it was not largely on religio-cultural space, but on security and promises of welfare measures. The Congress Government appointed High Power Committee popularly called as Sachar Committee to report on the social and educational backwardness among the Muslim community. Sachar Committee found that the socio-economic condition of the Muslim community was lagging far behind the other communities. Though poorly implemented, the Congress Government did come out with PM's 15 point programme for religious minorities which included giving scholarships for school programme for students for higher studies, small financial loans, for development of minority concentrated districts etc. The programme was so poorly implemented and the beneficiaries disproportionately from non-Muslim minorities that the community bore stigma of appeasement and gained little material benefits. The then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's proclaimed that minorities had first charge on the budget.

A section of leadership within the Muslim community demanded reservations for the entire community

rather than the backward classes within the community on the plea that entire community was backward and discriminated. This was however not true as the Ashraf Muslims – the upper caste converts though small in number, like the sayyeds, pathans, bohras, memons, etc., being mercantile communities were better educated and economically better off. Besides, reservation for the entire community would amount to affirmative action based on religion and as such amount to discrimination on the ground of religion which is prohibited according to Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution. The Congress governments in AP and Maharashtra announced reservations though technically on the criteria of backwardness but practically to the entire community. Salman Rashid, the then minister of Minority Affairs announced reservations for the Muslim community during his election campaign for UP legislative assembly, which however, was declared to be in violation of code of conduct and therefore had to be withdrawn. First the AP and now the Maharashtra Government's decision of reservations for Muslims was stayed by Constitutional Courts and tangible benefits denied to the community.

The Congress failed to protect the community youth from being targeted by the intelligence agencies. Not one intelligence official was brought to justice for wrongful arrests of the educated youth – whose careers were destroyed and were forced to live life with stigma of being a terrorist. Congress failed to bring to justice those police officials involved in cold blooded murders of Muslim youth by intelligence agencies in staged encounters. The fake encounters abated only after courageous individuals and human rights activists fought long battles

to bring some police officials to justice for staged encounters. Anger of the youth within the community was simmering and waiting to be tapped. The Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) tapped this simmering anger, particularly among the youth. Coupled with targeting of the community was the rise of Narendra Modi on the national scenario and getting himself elected on the plank of development. Modi's propaganda blitzkrieg may convince anyone but the community knows the real implication of election of Modi as the PM would be to push the Muslims to be second class citizens of Hindu rashtra. The Muslim presence in the Lok Sabha is getting marginalized every successive election from 13.1 per cent in the Constituent Assembly in 1947 (a slightly higher percentage than warranted by their population, elected through separate electorates) to barely 4 per cent (22 MPs) in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha when they constitute about 15 per cent of the population. As one angry youth in Delhi asked this author before the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections and after the Muzaffarnagar riots, "blood of how many Muslims would be shed every time there are elections?"

### **Disillusionment with "secular parties"**

Given this scenario, where innocent Muslim youth were being targeted and crumbs of welfare shown and not implemented, coupled with rise of aggressive Hindu nationalism, there was disillusionment among Muslims with all the 'secular' parties. Maulana Madani and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind – an organisation favourable to Congress - started propagating that the only plank on which the Congress mobilized votes of Muslim community was fear of Hindu Nationalism. They

held several meetings throughout India and gave one message – it was not enough to scare the Muslims in order to get their votes. Their votes could be mobilized only on affirmative action. What these actions would be was left open and negotiable. The minimum demand propagated in these meetings was – discharge of Muslim men falsely implicated in the 2006 bomb blast in Malegaon as the NIA investigations did not find any evidence against them and confessional statement of Swami Aseemanand nails the Hindu nationalists. The other demands included bringing the intelligence officials targeting innocent Muslim youth to justice and reservations in jobs and education for Muslims. Imam Bukhari backed the Congress but his influence on Muslims is more of a myth that has been demolished by every successive elections.

As the 'secular' parties failed and Muslims were getting disillusioned, there was increasing urge for a Muslim dominated party. The Peace Party in UP was founded in 2008 by a Muslim surgeon Mohamed Ayub and won four seats in UP Assembly in 2012. In short span, it quickly spread to Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. Peace Party attracted chunk of Muslim votes. In Kerala, the Indian Union Muslim League enjoyed popularity among the Muslims in Kozhikode. The stable political equation between Hindus, Christians and Muslims in the state with 24 per cent Muslim population concentrated in Ponani, Manjeri and Kozhikode forming 60 per cent, 61 per cent and 52 per cent of the population respectively. Maulana Badruddin Ajmal fell out with the Assam State Congress leader Tarun Gogoi over choice of candidates and founded his own party – All



India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in 2005. Assam has 30 per cent Muslims. With 18 MLAs, AIUDF is the main opposition party in Assam. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, AIUDF candidates succeeded in three constituencies though their vote share dipped from 17 per cent to 15 per cent, they gained one extra seat.

In Malegaon Mufti Ismail gained popularity after the blast. There was widespread outrage among the community as Muslim youngsters from Malegaon were allegedly falsely implicated in the case. The Teesri Mahaj or Third Front, formed ahead of the local civic body election in 2007, came to power in the corporation riding on the anti-Congress and anti-NCP wave. Mufti fought the 2009 Assembly election on the ticket of Jansurajya Shakti Party by defeating sitting Congress candidate Shaikh Rashid. However, he later joined NCP but maintained that the youth were still angry with the ruling dispensation as they had not got justice. In the last Assembly elections, Mufti Ismail was defeated by Congress candidate Shaikh Rashid by over 16,000 votes as Mufti failed to deliver on his promise and his attendance in the previous Assembly was poor. The MIM candidate was far behind polling little over 21,000 votes. Malegaon had its dose of Muslim dominated politics with election of Nihal Ahmed whose communal appeal led to polarization and invited targeting of Muslim youth by state and development deficit.

### **Emergence of MIM in Maharashtra**

It is in this context that rise of MIM in Maharashtra should be seen. Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimeen (or council of Muslim unity) was founded in 1927 as a federation

of Muslim sects and communities to support and advice the then ruler of Hyderabad. After the defeat of *razakars* and merger of Hyderabad into Indian Union, the MIM remained dormant till about 1957 when it was revived by Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi “to back up your (Muslim) argument with political muscle.” In 1960, the MIM got 19 out of 30 seats it contested in the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) and in 1967 three MIM candidates were elected to the state Assembly and in 1986 MIM was elected as the single largest party in MCH. With the rise of Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, MIM predicted division of Non-Muslim votes in Hyderabad between TDP and Congress. Through its rabble rousing, it aimed at polling chunk of 35 per cent Muslim votes in the 1984 general elections and has repeated its victory since 1984 till date. Muslims could be rallied behind MIM due to perception of insecurity among the community due to series of communal riots in the 1980s in the cow belt along with the campaign against Babri Masjid. Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi participated in the Babri Masjid Movement. Slowly, the MIM has also been able to mobilize dalit votes by giving the slogan of MIM-Bheem unity.

MIM gained its first significant victory outside Telangana during Nanded Municipal Corporation elections. Nanded has 30 per cent Muslim population and MIM won 11 out of 81 seats in the Corporation in the elections held in the year 2012. That was a reaction to arrest of innocent Muslim youth from Aurangabad, Malegaon and other places and implicating them in terror cases. Election of Imtiyaz Jaleel from Aurangabad Central and Warris Pathan from Byculla Constituency in

Mumbai for Maharashtra Legislative Assembly is the continuation of the same trend.

### **Conclusion**

A Muslim youth told this author after MIM’s elections in two constituencies in Maharashtra, “We are not scared of rise of Hindu nationalists and ready to face all the consequences. Nothing worse can happen. We must now have our (Muslim) community’s demand. MIM’s expansion on aggressive assertion and rabble rousing should be seen as a failure of all ‘secular’ parties in safe guarding rule of law and checking Hindu nationalization of the state. MIM is the mirror image of Modized BJP. As Modi is catering to aspirations of youth from the majority community, MIM is catering to aspirations of Muslim youth. The disillusionment with MIM too will set in sooner rather later, as there was disillusionment with Nihal Ahmed’s politics in Malegaon. MIM fills the youth with false pride of “glorious history of Muslim rulers”. Media try to tell Indian people that Modi no more talks of communal agenda. He need not! His brand is understood and his minions do – Yogi Adityanath and other gurus who are nominated as campaign managers of UP elections as a badge of honour. However, the consequences of competitive communalism would ultimately devour Indian Constitutional democracy. Those committed to the Indian Constitution, rule of law, liberal values and secularism have an ardent task of convincing the people of India and building a healthy civil society movement that would secure the minorities and value diversity and pluralism.



# Has the Quest for Equity Become Irrelevant in India?

Arun Kumar

*Yusuf Meherally who was in the vanguard of India's struggle for independence played a leading role in peasants' organisations and trade unions. He was imprisoned eight times during the freedom movement. The 'Quit India' slogan coined by him was adopted by Gandhiji for India's final nationwide campaign for independence. One of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party, Yusuf Meherally wrote, "I hate ugliness and cruelty and that is why I am a socialist. My socialism is based on aesthetic and ethical premises and not on economics." In the words of late Dr. Zakir Hussain, the Vice President of India, "It was the primeval sorrow of man for what men do to each other, knowingly or unknowingly, which moved him ... ." (www.yusufmeherally.org). It is this philosophy and the growing all round inequity in society that made me choose the topic of this talk.*

## I Introduction

Historically, most societies known to us have had disparities whether looked at in terms of living standards or other aspects of life. Earlier, the differentiation between various groups of people was less for many reasons but perhaps above all because there was a greater sense of justice associated with equity due to the higher value attached with community life which seems to have eroded over time. Atomization and alienation of individuals are responsible for this decline and have led to a greater acceptance of inequity in society.

Disparities are of course multi-dimensional with political, social, historical, cultural, geographical and economic factors contributing to them. These reflect themselves in differences in living conditions (including housing), in access to health and education, in environmental factors or in differentiation in incomes and wealth, etc. The differentiation may manifest itself in terms of gender, class, community and caste. All this gets embedded in social consciousness and, therefore, inequality takes societal, cultural and civilizational forms. Consequently, inequality becomes difficult to tackle (reduce) or deal with.

## II Recent historical trends

Present day India is characterized by growing inequality (See Graph I). It shows that the Gini Coefficient (a measure of inequality) declined in the 1970s but has risen again after the mid-1990s. On the one hand, we have the largest number of poor people in the world and on the other hand, we have a large number of billionaires. The number of billionaires is larger than

in many other countries, much richer than us. We also have the largest number of malnourished and the largest number of illiterate people in the world. Inequality across the nation is also substantial with regional disparities growing over time (Table 1).

### II.1 National developments

Is equity in society a natural state of affairs? History tells us that is not so. Equity is a social construct and each society has had its own ideas about it. In India, during the colonial rule, there was not only extreme poverty among the masses but society had become highly iniquitous with a small well off elite class created by the colonial masters to rule the country. After independence in 1947, society strove to not only eliminate poverty but also reduce inequity. Government was given a large role in this task and policies were pursued to achieve these ends. The policy paradigm adopted in 1947 had the underlying view that individuals are not responsible for their problems of poverty, illiteracy, ill-health, etc. These were seen to be the result of social processes hence characterized as social problems which had to be solved by the nation as a whole (Kumar, 2013). These tendencies need to be understood in a historical context.

#### II.1.1 Colonization and present day inequity

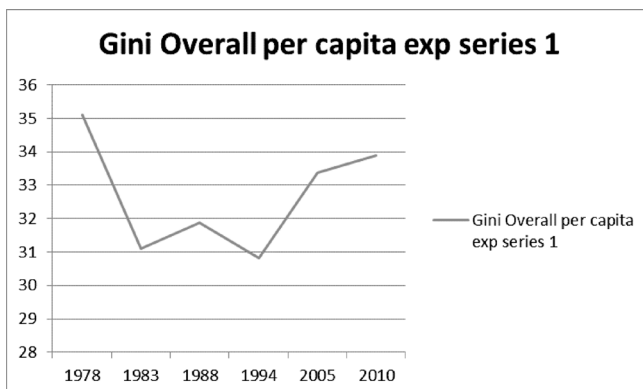
Just like biological systems are determined by their genetic make ups, societies are conditioned by their histories. However, there is no determinism since people can change the course of society because they are conscious beings and not automatons. But change in social consciousness is often slow so social change also takes place gradually except during revolutionary times.

Societies in the developing world were disrupted by colonization and India was no exception with its colonization beginning around 1750. This left a deep mark on Indian society. India's social dynamics was disrupted by the colonial masters to suit their own ends of control and exploitation. It linked the Indian elite to the interests of the foreign rulers and distanced them from the common people of India. As Macaulay said in his Minutes of 1835, there was a need for a class intermediate between the rulers and the common people of India. There was a hegemonization of the thinking of the Indian elite. The impact of disruption was on every aspect of Indian society. Agriculture, industry, education, etc., were all impacted and the effect persisted after independence (Kumar, 2013). Society as a whole lost dynamism.

The knowledge base of society and its understanding of itself became dependent on what was propagated by the colonizers. Even after independence, the nation has substantially depended on the knowledge generated in the advanced countries. Thus, Indian intellectuals have become largely 'derived intellectuals'. There is a continuing loss of value of ideas and curtailment of creativity.

Consequently, the leadership at the time of independence was enamored of Western modernity and wanted to copy it quickly. This bias introduced contradictions in government's policies with the ruling elite in pursuit of Western modernity going for a top down model of development which has marginalized the vast majority of citizens and aggravated inequality. Thus, while the government paid lip service to the poor and to equity in society, its overall policies did not work to reduce inequality in society even though specific

**Graph I**



Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank online databank. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx?isshared=true#> (Accessed on 20/09/2014).

policies were supposedly working in favour of the poor. The former dominated while the latter could not achieve their goals.

The growing black economy undermined all policies – macro and micro – so that general development was set back with consequent ill effects for the marginalized. Policy failure due to both the top down approach and the growing black economy was visible from the mid-1960s. This only worsened as the years rolled on with the downgrading of planning and the failure of the public sector to mobilize resources. The final nail in the coffin for the state dominated economic policies came with the Iraq crisis in 1989. India found itself in a debt trap in that year due to its embracing massive consumerism in the 1980s based on imported goods (especially, petro products). The foreign debt rose from about \$10 billion in 1970 to about \$20 billion in 1980 to around \$ 86 billion in 1990. So, while it doubled in the 1970s it more than quadrupled in the 1980s.

The crisis starting in 1989 led to a shift in policy paradigm in 1991 to 'marketization' (See Section V). While markets always existed, marketization was new. The state retreated in favour of capital with 'market friendly state intervention'. Solutions to problems lay in the market – problems like poverty, employment, education and health. Individuals had to accept blame for their own problems and society was largely absolved of its responsibility. However, after the collapse of the South East Asian Tiger economies in 1997, this was called 'crony capitalism' and the World Bank changed its line to a pure market based growth strategy called 'growth at any cost'. The US economy was booming on the back of the asset bubble in the financial markets. The Fed chief, Alan Greenspan, pronounced that 'markets are self correcting' and there is no need to intervene in them. Later in 2008, he admitted in the Senate hearings that he was wrong. Government of India also pursued this strategy and under it, all costs have fallen on the workers and the environment. This has aggravated inequality further.

## II.2 Global developments

Rising inequality since the mid-1970s is a global phenomenon (Picketty, 2014). The welfare state put into place after World War II, following Keynesian prescription, faced the crisis of stagflation after the mid-1960s. Consequently, these policies were largely replaced by the neo-liberal economic paradigm. Margaret Thatcher came to power in the UK in 1978 and argued

**Table 1. Disparities across the rich and Poor States of India**

Year	Ratio of Highest to Lowest Per Capita Income	Ratio of Per capita Income Average
1980-81	2.92	2.18
1985-86	2.86	2.22
1990-91	3.13	2.55
1995-96	5.31	2.82
2000-01	4.35	2.87
2005-06	5.15	3.12
2010-11	4.91	3.29
2012-13	4.38	3.18

Source: RBI (2007) pp. 34-36 (for 1980-81 to 1990-91). RBI, *Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy (1995-96 to 2012-13)*

Notes:

1. For 1st three years the base year is 1980-81
2. For 1995-96, the base year is 1993-94
3. For 2000-01, the base year is 1999-2000
4. For last three years, the base year is 2004-05

that 'There is no alternative' (TINA) and attacked the trade unions. Ronald Reagan became the President of the USA in 1980 and he pushed these policies. Given the weight of these countries in the institutions of global governance, like, the IMF and the World Bank, these institutions also pushed the developing world to adopt more conservative, market based policies which came to be known as the Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1989).

Globally there was a shift in the strategic balance which aided this process of Anglo-American domination. With the passing away of Mao in 1976, Deng Xiaoping came to power and he moved China's economic policy paradigm to capitalist policies under an authoritarian regime and called it 'Socialism with a difference'.

Soviet Union which used to help the developing countries balance the pressures from the Western powers itself started to falter from the mid-1970s due to growing inefficiencies and corruption. From 1980, when Reagan announced the Star War programme, the collapse of the Soviet economy set in. The weight of defense expenditure became too much for them to sustain. By the mid-1980s it was clear that the developing countries would have to deal with the Western powers on their own and India was no exception. Thus, the Western powers were

emboldened to introduce new issues in GATT in the Uruguay Round of negotiations in 1986. The collapse of the Soviet bloc starting 1989 was sudden and capitalism became dominant.

The rapid growth in some of the poor countries like China and India and the rise of the South East Asian economies has meant that across countries, disparities have declined in the last 35 years. However, within each country the disparities have increased. Thus, if disparity is measured globally between the top 1% and the bottom 50%, they have risen (Picketty, 2014 and OXFAM, 2014). These trends have had their impact globally but more specifically on India. As argued below, this is the consequence of a philosophical shift in societies with the adoption of marketization as a social principle (Kumar, 2013).

### III Equality and equity – from absolute to relative

All important religions and philosophies talk of equality among people. Our Constitution talks of equality of all before law. Why then does it not come about? People are born equal (except when there are genetic problems) with the same social potentialities but it is in terms of their social existence that they become unequal. The potentialities of individuals get modified by social processes – where one is born, the social status of the family and so on. These become the sources of inequality in society. Even if there are natural differences amongst different people, it depends on society whether they would be treated as equal or if not, how unequal. Some influential writings on this subject in Western literature are Rawls (1971), Atkinson (1970) and Sen (1997).

Treating everyone as equal even when people are recognized as having varying capabilities as per different attributes of life is an absolutist idea. The dominant sections decide on who gets what status and for their own benefit create divisions/hierarchies. This is justified as a 'natural' division to lend legitimacy to their view of society. Their notion of justice is also based on such views.

Even the oppressed or the victims of the system largely accept that notion as 'just'. For instance, in the present day male dominated world, successful women also adopt the male centric values of society and implicitly accept them as a natural state of affairs. Similarly, in the Indian caste ridden society, the oppressed, like, the Dalits, adopt upper caste norms.

Equity is a relative idea which specifically recognizes the differences amongst individuals. According to principle of equity, equals should be treated alike while unequals need to be treated unequally. For instance, two individuals with the same level of income should pay the same amount of tax. Those with different levels of income ought to pay different amounts of tax. How unequal should the treatment of unequals be is for society to decide. There is no one rule for it since different societies value equity differently – some more and others less.

### III.1 Wider context – social, political and economic

Features affecting our notions of equality/equity are not just economic but also social, political, cultural, linguistic, ecological and so on. Change in society comes through change in social consciousness and not just through the good intentions of the rulers.

Societies are not in a stationary state and are buffeted by new ideas and influences from outside so that they keep responding to different factors. Existence of inequity and changes in it - both are causes of tensions in society. Any time there is change in the prevailing level of inequity in society, there is a build up of tension. Whether it is an increase or a decrease in the prevailing levels of inequity there is resistance from those who lose out. Both existence of inequity and changes in it can disturb social harmony.

All known societies have had various degrees of inequity. At times, societies seem to accept inequalities easily and without disturbing their functioning. [Keynes (1936) and Hicks (1974)] have pointed out that a historically given income differentiation amongst the various groups does not lead to big social conflict while rapid changes in it do so.

The acceptability of a historically given income ladder is perhaps reinforced in a variety of ways. If society attaches a notion of justice with the prevailing income disparity, it becomes socially acceptable. Rapid changes in income relativities would then be seen by those who are losing out as unjust and be resisted.

In post-independence India, income relativities have been disturbed significantly. The nature of the elite changed and businesses started playing a more dominant role. In a democracy, like, in India, those in control of larger numbers also played a significant role and tried to get a larger share of the national pie.

The peasantry/ rich farmers fall in this category. The judiciary and the executive consisting of the police and the bureaucracy (who were essential to the colonial rulers for their continued hold over the country and hence constituted the elite of the country) slowly lost out to these upcoming groups. There was a reaction to this via the instrumentality of the black economy.

#### III.1.1 Material aspects of social progress

Economists have principally used income distribution to measure disparities in society believing it to be the principal manifestation of inequality. It correlates well with the other economic parameters that signify inequality. However, it may not be able to explain other social, political and cultural aspects of inequality. Like, in India, disparities based on incomes need to be supplemented by the caste and community factors.

In spite of these limitations, traditionally, economists have principally measured disparities in terms of skewedness of incomes. More recently, there have been attempts to take into account multi-dimensional factors by constructing indices like, the human development indices but as is usually the case, they suffer from a certain degree of arbitrariness about the weights attached to their different components. Of course, different societies may view each factor differently and assign different weights making inter-society comparisons difficult. Even in income terms, comparisons across nations may be difficult since the exchange rate used may have a degree of arbitrariness.

In brief, while inequality has many dimensions, today it is taken to refer largely to the material dimension. The question is whether material progress can be the sole yardstick of progress.

The present age is one of selling everything from one's reputation to the Taj Mahal (Bunty and Bubbly style). Advertisers depend on creating a feeling of dissatisfaction amongst the people and especially the young; contentedness amongst individuals is a casualty. Sex and violence are used to sell products and this both commercializes them and also creates a sense of dissatisfaction in people. Hence material progress is disjointed from being happy. Notions of freedom are used to justify any checks on irresponsible advertising. People are posited to be strong and able to discriminate between what is or is not good for them. However, the entire exercise of advertising is to weaken people and catch them at their weakest. Its psychological impact on



people, especially children, needs careful analysis.

Since the purely material possession devoid of other attributes can only give momentary satisfaction, the purely economic view of society results in short termism. It leads to a disjuncture between society's long run (and existence itself) and short termism of the individual with severe consequences for humankind.

#### **IV Disparities – regional, sectoral, income, gender**

The Indian economy started to open indiscriminately with the New Economic Policies (NEP) launched in 1991. While its exports and imports as a percentage of GDP in 1991 were around 7% (roughly the figures for the USA, Japan and China), now these have risen to 20% and more.

As already argued, NEP led to a paradigm change in policies. The market has taken over from the state and is playing a leading role in the growth process. This has meant giving concessions to capital and ignoring the distributional consequences of policies. As pointed out in Kumar (2007) there is a simple dichotomy playing itself out between agriculture and non-agriculture.

Since 1991, while agriculture grew at 3.1 per cent per annum, non-agriculture has grown at around 7.5 per cent. While agriculture still employs around 45% of the work force, its GDP share is only 14%. In contrast, the services sector employs 30% of the work force but it contributes more than 60% of the GDP. Thus, those in agriculture are the majority but marginalized in national income. Since agriculture is concentrated in rural areas and services in the urban areas, this disparity is leading to a growing rural-urban divide. Further, since the backward states are predominantly agricultural, they are lagging behind the advanced states which have a dominant contribution to the services sector. Finally, since agriculture employs largely unorganized workers there is a growing divide between the unorganized and the organized sectors (Kumar, 2007). It is accentuating the disparities between the top 3 per cent (elite) and the bottom 40 per cent broadly those around the poverty line. (Graph II shows that the decadal rate of growth was unchanged).

The growing disparity is also based on the post-1991 concentration of resources in the hands of the private corporate sector which is investing in the organized sector and mostly in the advanced states except recently when it is investing in buying out natural resources. Thus, agriculture is receiving hardly 10% of the total

investment (for 45% of the work force) and is lagging behind in productivity and wages. It is hardly generating new jobs (Kumar, 2005a). In contrast, the corporate sector is investing, but in capital intensive activities and is, therefore, shedding jobs in a kind of jobless growth. Consequently, overall, few jobs are being generated and this is resulting in rising under-employment.

Growing problems of employment generation and rising disparities have led to increased political and social instabilities in India. There have been violent protests against land acquisition for industrial projects and setting up of SEZs. Agitations for reservations and affirmative action have often turned violent since the government is seen as non-responsive and pro-corporate sector. Growing corruption has added to a loss of faith in the government which is seen to be working against the poor and in favour of the rich and the corrupt.

To correct its image, government has been forced to go in for programmes for the support of the poor like, rural employment generation (MGNREG), right to food, right to education, midday meal scheme in schools, loan waiver for poor farmers and so on.

However, as Graph II shows, spurts in growth since 1991 have been short lived.

#### **V Nature of globalization – one-way and marketization**

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. It has been going on for a long time. India has traded with S E Asia, Arab countries and so on for thousands of years. Buddhism went from India two thousand years ago and that is also globalization. The coming of the British was also globalization. But it was a two-way process till the British colonized India starting 1750. That is when globalization became a one-way process with severe impact on the dynamism of Indian society.

##### **V.1 Disparities and marketization**

As mentioned above, data indicate, the process of marketization of society has led to growing economic disparities in India since 1991. The pre-existing disparities have worsened. While economic growth accelerated in the 1980s and went up from an average rate of growth of 3.7% between 1950/51 to 1980/81 to 5.3% in the 1980s, disparities remained in check. In the 1990s, this rate of growth was maintained but with rising disparities (Kumar, 2005b). After 2001/02, the rate of growth accelerated further to about 8.5% for five years but the disparities increased even faster (Kumar, 2007).

It needs to be clarified that markets are an institution of exchange of goods and services and have always existed. It is the process of marketization that is new. It leads to the penetration of market philosophy into every sphere of human activity and the guiding factor of social institutions. Markets are considered to be 'objective' and society as 'subjective'. Thus, it leads to the advance of the former and the retreat of the latter.

## V.2 Principles underlying marketization

Why does marketization result in growing disparities?

First, markets in themselves are devoid of values which come from society. It is society which decides implicitly or explicitly what level of inequity or equity it should have. As society retreats and markets advance, judgments about equity become less important. Free competitive markets by themselves cannot deliver equity. It is well known that they are consistent with complete inequity with one having all and the rest nothing.

Second, markets are based on 'dollar vote'. Purchasing power of the individual is what counts and not 'one person, one vote'. The outcomes of the market depend on the former and not on the latter. This results in the 'marginalization of the marginal', that is, the less purchasing power one has the less one can influence the outcome of the markets. This operates at the international, national and regional terms accentuating disparities at all these levels.

Third, the notion of welfare under the markets is based on the idea that 'more is better' and leads to consumerism. This leads to demand for higher incomes to enable greater consumption. It justifies consumerism but that leads to environmental problems which affect the poor more than the well off and aggravate disparities through health effects (Kumar, 2006). This principle also implies that sacrifice is stupidity so equity through transfers should be resisted and cannot be considered to be welfare enhancing.

Fourth, the market notion of 'let prices prevail' is used to justify the retreat of the state. Thus, in the labour market minimum wage laws are diluted and unemployment dole is frowned upon. Subsidies are considered to be distorting so they need to be withdrawn. This impacts prices of basic goods and the welfare of the poor since they are able to afford less of them. In fact, unemployment is considered to be desirable as a means of disciplining labour and this accentuates disparities by

causing a downward pressure on wages.

The marketization process results in the basic philosophical changes in society. The free goods of nature or the non-marketized aspects of life like beaches, rivers, common areas, etc. are marketized. This leads to a deterioration of the situation of the income-poor who could otherwise get some sustenance from these free goods (Kumar, 1997).

Fifth, marketization has led to a new international division of labour, with polluting industries relocating in the developing world and clean technology production concentrated in the advanced countries, reducing their pollution levels. Larry Summers argued that it is more efficient for people to die due to pollution in the developing world (Summers, 1992) hence polluting industries should relocate in the developing countries.

Sixth, marketization has led to the notion of people as homo-economicus and 'rational individuals' working solely to maximize their profits. They are atomistic individuals. Optimization has become an important tool in economics. There are benefits and losses of every action of economic agents and they optimize their gains to improve their welfare. There are no absolutes and everything becomes relative. There is an optimum level of smuggling, tax evasion and so on so the existence of ills of society are justified and need to be tolerated as rational. Hence principles are less important today.

Atomization of individuals has led to wider impact on thinking in society. In modern medicine a person is not a whole but parts and dehumanized. In modern education, people are a resource, like, a mineral. They are basically, a prerequisite for production. Education is referred to as human resource development (HRD) or human capital formation.

In such a framework, with things becoming relative, no stand on social issues need be taken by the individual. World is for enjoyment and not denial which is a cost to the individual. Since profit maximization requires minimization of costs, feeling of guilt has to be minimized. Consequently, taking a stand in favour of greater equity would mean sacrifice and it should be avoided by rational individuals.

These philosophical changes lead to the acceptance of the idea that the poor themselves and not society are responsible for their poverty. This makes inequalities

acceptable. In this line of argument, it does not matter that markets fail and have done so more often. The ideology of the 'free market' which helps the better off sections is used to justify their privileges in society and to further them. The marginalized and the less marketized sections of the population fall behind due to marketization and resent this change.

Thus, it is clear that the degree of marketization in society stands in direct opposition to the extent of socialization or the public good nature of many activities. While the former helps the well off sections and the latter gives support to the marginalized but that is on the decline under pressure of marketization. Globalization has narrowed the space for pro-poor policies

## **VI Macroeconomic factors – growth and distribution**

Under Capitalism, the biggest inequality is between wages and profits and not amongst wage earners. As the degree of monopoly rises, so does this gap. As capital gets concentrated in fewer hands and labour gets weakened, the degree of monopoly rises. Capital is able to push for policies favourable to itself. International finance capital has come to dominate policies globally and earn vast sums of profits.

The macroeconomic environment to promote growth, increase investment and exports has been weighed in favour of capital since 1991 and even before that since 1980 when India went to the IMF for loans to meet its balance of payment difficulties. This has led to a rise in the share of profits in the economy and led to greater inequality.

As the share of profits has increased, demand has to be generated by increasing investments. Even export demand has to be generated by holding down wages. Demand from the middle classes and the well off has to be based on creating asset bubbles like we witnessed in the 1990s and the 2000s up to 2006. None of this is a stable solution for growth but all of them lead to greater inequality.

### **VI.1 Inequality leads to more inequality**

Economic growth has come to depend on the actions of the capitalist elite. Mobility of capital has helped it to extract concessions from different countries. Thus, taxes in country after country have been lowered in order to attract capital. Labour laws have been diluted across countries for the same reason. Within countries

too, capital has been able to extract concessions from society on the ground that it is the source of growth. Belief in welfare state has been replaced by an exclusivist and elitist model of development. Thus, inequality has become the cause of more of it.

But, long term growth can not be sustained on the basis of creating an increasingly unequal society. The global economic crisis starting in 2007 also followed growing inequity in each country and in the world as a whole.

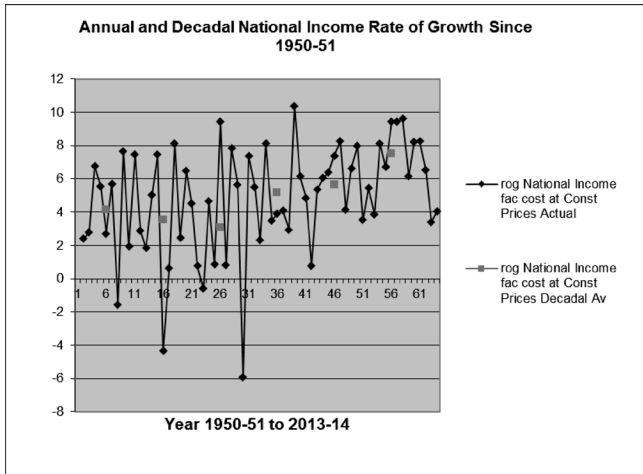
### **VI.2 Fiscal policies and public goods**

Governments have had a close association with businesses but under the weight of globalization and the World Bank prescription of 'market friendly state intervention' they have become more closely integrated with businesses. So, Japan is called 'Japan Inc.' and in India too post-1991, we have become India Incorporated. Crony capitalism and the associated corruption have been one aspect of this growing closeness between the businessmen and the politicians.

Democracy has been truncated in country after country. During the recent global economic crisis the 'Wall Street' dominated over the 'Main Street' and that led to the revolt of the 99 per cent against the 1 per cent. People in country after country have lost their right to choose their path of development. International finance capital is deciding that by propagating the notion of market 'efficiency'. Thus, national rules are subservient to the global demands of WTO provisions. India's food security or patent laws have to be as per the dictates of global capital.

For the Indian elite, globalization implies linking with the elite in the developed world. The emotional attachment with the nation is greatly diluted so that many of them have voted with their feet, becoming Non-resident Indians and taking their capital abroad rather than investing in their own capital-short nation. The Social Contract has been shattered. The State with a monopoly over violence has used it with a heavy hand against all those who protest, so that capital can be appeased.

Equity through taxation has been diluted due to concessions in direct taxes. There has been talk of replacing direct taxes by VAT or moving from progressive taxation to proportionate taxes. Both these shift the focus of taxation from making post-tax income distribution more equitable to less equitable. Large concessions on

**Graph II**

Source: RBI, *Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy* (15/09/2014)

property income had any way dented the progressivity of taxes on high incomes (Kumar, 2013). The number of public goods that generated some equity have also been reduced and now the emphasis is on shifting to the levy of 'user charges' for public goods.

In brief, the content of public policy for creating a more equitable society has declined over the last 25 years.

### VI.3 Black economy and equity

The growing black economy implies rising illegality and is anti-social. It is currently estimated to be around 50% of GDP in India so is both systematic and systemic. It is concentrated in the hands of 3 per cent of Indians and results in huge additional inequity which is not captured in data (Kumar, 1999:75-78). So, in 1995-96, the disparity between the top 3% and bottom 40% in the income ladder was 12:1 in the white economy; it becomes 57:1 if the black economy is included. So, the real disparity in society is a result of the black economy. It makes social action difficult by leading to growing alienation of individuals.

The inequity due to growing black economy is not captured in the official data. This is true globally and especially in the developing economies. Typically, the black economy is concentrated in the hands of the already rich, the profit earners who try to increase their incomes by illegal means. They share a fraction of this, as in India, with the other elite sections of society, like, the politicians, the bureaucracy, the police and the judiciary (Kumar, 1999).

The black economy leads to policy failure and social waste. It results in less of tax collection and, therefore, to shortage of resources for development and lower expenditures on essentials like health and education. Further, the money sent for development is siphoned out and that makes expenditures less effective. Consequently, expenditures do not lead to outcomes. Often due to it, resources are wasted, like, roads are poorly made and repeatedly repaired rather than new roads built. Thus, the rate of growth is shown to be less than the potential rate of growth by 5% due to the existence of the black economy (Kumar, 2005c). The Indian economy instead of being a \$1.8 trillion economy could have been a \$12 trillion economy this year. Thus, roughly \$10 trillion of development is being missed out every year. This is a major cause of growing inequity.

Globally, black income earners are using tax havens to both take their capital out of their national territories as well as round trip it back to their countries. The tax havens are also used by the corporate sector to siphon profits out of the developing countries via transfer pricing or under and over invoicing of exports and imports. Illicit flow of funds from India has resulted in loss of opportunity of about \$1.2 trillion since 1948 (Kumar, et.al., 2014). The MNCs like, Amazon, Google, Apple, etc., are taking billions of dollars of profits out of the USA to Ireland.

Illegality is also damaging the environment in severe ways and the impact of this degradation of the environment falls disproportionately on the poor through attack on their employment opportunities and health.

Since the black economy is illegal it moves economic activity out of the realm of the collective and into the hands of the individuals. Mobility of capital has made the situation more complex and enabled capital to evade government actions. This has become a major cause of the growing inequality globally and in each of the nations.

### VII Political aspects – democracy subverted

The black economy operates by subverting democracy in the nation. Political parties represent the interest of vested interests rather than the interests of the citizens from whom they get the vote. The leadership of almost all political parties across the ideological spectrum have been accused of corruption and being a party to the subversion of democracy.



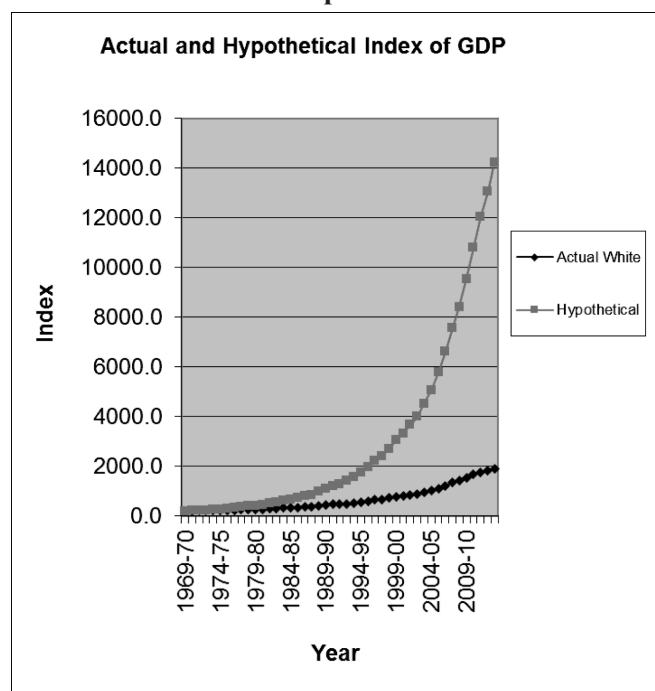
Democracy has become formalistic. Choice for the people is restricted to voting for one or the other corrupt set of people. Data on candidates standing for elections shows how they multiply their wealth while in power. This is the declared wealth and not the actual which is often held benami and through a complex web of holdings in India or abroad in tax havens.

Leaders of parties do not encourage criticism within parties. Leadership which used to identify with the poor by living simply has given way to one which socializes with the rich and copies its style of living. Parliamentarians with designer clothes, gold and diamond watches and fancy cars are now a common sight. These people, when they get to power, subvert democracy to make gains. Even the leadership of the marginalized sections has rapidly got corrupted under the influence of this undemocratic politics based on vote bank politics. They feel they can only win elections if they have big money and not because they have the support of the citizens. The result is unresponsive and unstable politics, a weak democracy and a shift away from the politics of achieving greater equity in society.

**VII.1 Collective action - difficulties**

Organizing people is becoming increasingly difficult. National governments have become more authoritarian and global capital has become all powerful. Society's

**Graph III**



Source: RBI, Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy (15/09/2014) and own calculations

horizons have become increasingly narrow and so have the horizons of individuals. The process of atomization of the individual and the retreat of the social in favour of the 'objective and valueless' market has added to the difficulties of sustained mobilization of the citizens.

Arab Spring and the movement against the one per cent have faltered with negative consequences. In the Arab world country after country is in disarray – Egypt, Libya, Syria and so on. There is a lack of a global society and global values. The power of global capital also is enormous and it keeps the various movements divided. This is also the case in India where we have many single issue movements but not ones that can challenge capital as a whole.

The Gandhian principles can form a basis for change. He remains relevant even if he appears to be not so in the present materialistic world. His principle, 'last person first' can be a truly democratizing one which can check the growing inequity in society.

**VIII Conclusion**

Society has a civilizing aspect and even if there are natural differences among people, they can be overcome because of the potentiality of social thought and social organization. Civilized societies protect their weak since they recognize the potential of each citizen. Thus, society has to regain its domination and counter growing marketization and atomization. Altruism is basic to people. This is being denied in the race for competition. Youth is robbed of its best years and atomized. Its idealism and energy are largely turned into cynicism.

To conclude, while many factors are responsible for inequality in society, only some of the important ones have been dealt with in this talk. The historical and international roots have been pointed out and the importance of marketization, the black economy and some macroeconomic factors have been highlighted. While the market marginalizes the marginal, the failure of the free market framework is further accentuating the problems. The large and growing black economy as indicated by the growing levels of corruption is vitiating the problem of inequity by taking the issue out of the realm of the social.

Thus, today while the need to promote equity in society is greater, the predominance of economics over other disciplines and the economic system resulting from one-way globalization and the growing marketization

are marginalizing the quest for equity in India. Even the marginalized social groups which should fight for equity are influenced by these factors and their struggle gets subverted by their leaders. Capitalism by itself is not known to produce equity and it is this feature that leads to its periodic crisis. The present juncture is also one of continuing crisis because of rising inequality in society. The Indian ruling elite has made the struggle for achieving equity irrelevant by ignoring it but they do so at their own peril.

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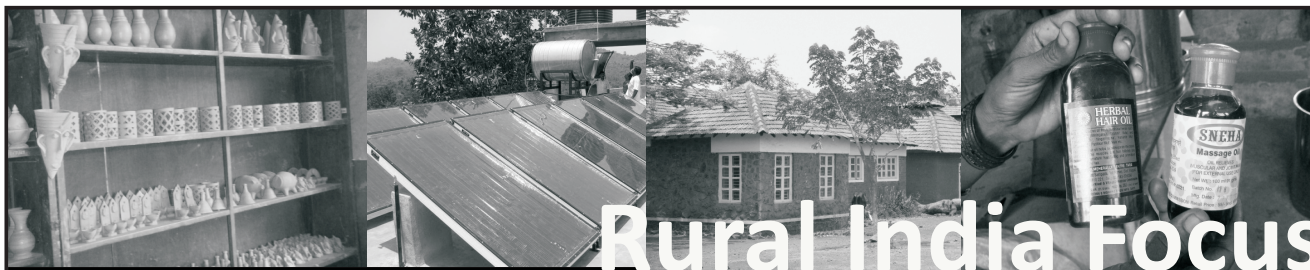
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# janata

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## Democracy Zindabad!

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**A Century of Turmoil in  
western Asia**  
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If the national media has termed the turn-out of voters in the first phase of assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand as “triumph of democracy”, it is with a good reason. It is not only the size of the turn-out that warrants this description. There are other reasons. The first phase voting has many encouraging, positive and heart-warming features distinctly pointing to the deep entrenchment of the democratic spirit in the Indian populace. This is not something new, although it is something worth welcoming heartily: Indian voters have demonstrated clearly their commitment to democracy, free and fair elections and support for the parliamentary system in successive polls. But the voting in Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand earlier this week is something way out of the normal.

Let us take J & K first. The state is by now used to successful elections. But there is always an apprehension that unpredictable developments may occur to mar the conduct of polls whenever polling is held for the state assembly or the Lok Sabha. Thus, an element of suspense and tension always precedes the voting. Fifteen of the 87 assembly constituencies voted in the first phase of the five-phase poll.

There was added interest to the polls this time as the Bharatiya Janata Party is making a bold attempt at getting a majority in the assembly on the slogan of 44+ (the party calls it Mission 44+ strategy). Consequently, the campaign this time was livelier than in the past as the younger elements in the Valley worked up enthusiasm to counter the BJP strategy. Hence, the turn-out in the Valley was impressive.

Voters defied a boycott call by the separatist groups and stood in long queues braving the inclement weather. According to reports, a large number of voters were voting for the first time and this made the campaign and the voting process interesting for the voters. The fact that the voter turn-out was as high as 72 per cent is noteworthy. It could mean two things: first, anti-incumbency and lack of support for the ruling National Conference-Congress alliance or opposition to the BJP. There is also a third factor. Over the last six years, the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) has gained in strength in the Valley and poses a big challenge to the ruling alliance. A high turn-out is usually regarded as a signal of danger for the ruling party or alliance since it is held as a reliable barometer of anti-incumbency. That the ruling

*Between the lines*

## The Modi phenomenon

**Kuldip Nayar**

alliance is not popular was shown in the Lok Sabha polls in which the BJP's performance was impressive. The Lok Sabha outcome, a morale-booster for the BJP motivated the party to aim to seize power. It hopes that its performance in Jammu and Ladakh will enable it to over-run the NC-Congress performance in the Valley. If it manages to secure 44 seats (half of the total), it feels it can manage the rest required for a working majority.

The BJP's expectations cannot be termed as exaggerated. A BJP-Modi wave is still sweeping the country if the outcome in successive elections in the recent past is an indicator. The BJP has gained many states after the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the latest being Maharashtra and Haryana. Riding on the crest of a Modi wave, the BJP is pitching its hope high in J & K and Jharkhand. It will not be a big surprise if the BJP wins in Jharkhand. In the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP managed to be ahead of the local parties and the Congress in 56 of the 81 assembly seats. It could well repeat the performance in the assembly polls. Modi hopes that the tribal population of Jharkhand will stand by his party just as the majority of the tribal votes in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh have helped form BJP governments in those states.

The challenge for the BJP will be really serious in the J & K valley. Though the BJP is an old party, this is the first time it is challenging not only the NC but all the small local parties and the Congress. With an eye on the Muslim vote, it has fielded a large number of Muslim candidates. Let us see what kind of response the party attracts. Will the Modi wave prevail? Or will its march be halted in J & K?

By any yardstick, the participation of US President Barrack Obama at the Republic Day parade in January is the recognition of India's growing structure. His phone call to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was, no doubt, an effort to make amends of sorts. But it does not hide the fact that Washington has chosen New Delhi as its partner to advance the policies and programmes it has in view in this part of the world.

Washington is for free enterprise and leads the capitalist world. Its policies are aimed at benefitting big enterprises and the rich. In Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it has a tailor-made partner. Even to the right of centre, Obama looks liberal compared to Modi. Why the two have joined hands is not for economic reasons, although New Delhi will benefit because the American industry is bound to make way towards India.

The real reason is what is hawked about as the strategic partnership. America wants to sell weapons, an underpinning of its industrial growth. India is famished of advanced military technology and hopes to get it from the America-led West.

Why New Delhi has bought the post-Bofors guns at an exorbitant price of some Rs. 15000 crores is because of its insistence that the suppliers put up the manufacturing plant in India. Since the country faces an attack on two fronts at the same time, as National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has warned, it is frantic to have weapons from

whatever source it can obtain. Fortunately, Russia is still India's dependable supplier and does not mind the purchase from the West as it used to be the case in the past. And New Delhi has gained from this.

Obama, no doubt, likes democratic India, however disorderly. But his main purpose is to span the distance between India and Pakistan. He does not like the way in which the Taliban are proliferating in Afghanistan and to some extent in Pakistan. True, Islamabad is itself to blame for creating the Frankenstein but it never expected the Taliban to invade it first. With the outside Taliban, supported by the home grown crop, Pakistan has become in the eyes of world an 'epicenter of terrorism'.

How does Washington wish if the democratic India could join the fight against the Taliban. But rightly does not want to commit its forces in that area knowing how America bled in Vietnam when it joined the war there. The fundamentalists in the area may find it a God sent opportunity to launch a *Jehad* against the infidels.

There is no prospect of India and Pakistan normalizing their relations till they shed mistrust in each other. It has not happened since the partition of India some 70 years ago. It was sad to see how Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan avoided each other at the SAARC summit at Kathmandu.

I recall the founder of Pakistan Qaide-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah

saying more than once before he won a 'home land for the Muslims' that the two countries would live like the US and Canada. Although he had propagated the two-nation theory he did not want religion to be mixed with politics after the partition. That was probably the reason he never wanted the migration of population after the creation of Pakistan.

To put the blame of enmity between the two countries on Pakistan alone would be unfair. The Congress accepted the partition formula even though Mahatama Gandhi had warned that the partition would be on his dead body.

Keeping that spirit alive, India went for a rule of the constitution which knows no parochialism and treats every person, belonging to any religion, an equal citizen with all the rights. No doubt, India is a secular state but lately it tends to be tilting towards Hindutava. This is dangerous fallout of the Modi phenomenon who is an old RSS parcharak (preacher).

True, the Hindus and the Muslims in India are equal before the law. Yet the contamination of civil services, particularly of the police has taken a toll - the force sees to it that the Hindus have the last word.

Since I cannot put myself in the shoes of Muslims, however hard I may try, I do see that the phenomenon of Modi has worked in favour of Hindutava. He is making it hard for the Muslims and the liberals to accept him when he continues to approach the RSS leadership for advice.

This may well be the reason why RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat has announced with pride that the

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## No logic in judges' transfer

**Rajindar Sachar**

Self-inflicted wounds seldom heal. I am reminded of this whenever I think of the transfer policy of High Court judges being followed by the Supreme Court. No doubt the power of transfer of judges from one High Court to another is to be found in the Constitution. But when in 1963 some amendments were to be made, the then Law Minister in order to remove apprehensions about the misuse of power assured Parliament that the transfer of a High Court judge would only be done with the judge's prior consent.

But in 1975 the High Court judges were the target in a series of non-consensual transfers because they were said to be too independent. The Supreme Court, one had hoped, recognising the danger to the independence of the judiciary, would strike down this provision — but rather it self-inflicted a wound by continuing to uphold this power.

I fail to see any logic in the present policy of transfers. Normally transfers may be explained by the Supreme Court by relying on what is ironically called the "uncle/nephew phenomenon", namely to transfer those judges whose sons or brothers are practising in the same High Court - though to me this unnecessarily accepts an adverse assumption without any solid proof. But to transfer a judge at the initial stage is most unfair. There is double jeopardy. When judges are appointed in one court and then transferred to another, they are denied the right to practice in the parent court. The more damaging aspect of the transfer of judges is the practice of appointing outside Chief

Justices and judges notwithstanding the fact that at the Chief Justices' Conference held in 2002 it was resolved that the policy of having outside Chief Justices of High Courts be discontinued. But the government was apparently not happy with it because in such a case it would have no hand in the appointment because the seniormost judge of a High Court would automatically have to be appointed the Chief Justice. Later on, however, the Supreme Court collegium yielded to the government suggestion of outside Chief Justices and the damage was done.

There are no past precedents in India nor in other countries like the USA and the UK does this practice prevail. In fact, in the USA, in many states the Supreme Court justices, whether elected or appointed, are not posted outside the state. No one has found fault with this practice in the USA or the UK. Why this gratuitous insult to the Indian judiciary?

I have never understood the logic of transferring the seniormost 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 for a period of one or two years to a new court to which he is a total stranger, most likely not even knowing the names of his colleagues, is a strange concept of advancing the administration of justice. He may willy-nilly have to rely only on the opinion of a few select colleagues and officials which unfortunately may spell further disharmony in the High Court. Is there any special

reason why the judiciary wants to devalue experience and, thus, score a self-goal and reduce its own effectiveness?

Let us not indulge in hypocrisy of judges being tigers and fiercely independent — yes they should be but practical life is different. We know to our shame how apparently Supreme Court judges caved in during the Emergency (1975) and how the threat of transfer kept many quiet. Do not forget that judges come from the same background as the rest of us mortals.

That transfer policy continues to defy logic has been brought to public notice very recently and rudely when I read in a newspaper about the appointment of nine judges in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. All of them, we are told, were asked to give their consent to be transferred any time at the discretion of the Supreme Court, though they were given the useless lollypop of inviting their three preferences of the states to which their transfers could be made. I understand none of them has any relation practising in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Three have already been ordered to be transferred. How a choice has been made and by what norms is not immediately known. So arbitrary and one may even say unsympathetic is the decision that amongst these three there is a lady judge, who has no parents and, being unmarried, no immediate family she can take with her to the new strange place. I am quite sure that if the executive had transferred any officer in such circumstances the Supreme Court would have pontifically reprimanded the executive for justifying its arbitrary and discretionary anti-women attitude - sarcastically this action of the collegium has given a pleasurable justifiable occasion

to retort loudly: “Physician heal thyself first”.

Let me make it clear that I have never seen or met any of these nine appointees, nor have I known the parents or relations of any of them. My distress is because of the deep attachment I have to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, where I spent my best years at the Bar and where friends were gracious enough to elect me the president of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association unopposed in 1967-68. So any decision touching the High Court by the mysterious working of the collegium naturally disturbs me.

I also know closely the trauma of transfers from my experience during the 1975 Emergency. But then we

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*(Continued on Page 2)*

Hindu raj has returned after 800 years. He forgets that India is ruled by the constitution even though the Hindus are in a majority. I wish the new generation of Hindus realizes this and goes out of the way to reach the Muslims and other minorities. Sadly, this is not the case.

Unfortunately, Pakistan is brought in all the time in discussions. Things are different. That country has opted for Islam which is the State’s religion. India, nurtured in the atmosphere of the national struggle, led by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, could not have accepted anything except the ethos of independence movement, the pluralism. The Muslim League acted differently. It appealed in the name of Islam and mixed religion with politics. Unfortunately, Islamabad still does the same.

The Modi phenomenon reminds me of those days when every Muslim

were political animals and could bear the trauma, namely, family disruption and isolation, tolerably well. But there is no justification for putting the politically neutral judges, especially a single lady judge, to the trauma of transfers and tragically that too at the hands of the family head — the collegium of the Supreme Court.

I know I am sounding harsh, but let me in my defence call to aid the observations 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 criticize it so freely... but one may criticize even what one reveres... and I should show less than devotion, if I did not do what in me lies to improve it.”

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was expected to be a member of the Muslim League and a supporter of Pakistan. The BJP’s propaganda is similar. This is a betrayal of the national struggle and its ethos of secularism. Why does not Modi ever recall those days during his speeches to remind the nation of its diversity and still the sentiment of togetherness running all through.

Modi can at least suggest some reforms in Hinduism which continues to follow the archaic customs and inhuman traditions. The stigma of caste still besmears the face of Hindu religion. I have never heard even a word against such a practice from the BJP leaders.

Only a few days ago, did a girl marry her boyfriend belonging to a different caste in a temple. She was strangled to death by the parents themselves. I do not know why such murders are called the honour killing. They should be called ‘criminal killing’.



# Why only one village?

**Sandeep Pandey**

Narendra Modi has started a campaign in which he is asking every Member of Parliament (MP) to adopt a village for the purpose of carrying out development works there. Either the idea seems so attractive that even opposition leaders are identifying one village in their constituency or they don't want to be seen as left behind in this supposedly positive initiative. Usually 'adopt a village' kind of programmes are taken up by NGOs or Corporate Houses under their CSR activities.

An MP represents a big constituency with many villages. How can an MP restrict himself/herself to the development of just one village? Are we reducing the role of an MP to that of a Gram Pradhan? Or have our MPs realized that it is not possible to develop the entire rural India, so it is better to concentrate on only one village in a constituency? This way it would be possible to give an excuse after five years that since the development efforts were carried out intensively in one village it was not possible to look after the other villages. The whole exercise would be reduced to farce if even one village is not properly developed to the satisfaction of local inhabitants. The question also remains who'll judge, and based on what criteria, that the village has been developed. Chances are pretty high that after the initial steam has been let out our inefficient, insensitive and corrupt system would not even be able to show results even in this singular village.

An MP is part of a system where he/she has the services of entire

executive available to him/her. There is a hierarchical system in every district with officers like Chief Development Officer, Block Development Officers and Village Development Officers whose job it is to carry out developmental work. The MP can use this system to get development work performed in each village. Besides there are Gram Pradhans, Block Pramukhs, Chairperson, Zila Panchayat, MLAs and other elected representatives whose help can also be taken to get developmental work done. MPs and MLAs also have direct control over Local Area Development Funds allotted to them which they can use to get developmental work done in their respective area.

The crucial question then is using a system of government officers and elected representatives why can't a MP do in all villages falling within his/her constituency what he/she proposes to do in one village? In fact, it is his/her responsibility to carry out such work in all villages of his/her area. If he/she is not doing such work in some villages or most villages of his/her constituency and merely concentrating on one village then he/she is shying away from his/her responsibility.

It may appear enthralling to some and on surface but Narendra Modi has really created confusion by announcing this scheme. It gives an escape route to MPs from the bigger role that they are supposed to perform. Or is it that Narendra Modi doesn't want them to perform any bigger roles? He has very clearly centralized the entire decision

making power leaving little for the MPs to do. In any case, this programme is ill-conceived and ill-fated.

Instead what should have been done is empowering the local bodies to take up developmental work on their own – as envisioned in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution. Instead of allotting a village to an MP, each Gram Pradhan should have been empowered in all villages to undertake developmental planning and programmes for social justice. Strengthening the local bodies is the only way true development which fulfils the needs of local people can take place. The articles 243-g and 243-w of the Constitution empower the rural and urban local bodies, respectively, to carry out development work in their local areas. 29 and 18 subjects have been identified, respectively, in Schedules 11, related rural areas, and 12 related to urban areas, of the Constitution in which local bodies are free to take decisions.

A reason why local bodies are not being able to assert themselves is because there is too much interference from higher level government officers and elected representatives. In fact, MLAs and MPs have no business interfering in the activities of local bodies. But it is quite common for a ruling party MLA to decide who the Fair Price Shop owner should be in various shops of his/her constituency in addition to who the local SDM or SO at the police station should be. They also arm-twist or lure the panchayat members to get the

Block Pramukh or Zila Panchayat Chairperson associated with their party get elected.

Modi's recipe will create unnecessary conflict between MPs and MLAs and Gram Pradhans. An MP is supposed to concentrate on higher level things. An MP is part of legislature supposed to be making laws or policies to govern the country. It is the Gram Pradhan who is expected to deliver at the local level. This is also the reason why more people vote in Panchayat elections than in the Assembly or Parliament elections.

It'll be better if MPs leave the development work to panchayat level elected representatives assisted by the bureaucracy and themselves concentrate on law making or policy formulation and monitoring the implementation of laws and policies. Rather than themselves lifting the spade and doing the work, which they can't do every day, it is their job to ensure that the system works. The MP may feel happy about having achieved something at a village level but he/she is not doing justice to his/her role by doing this.

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# Barriers to Sustainable Farming Put Burden on World's Poor

**Vandana Shiva**

The conflict between “free trade” and food rights came to the fore again at the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations in September [2014], when India did not back down from its stance that a permanent solution be found for **food security issues** before signing the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

The TFA is designed to push free trade further, with heavy losses to India's food security. The U.S. had challenged India at the WTO's Bali Ministerial in 2013, on the ground that the Food Security Act adopted by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime would increase India's food subsidies beyond levels allowed by the WTO.

The rules allow subsidies at 10 percent of the value of agricultural produce. Oddly, the base year for India has been fixed at 1986-88. India, justifiably, is demanding that this date be changed to reflect the reality of food prices today. Double standards in the WTO rules are also exposed when one realizes that India's subsidies of \$12 billion to its 500 million farmers are considered “trade distorting,” while U.S. subsidies of \$120 billion to its 2 million farmers are not. India's subsidies are \$25 per farmer, while U.S. subsidies amounts to \$60,000 per farmer—that's 2,40,000 percent more than Indian subsidies. Yet the U.S. is threatening India and demanding the removal of support to its small and marginal farmers.

These are not rules of trade, but rules of manipulation written during the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations, which led to the establishment of the WTO, by agribusiness corporations seeking to profit from India's large food and agriculture market. The WTO debate on food and agriculture subsidies is actually intended to force India to stop supporting its farmers through procurement at the minimum support price (MSP) so that 1.25 billion Indians, including the 810 million covered by the Food Security Act, become a market for multinational corporations.

The U.S. has claimed that India has doubled the MSP in the last 10 years. What is hidden from the public view is the fact that costs of production have gone up more than 10 times. In spite of MSP, farmers are not able to recover their production cost. In 2011-12, the cost of production of rice in Punjab was 1,700 rupees per quintal, while MSP was 1,285 rupees. In the same year, the cost of production of wheat was 1,500 rupees, while MSP was 1,110 rupees. In Haryana, the cost of production of rice was 1,613 rupees, while MSP was 1,350 rupees.

In the Northeast, the cost of production has risen by 53 percent between 2008-2009 and 2011-12, while MSP has risen by only 20 percent. A negative economy translates into debt and un-payable debt translates to suicides. Debt is

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# A Century of Turmoil in western Asia: Some pitfalls of nationalism

M. Hamid Ansari

I deem it a privilege to be invited to deliver the 43rd Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. This institution, founded by our first Education Minister, is dedicated to the promotion of cultural relations with other countries and cultures. Its wider objective is a continuing cultural dialogue.

Some in this audience may know that Mohiuddin Ahmad, better known as Abul Kalam Azad, was himself a man of many cultures. He was born in Makkah of an Indian father and an Arab mother and throughout his life remained familiar with the languages, culture and political developments in western Asia, a region in our proximate neighbourhood. Happenings there in the past, as now, were and remain of interest and relevance to India and Indians. For this reason, it is essential to view them from an Indian perspective.

The year 2014, and the month of November, coincides with a momentous happening a century back. I refer, of course, to World War I that commenced in August 1914 and ended in November 1919. The centenary of the commencement of that monumental folly has been observed in many countries in Europe. Its consequences were enormous: around 17 million dead, the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman

Empires, overthrow of the German, the Austrian, the Russian and the Ottoman dynasties and the emergence of new national entities.

A century later, it is useful and enlightening to dwell on the immediate and longer term impact of this on the Arab societies of western Asia with whom religiously, intellectually, and culturally Abul Kalam Azad had multi-layered affinities<sup>1</sup>. These, in fact, went beyond being personal; there were, instead, patterns and parallels to be discerned in the anti-colonial struggles that developed in India on the one hand and in western Asian lands, mistakenly and parochially termed as Middle East<sup>2</sup>, on the other. The term itself was a neologism invented by the British General T.E. Gordon and the American naval officer Alfred Mahan to describe the region between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. It gained currency when the British journalist Valentine Chirol popularised it in a series of articles in 1902, published as a book a year later entitled *The Middle Eastern Question or Some Problems of Indian Defence*<sup>3</sup>.

This preoccupation with safeguarding the empire in India and the approaches to it largely determined British policy in western and central Asia and in that context established an emotional bond between the anti-colonial sentiments of the freedom fighters in these

regions. As Azad put it in 1923, 'India commends the spirit of every Eastern nation which is fighting for freedom, and feels chagrin for every nation which is lagging behind in these endeavours.'<sup>4</sup>

For this reason and despite considerable differences in the historical settings and objective conditions, it is tempting to examine the evolution of the Arab and other Asian nationalisms and their respective experiences in confronting colonial and or imperialist domination and shaping national entities and objectives.

Some conceptual clarity is essential to this discourse. *Anation* has been called 'an imagined community',<sup>5</sup> a 'community conscious of its particularistic existence'<sup>6</sup>. Nationalism implies 'a criterion for the determination of a unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state.' It is 'a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.'<sup>7</sup> It is also 'an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members as to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'<sup>8</sup>. The two dimensions, of territoriality and ideology, may not at times appear as converging if the latter is prescriptive and non-

inclusive. This would and does lead to contradictions because

our world today is divided into territorial states, and the Preamble

of the Charter of the United Nations testifies to it.

## II

The beginnings of Arab nationalism in the closing decades of the 19th century, has been diligently traced by George Antonius, Bassam Tibi and others. Freedom from foreign domination was one aspect of the matter; another was the gradual awareness of possessing an identity distinct from other identities, of belonging to a 'nation'. This emanated from two processes, one purely religious and the other essentially linguistic. The latter was the older of the two and applied 'to Christians as well as Muslims, and to the off shoots of each of these creeds.'<sup>9</sup> Thus 'early Arab nationalism was clearly a predominantly secular ideology' with a subtle intermixture of Islam and sought to profess liberal values. This intermixture was also at times an uneasy one; one scholar has argued that 'in defining its relationship with Islam, Arab nationalism often ends where it started: with the glorification of Arabism as a commanding value in Islam.'<sup>10</sup>

The Arab revolt of 1916 was the first organised political action by Arab nationalists. It intermeshed with the politics of the powers aligned against the Ottomans and was impacted by it. While the Sykes-Picot agreement of May 1916 spoke of 'an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States' in the conquered Ottoman territory, the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 specifically mentioned 'the setting up of national governments and administrations that shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous

populations.' The modification of this arrangement in the San Rimo conclave of April 1919 was viewed by the Arabs as 'a breach of faith.'<sup>11</sup>

Another World War I strategic device was the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. It was described by the historian Arnold Toynbee as 'the winning card in a sordid contest between the two sets of belligerents...for winning the support of the Jews in Germany, Austria-Hungary and – most important of all – in the United States.'<sup>12</sup> In 1923 Vladimir Jabotinsky characterised Zionism as a 'colonising adventure' whose success depended on armed force.<sup>13</sup> The exceptionality bestowed by the world on Israel ensured its success in 1948. The Palestinian bewilderment, and the ineptness of the Arab states, did the rest.

It is important to recall that the nation-state principle did not grow organically in the region as it did in Europe for three centuries in the post-Westphalia period.<sup>14</sup> The territorial entities carved out from the Arabic-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire thus lacked historical legitimacy as political units (with the exception of Egypt) and therefore needed to create a national sentiment. They reinforced it by recourse on the one hand to sub-national, tribal, religious or monarchical identities and on the other to supra-national, pan-Arab sentiments. The Arab political discourse used different, occasionally overlapping, expressions in the debates relating to pan-Arab nationalism. The latter was, from time to time, 'oriented towards the political utopia of a

United Arab State', 'an indivisible political and economic unity' even when, in actual practice, it was characterised by 'a duality of words and deeds', as was evident from the preamble of the founding document of the Arab League in March 1945 that spoke of 'coordination, cooperation and integration...to serve the sublime objectives of the Arab Nation...on the path to the unity of their States.'

An attempt to clarify and reconcile overlapping concepts was made by the Lebanese scholar Abd al-Latif Sharara in 1957: 'If a group of men have one common language, a common history, common ideals, and are linked together by the same memories and the same aspirations for the future, the same economic and cultural interests, then such a group is a nation, no matter how many and various are its fatherlands, states and peoples. Nationalism is that emotion and common interest, combined in one feeling and one idea within the members of the nation.'<sup>15</sup>

The claim to be a homogenous society with an overarching character also led to a complicating factor that was not addressed sufficiently. This pertained to minority groups within states. Scholars have sought to identify different types of minorities that had or could have had an impact on national identity: minorities that are religious, ethnic or national and within them those that are sectarian, political and 'majoritarian'.<sup>16</sup>

Jamal Abdul Nasser and Michel Aflaq articulated the two principal versions of Pan Arabism; the first,



centred on Nasser's charismatic personality in the most important country of the region and premised on his 'Three Circles', ended with Egypt's defeat in the Six Day War of 1967 while the second, more comprehensively articulated in the Constitution of the Arab Ba'ath Party and its pledge for freedom of speech and assembly and a constitutional parliamentary regime, survived longer in its two mutually irreconcilable versions in Iraq and Syria. In each case, the rhetoric did not resolve the internal contradictions of the argument and did not match the capacity to deliver.<sup>17</sup>

Two instances of heart-wrenching introspection seeped deep into the psyche of the public and the intelligentsia. They contributed expressions to the vocabulary of modern Arabic – *al nakba* (the catastrophe) for 1948 and *al-hazima* (the rout) for 1967; the latter in particular generated serious analysis of Arab society. Its critique of Arabism focused on its social base – urban elites, merchants and army officers. Prominent among critics were the Syrian philosopher Jalal al-Azm and the poets Ali Ahmad Said 'Adonis' and Nizar Qabbani. In keeping with age-old tradition, poetry remains a powerful stimulant to sentiments and it has been observed that 'the loss of Palestine formed the tragic reality that determined the climate within which Arabic poetry has developed since the late forties. The poetry of the last three decades has embodied the frustration, bitterness and despair eating at the heart of the Arab poets in these years.'<sup>18</sup>

Further afield, the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui described Arab society as 'living in infra-historical rhythm.' He cited with approval Syrian historian Constantin Zurayq reproach that the Arab

nationalist attitude was romantic and lost in the past.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the intellectual edifice of secular nationalism and modernity, called a '*dream palace*' by Fuad Ajami, was seen to develop structural cracks and failed to sustain itself: 'After 1967, there was a widespread sentiment that unity was no longer the issue.'<sup>20</sup> A final blow to it was administered by the 1990-91 Gulf War.

Three principal themes dominated the functioning of the Arab state system in the last eight decades of the twentieth century. These pertained to (a) internal integration (b) relations with West in its various manifestations and (c) confronting Zionism and Israel. In actual practice, the imperatives of the first, and the pressures of the second, ensured that the third only retained a nominal, ritualistic, presence.

The perception that the national took precedence over the pan-Arab and that Arab unity did not necessitate a union was emphatically articulated by an Arab leader in September 1982:

*Arab unity can only take place after a clear demarcation of borders between all countries...The question of linking unity to the removal of boundaries is no longer acceptable to present Arab mentality...We must see the world as it is...The Arab reality is that the Arabs are now twenty-two states, and we have to behave accordingly...Unity must give strength to its partners, not cancel their national identity.*<sup>21</sup>

Despite the commonality of language, culture and to a considerable extent religion, the national positions of individual Arab states in regard to relations with

the West were portrayed vividly in developments relating to the Baghdad Pact in 1955, the Suez crisis of 1956, the formation of the United Arab Republic in 1958, the Arab Summit of 1964, the resulting trauma of the Six Day War of 1967, the Camp David Accord of 1979, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 2003. In each of these, the curse of centrality in geopolitical terms was evident; in each, it was compounded by the geopolitics of oil and the imperatives the Cold War. Most of the time it was a relationship between a centre of power and domination on the one side and a dependent and subordinate periphery on the other; it was described by the academic Hisham Sharabi as 'the outcome of modern Europe's colonization of the patriarchal Arab world, of the marriage of imperialism and patriarchy.'<sup>22</sup> This sustained the status quo and impeded or prevented normal political and social evolution. Much the same was said a few decades earlier (from a friendlier perspective and without the foresight of later happenings) by the Lebanese scholar and diplomatist Charles Malik who accused the West, in its dealing with the region, of a lack of responsibility, sincerity and understanding of the deeper issues at stake apart from 'immense racial arrogance'.<sup>23</sup>

The dominance of tradition was evident in the slow pace of social progress. In 1928 a Lebanese lady had written about the four veils of cloth, ignorance, hypocrisy and stagnation that hampered the progress of women; seventy five years later, in 2002 and 2003, the UNDP's Arab Human Development Reports still spoke of deficits of knowledge, freedom and women's empowerment as principal challenges to progress in the region.

Despite the urging of the Alexandria Declaration of March 2004, freedom as a catch word was side stepped by the political establishments in their civil or military incarnations and did not translate into more open political structures. The failure on this count left these societies entrapped in non-participatory structures of governance. These became pervasive and were evident even in societies that opted for democratic forms, if not substance, of governance in the post-2003 period. None indulged in democratic institution-building. An immediate consequence was a non-inclusive approach, and practice, of nationalism.

Alongside, and as a consequence, the erosion of the legitimacy of the secular nation-state brought forth various versions of Islamist solution as viable alternatives. Islamist solution represented to

its proponents the only means of expressing popular opposition to regimes regarded as incapable of delivering wider political participation. It considered Arabism as 'a mere stage' for Islamism without a contradiction between the two.<sup>24</sup> It premised itself on a universally applicable principle but restricted it to local application. It professed foundational authenticity but in actual practice did not produce sufficient clarity on a model of governance for a nation state. The resulting dilemma was anticipated many years back by the Tunisian Islamist Rachid Al-Ghannouchi; he observed that 'a democratic secular system of government is less evil than a despotic system of government that claims to be Islamic.'<sup>25</sup> This pragmatic approach led him to assert, after more recent happenings in Tunisia, that 'a political transition is no time to

govern with a relative majority of 51%. It is a time for consensus... Power must be shared out to prevent a putsch, to defuse any idea of despotism and backtracking.'<sup>26</sup>

Another, more radical, Islamist perspective has come forth from Tariq Ramadan. He depicts the Arab societies as 'rushing headlong into blind alleys' and suggests that 'the Arab world and Muslim majority societies not only need political uprisings; they need a thoroughgoing intellectual revolution that will open the door to economic change, and to spiritual religious, cultural and artistic liberation – and to the empowerment of women. What is needed is a global approach. Nothing is served by focusing on political and structural upheavals at the expense of the other, more vital matters.'<sup>27</sup>

### III

A number of questions arise from the foregoing. The early advocates of Arab nationalism set out on a high note focused on cultural renaissance. In that period, their demands did not go further than the call for local and cultural autonomy within the confines of Ottoman Empire. Beyond that:

Did the creation of nation-states from the body of a wider conglomerate induce in them sufficient sense of national identity and purpose?

Was this perception adequately inclusive or essentially exclusive?

Did it identify or develop an image of the *other* in relation to whom awareness of a set of socio-economic and political objectives

could be inculcated and pursued as realisable targets?

To what extent did external intervention in the region, so consistently supportive of authoritarian modes of governance, impede the acquisition of knowledge and freedom?

With the exception of Egypt, the primary and primordial identity of the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire was essentially tribal with some regional attributes. The regions in question were administrative units of the empire. As independent entities, no organic changes were brought about in their internal tribal structures; instead, the tribal hierarchies were integrated in the new political structures that, despite protestations to the contrary, ended up being authoritarian. This

deprived them of a mass base and genuine public participation through political institutions. Aspects of this deficiency were reflected in the UNDP's second Arab Development Challenges Report 2011 which urged the need for 'a new social contract of mutual accountability (in which) the state becomes more responsive and accountable to the citizen'.<sup>28</sup>

The link between the citizen and the state through the mechanism of accountability (and an implicit social contract going beyond the ruler-subject relationship) is thus critical and has not been sufficiently in evidence. An analysis of the states of West Asia some years back identified among its characteristics the politics of limited association and of an essentially broad urban middle class base in which coercion or co-option into the state structure rather than in

a 'durable resilience of the system whose legitimacy is based on the full participation of the people in the body politic.'<sup>29</sup> No qualitative change in this has happened (except in Tunisia) despite the turbulence in some Arab societies in recent years. As a result, the required transformation of nationalism from a political movement into a mass ideology has not taken place. Instead, there has been a propensity at times to promote or aggravate social or sectarian divisions for political gains and thereby deprive state institutions of their autonomy and national character.<sup>30</sup>

One last word about certain other traits of nationalism that became clearer in the 20th century. The anti-colonial and anti-imperialist phase of nationalism was one aspect of individual movements; another was the content of their strategies of governance. It was here that the ideological edges became evident. It has been argued that nationalism was amongst the transcendental fictions of the twentieth century<sup>33</sup> in which nationalistic self-identification was considered superior to others; also that 'appeals to our tribal instincts, to passion and to prejudice, and to our nostalgic desire to be relieved from the strains of individual responsibility which it attempts to replace by a collective or group responsibility.'<sup>34</sup> One particularly unedifying version was 'cultural nationalism' preaching 'authoritarian uniformity of state and faith' and fostering xenophobia.<sup>35</sup> Nationalism has also been viewed as 'a deeply divisive force if it is not tempered by the spirit of tolerance and compromise or the humanitarian universalism of a non-political religion. Its stress on national sovereignty and

This deficit in traits of Arab nationalism in its national manifestations is in contrast to the characteristics of nationalism as it unfolded in some other Asian countries like India, China and Indonesia. The essential ingredient in each was mass participation and an identifiable 'other' at whom the national movement could focus its grievances. In India, in the words of the late Professor Bipan Chandra, it was 'basically the result of a fundamental contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and of British colonialism', was a 'popular, multiclass movement' that

#### IV

cultural distinctiveness hardly helps to promote cooperation among people at the very same time when for technological and economic reasons they grow more and more interdependent.'<sup>36</sup> In many instances, militant nationalism became a reflex of despair resulting from economic failures and of unrealised aspirations along with a motivation to resurrect an imaginary past devoid of these shortcomings. From this, slippage into a religio-cultural form of strident nationalism has been found to be easy.

As against this authoritarian or cultural form, an alternate approach is that of pluralist or liberal nationalism that 'celebrates the particularity of culture together with universality of human rights, the social and cultural embedded-ness of individuals together with their personal autonomy. In this sense it differs radically from organic interpretations of nationalism, which assume that the identity of individuals is totally constituted by their national membership.'<sup>37</sup> Its emphasis on plurality eschews

underwent 'constant ideological transformation', and 'was able to tap the diverse energies, talents and capabilities of a very large variety of people.'<sup>31</sup> It was supplemented and strengthened by local and regional movements of protest.<sup>32</sup> The legal framework put into place in the post-independence period sanctified it.

The same was also broadly true of China in its struggle against Japanese imperialism and of Indonesia's struggle against the Dutch occupation.

assimilation and celebrates diversity. It is multicultural in essence and aspires 'towards a form of citizenship that is marked neither by a universalism generated by complete homogenisation, nor by particularism of self-identical and closed communities.'<sup>38</sup> In the historically altered context of contemporary India, the thrust of this pluralist nationalism is also on the need to 'readjust state institutions to meet demands of inclusion of marginalised and disadvantaged political groups.'<sup>39</sup>

This, in fact, has been the Indian approach. It is premised on the ground reality of a plural society that is multiethnic, multi-religious and multilingual, a secular polity rather than a religious one, and a democratic state structure functioning on the basis of Rule of Law. Each of these ingredients constitute the core values of the Constitution; none can be abridged or abandoned without damaging the constitutional structure and endangering social harmony; nor can another set of values be grafted

on the richness of Indian diversity without impinging on its uniqueness. Citizens know that Article 51 of our Constitution enjoins amongst Fundamental Duties the preservation of the heritage of composite culture. This, as Professor Upendra Baxi pointed out many years back, is a 'fundamental obligation.'<sup>40</sup>

Abul Kalam Azad was a passionate believer in this diversity and the pluralist and liberal nationalism emanating from it. His approach was premised on an openness of mind, tolerant and accommodative. It found expression in a Persian couplet recited by him in one of his early speeches<sup>41</sup> :

*Tafawut ast ma'ani shanidan  
man-o tu Tu bastan-e-dar, o man  
fateh-bab mi shawam*

What you and I hear is different. You hear the sound Of closing doors but I of doors that open

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*(Continued from Page 6)*

due to dependence on MNCs who sell costly seeds and chemicals.

The WTO rules are, in fact, written by corporations for transforming public goods into globally traded commodities and capturing our economies for their profits. Monsanto, now the world's biggest seed giant, wrote the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement of WTO, which opened the floodgates for patenting seeds and life forms. It has blocked the mandatory review of Article 27.3 (b) since 1999 wherein governments, including India, have called for "no patents on life." Cargill, the world's grain giant, wrote the rules of the Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) and would be the biggest beneficiary if India stops procuring from its small farmers.

Food is a fundamental right, a basic need and the livelihood of a majority of Indians. The rules governing it should be rules of sustainability and justice, not rules for the profit of a handful of seed and food multinationals.

It is time to review both the TRIPs agreement and the agriculture agreement of the WTO because they are destroying the planet and

the livelihoods of our farmers and denying the poor and the vulnerable the Right to Food. One just has to look at the evidence. Since trade liberalization was forced on us by the WTO in 1995, 3,00,000 **farmers have committed suicide** because of debt due to the purchase of costly seeds and chemicals. Every fourth Indian is hungry. And every second Indian child is stunted.

Average calorie intake in rural areas has declined from 2,221 kilocalories in 1983 to 2,020 kilocalories in 2009-10; protein intake has dropped from 62 grams to 55 grams per day in the same period. In urban areas, the calorie intake stood at 1,946 in 2009-10, a decline from 2,089 kilocalories in 1983. Protein intake declined to 53.5 grams from 57 grams in the same period. These are direct consequences of the rules of trade liberalization, which have transformed food from a right to a commodity for trade and profits.

Addressing the twin epidemics of farmers' suicides and hunger requires rewriting the rules of trade on the basis of sustainability and justice. India's refusal to dismantle its food security system to further benefit MNCs is an opportunity to start redefining global trade on the

basis of people's rights rather than corporate profits.

**Seed sovereignty** is the foundation of **food sovereignty**. Farmers' suicides are linked to seed monopolies and high costs of seed. Seed must be put back in the farmers' hands through creation of village seed banks and capacity-building in participatory and evolutionary breeding to deal with climate change.

Internationally, seed sovereignty requires ensuring that the mandatory TRIPs' review of Article 27.3 (b) is completed. For food sovereignty, we need to ensure that farmers do not fall into debt and are able to earn a dignified and fair income. While we need to defend our right to support farmers through MSP, it is evident that MSP is no longer covering the costs of production. The government has, in fact, frozen MSP in 2013-2014. The alternative is to reduce costs of production by reducing dependence on chemicals and corporate seeds through ecological farming. This is why organic farming based on the principle of agroecology has become an imperative for food sovereignty.

## India's Position at the WTO

*Letter to Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Government of India*

In the light of the Government of India's resolving differences (reference your statement of 13 November 2014) with the USA on the Bali Agreement, we, representatives of Indian civil society, write to you to convey our views and concerns on the issue.

From newspaper reports, it is evident that India has reached an understanding with the USA which will ensure US support for the Indian proposal to be tabled at the WTO's General Council (GC) meeting in December. This revised proposal will ensure that the 'Peace Clause' related to the G-33 food security proposal will actually be in operation until a permanent solution is found. We believe the proposal will also include an institutional framework for discussion on the post Bali work programme. These two gains are useful and could be of value for Indian agriculture, food security and farmers' livelihoods.

However, we are worried about the heavy conditions imposed on the use of the Peace Clause. These include the very onerous data filing requirements, the need to prove that the subsidies are "non trade distorting", and that it does not affect the food security of other countries. The data filing requirements are worrisome especially since the US, Japan and EU are already questioning the reliability of subsidy statistics provided by India at the WTO, and asking why big farmers have been included in the producers category and why the statistics were given in the US dollars (not rupees). In addition the Peace Clause does not cover the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (ASCM). We are also seriously concerned that the current Peace Clause is limited to "existing programmes" and fear that this will affect India's ability to expand

its current food programmes and potentially restrain its sovereign policy space to come up with new ones, if need be.

Civil society groups had pointed out these concerns with respect to the stringent conditions attached to the use of the Peace Clause before, during and after the Bali Ministerial. We strongly urge the government not to table this proposal without discussing and easing these restrictions. Unless these are addressed India may not actually be able to use the Peace Clause at all. India should not be in a haste to sign the TFA without having ensured a fully usable and meaningful Peace Clause.

We appreciate that the government has taken steps to forward talks on the Permanent Solution, through the setting up of an institutional mechanism. We urge the government to seriously pursue a genuine Permanent Solution that does not just talk about the Reference Price but actually uses this opportunity to address the historical inequities in the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and the unfair subsidies given by the developed countries who are now pointing fingers at us.

However we are seriously concerned about India's agreement to ratify the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The TFA needs to be rejected not only as a strategy but on its own lack of merit. It imposes costs rather than benefits on us. It can lead to moving resources away from essential development expenditure whereas our industry is hardly ready to reap the benefits of the Agreement at least in the near to medium future. Given that the TFA is currently the main and perhaps the only interest for countries such as the USA in WTO negotiations, agreeing to the TFA now will also be a

strategic blunder. Future negotiating positions on development issues in the Doha Round will be weakened and compromised.

We are also aware that if this issue is resolved, we will get into further negotiations on other elements of agriculture, industry (NAMA) and services trade. The developed countries are pushing us to accept liberalisation in these areas that will severely threaten job generation, local industrial development especially of SMEs, food and farmers' livelihood security, access to affordable services, and will severely restrict policy space. The push for plurilaterals is also something we strongly reject. India needs to have very well thought out positions that are developed in consultation with civil society, state government and the Parliament on these issues.

Finally, while we note and agree that the Government is at least trying to take an apparently pro-farmer and pro-poor position at the WTO, this stance is not consistent with its approach in domestic policy or in the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

In domestic policy we see the lack of coherence in the continued policy neglect of agriculture and food security including the withdrawal from essential farming subsidies, promotion of land grab in the name of development, and the lack of will to implement the National Food Security Act.

In FTAs, the government is willingly reducing applied duties in agricultural products and allowing increasing intellectual property rights to limit farmers' access to technology, seeds. FTAs are also bringing in strong investment chapters that are shifting control of productive natural resources away from farmers. The government is

keen to sign FTAs with powerful developed countries and engaging in mega regional FTAs, both of which are threatening the survival of farmers' livelihoods and incomes as well as food security of the Indian people.

In terms of process, we hope that India will always stand for the consensus process and take on board the concerns of all other developing countries and not get into bilateral deals in multilateral negotiations. Such side deals, while they might arguably protect India's interests, will undermine its standing as a leader of the developing countries.

We therefore urge the government, through your good offices, to

Come up with a consistent policy stance at global, regional

and domestic policy formulations

Not accept any unfair and unreasonable conditions on the Peace Clause at the WTO

Pursue a meaningful Permanent Solution that actually attempts to redress the historical unfairness of the AoA

Seriously analyse the usefulness of the TFA for the Indian people at large

Initiate a dialogue and discussion with major political parties, farmers groups, trade experts and civil society groups to keep them informed about these developments at the WTO and to develop a better understanding and policy response

In particular, ensure parliamentary oversight over global policy negotiations and agreements

As agriculture is a state subject, the union government should consult with State governments and evolve consensus.

Have a stance that is informed and works for the benefit of the people at large in following negotiations on agriculture, NAMA, services as well as in the plurilaterals

Introspect about India's objective and value of being in the WTO and what influence it has on India's independent policy space and specifically organise/undertake a 20 year assessment of India's gains/losses from membership of WTO.

Hoping to work with the Government in clarifying and strengthening people friendly positions in trade negotiations,

***Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha; Rakesh Tikait, Bhartiya Kissan Union; Yudhvir Singh, Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers' Movement; Vijay Jawandhia, Shetkari Sangathana, Maharashtra; Ajmer Singh Lakhwal, Bhartiya Kissan Union, Punjab; Subhash Lomte, National Campaign Committee For Rural Workers; and others.***

## **“India has Less Than 1% Info on Black Money**

He is the whistle-blower who, six years ago, leaked a list of thousands of secret accounts at HSBC Geneva. On that list were over 600 Indian names. Speaking exclusively to NDTV in France where he currently lives, Herve Falciani, a former HSBC employee, said, “India has less than 1 per cent of the information from the original data. I am helping other countries and I am keen to help India.”

In 2011, France shared the list of Indians who allegedly hold bank accounts at HSBC with the government. That is “just the tip of the iceberg”, Mr Falciani told NDTV.

He said India was given only 2 MB of the 200 GB of data. “If India asks tomorrow we will send a

proposal tomorrow,” he added.

Mr Falciani was a systems engineer at the Geneva-based private banking unit of HSBC. The bank would find later that he had carried out one of the biggest security breaches in Swiss banking history, obtaining details of some 127,000 accounts worth 180 billion euros.

He shared the data, which was a jumble of encrypted information, with France in 2008 and helped prepare the “HSBC list.”

The 42-year-old was first on the run, then imprisoned, but is now helping investigators from several countries trying to fight large scale tax evasion, money laundering and corruption. Among these countries are US, France, Spain and Belgium.

The whistleblower, who works with a team of lawyers and experts, told NDTV that there is “1000 times more information” available for investigators and there are a lot of business procedures to be unveiled to them. “It’s just up to (the Indian administration). They can contact us,” he said.

This week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch at the G20 summit in Brisbane for “close coordination” among nations and transparency in efforts to retrieve black money.

Experts say the proof in the HSBC data leaked by Mr Falciani is damning but Switzerland has always said their laws don’t acknowledge leaked data that is considered “stolen”.

**–Noopur Tiwari**



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Apologists of the government argue that the problems facing the country are so formidable that dealing with them effectively and neutralizing them is a time-consuming process. Granted. Granted also is the fact that India is a difficult country to govern because of its size, population and many diversities. Even so, basically the problem is that challenges gather intensity and grow in size because of two factors: first, neglect and second, lack of political will and administrative commitment. Let us take two specifics. The plight of India's north-eastern states and growing menace of Maoist insurgency. Both these issues seem to be receiving some overdue attention from the Modi government, which the nation should take note of.

Over the post-independence years, successive governments and prime ministers have vowed to pay special attention to the North-East and try hard to bring the "seven sisters" into the national mainstream. At least two of them, Inder Gujral and Deve Gowda went to the region to get a closer look into the situation and to assure the people that New Delhi was seized of the problems confronting each of the seven sisters, all of whom faced problems of economic development and internal security.

The challenge to the second comes from continued insurgency, which is seen as a by-product of economic disparities, unemployment and lack of facilities for education and health care.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done well to accord some priority to the North-East. He has just completed a three-day visit to the area and has announced a number of plans and schemes of long-term benefit to the states. At the same time, the Home Minister Rajnath Singh is concentrating on tackling the Maoist challenge which he has described as the biggest threat to internal security. Testifying to the correctness of the description, Maoists launched a daring attack on government forces and killed 14 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel on 1 December. The strike was in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district and it was the second one against CRPF personnel. Chhattisgarh perhaps faces the direst of Maoist challenges. It is reported to have suffered more than 1100 deaths since 2008 resulting from the Maoist menace. Newspaper reports have suggested that while Chhattisgarh remains the epi-centre of Maoist trouble, the problem is spreading and has touched Odisha and West Bengal.

## Education: Inequity and Social Exclusion

K. S. Chalam

Education is defined as a process of acquisition and utilisation of knowledge. It is divided into formal and informal education, the latter is not being offered within the four walls of an institution. Learning is a method where the three domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor are manipulated to get knowledge. Knowledge is different from wisdom that uses wise decisions based on it.

The history of education in India is basically concerned with the formal education that was offered in a formal system of education either in Ashram or Gurukul in the past or through formal educational institutions established either by government or private philanthropy now. So far no one seems to have studied Native Indian system of learning of Dalits and Adivasis.

The controversy between Gandhiji and Sir Hartog during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Table conference about the status of schools during pre-British period has never been resolved during the lifetime of Gandhiji. Dharmapal's 'Beautiful Tree' has tried to address the issue and prove that there was a school for every 1000 people during pre-British period which was challenged by historian Dharm Kumar alleging that Dharmapal had reproduced Adam's missionary report from Munro minutes of Madras presidency and nothing more. Dharmapal is being repeated now with the changed circumstances.

Mahatma Phuley contested the British policy of education in his memorial submitted to Hunter Commission on 19 October 1882. He said that "the teachers now

employed in the primary schools are almost Brahmins; a few of them are from normal training college, and the rest being all untrained men... the course of instruction should consist of reading, writing, Modi, Balbodh and accounts and a rudimentary knowledge of history, general geography, and grammar, also an elementary knowledge of agriculture .."

Phuley's memorandum contains data that contradicts Dharmapal. According to the memorandum "There are 1049 indigenous schools with about 27694 pupils in Bombay presidency and these schools exist where Brahmins were located and higher education was entirely given to Brahmins and Purbhoos out of the tax revenue collected from illiterate farmers". It was only after the Hunter Commission and on the basis of the memorandum submitted by the Muslims of Ganjam district who claimed discrimination, the government had introduced 'Reservations' in schools for the first time that became a general policy later in Madras Presidency after 1925.

The tirade against the discriminatory policy of the British was raised by Babasaheb Ambedkar in his Bombay Legislative debates during 1927-28 and in the memorial submitted to the Simon Commission on behalf of Bahiskrit Hitakarini Sabha he continued the diatribe of his spiritual guru. Babasaheb wanted that Compulsory Primary Education Act be abolished and stop the transfer of schools to Boards that were biased against dalits. He wanted dalits to enter advanced type

Latest figures suggest that Naxalite problem affects internal security in 7 or 8 states in an area beginning with Andhra Pradesh in the South and extending to Bihar in the north. Civilian deaths top the list of casualties. Equally disturbing are reports that Maoists have been consolidating their strength and are getting more and more entrenched, even in urban areas. More security forces personnel fell to Maoist bullets than vice versa. Government sources admit that civilian casualties have risen in number, but they point out, that surrenders by the rebels have also risen dramatically in number.

This, it is said, is because of the effective counter offensive steps by the establishment. The strategy in dealing with the problem? A combination of calibrated police action, focused development efforts and improvement in governance to be the effective plan to combat the Maoists in the long-term. Don't lower your guard, is the advice of Home Minister Rajnath Singh to the police forces.

The North-East has good reason to be assured of the Centre's plans for the region. The prime minister has promised to provide Rs. 28000 crores for laying new rail lines and a sum of Rs.5000 crores for 2G mobile coverage as part of a development package for the region. He disclosed that the Centre has earmarked Rs.53000 crores in the budget for the development of the North-East and would focus on developing the untapped tourism potential of the region. Domestic tourism is unfortunately a badly neglected sore in India's governance. Hopefully the PM would ensure implementation of schemes that would enhance the claim of tourism to be an active

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Science and Technology courses as 'education in Arts and Law cannot be of much value to the Scheduled Castes' as stated in his Grievances presented as Member, Governor General's Council during 1942-46. He later provided Constitutional remedy to this by incorporating Art. 45, which became an Act – RTE - 60 years after the formation of the Republic. He also included the instruments of inclusion under Arts. 21, 38, 39, 41, 43 in our Constitution.

The progress of literacy achieved by the Scheduled Castes and Tribes during the last one hundred years can be discerned here. The literacy rate of SCs was 0.53 when the first Census took place in 1891, and 1.9 in 1931 indicating the little contribution made by the British or the missionaries. The rate among the ST was 0.40 in 1891, 0.70 in 1931 while general literacy was recorded as 6.10 and 9.50 respectively during 1891 and 1931. After independence, the literacy rate rose to 10.27 in 1961 and stands at 66 for SCs and 58 for STs in 2011. However, this is an average figure and do not reflect the differences among the individual castes and states. The progress was very slow in the initial period due to drop outs and is now seen picking up in recent period due to the mid-day meal programme and other supporting services introduced by government to meet the commitment of MDGs and of universal primary education by 2015 and Article 26 of UDHR.

There are several issues that need to be considered by the Dalits under the RTE as the funds flow for the programme seem to be delimiting the increasing role of private sector that seems to have influenced the appointment of teachers/volunteers among 30 per cent of schools. It is strange to find the private sector coming up rapidly now when the

State is providing grants, but never took interest in people's, mostly the weaker section's education in the past. That is why we have more number of places of worship – 3013140 - than schools/colleges – 2106530 - as per 2011 census. The impact of this could be observed in the stock of education in terms of how many are educated in the total population. Among the SC males those who studied up to secondary are 11 per cent and among ST 11.1 and graduates and above are a mere 2.7 among SC and 2.2 among ST in 2010. Out of school children in 6-17 ages are 23% at all India, with Bihar 35%, Punjab 29%, MP 23% and the lowest of 5% in Kerala.

The situation in higher education is dissolute as most of the institutions are conducted by the private agencies where reservations are not observed and the Judiciary in the name of merit and minority rights limited the scope for dalits and adivasis in TM Pai, Unnikrishnan case, etc. Some of the judicial orders were so knave that the same judges who considered the concept of creamy layer and merit in granting concessions to the educationally backward did not mention merit while granting permission for NRI quota and even allowed reasonable surplus for the managements. These unenlightened judgments have made privatisation of education a right of the managements denying the opportunities to millions of meritorious but poor. It is very interesting to notice that the so-called upper castes who oppose subsidies in higher education and increase in budget support were the ones who had exclusively used the state support; public resources till most of them became top scientists, engineers, managers, etc earning billions during 1950-1990. Some of them left India with a drain on the economy and no gain for the

country if the social and opportunity costs are considered. The role of the 'paid intellectuals' of some of the management schools is amazing as the costs and benefits calculated and reports submitted by them to the Government with doubtful data that implementation of Right to Elementary Education would be disaster and recommended PPP.

The enrolment of Dalits in the courses that are not very promising to get jobs like Arts, Commerce, Law and in low quality institutions are really damaging them and their future. For instance, 11.4 % of SC and 3.1% of ST are in MA out of 100, and in the same proportion in BA. Enrolment in to M.Sc. and B.Scis 9 % for SC and 1.9 % for ST. Engineering enrolment for SC is 8.7% and 3.2% for ST. Further they are admitted in colleges that are not known for quality and almost all the students in Government colleges are reported to have come from reservation groups, while quality institutions are kept for upper castes imposing some kind of social exclusion of a different order with new state policy.

It is not enrolment into a course that makes the student qualify for a job, but the internal process of education and the quality. It is noted with great pain that dalit boys and girls studying in IITs have committed suicides not only due to the pressure of work but definitely due to the primordial values of untouchability that is not limited to physical contact but extend beyond mind and matter. As the latest NCAER study shows that 62% of a particular caste observe untouchability in our country today, the conditions in the quality institutes where the teachers are drawn from these groups in preponderance, it is

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# Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism: VI

**Bhagwat Prasad Rath**

The Bhagvad Gita (Fourth Canto) calls the Yogis *Rajarshees* who enjoyed the highest status in society.

‘A much-cited example, depicted on some of the Harappan seals, is that of a big-nosed gentleman wearing a horned head-dress who sits in the lotus position with an erect penis, an air of abstraction and an audience of animals. ‘ (The Harappan World).

He must have been a *Rajarshee*.

To identify this figure with Shiva is a mistake made by scholars steeped in patriarchal values. G. S. Ghurye in his easy ‘Epic and Historic Siva, an Indo-Aryan God Shiva, (Vedic India)’ proves conclusively that there was no Shiva figure in any seal of the Sindhu civilization. Siva, one of the powerful Gods of Hinduism, later identified with Rudra, is a great warrior and hunter. The main value that Harappan Yogis and Yoginis exhibit is non-violence. Harappan elite did not believe in any God. Their philosophies (Aanwikhiki: Yoga, Samkhya and Lokayat) stress values based fully on rationality. Devotion or *bhakti* as an overpowering emotion was not present in pre-Christ India.

“... doubts surround the female terracotta figurines which are often described as mother-goddesses. Pop-eyed, bat-eared, belted and sometimes mini-skirted, they are usually of crude workmanship and grotesque mien. Only a dust-eyed archaeologist could describe them as ‘pleasing little things’. The bat-ears, on closer inspection, appear to be

elaborate headdresses or hairstyles. If, as the prominent and clumsily applied breasts suggest, they were fertility symbols...” (The Harappan World).

The abundance of female terracotta figurines indicates the presence of numerous Yoginis in society. More than fifteen hundred years later, the non-violence-value-accepting Joginis were converted into blood-thirsty Goddesses. This happened when the male value of violence overwhelmed society in the fifth and sixth century AD. The hedonistic cult of Tantra became powerful and the *Sakti* cult became prominent in Eastern India. The Joginis were sixty four in number whereas there was one warrior, so-called Yogi, Shiva. Uma, a non-violent Goddess of the Upanishads became Durga, a ferocious Goddess. Those were the days when the non-violence preaching popular book, the Bhagvad Gita, was converted into a book preaching violence (D. D. Kosambi: He based his remarks on Hiuen Tsang’s memoirs). Ancient Jainism speaks against the caste system and the Brahmin hegemony.

The Mahabharata refers to the Joginis in many places. They were sexually free and roamed in the land (Sulabha, Jabala, Itara and many others). The Vedas mention two women as chiefs of some communities. When Indra met them he laughed and ridiculed them because they were unfit to fight wars.

R. S. Sharma argues that evidence for ‘band’ organization (a pre-tribal stage in which a group of

people not necessarily related by blood came together for food-gathering, hunting or fighting) notwithstanding, Rgvedic society on the whole was ‘tribal, pastoral and largely egalitarian’. The main source of subsistence was cattle and not agricultural products. Apart from cattle-herding, raids were a major source of livelihood. He quotes the well known remark of Marx that ‘man-hunting was the logical extension of animal hunting’. (*CASTE*: by Suvira Jaiswal )

Animal domestication was also the logical extension of hunting because it made the availability of meat throughout the year possible. Hunters soon turned into warriors and made men and women of weaker groups their slaves. Such a situation did not prevail in India during the period of the Sindhu civilization.

In the book ‘*Science And Philosophy In Ancient India*’, D. P. Chatterji conclusively proves that the science of healing reached the highest level possible in the world in that age. The Greek civilization of the later days failed to reach such levels. ‘The Vedic elite, steeped in superstitions and wrong beliefs, tried to control the flow of free thought in India. Cosmologists and mathematicians reached a high level in science. The Vedic elite were unable to understand them.’ (Amartya Sen: *The Argumentative Indian*).

Lokayat was the best philosophy devised by a matricentric society for the welfare of humanity. It is desirable to discuss this philosophy



which Kautilya thinks would build the best type of society in the world (Arthashastra).

- Lokayat is the only philosophy in the world which preaches equality of all species which seems to be the aim and purpose of nature.
  - Lokayat accepts equality in status of both males and females.
  - Lokayat abhors all types of violence. They treated all animals as their kith and kin.
  - Lokayat opposes all barriers to equality like the caste system, the self-created feeling of superiority of any section of humanity (the Greeks treated non-Greek people as inferior uncivilized Barbarians).
  - Lokayatikas want to be perfectly rational in all their deeds and words (unlike European rationalists, they believe that only a profoundly calm mind, free from self-interest, anger, lust, strong attachment to worldly pleasures can be rational. The word *Sukha* used in this context to convey a state of mind was misunderstood by the philosophers of both the East and the West because they failed to seek the true meaning of *Sukha* explained in the two famous books, the Gita and Dhammapada. *Sukha* is the pleasure principle of nature confined to the neo-cortex of the frontal part of the mind. The pleasure principle of the reptilian mind and the pleasure principle of the limbic mind (mammalian mind) are different.
- Western philosophers and scientists have not studied the controlling and pleasure-giving capacity of the pre-frontal cortex on which Yoga concentrates.
- Lokayatikas actively preached their philosophy among the

people without any fear of death, dishonor or loss of property. They believed in deeds, not in words. They risked the wrath of the rich and the powerful to preach their philosophy. Charvak was killed by the greedy Vedic Brahmins with the covert support of the Pandavas, when he condemned the Pandavas for the violence of the Mahabharata war.

- Lokayatikas did not believe in life after death.
- Lokayatikas were out and out materialists.
- Lokayatikas were against all types of metaphysical speculations. They believed in what their senses dictated (*Pratyaksha Pramana*). Lokayatikas of later days accepted inference (*Paroksha Pramana*) also as the basis of truth. They vehemently criticized animal slaughter in the *Yagnas* and also the caste system.
- Lokayatikas did not believe in supernatural beings. They opposed the theory of Karma and rebirth. This made them different from the Buddhists and Jains.
- They opposed sacrifice (*Yagna*). They abhorred animal slaughter in sacrifices.
- Lokayatika philosophers (Yoginis) were there in large numbers in the Sindhu civilization. They accepted ‘non-violence’ as the supreme value of life. There was perfect sexual freedom among both males and females.
- In the Ramayana, Lokayat Jabala places people’s welfare as a higher value than truth. He requests Ramachandra to return to Ayodhya. Adiparva of the Mahabharata places non-violence as a value above truth in the Kausika myth.

– It is unfortunate that Lokayat philosophers were presented as hedonists by many scholars of the West and East. Hedonism was present in Tantra philosophies, not in Lokayat.

- The Gita tells that Yoga and Samkhya philosophies are the same. The Jaina Sutras say that Samkhya and Lokayat are the same (D. P. Chatterji; Lokayat). Lokayat philosophers were active among the people. In the Vedic Age, they incurred the wrath of the Vedic Aryans. In the age of the Buddha, they preached against Karmabad (the theory of Karma) and the Theory of Rebirth. The Mahabharata was written by a Lokayat philosopher because: 1. It placed the value of non-violence above truth. 2. The Mahabharata contains verses (*Slokas*) that vehemently criticize the Vedic priests (Activities such as priestly work done in sacrifices, big and small; deity worship by professional priests in temples and the use of astrological knowledge for predicting the future are nefarious types of work (The Mahabharata: Santiparva). 3. Every type of violence including the so-called just wars was condemned in strong terms (*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*): killing animals in sacrifices was criticized in the legend of *Uparichara Basu* in the Mahabharata.

In the days of the Buddha, there was a group of famous philosophers who belonged to the *Ajivaka* cult. All of them accepted non-violence as their main value.

In the modern age, Mahatma Gandhi proved that non-violent struggles lead to success without producing ill-will among the opponents.

Controlling *Amygdale* violence through the pre-frontal neo-cortex and increasingly harboring empathy for all living beings (because of mirror neurons) is the specialty of human beings. Nature wanted us to serve its aim of the survival of all the species. When carnivores appeared, nature produced in them the tendency of self-destruction. The same tendency of self-destruction (wars, terrible in-equality, exploitation of weaker nations and climate destruction) is at present endangering human survival because we have forsaken the path fixed by nature which devised the female brain as the motor for choosing non-violence, non-competition and non-hierarchy as the right path of development (scientist Louann Brizendine).

In the present world we can advocate and stress matricentric values nurturing socialism to save humanity from sure destruction.

Creative individuals are the most important elements in human society. Creativity thrives only in the social environment of liberty where a fierce sense of individuality exists in extraordinary individuals and is tolerated by the society. Those who think that 'individuality' is a gift of the western society are requested to study the following verse of the Mahabharata:

"A wise man shuns honour like poison; he always welcomes insults and abuses as nectar.

Neither attachment to wealth nor the fear of losing one's life should make a man leave the path of Dharma (love for all living creatures of the world)."

All sorts of collective selfishness like nationalism, racism and casteism should be shunned by such a man.

The Buddha asked his disciples to concentrate their attention on Dhamma alone and not to aspire for honour among his lay followers and also the renouncers.

Aanwikshiki society of India, by giving the highest place to the value of 'nonviolence' created the proper environment for extraordinarily creative persons. Such environment was not available even in the twentieth century in Europe and the US. The propaganda machine of the powerful media managed by capitalists creates only mass societies dominated by the violent herd in every country, with very few exceptions. India is no exception. Such societies cannot nourish socialism.

'A socialist society should create the right atmosphere for creativity'. Einstein writes, "Europe today contains about three times as many people as it did a hundred years ago. But the number of leading personalities has decreased out of all proportion. Only a few people are known to the masses as individuals, through their creative achievements. Organization has to some extent taken the place of leading personalities, particularly not only in the technical sphere, but also to a very perceptible extent in the scientific." (*Society and Personality*: Einstein)

"The lack of outstanding figures is particularly striking in the domain of art. Painting and music have definitely degenerated and largely lost their popular appeal. In Politics not only are leaders lacking, but the independence of spirit and

the sense of justice of the citizen have to a great extent declined. The democratic, parliamentary regime, which is based on such independence, has in many places been shaken; dictatorships have sprung up and are tolerated, because men's sense of the dignity and the rights of the individual is no longer strong enough. In two weeks the sheep like masses of any country can be worked up by the newspapers into such a state of excited fury that men are prepared to put on uniforms and kill and be killed for the sake of the sordid ends of a few interested parties. Compulsory military service seems to me the most disgraceful symptom of that deficiency in personal dignity from which civilized mankind is suffering today.' (*Society and Personality*: Einstein)

Bertrand Russell writes, "If a society is not to stagnate, it must contain individuals who think and act independently and there must be sufficient toleration for such individuals to be effective. Galileo was silenced by the Inquisition, and Italian science collapsed to revive only after two hundred years; the work of Galileo was carried on in France and Holland and England, where the tyranny of ignorance was less severe."

Only a socialist society can give full freedom to the dissident individuals. Tagore's song (Walk alone even when nobody is ready to follow you; Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Even if your own people desert you for your ideas, you should not bother about it) can guide the socialists. Gandhi followed the ideals embodied in the Tagore song almost to the letter.

# The Unholy City

## Uri Avnery

In its long and checkered history, Jerusalem has been occupied by dozens of conquerors: Babylonians and Persians, Greeks and Romans, Mamluks and Turks, Britons and Jordanians – to mention just a few.

The latest occupier is Israel, which conquered and annexed Jerusalem in 1967.

(I could have written “East Jerusalem” – but all of historical Jerusalem is in today’s East Jerusalem. All the other parts were built in the last 200 years by Zionist settlers, or are surrounding Arab villages which were arbitrarily joined to the huge area that is now called Jerusalem after its occupation.)

This week, Jerusalem was in flames – again. Two youngsters from Jabel Mukaber, one of the Arab villages annexed to Jerusalem, entered a synagogue in the west of the city during morning prayers and killed four devout Jews, before themselves being killed by police.

Jerusalem is called “the City of Peace”. This is a linguistic mistake. True, in antiquity it was called Salem, which sounds like peace, but Salem was in fact the name of the local deity.

It is also a historical mistake. No city in the world has seen as many wars, massacres and as much bloodshed as this one.

All in the name of some God or other.

Jerusalem was annexed (or “liberated”, or “unified”)

immediately after the Six-day War of 1967.

That war was Israel’s greatest military triumph. It was also Israel’s greatest disaster. The divine blessings of the incredible victory turned into divine punishments. Jerusalem was one of them.

The annexation was presented to us (I was a member of the Knesset at the time) as a unification of the city, which had been cruelly rent asunder in the Israeli-Palestinian war of 1948. Everybody cited the Biblical sentence: “Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.” This translation of Psalm 122 is rather odd. The Hebrew original says simply “a city that is joined together”.

In fact, what happened in 1967 was anything but unification.

If the intent had really been unification, it would have looked very different.

Full Israeli citizenship would have been automatically conferred on all inhabitants. All the lost Arab properties in West Jerusalem, which had been expropriated in 1948, would have been restored to their rightful owners who had fled to East Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem municipality would have been expanded to include Arabs from the East, even without a specific request. And so on.

The opposite happened. No property was restored, nor any

compensation paid. The municipality remained exclusively Jewish.

Arab inhabitants were not accorded Israeli citizenship, but merely “permanent residence”. This is a status that can be arbitrarily revoked at any moment – and indeed was revoked in many cases, compelling the victims to move out of the city. For appearance’s sake, Arabs were allowed to apply for Israel citizenship. The authorities knew, of course, that only a handful would apply, since doing so would mean recognition of the occupation. For Palestinians, this would be paramount to treason. (And the few that did apply were generally refused.)

The municipality was not broadened. In theory, Arabs are entitled to vote in municipal elections, but only a handful do so, for the same reasons. In practice, East Jerusalem remains occupied territory.

The mayor, Teddy Kollek, was elected two years before the annexation. One of his first actions after it was to demolish the entire Mugrabi Quarter next to the Western Wall, leaving a large empty square resembling a parking lot. The inhabitants, all of them poor people, were evicted within hours.

But Kollek was a genius in public relations. He ostensibly established friendly relations with the Arab notables, introduced them to foreign visitors and created a general impression of peace and

contentment. Kollek built more new Israeli neighborhoods on Arab land than any other person in the country. Yet this master-settler collected almost all the world's peace prizes, except the Nobel Prize. East Jerusalem remained quiet.

Only few knew of a secret directive from Kollek, instructing all municipal authorities to see to it that the Arab population – then 27% – did not rise above that level.

Kollek was ably supported by Moshe Dayan, then the Defense Minister. Dayan believed in keeping the Palestinians quiet by giving them all possible benefits, except freedom.

A few days after the occupation of East Jerusalem he removed the Israeli flag which had been planted by soldiers in front of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. Dayan also turned the de facto authority over the Mount over to the Muslim religious authorities.

Jews were allowed into the Temple compound only in small numbers and only as quiet visitors. They were forbidden to pray there, and forcibly removed if they moved their lips. They could, after all, pray to their heart's content at the adjoining Western Wall (which is a part of the compound's ancient outer wall).

The government was able to impose this decree because of a quaint religious fact: Orthodox Jews are forbidden by the rabbis to enter the Temple Mount altogether. According to a Biblical injunction, ordinary Jews are not allowed into the Holy of Holies, only the High Priest was allowed in. Since nobody today knows where exactly this place is located, pious Jews may not

enter the entire compound.

As a result, the first few years of the occupation were a happy time for East Jerusalem. Jews and Arabs mingled freely. It was fashionable for Jews to shop in the colorful Arab market and dine in the "oriental" restaurants. I myself often stayed in Arab hotels and made quite a number of Arab friends.

This atmosphere changed gradually. The government and the municipality spent a lot of money to gentrify West Jerusalem, but Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem were neglected, and turned into slums. The local infrastructure and services degenerated. Almost no building permits were issued to Arabs, in order to compel the younger generation to move outside the city borders. Then the "Separation" Wall was built, preventing those outside from entering the city, cutting them off from their schools and jobs. Yet in spite of everything, the Arab population grew and reached 40%.

Political oppression grew. Under the Oslo agreements, Jerusalemite Arabs were allowed to vote for the Palestinian Authority. But then they were prevented from doing so, their representatives were arrested and expelled from the city. All Palestinian institutions were forcibly closed down, including the famous Orient House, where the much admired and beloved leader of the Jerusalem Arabs, the late Faisal al-Husseini, had his office.

Kollek was succeeded by Ehud Olmert and an Orthodox mayor who didn't give a damn for East Jerusalem, except the Temple Mount.

And then an additional disaster occurred. Secular Israelis are

leaving Jerusalem, which is rapidly becoming an Orthodox bastion. In desperation they decided to oust the Orthodox mayor and elect a secular businessman. Unfortunately, he is a rabid ultra-nationalist.

Nir Barkat behaves like the mayor of West Jerusalem and the military governor of East Jerusalem. He treats his Palestinian subjects like enemies, who may be tolerated if they obey quietly, and brutally suppressed if they do not. Together with the decade-old neglect of the Arab neighborhoods, the accelerated pace of building new Jewish neighborhoods, the excessive police brutality (openly encouraged by the mayor), they are producing an explosive situation.

The total cutting-off of Jerusalem from the West Bank, its natural hinterland, worsens the situation even more.

To this may be added the termination of the so-called peace process, since all Palestinians are convinced that East Jerusalem must be the capital of the future State of Palestine.

This situation needed only a spark to ignite the city. This was duly provided by the right-wing demagogues in the Knesset. Vying for attention and popularity, they started to visit the Temple Mount, one after the other, every time unleashing a storm. Added to the manifest desire of certain religious and right-wing fanatics to build the Third Temple in place of the holy al-Aqsa Mosque and the golden Dome of the Rock, this was enough to create the belief that the holy shrines were indeed in danger.

Then came the ghastly revenge-



murder of an Arab boy who was abducted by Jews and burned alive with gasoline poured into his mouth.

Individual Muslim inhabitants of the city started to act. Disdaining organizations, almost without arms, they started a series of attacks that are now called “the intifada of individuals”. Acting alone, or with a brother or cousin whom he trusts, an Arab takes a knife, or a pistol (if he can get one), or his car, or a tractor, and kills the nearest Israelis. He knows that he is going to die.

The two cousins who killed four Jews in a synagogue this week – and also an Arab Druze policeman – knew this. They also knew that their families were going to suffer, their home be demolished, their relatives arrested. They were not deflected. The mosques were more important.

Moreover, the day before, an Arab bus driver was found dead in his bus. According to the police, the autopsy proved that he committed suicide. An Arab pathologist concluded that he was murdered. No Arab believes the police – Arabs are convinced that the police always lie.

Immediately after the Synagogue killing, the Israeli choir of politicians and commentators went into action. They did so with an astonishing unanimity – ministers, Knesset members, ex-generals, journalists, all repeating with slight variations the same message. The reason for this is simple: every day the Prime Minister’s office sends out a “page of messages”, instructing all parts of the propaganda machine what to say.

This time the message was that Mahmoud Abbas was to blame for everything, a “terrorist in a suit”, the leader whose incitement causes

the new intifada. No matter that the chief of the Shin Bet testified on the very same day that Abbas has neither overt nor covert connections with the violence.

Binyamin Netanyahu faced the cameras and with a solemn face and lugubrious voice – he is a really good actor – repeated again what he has said many times before, every time pretending that this is new recipe: more police, harder punishments, demolition of homes, arrests and large fines for parents of 13-year old children who are caught throwing stones, and so on.

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

development promoter. It is all to the good that the North-East is at last getting high-level notice.

The Centre would do well if, as part of counter-insurgency measures, it chalks out a plan for co-operation with the states affected by insurgency so that the problem is raised above the normal law and order syndrome. The plan has to be time-bound and has to work on deadlines. What is happening is that the Maoists, like many other anti-national criminal forces, manage to carry out surprise attacks on security and civilian establishments and get away after causing deaths and loss to property. The problem needs to be dealt with beyond the boundaries of law and order methodology and dealt with as a by-product of a full-scale war with Naxals. Because, in the strictest sense, it is a war against the State that the Maoists are waging and they have to be put down on the strength of strategies usually evolved and implemented in an actual war.

Every expert knows that the result of such measures will be the exact opposite. More Arabs will become incensed and attack Israeli men and women. Israelis, of course, will “take revenge” and “take the law into their own hands”.

For both inhabitants and tourists, walking the streets of Jerusalem, the city which is “joined together”, has become a risky adventure. Many stay at home.

The Unholy City is more divided than ever before.

–*TRANSCEND Media Service*

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

easy to ponder. In most of the cases, the usual empathy is not reported to have taken place indicating the continuation of the loathsome traditions and their deepening conditions in the so-called temples of learning. Therefore, the inequity in higher education would continue to haunt the nation in years to come as education is the only source through which the ex-untouchables could touch the secular jobs in India being increasingly remaining out of the pale of public education.

The situation in USA where 78% of enrolment in state universities with tuition fees constituting just 9% of unit cost and Obama’s “No child left behind” is helping African Americans, should be considered here as mantra for dalit emancipation. It is also necessary to insist here about the neighbourhood schools and free education till PG and in quality institutes to shun social exclusion and reiteration of bussing.

*(Summary of the inaugural address delivered at the national seminar organised by the Common Concern at Constitution Club, Delhi on 16-11-2014)*

# Transplanting Elephant head on human body!

**Ram Puniyani**

One of the best parts of childhood for me was to enjoy the mythological tales and become aware of the world where Lord Hanuman could fly, as the emergency herbal treatment is to be delivered to his master's brother, Laxman. Lord Ram travelling by Pushpak Viman (aeroplane), Lord Ganesha being planted with the head of elephant as his human head was chopped off by his father, all this was uncritically digested. Karna is born from the ear of his mother; Kauravas are born from the mass delivered by Gandhari, the mass being divided into 100 pieces and being preserved. Such fanciful imaginations were so engrossing that questioning them never came to my mind. With growing up years, some exposure to science and then rigorous training for close to decade in a medical school forced one to revisit the childhood fantasies built around mythological fictions. Realization gradually dawned as to how to distinguish between fact and fiction, history and mythology. The beauty of imagination - fiction of the pre-Historic times, does still remain etched somewhere but is not a guiding principle for understanding of social phenomenon and processes.

While going through the tough medical discipline, one came to see the complexity of human body, histopathology, immune systems, blood groups, bio-compatibility and what have you. A mere thought that Lord Ganesha could carry an elephant head if taken logically will lead you to so many questions. If the head is severed from the body; for how many minutes one can survive? The head houses the

brain with higher centers for control of breathing and heart pumping amongst others, so how long can one remain alive to be a recipient for other's organs, and that too the head of an elephant? What is the difference in the immune system of human body and elephant? Even while transplanting kidney of one human being to another there are battery of tests carried on meticulously to assess the compatibility between recipient and the donor. So there was all this paraphernalia, if Modi is to be believed?

A mass delivered from uterus - can it be divided into 100 pieces? What type of micro surgery is required for splitting the fertilized ovum? Can uterus be located near ear? I am sure all these questions must have cropped up in the minds of the doctors, who had the privilege of listening to their Prime Minister in person when he was inaugurating their hospital. They heard, "We can feel proud of what our country achieved in medical science at one point of time. We all read about Karna in Mahabharata. If we think a little more, we realize that Mahabharata says Karna was not born from his mother's womb. This means that genetic science was present at that time. That is why Karna could be born outside his mother's womb... We worship Lord Ganesh. There must have been some plastic surgeon at that time, which got an elephant's head on the body of a human being and began the practice of plastic surgery".

Hope the hospital he inaugurated is not planning to undertake such

miraculous surgeries and splitting of the ovum into hundred pieces! Many in the country surely must be feeling happy that their PM has given glory to 'our' past achievements! By all accounts it was a pastoral society or might have been the beginning of agricultural times, with hunting stage still lurking somewhere. The facts are very different from the utterances of the PM.

The practical impossibility of these fictional tales being true cannot be overemphasized. As understood with great pain and scientific enterprise the fictions of mythology of Mahabharata or Ramayana do not stand even a chance of being actualized. All this requires a huge infrastructure, body of scientific knowledge of human body, physics, astronomy and myriad other components of knowledge which have been growing from the past but have taken definitive contours in the last few centuries only. With all this progress in scientific enterprise, none of these 'glorious achievements' can be dreamt of even today. The world of science has taken giant strides and built up on the cumulative knowledge of human society as a whole. Surely there are many contributions which came up in ancient India, and they need to be underlined, and their wisdom and logical method highlighted. Some of these are the ones related to Charak Samhita (medical science), Sushrut (surgical techniques); contributions of Aryabhata in astronomy and discovery of zero. What is important is to build a method of thinking

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# Safeguarding Security and Sovereignty

C. V. Wugbeswarab

Human rights' advocates tend to adopt a moral high ground in their discourses. It is often said that one adopts moral high ground when one has no other ground to rely on! Could that be the case with human rights' advocates - particularly those who often decry security and sovereignty? I, personally, cherish these values.

All too often human rights' advocates forget that it was that model of American virtue, Abraham Lincoln, who is credited with first using the phrase "the Constitution is not a suicide pact," when he suspended the writ of habeas corpus during the American Civil War. It was articulated formally in the legal context around ninety years later in Justice Jackson's dissent in a free speech case, *Terminiello v. City of Chicago*, where he chided the majority of the Court thus:

This Court has gone far toward accepting the doctrine that civil liberty means the removal of all restraints from these crowds and that all local attempts to maintain order are impairments of the liberty of the citizen. The choice is not between order and liberty. It is between liberty with order and anarchy without either. There is danger that, if the Court does not temper its doctrinaire logic with a little practical wisdom, it will convert the constitutional Bill of Rights into a suicide pact.

There are many followers of this 'little practical wisdom' across the globe.

In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbour **the US Supreme Court** upheld as constitutional, curfews imposed on persons of Japanese descent in *Hirabayashi v. The United States* and supported the internment of more than 100,000 persons of Japanese descent through its well-known decision in *Korematsu v. The United States*. The respected Justice Hugo Black stated categorically that the case had nothing to do with racial prejudice thus:

Korematsu was not excluded from the Military Area because of hostility to him or his race. He was excluded because we are at war with the

Japanese Empire, because the properly constituted military authorities feared an invasion of our West Coast and felt constrained to take proper security measures, because they decided that the military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily, and, finally, because Congress, reposing its confidence in this time of war in our military leaders — as inevitably it must — determined that they should have the power to do just this.

In the UK, in *Liversidge v. Anderson*, the House of Lords held that they would defer to the decision of the Home Secretary the question of whether he had reasonable cause to believe that the detention of Liversidge was necessary. The celebrated Lord Denning followed the decision in *R. V. Secretary of State, ex parte Hosenball*, in a deportation case, supporting judicial deference in matters of national security. In his work *Landmarks in the Law*, he termed *Liversidge* as a decision made against the background of the danger the UK was in at the time and the necessity to combat the enemies in their midst.

In Sri Lanka too our courts have amply demonstrated their *little practical wisdom*. When nearly three hundred and fifty thousand Tamils were incarcerated in open prison camps immediately after the end of the War, a public interest petition was filed claiming that there was no legal basis for such detention and that detention without detention orders was illegal. The Supreme Court and the Attorney General are reported to have queried, with what must have been of great concern to them, whether the Petitioners in the case were seeking to imperil the detainees further by insisting that detention orders be issued on them. The Attorney General on behalf of the State explained the great threat to security that these people could pose if they were allowed to get back into society for there were sure to be terrorists in their midst. Surely the lives of 22 million were worth more than the discomfort of a few hundred thousand? The Court reserved order on whether leave should be granted. That was five years ago. It still needs to be pronounced!

*Excerpts from K. G. Kannabiran Memorial Lecture delivered by the Chief Minister, Northern Province, Sri Lanka and Retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, under the auspices of Peoples Union for Civil Liberties on 9th November, 2014 at Chennai*

In essence are we not dealing with that famous law school conundrum of a ticking time bomb? Should we torture a terrorist who has information on when a time bomb would explode and kill millions of innocent lives and thus save them or do we make a suicide pact with the bill of rights and die? Can any human rights' advocate, who claims to have the interests of humans at heart, claim that innocents should be sacrificed at the altar of blind subservience to the law? Of what use is liberty without security? Is not security the essence of all rights – the foundation upon which all other rights rest?

This brings us to our next question – who are those who seek to espouse these human rights' values? Are not human rights essentially a Western concept? Why should we, who have histories and civilisations that date back to antiquity, subscribe to new-found notions of countries that enslaved and colonised most of the world? Is this not neo-colonialism supported by NGOs that are simply "human rights' hit men"? What right do other countries and international organisations have to dictate terms to individual countries? Does it not infringe upon the sovereignty of States? Is not sovereignty the most sacred element of Public International Law – the foundation even? Are not slogans of R2P or Responsibility to Protect simply cloaks for imperialist interventions?

Dilip Sinha, the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in Geneva, in explaining India's abstention at the United Nations Human Rights Council vote on the Resolution on "Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka" in 2014, said:

It has been India's firm belief that adopting an intrusive approach that undermines national sovereignty and institutions is counterproductive. Any significant departure from the core principle of constructive international dialogue and cooperation has the potential to undermine efforts of Human Rights' Council for promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Sri Lankan Government's response was more direct:

Sri Lanka categorically and unreservedly rejects this draft resolution, as it challenges the sovereignty and independence of a Member State of the UN, violates principles of international law, based on profoundly flawed premises, and is inimical to the interests of the people of Sri Lanka.

The assault of human rights on sovereignty is not something only imagined by the countries with a colonial hangover. Britain's former Lord Chief Justice, the aptonymic Baron Judge, recently said that the European Court of Human Rights is undemocratic and undermines the sovereignty of Parliament. He went on to say that:

In any country which embraces the principle of democracy, and certainly in the United Kingdom, ultimate authority over constitutional and societal questions is not vested in a body of judges, however wise and distinguished, and even if the system for their appointment is beyond criticism.

It is not clear whether the learned Judge Baron Judge was implying that sovereignty is the province of only those countries that 'embrace the principle of democracy' - whatever that phrase might mean - but the idea is clear – the European Court of Human Rights is not welcome as it erodes parliamentary sovereignty. While parliamentary sovereignty is not the same as state sovereignty the critique is essentially the same.

Surely this is distinguished company following *little practical wisdom!* Should not human rights' advocates reassess their positions? Should not they endeavour to gain some *practical wisdom?*

Alas, I too seem to lack this *little practical wisdom!*

More than a decade ago as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, I held, in *Nagamany Theivendran v. The Attorney General*, that confessions under the Prevention of Terrorism Act or PTA in Sri Lanka required corroboration to establish the commission of the offence. The PTA, similar to the infamous Indian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act or TADA, made admissible, confessions made to police officers of a certain rank and imposed the burden of proving that any such statements were involuntary, on the accused. Perhaps it was my years of experience as an original court Judge, seeing the circumstances under which such confessions were coerced, that blunted my wisdom – for I was alone in my reasoning, though my brother judges agreed with me that the confession in that particular case lacked congruity and consistency. But they would not advocate corroboration.

Let us at this stage, look a little deeper at some of the cases highlighted by me earlier, for history is a patient teacher, repeating herself often. 40 years after *Hirabayashi and Korematsu* new information unearthed by Peter Irons, a political science professor, showed



that the Government knew that there was no military reason for the exclusion order but withheld information from the US Supreme Court. The US Congress gave compensation to the surviving internees. The convictions were overturned though the Supreme Court decisions were not. US President Bill Clinton awarded the highest civilian honour – the Presidential Medal of Freedom – to Fred Korematsu in 1988. On the 24th of May 2011, the acting US Solicitor General confessed that the office of the Solicitor General had erred in the Hirabayashi and Korematsu cases and considered them blots on its history. A year later, US President Barack Obama awarded Hirabayashi the Presidential medal of freedom.

In England, it is Lord Atkins' famous dissent in *Liversidge v. Anderson* that chastised judges for being “more executive minded than the executive” that is the proper law today. His words were powerful:

In England, amidst the clash of arms, the laws are not silent. They may be changed, but they speak the same language in war as in peace. It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty for which on recent authority we are now fighting, that the judges are no respecters of persons and stand between the subject and any attempted encroachments on his liberty by the executive, alert to see that any coercive action is justified in law.

Lord Diplock held in a later case that “the time has come to acknowledge openly that the majority of this House in *Liversidge v Anderson* were expediently and, at that time, perhaps, excusably wrong and the dissenting speech of Lord Atkin was right.”

In Sri Lanka, when the Presidential elections were announced in late 2009, shortly after the Attorney General's officers waxed eloquent on the perils of releasing the hundreds of thousands of hapless Tamils, nearly 250,000 were suddenly released. Those who were perilous to the entire nation as potential bloodthirsty terrorists were now safe voters! In one of its most cowardly acts, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka is yet to make order on whether leave to proceed should be granted or not in this case even though five years have passed. To give this dastardly act some context, leave to proceed is usually granted or refused by Bench Orders of single sentences and reasons seldom given. To reserve order and not pronounce it for 5 years is an act of unforgiveable cowardice.

Let me hasten to add that the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka was not always lily-livered. In 1937 in the

celebrated case of *In re Bracegirdle* the Court did not shy away from taking on the Governor of Ceylon in a *habeas corpus* application holding that the Governor's powers were not untrammelled and struck down the arrest and detention of Bracegirdle as illegal. Perhaps timorousness set in with the so-called autochthonous Constitution of 1972 or First Republican Sri Lankan Constitution, where judicial review was repealed and secularity snuffed out in contravention of the entrenched provisions of the previous Constitution. It was a Constitution that was passed by excluding the Tamils not only from its creation and promulgation, but from its application as well. One of the reasons for abolishing the appeal to the Privy Council in the 1972 Constitution was the same reason that was articulated by Baron Judge in England recently – that recourse to a supra-national legal entity eroded sovereignty. The Government of the time was clearly concerned about the possibility of a repeat of the Privy Council decision in *Kodeswaran v. The Attorney General*, (1969), which directed the Supreme Court to answer constitutional issues instead of hiding behind technicalities.

In India, as Mr. Kannabiran pointed out, the intellectual rigour displayed by the Indian Supreme Court in dealing with property rights was missing when dealing with the right to liberty, such as the rights to free speech, association and assembly. Some of its decisions were understandable – Justice A. N. Ray was polevaulted over three senior judges and made Chief Justice - clearly for his role in leading the dissent in the *Kesavananda Barathi* case, where the majority held that Parliament's amendment power could not be utilised to alter the basic structure of the Constitution. When faced with serious intimidation and interference it stumbled, but then once the danger had passed the Indian Supreme Court took steps to safeguard itself from interference and took on a robust role.

In Sri Lanka we have taken things a step – or rather an entire flight of steps – further when we impeached our Chief Justice last year. The Court of Appeal based on the Supreme Court's special interpretation on a reference made to it, struck down the impeachment without a judicial inquiry, as unconstitutional. The Chief Justice was given around 1000 pages of evidence at 4.30 p.m. and asked to present her defence by 1.30 p.m. the next day by the Parliamentary Select Committee that heard her matter. Eager witnesses were hurriedly summoned when the Chief Justice's legal team and the few honourable members of the Select Committee walked out of the shambolic proceedings. Parliament

proceeded to impeach the *de jure* Chief Justice and a *de facto* Chief Justice was put in her place. At the time of such appointment the Court of Appeal order supported by the Supreme Court's decision was in full force and effect. Not a single judge of the Supreme Court had the courage to refuse to sit with the *de facto* Chief Justice despite the judicial orders in existence that made the appointment a nullity. The Supreme Court itself thus disrespected its own judgement and in my view acted in contempt. To compound matters, the *de facto* Chief Justice himself nominated the Supreme Court Bench to hear the appeal preferred by the Attorney General against the Court of Appeal order that struck down the impeachment. Such was the blatant disregard for the edict of justice being seen to be done. The Supreme Court did not think it improper that the *de facto* Chief Justice, the direct beneficiary of the impeachment, could hear and determine cases, even though the appeal, which would determine the validity of his appointment, was pending. After several months the Supreme Court reversed its decision and that of the Court of Appeal and held that the impeachment was now valid. Since then a spate of political and highly irregular appointments have been made to the higher judiciary with scarcely a murmur from the Bench!

Getting back to the issue of national security, Professor Conor Gearty, pointed out "The first concern is often now centered on security, with human rights fitting in the conversation only in so far as they can be seen not to detract from this prior focus". In an era of National Security primacy, rulers of all kinds have found it to be a sanctuary for the prosecution of their "own counter terrorism/insurgency" efforts suspending civil liberties and extending their authoritarian tendencies through the manipulation of the instruments of a democratic state.

Let us focus on the question that is oft asked of human rights' advocates. Is not national security more important than liberties and freedoms?

In my view, the question is wrongly framed for National Security cannot be separated from liberties and freedoms. People could be kept safe in a maximum-security prison – does that justify imprisonment? The issue arises from our understanding of security and from the manner in which we believe security concerns should be addressed. As Robert McNamara, former US Secretary of Defence once said "We have come to identify "security" with exclusively military phenomena, and most particularly with military hardware. But it just isn't so." Looking at National Security and how it is pursued in the contemporary sense we could see that McNamara

was not far off the mark. In an era of globalization and transnational threats ranging from Terrorism to Ebola, threats of all manner have become an issue of National Security. I would define it, not as "National Security", which is really a euphemism for "Regime Security", but "human Security", which is the type of security I cherish. As the UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report argued, ensuring freedom from fear and freedom from want for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity. The definition of human security was framed along seven themes: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

According to a 2008 WHO study 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygienic causes. Less than 18,000 people died around the world due to terrorism in 2013 and that year had a considerable spike because of an increase in violence in Iraq. Even snakebites kill more people than so-called terrorist activities every year according to the WHO. Why is it that water security is not an issue? Why is hygiene not an issue?

I was very pleased to hear the recent emphasis placed by the Indian government on hygiene, going back to what Gandhiji did from his days in South Africa. In Sri Lanka we have an epidemic of Chronic Kidney Disease, which has reached this stage because for nearly two decades nothing has been done about the problem, the root causes of which relate to water, nutrition and health facilities. Despite years of warning on the instability of the land in areas where low income groups have been provided line-housing from during British times, no action was taken resulting in the deaths of many unfortunate people two weeks ago in a land slide in Sri Lanka. I visited the affected area just a few days ago.

We may ask the question post-war how many people have been killed due to private terrorist activities? What is the budget allocated to defence and what is the amount allocated to ensuring safe accommodation?

If security is viewed as Human Security instead of Regime Security we would be able to resolve many of the so-called tensions between liberty and security. As I mentioned earlier, the release of 250,000 Tamils who were held in open prisons without any legal basis just before the Presidential election in 2010 demonstrates a classic case of how Regime Security is given primacy. The people were incarcerated primarily to prevent the flow of information about the atrocities committed during the war and to ensure a change in the demography. Free flow of that information would have undermined

the rhetoric of the “zero-casualty” and “humanitarian mission” and would have led to calls for prosecution for grave breaches of humanitarian law. The principle of command responsibility posed a serious risk to the regime. However, winning the election was a greater requirement for the regime and the possibility of gaining a significant number of votes as gratitude for release was the thinking behind the sudden release. If Human Security was at the forefront the release could have been expedited months earlier.

If Human Security were foremost in their mind the Government of Sri Lanka would not have engaged in the “bait and switch” chicanery by announcing to the world that it has abolished the draconian Emergency Regulations in 2011, whilst persisting with the equally draconian PTA. In fact, as Human Rights Watch reported the then Attorney General had confirmed that the lapsing of the Emergency Regulations will *not* mean a change in detention practices, stating “No suspects will be released and there is no change even though the Emergency has been allowed to lapse.”

As I have repeated on numerous occasions the militarisation of the North of Sri Lanka, where I am the

Chief Minister, takes place not due to any real security threat, but to maintain a stranglehold over the populace; to subjugate them and make them compliant; to stifle any form of democratic or political dissent. If Human Security were the guiding principle the military would not be taking over people’s lands, cultivating them with the owners having to buy the produce from their own land and building hotels and golf courses when the dwelling homes of the people devastated by the war remain like pock marks in the Northern landscape. Today cases involving more than 2100 petitioners are pending before the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court regarding the acquisition of 6381 acres of land in Valikamam North where an illegal High Security Zone for the Sri Lankan armed forces has been set up. Despite such legal actions pending before the highest court in the country, the Army continues to destroy whatever is left of the buildings, homes, holy places or hallowed school premises inside the High Security Zone. In fact when I, as the Chief Minister, tried to visit such places of vandalism I was politely told by the armed personnel manning those areas to obtain permission from the Secretary of Defence who happens to be a brother of the President. Such is the sorry state of our sovereign State’s security concerns!

*(To be concluded)*

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and logic which can take us to the next step of the knowledge, ultimately leading to techniques and applications, which in turn can be used to enhance and enrich existing scientific knowledge.

It’s not that it’s only in our country that such mythological fantasies developed. All old civilizations have such interesting myths. In Egypt, in prehistoric times the tales of Cleopatra tell us that she had belief, like probably many other Egyptians, in the supreme power of many gods who had animal’s heads, like Baboon God head Hedj-Wer and Anubis the jackal headed God. Had the likes of Modi known about this Egyptian belief, the claim of ‘export of our knowledge’ claim would have been registered by now. What a coincidence with our own Lord Ganesh? Is it again a case of plastic surgery or flight of imagination? In Greek mythology,

Chinese mythology and many other traditions such fictional characters do merrily abound.

The hope and prayer is that in order to prove the point, those in seats of power do not divert and waste social funds for investigations of these fantasies. While an average person can believe in Lord Ram’s travel in Pushpak Viman or someone else travelling on a flying mat, if those in power believe in these things; the danger of public money and state funds being diverted for ‘research’ in these fantasies is very frightening. One recalls that during Zia Ul Haq’s regime there was a conference on ‘how to solve the power shortage’. Encouraged by the atmosphere where it was supposed that all knowledge was already there in our holy books, one ‘scientist’ presented a ‘research paper’ which argued that *jinn*s are an infinite source of energy and that should be

harnessed to solve the power crisis in Pakistan! Mercifully, one hopes that state did not allocate funds for such a research! Anyway science is a universal knowledge not owing allegiance to any country or religion. There cannot be anything like a Hindu science or a Muslim science!

While individuals can harbour the reality of mythology, the matters will be difficult if the chief of state has belief in these fictions being part of history. That will be a big setback to the progress of scientific, rational thinking and enterprise. This combination of mythology, religion and politics will make the matters worse. Many competing mythologies will be struggling with each other for their acceptance and being encouraged by such utterances. And the fantasies of power of jinn’s and plastic surgery for Lord Ganesh will have field day.



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## Modi disappoints

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**Safeguarding Security  
and Sovereignty - II**  
C. V. Wigneswaran

Hard-core Hindutva fanatics may well be holding a grudge against Prime Minister Narendra Modi till now for keeping them in check so far and ensuring that the Hindutva campaign did not get out of control or assume distinct communal overtones. Well, they have good reason to be pleased because the Prime Minister has slipped up badly by showing himself to be a supporter of such hard-core fanatics. At the same time he has given cause for the vast majority of Indians to be disappointed with him for his wanton failure to reassure them that he does not encourage mixing of religion and politics. It was a bad slip-up even if only because the cause Modi backed was not worth upholding.

Parliament was in turmoil following the totally unacceptable and highly provocative remarks of Union Minister of State Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti at an election rally drawing a distinction between two sets of people. All the opponents of the BJP, she said, were “*haramzades*”, while members of her own party were “*Ramzades*”. The remarks naturally shook public opinion since the word she used to distinguish BJP supporters from the opponents is a pejorative

that is colloquially translated as “illegitimate” but in fact means “bastards”. The opposition in both Houses insisted first on an apology from the concerned member and then her dismissal from the government. As happens on such occasions it was again a situation where neither side would yield. The demand for an apology was converted into a demand for the Prime Minister’s presence and intervention. The Prime Minister did not think it fit or necessary to go to Parliament but it was pointed out that he had, in a speech outside parliament, strongly disapproved the language used by the member. The said member immediately offered a token apology which satisfied neither the opposition nor public opinion. Modi also rushed to her defence, when he went to the Rajya Sabha to remind the members that she was from a rural background and hence not well versed in social and political niceties. Her lack of practical political wisdom ought to be forgiven, Modi argued. However, the opposition demand for her resignation and /or dismissal intensified and parliament was brought to a standstill. The focus of the situation changed from one centred on the sadhvi to one on how to reactivate proceedings. His partymen

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*Between the lines*

## Modi should settle Kashmir

**Kuldip Nayar**

took the cue from the prime minister that with the sadhvi's apology and his own reaction, the matter be regarded as closed. The BJP rejected all opposition suggestions for a compromise or give-and-take solutions like a resolution condemning use "of bad language" or a government statement or a PM's apology.

Finally, thanks to persistent and effective backroom strategies, the standoff ended with the Rajya Sabha chairman, Vice-president Hamid Ansari, reading out a consensus statement that appealed to all members to "maintain civility at all costs in public discourse." The BJP may not agree, but the overwhelming impression left behind by the entire episode is that the prime minister could not only have intervened and disciplined the Sadhvi in public or offered regrets for her remarks on behalf of the ruling party. Indeed, he lost a good opportunity to take a position against hard-core religious fanaticism being reflected in day-to-day politics. In the final analysis the fact remains that the mindsets in the ruling party remains unchanged. Modi showed himself up as a prisoner of the saffron lobby and fundamentalism practiced by the RSS. A pity. Modi had a good chance of rising above narrow arty considerations and could have tackled the crisis as a matter affecting the entire polity. His conduct disappointed.

Atal Behari Vajpayee was a success as Prime Minister because he decided to downplay controversial and divisive religio-political issues. He was a liberal who recognized that good governance needed

*(Continued on Page 15)*

Intelligence reports about the crowd estimate at public meetings in Srinagar were never optimistic. Therefore, the criticism that Prime Minister Modi drew only four thousand people is not fair. He wanted to make a point that as an Indian he could visit the state at will. Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Farooq Abdullah had chided Modi that he would never dare to visit the valley. He did so and made even the Lal Chowk, the city-centre of Srinagar, without being challenged by the so-called separatists and some others like them.

That the people in the valley feel distant from New Delhi is nothing new. Initially they were not and India could have won the plebiscite hands down. They began to go far when the unthinking government in New Delhi started to water down even the limited powers that the state enjoyed under the Instrument of Accession Act, following its integration with India.

Sheikh Abdullah was the state's most popular leader who had undergone untold privations while raising the standard of independence. When the British paramountcy lapsed and it was left to the state to accede to either India or Pakistan or stay independent. Jammu and Kashmir ruler Maharaja Hari Singh preferred to be independent. But when Pakistan's irregular troops invaded the state, the Maharaja sought India's support.

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, said 'no' to the plea that he did not recognize the independent status. When the Maharaja finally acceded to India, Nehru still did not accept his request until the Sheikh was put at the helm of affairs. Modi should reach out to Omar Abdullah because he is the elected leader of the people in the state. The BJP has a different agenda. Even Modi is not taken in good light. Yet both will have to change their ways to be able to traverse together.

It is unfortunate that during the election campaign Modi avoided mentioning Pakistan. Was he trying to ignore it? No long-term solution is possible without its concurrence. True, Islamabad wants to have the whole of Kashmir, even the part which is under New Delhi. But that is neither feasible nor possible. For all practical purposes, the Kashmir has got divided with the Line of Control as the border. Nonetheless, the Kashmiris have come to assert their identity and want to have the valley as an independent country.

The problem is intractable in the present circumstances. Yet, it cannot be left hanging. Things can take a turn for the worse. Since both the countries have nuclear weapons, the downward escalation in relations between India and Pakistan can prove to be disastrous not only for the two countries but the entire world. The proposal I want to place will save the face of both and may solve the problem. A solution to the liking of Pakistan may not be

acceptable to India and vice-versa. And what happens to the Kashmiris?

My proposal is that the entire Kashmir, the one under India and the other with Pakistan should be united, with New Delhi retaining Defence and Foreign Affairs of the part under it and Pakistan doing the same thing about its part. Then the ceasefire line would become redundant. The Kashmiris on both sides should exercise the subjects other than Defence and Foreign Affairs.

Even otherwise, it is difficult for a small state to take care of Defence and Foreign Affairs because the betterment of society should be its priority. In fact, the new state of Kashmir should spend money on development, not on weapons. The Kashmiris should realize that the Hindu-majority Jammu and the Buddhist-majority Ladakh would not like to be under the valley which has more than 95 percent Muslim population.

Many years ago, when military dictator Pervez Musharraf was at the helm of affairs in Pakistan, a formula had been found at the Agra summit. Musharraf, making his first statement on the soil of India on Kashmir during his meeting with the intellectuals in Delhi on the eve of the summit, had said the LoC was not acceptable as the border and if any Pakistani leader agreed to it, he could not return to his country.

One could visualize a favourable response to his statement in Pakistan, particularly from the fundamentalist groups that have been wedded to politics since the days of Zia-ul-Haq, another military ruler in the eighties. But Musharraf should have also realized that no government in India could stay in office if it agreed to change the LoC in any substantial  
*(Continued on Page 6)*

## Countering BJP with new politics

D. K. Giri

The absolute majority gained by BJP in elections to Parliament in May this year, and the subsequent historic wins in states like Maharashtra and Haryana seem to have sent jitters to political parties in the country. No wonder, there are attempts at building and re-building alliances across the political spectrum in order to counter the BJP and NDA. The rendezvous organised by the Congress during celebration of its 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Nehru, by inviting all political parties including TMC and CPM, excluding only BJP is one such attempt. The other serious move is to reunite the former constituents of Janata Dal - RJD, JD(U), JD(S), INLD and SP. These parties are planning to merge into a new party called Samajwadi Janata Dal in January 2015 under the leadership of Mulayam Singh. Yet, another process of consolidation is observed as usual among the left and radical parties. My proposition is that all these moves in realignment are welcome but will fail to click. Let us examine why, but, before that, it is in order that we understand the context.

### History repeats itself...

When we invoke this famous quote, we must take it that this is a historical process viewed in many ways. Karl Marx said, "History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce". George Bernard Shaw said, "If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must be men of learning from experience". The second perspective is the one we

should be concerned with.

From 1947-89, we had one party dominance in Indian politics barring a short interregnum of 1997-79 when Janata Party was in power. It took a tall leader, a veteran socialist like Jayaprakash Narayan to fight that ominous dominance, seen in authoritarianism and corruption of Indira Gandhi regime, by leading the students and youth across the country. The political parties came in later to cobble up a coalition, a new party, the Janata Party. But no sooner did JP withdraw from the scene due to ill health the party fell apart. Then, after 1989, the coalition era began, as there was no single party that could get majority on its own in the parliament. Now, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, after 30 years, BJP got absolute majority, making Modi, the strong and unquestioned leader as Indira Gandhi was. So it seems like the Congress has been replaced by BJP and Modi has become Indira Gandhi re-incarnate. Interestingly, Indira Gandhi was talking the whole time of poverty alleviation, addressing the poor and the downtrodden, earning reputation abroad as a strong and decisive leader while crushing opposition within and outside her party. Modi is doing exactly the same, talking of development in each breath, and impressing upon the international community. Obama said 'Modi is a man of action'. Modi is in sole control in his party. Thus, in the last six months, we have seen shades of Indira Gandhi. What is more, some opposition leaders like Deve Gowda

are talking about the return of the Emergency days, a situation like “undeclared emergency” prevailing in the country”.

### **Realignment is fragile**

Against this scenario, centralised, strong leader and sectarian politics, a credible alternative politics is the need of the hour. But the current unity moves fail the test of time and trend as they are steeped in old politics - dynastic, feudal, elitist, casteist and personalised. Congress party lacks the ability to change. There is no leadership from within Indira Gandhi family to lead the charge against Modi. And without a Gandhi family member, the Congress cannot remain united. The Janata Dal constituents could provide the alternative leadership, but they too have been inflicted with the virus of Congress-ism, mainly dynasty and have lost the confidence of the people beyond their own peripheries of influence. Politics is the art of possible. So it is possible that these constituents can come together out of necessity, but it is impossible for them to stay united, as there is no supreme single leader in the group, and, sadly, they are not conversant with the concept and practice of collective and democratic leadership. Someone said, the socialists cannot stay without each other, and they cannot stay together for one year. The Left group - the communists, and Maoists are good revolutionaries in rhetoric, reformist in practice and pedantic in strategy. They are informed, and organised in some ways, but both ideologically and in praxis, they are out of touch with reality. To revive them is like using a medicine, beyond its expiry date. The world has moved far beyond their comprehension. So what is the alternative?

### **Building the alternative**

There are two ways of looking at this possibility. One, to try nothing new, and take the pragmatic approach, that is, go with the wind. Some structure will emerge; BJP will fall as no one is infallible. Modi will make mistakes, Congress will bounce back, and replace BJP in government with the support of some or the other parties. If political expediency demands, the Congress parivar and Janta parivar will jointly defeat BJP any day. In a speech at India International Centre, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Nitish Kumar pointed out that although BJP got absolute majority, it polled only 31 per cent of votes.

The second approach is to consciously build an alternative that will transform Indian political culture, revitalise democracy, and bring peace and prosperity to all. In fact, active, thinking and ideological people should opt for the second. But the second option calls for fresh and innovative thinking on recasting Indian politics. Therefore, what we need is not a new coalition of old parties, but a new politics, like New Labour in Britain, and creating new political actors if the old fail to fit into the new approach.

### **New politics**

There has to be a clear break between the old and new politics. The Indian National Congress, then Congress (Indira) and again INC is the oldest party representing old politics of dynasty and feudalism. BJP did come up as a party with difference with some, albeit limited internal democracy, but it soon drifted into the old politics of indiscipline, corruption and ideological compromise. In fact, it is now the Congress (Indira) with a difference as it has no dynasty.

AAP appeared to represent, of late, a new kind of politics, by giving space to common people on the street to engage in power politics. But as I have always maintained, AAP is a good movement, not a party. It has inherent difficulty in mutating into a party. Movements thrive on charisma (in this case, media visibility). Kejriwal has visibility, but lacks the skill and maturity to run a party. So we do not have champions of new politics. Do we need champions though? Do we need charismatic leaders? May be, for immediate media attention, but not for a robust new politics. The new politics should consist of three things that any party is built on - a clearly professed ideology, a transparent and democratic organisational practice and a set of values that the members adhere to.

Let us construct the new politics and the alternative will be built or rebuilt on it, which will be viable, credible and impactful. New politics should have a clearly spelt out ideology. Is it conservatism, liberalism, neo-capitalism, communism? No, it has to be the progressive-democratic socialism which the votaries of new politics, articulate, embrace and follow. Democratic socialism or social democracy, now also called progressivism is based on the eternal and universal principles of equality, liberty, dignity, justice, identity, pluralism and solidarity. Here I must add a caveat. For heaven's sake, do not evaluate democratic socialism by looking at present socialist leaders like Mulayam or Lalu. By no stretch of logic or imagination, social democracy can be discredited because a couple of leaders have strayed. Social democracy is the strongest and biggest group internationally.



Organisationally, the new politics should be based on modern democratic principles while drawing on local traditions, the conducive parts of them. It has to be based on collective leadership, not on strong-leader as it has been so far. The voters, or, in this case party workers should retrieve their pre-eminence in politics. This, by itself will be a counter culture to BJP and other old parties. The institution of the leader in any party is important, not the individual. Mutual respect among members, respect for the elders, etc. are elements of local culture which should be observed, but not confused with political loyalty. Both traditions and modernity could co-exist here.

Finally, solid values should drive new politics. Values like love, compassion, spiritualism and empathy should give energy to the party workers and leaders, and sanctity to politics. Politics should no longer be seen as the last resort of scoundrels as Bernard Shaw depicted, but a noble profession, a mission to touch lives and bring peace, relief and harmony to many hapless people in India and elsewhere. New politics will make people participate in politics, involve the voters actively in governance process through participation, ownership and rewards. When voters have a stake and a share in governance, politics will be a part of daily lives of people, not just once in five years. That will be the onset of new politics.

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## Reunification of Janata Parivar

Qurban Ali

The process of reunification of the 'Janata Parivar' that began in August when Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar, staunch adversaries for over two decades, came together to fight a common enemy in the BJP, saw its fruition last week when six members of the family finally decided to merge.

The six constituents of the erstwhile Janata Dal - the JD(U), JD(S), SP, SJP(R), RJD and the INLD - which made the crucial move here on Thursday left it to the Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, the 'Grand Old Man' of the 'parivar', to complete the formalities. However, the journey is not only uneasy but also fraught with many 'ifs' and 'buts'.

According to JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar, "The parties feel there should be a single party because they subscribe to the same idea and philosophy and follow principles of socialism". He said the six parties would like to work in tandem with entities like the Left Front, which would be approached. He did not, however, elaborate further. The primary objective, apart from presenting a united face in the Parliament, is also to prepare for the Assembly elections in Bihar, next year and in Uttar Pradesh in 2017.

Those who gathered at Mulayam Singh's residence included former Prime Minister and Janata Dal(S) chief H. D. Deve Gowda, Janata Dal(U) leaders Sharad Yadav and Nitish Kumar, Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo Lalu Prasad, Samajwadi Janata Party leader Kamal Morarka and Indian National Lok Dal MP Dushyant Chautala.

Leaders of these parties resolved to fight together against the government, both within and outside the Parliament. The parties have also decided to stage a united protest in Delhi on December 22 against government's failure on the issue of black money and promises made to the farmers.

According to Saghir Ahmed, veteran socialist leader and a close associate of former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, "The ideology of all Janata parivar constituents is based on socialism, on the policies of Acharya Narendra Deva, Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan. This brand of politics has always advocated the policy of social justice and preferential treatment to downtrodden, backward classes, Dalits, minorities and women. It was also responsible for the ouster of Congress party on the plank of non-Congressism. Now these parties have to re-coin the slogan and strategy of non-BJPism."

But, he also adds, "The irony of the erstwhile Janata Parivar constituents is that most of these political outfits are now family based and it would be very difficult for them to dismantle their family fiefdoms and unite in the name of socialist ideology and policies. Furthermore they don't want to lose their identity and recognition they have earned through long struggle."

At present, this new political alignment accounts for 15 Lok Sabha seats (SP 5, RJD 4, JDU 2, JDS 2 and INLD 2) and the tally of this group in the Upper House is 30 -

SP 15, JDU 12 and one each of JDS, INLD and RJD. "Now SP Supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav has to decide on what should be the name, flag and election symbol of the new party. Some have suggested that it should be 'Samajwadi Janata Dal' and some say it should be 'Samajwadi Janata Party'," Saghir Ahmed adds.

Other challenges for the new party will be to decide who should be the leader of the party. It seems that since the most important constituent of the proposed party is Samajwadi Party, its chief Mulayam Singh Yadav will head the new party. However, it is still not clear who will be the new faces of the new party. Political observers also feel that the proposed political party seems to be an organisation of backward castes, particularly, of Yadavs as major players are Mulayam Singh, Lalu Prasad and Sharad Yadav. Although Nitish Kumar represents the backward Kurmi caste and Deve Gowda represents the Vokkaligga in Karnataka, there is no prominent Dalit, Muslim and upper caste face in the proposed party.

There are three other political parties that have been a part of erstwhile Janata Dal--Biju Janata Dal of Odisha, Rashtriya Lok Dal of Ajit Singh and Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan. While the BJD headed by Navin Patnaik has been ruling in Odisha for the last three consecutive terms, LJP of Ram Vilas Paswan is a constituent of the ruling NDA at the Centre and Ajit Singh is now nowhere to be seen. The Janata party of 1977-79 and Janata Dal of 1988-96 was infamous for factional fighting, groupism that ultimately led to splits. It was formed on May 1, 1977. It was an amalgam of Congress(O) led by Morarji Desai, BLD led by Chaudhry Charan

Singh, Jan Sangh led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Socialist party led by George Fernandes and of CFD led by Babu Jagjivan Ram.

Although, Janata Party got more than 300 seats in 1977 Lok Sabha elections and formed the government with an absolute majority, the party split within two-and-a-half years of its formation on the issue of dual membership and the role of the RSS.

The party split into many groups - Janata Party, Janata Party(Secular), Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress(Jagjivan) and later as Lok Dal, Lok Dal(K), Lok Dal(A) and Lok Dal(B). The second time Janata pariwar constituents got united in 1988 under the leadership of Vishwnath Pratap Singh.

Although, Janata Dal won the 1989 general elections and formed the National Front government with the support of BJP and Left front parties, within two years of its formation the Janata Dal split into two groups and the breakaway group of Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal formed Janata Dal(S) and also formed a short lived government at the Centre with the help of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress party.

Now more than love for one another, it is the fear of erstwhile Janata Pariwar, as they are rapidly diminishing political relevance and the rise of the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is driving the reunification process.

But Nitish Kumar, the former Bihar chief minister, contested the fear factor that has apparently compelled them to reunite after decades. He said the aim was to form a platform in the current political atmosphere.

*(Continued from Page 3)*

way. Indeed, such solutions are harder to sell in a democracy than in the army-controlled country, which is not dependent on votes.

Had Jammu and Kashmir gone to Pakistan at the time of Partition in August 1947, it would have evoked a bit of disappointment, nothing more. People would have taken the state's integration with Pakistan in their stride. But after 67 years, how does India change its borders and the constitution without causing a great harm to its polity? This might reopen certain issues, which India has more or less settled after a long period of blood and sacrifice.

The change in the LoC means an adjustment in J&K territory. The composition of the state is such that it has three regions: the Muslim-majority Valley, the Hindu-majority Jammu and the Buddhist-majority Ladakh.

The partition has aggravated the relations between Hindus and Muslims. Another partition may play havoc. The question can be left as it is in the interest of the people in the subcontinent. Undoing it may create more problems. Unfortunately, there are no visionaries among the political parties on both sides. For them, power and personal interests take the front seat as they have left the smoking gun without even trying to sit across the table to solve the issue.

Let New Delhi and Islamabad refurbish that Agra formula and build upon it if it has got out of shape in the past few years. It is not fair to the people of Kashmir. Prime Minister Modi will go down in history if he finds an amicable solution. What his party, the BJP, decides may be acceptable by the majority in the country. Fortunately, Modi's say still counts. He should act now.

# Development or Plunder

**Bharat Dogra**

A CAG report placed before the Parliament on November 28 has highlighted that the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) created under the SEZ Act have become more of a burden instead of making any significant contribution to the development of the country. The available trends, this report has said, “do not indicate any significant impact of the functioning of the SEZs on economic growth.”

This report has pointed out that SEZs have availed tax concessions amounting to Rs. 83104 crore between 2006-07 and 2012-13. These include several cases of ineligible exemptions or deductions.

A disturbing fact revealed in the report is that 52% of the land allotted for SEZs remained idle despite approval dating back to 2006. In several cases land acquired for public purposes was subsequently diverted (up to 100% in some cases) after de-notification.

Out of the 45635 hectares of land notified for SEZ, operations commenced in only 28,488 hectares of land. A question that should be explored in detail is what happened to the remaining nearly 17000 hectare of land and to what extent were SEZ provisions merely used as a cover for large-scale plunder of natural as well as financial resources.

The SEZ law provides very attractive incentives for developers and units located in SEZs. Developers can also benefit a lot from real estate deals, setting up luxury housing units and hotels as also entertainment resorts and

expensive hospitals attending to richest sections. To avail of these benefits while somehow meeting the conditions necessary for this, there can be an endless movement of developers and entrepreneurs (including speculators dressed up as developers and entrepreneurs) to set up more SEZs or to set up more units in SEZs. No limit on the number of SEZs, or the total area to be occupied by them, has been set. So more and more land will be acquired by SEZs.

This means that the threat of displacement for farmers and other villagers - which is already a very serious threat and a very sensitive issue - will increase immensely and indefinitely as a result of SEZs.

Actually farmers of a wider area are adversely affected in addition to the farmers whose land is acquired. As has been seen already in many new industrial townships, several industries dig very deep bore-wells so that water-shortage is created for farmers in neighbouring areas. Industries start using a high share of other water-sources as well. And water pollution caused by industries also adversely affects farmers of nearby areas.

The food security of our country is already badly threatened with large-scale imports of staple foods such as wheat, pulses and oilseeds/edible oils. This is at a time when high levels of hunger and malnutrition exist in the country. Hence to meet adequate food needs of people we need much higher levels of production of staple foods. But the quick and large-scale diversion of farmland to industrial projects as

well as the adverse impact on the agro-ecology of nearby areas will adversely affect the food security of the country.

As the livelihood of several farmers, farm-workers, pastoral people and fisherfolk is devastated, their food-security will be most adversely affected.

There will be a huge loss of tax-revenue to the government due to the wide-range of tax exemptions and related benefits to the developers of SEZ and the units located there.

SEZ law is inherently anti-democratic as it seeks to legitimise the land-grab of the homes and livelihood places of people by rich persons, companies, developers and governments without the opinion of the affected people being even sought or obtained.

Pointing out other undemocratic aspects of this law, Mahesh Pandya and Hiral Mehta, who are environmental engineers with Paryavaran Mitra, Ahmedabad, say, “SEZs are deemed as industrial townships under Article 243 of the Indian Constitution. This is a dangerous clause, because the zones are not under the jurisdiction of municipal corporations, nagar panchayats, village panchayats or any other local authority...Residents of SEZs will have no say in the administration of the zones. The SEZ Act overrides all existing acts, including that pertaining to local government. When towns under SEZs fall in the hands of a few people with their own rules of administration, imagine the ensuing tyranny.”

# Rights of minorities in South Asia

**Neha Dabhade**

Centre for Society and Secularism (CSSS), Mumbai had organized a session during the PSAARC regional convergence on 24th November, 2014. The session was called Rights of Minorities in South Asia. The primary objectives of this session were to understand the nature of violation of rights of minorities in South Asia and create a strong network of organizations across South Asia to consolidate existing mechanisms or establish new ones to address such violations. The process of drafting a charter on rights of minorities in South Asia was to be initiated during this session. Approximately 40 participants from countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh attended the session. The session started with a brief introduction of the participants. Then Irfan Engineer, Director of CSSS briefly outlined the purpose of the meeting. He contextualized the discourse of rights of minorities in South Asia by tracing the consciousness of minorities in South Asia to the colonial times where the colonial rulers forced and induced migration of huge populations for cheap labour which would work to their benefit. However this migration changed regional boundaries and political systems. To further problematize this point he emphasized that the migration rendered majority community in one country of South Asia as a minority community in the other country. This made minorities' status more complex. The states perceive the demands or rights of minorities as a challenge to their authority. Though there were some attempts to address

the plight of minorities through pacts like Nehru Liaqat Pact, largely South Asia has been a battleground for imperial interests and a theatre of violence and intrigues during the cold war. This sowed the seeds of civil strifes and fundamentalism which is a threat to security and peace of the region and especially of the minorities which are already marginalized in South Asia.

Harsh Mander, Director of Centre for Equity Studies, who delivered the keynote address, pointed out to an uneasy existence between the minorities and governments. Concerns of minorities become complex when one community is minority in one country and majority in another. The minorities though in less numbers, have a deep sense of deprivation. The deepest fracture is based on religious identity. Three concerns or anxieties were highlighted by him which can also be the focus or reference points of drafting a charter of minority rights. These are - firstly, identity based on religion, language, ethnicity or culture; secondly security which implies freedom from all forms of violence and fear and thirdly equity where there is secure livelihood and inclusive development. He further explained that the true essence of democracy and secularism is respecting differences and not looking for sameness. This is the distinguishing feature of secularism in the context of south Asia and while in Europe the secularism is synonymous with assimilation e.g. prohibition on wearing turban or hijab in France. Due to oppressive

demands of the State and disregard for diversity, people feel safe in a country where their community is in majority. However this condition failed as has been observed in Bangladesh. What ensures fearless existence and rights of minorities is the space and freedom to have own identity and practice one's culture in an atmosphere of respect. The diversity in South Asia has enriched its culture. At the same time there has to be security where the minorities feel safe and live without intimidation or fear. This security becomes more meaningful when it translates into security of livelihood. The minorities which face discrimination and marginalization must be able to have an equal stake in development where they can also participate as an equal member. These principles can create a safe space and thus discourage communal forces to not use religious identity to spread hatred or violence. Everyone must have the freedom to practice any religion one wants or not practice any religion at all. That's true meaning of democracy. Unfortunately in almost all South Asian countries, this democratic space is shrinking where freedom of expression is curbed. Many places, like in Burma, secret meetings are called to discuss violation of rights since these topics are very sensitive and any dissent is ruthlessly crushed.

In order to address these issues and protect the rights of minorities in South Asia, Mr. Mander suggested that a Standing Committee is formed consisting of members from all the countries of



the region. This committee can take up the task of drafting a charter of rights of minorities in South Asia incorporating the three concerns illustrated above.

In the following session, participants from each country narrated the situation of the minorities in their country. The narratives of minorities in countries as shared by the participants mirrored the concerns raised in the keynote address. The problem of minorities is political and democratic rights must take into account and reinforce rights of minorities. What aggravates the problem of minorities is aggressive market driven economy which strongly influences the mindset of the middle class. The elite class wishes to perpetuate their dominance at the cost of the marginalized and the minorities. Thus ideologies like capitalism must be attacked which deepens the disparity between the rich and the poor. This results and also reflects lopsided development which is not inclusive.

Outlining the situation in Bangladesh, Mr. Moinuddin stated that there are many minorities in Bangladesh based on religion, ethnicity and sexuality. Hijra community is an important community in Bangladesh. Yet minorities are facing problems. It's unfortunate that the Hindu population in Bangladesh has reduced from 27% in 1947 to 10% now. There are instances of forced migration. There are 45 ethnicities which form 1% of the population like Marma and Chakma communities. However some of these ethnicities are becoming extinct due to the threat of Islamization. This is starkly reflected in the case of Chittagong where 97% of the population was of other religions and nationality. Today

the percentage stands at a reduced 50%. This is very unfortunate for democracy. Persecution of minorities takes place because the majority supports it. Thus there is a failure on the part of the electorate in electing secular leaders. Democracy is not the rule of majority and interests and concerns of minorities too must be represented and found expression through their representation.

K. Balakrishnan from Sri Lanka stated that Sri Lankan population consists of 72% of Sinhalese, 12%-13% of Tamils, 8% of Muslims and Indian Tamils for plantations around 7%. Discrimination and oppression is faced by minorities in Sri Lanka on the basis of race and class. That's also the case with Indian Tamils. They find themselves in a relationship of racial inferiority with Sinhalese Buddhists who propagate themselves as racially superior. Even if they are numerical superior there is fear or insecurity about the minorities. Article 29 u/s b in the Constitution and the Citizenship Act denies rights to Tamils. By the Act passed in 1956, Sinhalese was given the status of the official language of the country. Buddhism is the official religion of the country. This plunged the whole country in a long struggle for rights and assertion of identity as demanded by Tamils who felt marginalized. Tamils resorted to violent means to demand that Tamil language should also get official status and recognized. Once again in 1972, the Constitution snubbed the Tamil aspirations. 1983 witnessed an anti-Tamil pogrom. The issues of inclusion and power sharing still exist. The State has brutally responded to such aspirations and in turn the Tamils also brutalized the community. Many children were abducted to become soldiers in the war.

The situation in Pakistan too is much nuanced. The minorities have no stake in economy and development. And similarly they are disfranchised also in the bureaucracy. They minorities are not represented in the bureaucracy. There is a quota of 5% in Pakistan for minorities in employment but they are never given posts of high responsibility or rank. They are given the jobs in the less lucrative or priority department of sanitation. The stakes are not equal even in the sphere of housing rights. Women's safety is ignored too. This discrimination invokes a sense of insecurity. This is natural when a community is denied citizenship rights. What makes the minorities more of embattled communities in the country is the frequent attacks on lives and property. The houses of Christians are burnt. There was a recent incident where a Christian couple was burnt alive in Lahore. Though the civil society organizations were in solidarity with the community and the issue, this issue was not raised in the Senate. Clearly political processes must be inclusive and sensitive to the issues of minorities if there has to be a legitimate channel for their redress. This in a way reflects the biased mindset against certain sections of the country. For instance, the Dalits and aborigines in Pakistan are still a deprived community. When the mass exodus during partition was taking place from Pakistan to India and vice versa, they chose to stay in Pakistan due to the attachment to the land they spent their lives on. Only rich people having secured and resourceful lives could migrate out of Pakistan. Disappointed with the oppressive caste system and the inhumane practice of untouchability in every sphere of life, Bhil and Koli communities in Pakistan chose not to migrate to India. 80 lakhs from these

communities still live in Pakistan. Like in the Indian sub continent, equal opportunities or treatment was not given to all in education in Pakistan based on caste. Spitting for lower castes was prohibited. These practices and oppression they believed would end in the State of Pakistan and they would have equality and dignity in this new State. But unfortunately discrimination is still prevalent in Pakistan against Dalits and aborigines. What is indicative of this discrimination is that of scheduled castes amounting to 80% have just 2 representatives from the community out of 10. Political participation of minorities thus is resisted. More seats must be given to minority communities to ensure their proportionate representation in political processes and power sharing.

However in the discourse of minorities and discussions on their rights, it would be rather simplistic and futile to view them as a monolithic populace with uniform needs, experiences and aspirations. Gender, like caste, is a construct or identity which forms a basis for discrimination. There is a disturbing trend that women from minority communities are forced to convert into Islam during marriage. Rapes are common which violate women's bodies and agency. Hence any discussion on rights of minorities will not be comprehensive if gender justice and perspective is not integral to them. Women must be included during planning or implementation of any charter of rights of minorities.

Similar problems are faced by women in India too where rapes and sexual exploitation of women from minority communities is rampant. This was especially disconcerting during the Muzzafarnagar riots.

When violence was meted out to the Muslims, the Chief Minister of the State didn't take any action to stop the violence clearly hinting at a governance deficit. Even the MLAs from Muslim community were mere spectator. In protest when some civil society organizations boycotted observance of minority day which is on 18th December, the Secretary in the state wasn't even aware that 18th December was minority day. This is suggestive of the state of apathy and indifference that even the state has towards minorities. This has enraged some activists to such an extent that some believe that minorities must shed the attitude of pleading for their rights as favors but look at their rights as entitlements. The minorities must realize that they are equal citizens and not subjects. Their own mindsets have to change for empowerment. At the same time as pointed out by Prof. Ranu Jain from TISS, Mumbai, policies and structures for minorities in India must be debated upon since they are ambiguous. For instance something so fundamentally important as the definition of minority community or who constitutes the minority is left for the Supreme court to interpret and then bestow this status on communities they think are minorities. This leaves gap for mischief and manipulation by vested powerful communities and the state. In India, taking advantage of this ambiguity, the Jains and Parsis, though numerically small communities, they are promoted strongly by the State. However, that is being done at the cost of other minority communities which unlike the Jains and Parsis are marginalized and belong to lower income strata. Such clever ploys also change the attitudes towards minorities. Minorities are viewed as opportunistic. However what is not

understood that some affluent section of minorities is not symbolic of the entire community. There is a huge gap between the rich and the poor. The handful elite are blissfully unaware of the hardships, discrimination and violence faced by the poor. They seek to perpetuate their own power. The media and education system is communalized to an extent that these institutions too don't address the issues of minorities sensitively or offer any stakes to them. In this state of hopelessness, the Sachar committee report had offered a ray of hope with its recommendations which can be concrete solutions for inclusion of minorities. Some of the recommendations were establishing Equal Opportunity Commission, diversity index and annual monitoring of data related to minorities. But none of this has been taken up yet. In this scenario it would help to have an open discussion on the concerns of minorities and think along the lines of anti discriminatory laws and evolve mechanisms to monitor communal violence. To further understand the concerns of minorities in India, Bashir Ahmad from Kashmir made a crucial point. While contextualizing the plight of minorities in the region he comes from, he explained that Hindu Pandits are a minority in Kashmir. Their exit from the region was unfortunate. This exit was reflective of the large sense of insecurity that prevailed there. Thus minorities within minorities must be taken into account when policies for minorities are formulated.

At the end of the session, Karamat Ali, from PILER, Pakistan and Irfan Engineer summed up the discussions and proposed a plan for future action. In South Asia, colonial powers introduced capitalism which demolished the

native culture. On the other hand, a different governance system was imposed which paradoxically institutionalized feudal interests. This has made governance not very inclusive but a tool for politics of the elite. For efficient governance which will protect the rights and spaces of all sections of society, governance must be based on justice and respect for all cultures. Institutional mechanisms which serve as a barrier for discrimination must be strengthened to protect the vulnerable sections like minorities, women, Dalits and Adivasis from marginalization. Minorities must have equal stakes not only in terms of representation in decision making bodies and legislatures, but also in economic policies and development in order to have true economic democracy. Safe space must be ensured for practicing culture and freedom to protect identity of the minorities. Legislatures to prevent communal violence and genocide must be formulated and implemented to address the concern of communal violence which has claimed more than 40,000 lives in India alone since independence. But very few culprits have been brought to justice. Thus a South Asian mechanism in a form of a Commission to take up investigation of such violence must be established. One of the adverse fallouts apart from poverty stricken existence with no access to sanitation, education and livelihood of those displaced or stigmatized is the rise of fundamentalism. Inclusion in power sharing and protective laws will weaken fundamentalism and polarization of communities on religious identity.

Karamat Ali emphasized that a well thought out strategy to protect the rights of the minorities must be evolved collectively in the face of

the challenge posed by unresponsive state organs, communalization of state and politics and a society which has largely internalized communal attitudes and biases. He suggested that there should be a sustained campaign on issues related to minorities taken up simultaneously throughout the South Asian region. A drafting committee consisting of Irfan Engineer, Ranu Jain, Harsh Mander, Karamat Ali and

Bashir Ahmed must be set up to draft a concept note on charter on minority rights based on the broad principles and discussions emerging from this session and circulated on Google groups for everyone's inputs and comments. A South Asian Commission must be formed which will have one man and woman from each country of SAARC region to monitor issues related to minorities in the region.

Bharatiya Janata Party is the only national party which has not yet submitted details of the donations above Rs 20,000 to the Election Commission of India for the Financial Year 2013-2014. Among the recognized regional parties, only 17 parties out of a total of 45 parties have submitted their contribution reports.

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 states that "... the report for the financial year under sub-section (1) shall be submitted by the treasurer of a political party or any other person authorized by the political party in this behalf before the due date for furnishing a return of its income of that financial year under Section 139 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), to the Election Commission." As the due date for submission of the parties' audited IT Returns was 31st October, BJP and 28 regional recognized parties have defaulted on their donations report by more than a month. It is to be noted that BJP had declared the maximum amount of Rs 83.19 crores from 2941 donations during the Financial Year 2012-13.

It is seen that BSP had declared that no donation above Rs 20,000

was received by the party during FY 2013-14 and filed the report on 13th September, while NCP had filed its report on 17th September and declared donations from 15 donors. CPI had filed its report on 23rd September, and declared receiving donations above Rs 20,000 from 44 donors. CPM and INC filed their donations report on the 30th September and declared donations from 70 and 712 donors respectively.

While analyzing the donations reports of national parties it is seen that INC has not followed the format prescribed by the ECI in declaring its donations details. The column for declaring PAN details of donors is not provided in the contribution reports. Without the PAN details, it would be difficult to link the donors against their donations and hence trace the money trail.

There are 182 donations to INC via bank transfer where the details of bank transfer (name of bank, location, etc) and the PAN details of the donors are unavailable. Also, there are a total of 64 donations made by cash to INC which contain no details of PAN, hence will remain untraceable.

## Safeguarding Security and Sovereignty - II

C. V. Wigneswaran

If Human Security was at the forefront the people would be allowed the freedom of association without needing to worry about the military – they need not grit their teeth and invite military officials even for school functions. There would not be a need for foreign passport holders to obtain special permission to visit the North. This requirement was brought about barely a month ago – not because of any security threat but because of the UN inquiry and the fear that more evidence would be collected.

If Human Security was at the forefront, Sri Lanka would not have contributed to the lexicon with terms such as “white vanned” for government sponsored or sanctioned abductions and “grease devils” for trouble makers who escape from the civil authorities for unleashing terror on the general populace and mysteriously seeking refuge in Army camps. Surely it could be seen that these are counter-productive to security? We have long advocated a phased withdrawal of the military and the handing over of administrative matters to the civil forces according to a transparent timeline. How can Human Security exist when the people are under an occupying force? And indeed the North and East of Sri Lanka are under an occupying force!

If Human Security were at heart there would be no systematic and continual rape and torture of Tamil men and women by the Armed Forces as recent reports show. The BBC reported a man stating, “They would put my testicles in the drawer

and slam the drawer shut. Sometimes I became unconscious. Then they would bring someone and force me to have oral sex with him. Sometimes if we lost consciousness during the torture they would urinate on us”. Another woman describes being photographed and fingerprinted and then kicked, beaten with batons and pipes, burned with hot wires and cigarettes, submerged in a barrel of water until she thought she would drown suffocated by having a petrol-soaked plastic bag put over her head, before being repeatedly raped by men in army uniform. Her relatives managed to bribe and secure her release after 20 days of this torture. Just a few days ago a man was arrested for trying to gather evidence for the investigations being carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Is this evidence of Regime Security or Human Security? Or is this the new norm under which security imperatives rule the day? A norm under which embedding military in civilian life under the guise of civil-military programs blurring the boundaries between civilian and military life along the lines of highly militarised states like Pakistan and other states elsewhere?

This is what Mr. Kannabiran envisaged when he spoke of the State as a terrorist:

“State violence under the cover of ‘law and order’ and ‘security of the state’ has been far more extensive in scale and destructiveness than private violence. State violence does not come to an end with the abatement of private violence. It

continues its course to ensure that there is no protest, because its purpose is political. The population must be reduced to apathy and conformism, because participation in decision making is viewed as a ‘threat to democracy’.

State violence in Sri Lanka continues. The Tamils, though the worst affected by far, are not the only ones. When poor Sinhalese from the South dared to protest about the contamination of their water in Weliveriya the military was unleashed on them with fatal results. Other minorities such as Muslims and Christians have been targeted with a view to project a government that is representative only of the Sinhala Buddhists and to portray new enemies and targets. As Plato observed in the Republic “When [a tyrant] has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest or treaty, and there is nothing to fear from them, then he is always stirring up some war or the other, in order that people may require a leader.”

In Sri Lanka as in Pakistan and other states, we are witnessing the growth of National Security apparatus as a distinct power centre within a democratic system where secrecy and industry interests dominate as the nexus between military, industry and institutions of governance gain primacy. Lacking democratic oversight, the protection of democratic values and civil liberties has now become a process of bargaining with the dominant power centre, the security apparatus. In the case of Sri Lanka the fact that a single family controls the power



centres, political and military, adds a new dimension to the state Mr. Kannabiran took on.

I state these instances because they give a clear view of how Regime Security supplants Human Security as a governing principle. The false dichotomy between security and freedoms can be avoided or minimised if Human Security becomes the guiding principle. I therefore respectfully disagree with Lord Denning when he held in *Hosenball*:

There is a conflict here between the interests of national security on the one hand and the freedom of the individual on the other. The balance between these two is not for a court of law. It is for the Home Secretary. He is the person entrusted by Parliament with the task. In some parts of the world national security has on occasions been used as an excuse for all sorts of infringements of individual liberty. But not in England.

Lord Denning's confidence in England is admirable but misplaced. Whether it be the trial of Sir Thomas More for treason in the 16th Century or the war in Iraq in the 21st there have been numerous dubious instances where National Security considerations have provided the cover for various activities. Lord Denning himself remarked in 1964 in resisting a claim that an official document should be privileged from disclosure, "A practice seems to have grown up, that all a Home Secretary has to do is to give a certificate and pronounce a spell to make it taboo." I see no reason why the Defence Secretary will behave any differently from the Secretary!

I disagree with Lord Denning on his second assertion as well – that

Courts should defer to the judgement of the Executive. As Oliver Wendell Holmes said the life of law has not been logic; it has been experience. It is our different experiences that mould our opinions. Lord Denning seems to acknowledge this when he recognises that National Security is a convenient cover in many jurisdictions and to that extent we are in agreement. He doesn't state what judges ought to do in those circumstances. Much of the UK case law tends to defer to the Executive on questions of security, possibly as a result of their confidence that the Executive would not misuse such power. I wonder whether the level of confidence will remain after the Chilcot **Report** on the inquiry into the war in Iraq is released.

The reason why I don't think Court should be deferential to opinions of the Executive is mainly because of my experience with the Executive using National Security as a convenient cover and my understanding of how this has occurred throughout history, as I explained earlier. But equally important is the recognition that curbing individual freedoms and giving the Government excessive power is setting the stage for a tyrant to abuse that power. Well-meaning people tend to argue that restrictions on fundamental freedoms will have to be made to ensure the protection of the people themselves. Thus they will state that it is necessary at times to hold people without legal authority. What they fail to see is that every time such aberration takes place, the Government sets a precedent to breach the law. This empowers unscrupulous elements to abuse that power. Could the presence of J. Edgar Hoover as the Director of the FBI in the US at that time be the reason for the culture

of misinformation and secrecy of Korematsu and Hirabayashi? Did that allow the hounding of "communists"? Could the Watergate scandal have arisen 30 years later because of the gradual rise in impunity of the Executive in the US? These are difficult questions to answer. I would, however, wager that the Executive in Sri Lanka was emboldened by the series of decisions made by the Sri Lanka Supreme Court in supporting Bills and Constitutional amendments and holding with the Executive in Fundamental Rights' cases, so much so that the leader of that very Supreme Court herself became a victim of the Executive's wrath when she finally refused to tow the line. These are, in Mr. Kannabiran's words, the wages of impunity. Every time Courts sanction illegal acts or fail to scrutinise the acts of the Executive properly they contribute to the culture of impunity. Every such step strengthens the Executive and progressively weakens the judiciary and erodes democracy.

The Sri Lankan judiciary has fostered a culture of impunity in many ways; sometimes very insidiously. One practice was how the Supreme Court dealt with Fundamental Rights' cases dealing with illegal arrest and detention. The Court makes much fanfare in asking the Attorney General to check with the defence authorities to see if the person could be indicted or released and to expedite that process. The argument was that this was an efficient way of ensuring that the defence establishment and the Attorney General would evaluate the matters expeditiously. What this did was to allow arbitrary arrests and detentions to continue with no fear of consequences except in rare cases. It also ensured that there were

no findings against the Government, which could be used in international fora to show the widespread human rights' abuses that were going on.

It gives me great pain to say that the Judiciary in Sri Lanka, of which I was a part for a quarter of a century, has failed in preventing a culture of impunity and has contributed directly to the Executive's authoritarian rise. The Judiciary also played a major role in foisting a second-class citizenship on the Tamil Speaking Peoples. It has shown a systemic bias against minorities as the recent research by three fearless lawyers show. Dr. de Almeida Guneratne, Kishali Pinto Jayawardena and Gehan Gunatilleke in their excellently researched book *The Judicial Mind in Sri Lanka – Responding to the Protection of Minority Rights* describe how the judiciary as an institution failed the minorities in not only National Security cases but in relation to the language rights, land and housing rights and religious rights. The book authored by non-Tamils concludes that the rise of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka cannot be divorced from institutional failure, including that of the Judiciary, to address genuine grievances, because, barring a few exceptions, the Judiciary's treatment of minorities was fundamentally different to the general dispensation on the issue. Their findings with regard to the Judiciary's role in public security related cases is also revealing. From 1947 to 1979 the Court did not appear to be racially biased but was conservative. From 1979 to 2009 (i.e. until the conclusion of the war) the Court was inconsistent in its findings but what is disturbing is that while the progressive cases were invariably those where majority community members were involved, the regressive and oppressive decisions

tended to be where minority community members were involved. Post-war the Court transcended its anti-minority bias and instead became completely deferential towards the Executive.

The regressive and oppressive measures against the Tamils did not just occur in the judicial arena. It also extended to the legislative sphere. As I alluded to earlier, the 1972 Constitution

(a) made the Tamil speaking citizens of North and East of Sri Lanka second class citizens overnight;

(b) unilaterally abrogated the post-independence pacts entered into by the elected Tamil Leadership with the majority community Prime Ministers to resolve the ethnic conflict such as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957 for Regional Councils in the North and East and then Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1967 for devolution;

(c) it institutionalised structures of discrimination which resulted in the denial of right to land, right to education and rights to development and resulting disillusionment and disenchantment and frustration of the Tamil youth and (d) made the Tamil leadership (against the backdrop of Sinhalisation of the governance structures in Sri Lanka to the detriment of the Tamils) unable to secure an equitable and sustainable political settlement via democratic means. Such were the main causal factors for the genesis of the rise of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka.

This study on the failed judicial system and our experience with the constitutional process shows how over time impunity can grow

and get out of control. The Courts would not have realised when they ignored the injustice heaped on minorities that they were setting the stage for injustice to be heaped on all communities in the future. This is a function of untrammelled power; evidence of the propensity for impunity to grow exponentially. It is precisely for this reason that I do not support deference to the Executive. I remain suspicious of the concentration of power and believe that the Judiciary must always have oversight over the functions of the Executive. It has to be constantly vigilant and should ensure that the Executive knows that it would have to justify its actions or be taken to task.

The answer to our first question then is recognising that the question is wrongly framed. We should take steps to address security concerns whilst ensuring liberties and freedoms. The first step is to inculcate the idea of Human Security into our thinking and ousting Regime Security from policy considerations. The second step is ensuring the rule of law and maintaining judicial oversight to ensure that no arm of the State is unaccountable or allowed to cloak itself in secrecy. This would ensure that there are no false dichotomies in *practice*. Judges and policy makers are not there to answer Law School conundrums but to address the issues before them. Let us postpone answering hypotheticals to the day we come across a case where liberties and freedoms cannot be adequately safeguarded whilst providing human security. Courts, as one of our more illustrious Chief Justices held, are not academies of law, but courts of justice.

When one points out the injustices indulged in by the State, one is

invariably termed a terrorist, naxalite, communist, imperialist, separatist or whatever term that is in vogue at the time to demonise and silence critics. Human Rights' organisations and civil society groups are oft termed western lackeys and conspirators. Critics are viewed as fifth columnists seeking to undermine the Sovereignty of State. This brings us to the question of Sovereignty.

At the outset I wish to point out that the labels and agendas of people who advocate human rights are largely irrelevant. In logic, arguments of this kind are termed *ad hominem* and are devoid of merit. Let us look at the substance of the argument instead.

Let us look at the principle of Sovereignty. Again I cherish this principle, but the sovereignty I cherish is that of the people and the rule of law and not that of the artificial construct of the State. Sovereignty of the State is the remnant of the divine right of Kings from the days when sovereigns ruled. What we should focus on is ensuring that the people are sovereign and that the rule of law is sovereign. The necessity for the rule of law and the consequence of the absence of it leading to a culture of impunity has already been discussed. How do we ensure that the people are Sovereign? What happens if the majority wish to impose their will on a minority? This is where we have to go back to our concept of Human Security to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and that there is political security.

It is easy to speak of Sovereignty of the State in lofty terms but that doesn't mean the world has to turn a blind eye as it did in Rwanda when nearly 800,000 Tutsies were

massacred in just a hundred days? President Clinton considered it one of his greatest foreign policy failures. In a damning internal report by Charles Petrie, the UN was criticised for failing in its mandate to protect civilians in Sri Lanka in the final months of the War and the events were termed a "grave failure" for the UN. Contriteness is admirable, but is not prevention preferable? If India had not intervened in 1971 would not the genocide of Bangladeshis continued unabated? A State is morally entitled to claim sovereignty only when it is ensuring the sovereignty of its people and the rule of law by ensuring Human Security. In my view Sovereignty of the State is a representative sovereignty sustained by the sovereignty of the people in that State. This is not to say that countries should be entitled to use internal disturbances as a ruse to interfere, but that Sovereignty should never be allowed to be a shield against violations of international law.

In any event, it should be understood that in today's context Sovereignty of the State has become largely irrelevant. As Luis Moreno Ocampo, the former Chief Prosecutor of the ICC for nearly a decade stated on BBC's Hard Talk around September 20th, 2014, the world order is changing where Sovereignty of States is being eroded with greater power being given to supra-national institutions. In an age of treaties and the recognition of greater *jus cogens* norms is Sovereignty still relevant? The very existence of international law in a sense is a restriction on State Sovereignty. For *pacta sunt servanda* to be obligatory as Customary International Law, States are the subjects of International Law and to that extent are not Sovereign. Still further in today's

interconnected world the problem in one country spreads to another very fast, as can be seen in the Middle East. The cultural, linguistic and religious affinities across borders internationalise issues. The moment an issue in one country has trans-boundary effects the matter ceases to be a purely domestic issue and all countries affected by it have a stake in the matter. Let us take the situation of the Tamil-speaking peoples of Sri Lanka. They were majorities in their areas of historical habitation from time immemorial, but they became minorities in the context of the whole of Sri Lanka. They have been discriminated against, politically marginalised, brutalised in war and even the Courts have a systemic bias against them and has consistently failed to protect them. Majoritarian policies have marginalised, disempowered and alienated them. How is their security preserved? How is their Sovereignty as human beings preserved, especially since the Sovereignty of the rule of law has been eroded?

*(To be concluded)*

*(Continued from Page 2)*

accommodation of differing views in order to ensure consensus. He agreed, wisely, to put all divisive issues in cold storage. Modi too had shown similar practical, pragmatic political wisdom and disallowed the ranks and lumpen elements in the saffron parivar from raking up provocative issues. Why he developed cold feet later will be a question both his supporters and opponents will raise in the days to come. If he does not set his face firmly against divisiveness, more stalwarts of his party will come up with ideas like elevating the Bhagwad Gita to the level of a national scripture like good friend Sushma Swaraj has done!



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## Terrorism's ugliest face

S. Viswam

“Oil your guns and keep your powder dry” is the advice that generals usually dole out to the soldiers to keep them in a permanent state of preparedness to face the enemy in war. It would seem that the time has perhaps come for both combatants and non-combatants in India to be offered the advice.

Terrorism, both global and local, is showing its ugliest face. For, nothing is uglier, more sinister and heartlessly cruel, when armed men kill children. The poet wrote “as flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport.”

Ostensibly to avenge the army's offensive against it in June, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan on Tuesday morning killed in cold blood 132 children and 13 teachers and staff in a Rawalpindi army public school.

Disturbing enough. What is even more disturbing is that the terrorist organization has said its Tuesday's performance was only a trailer to further attacks. The previous day we had the grim spectacle of two men being killed by a Jihadist gunman who held a number of hostages in a Sydney restaurant.

Everyday, somewhere or the other in this cruel world some innocents are killed to appease the bloodthirst of a terrorist or his organization. Every day every nation is going to sleep with the fear that the morning may bring mayhem with it. Killings can occur anywhere, at any time, with or mostly without reason or justification.

Mercifully, the bloody and gruesome slaughter of the innocents lasted eight hours and ended after 121 children and three staffers were rescued. But while it lasted the siege turned out to be the deadliest of all terrorist attacks Pakistan has endured in the last decade. Why did the TTP, which accepted responsibility, launch the attack and why did it target children? TTP spokesman Mohammed Khurasani said: “We selected the army's school for the attack because the government is targeting our families and females. We want them to feel the pain.” A cruel example of a revenge killing.

An eye for an eye, Mahatma Gandhi said, will make the whole world go blind. The TTP is composed of a group of Pashtuns of Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas set up in 2007 with close ties to Al-Qaeda. It is known as the Pakistani Taliban,

a counterpart to its Afghan cousin. Both Talibans have a terrorism history and have been responsible for several deaths. The Pakistani Taliban aims to topple the government in power and set up an Islamic state on the pattern of the Syria-Iraq Islamic State. It is aggrieved that the Pakistan government has deployed forces against it and other rebel groups. Tuesday's attack was to avenge the June 15 operations against militants in North Waziristan. That operation itself was in retaliation of the June 8 militant attack on the Karachi airport in which a number of people died. The anti-militants operation is termed Zarb-e-Azb and run by some 30,000 Pakistani security forces.

The uncharitable may well argue that for Pakistan the chickens are coming home to roost. After all, the world knows that for years Pakistan was a dedicated exporter of terrorism to India. It sent trained men not only to play havoc in J & K, but in many other Muslim dominated states in which it set up modules of local anti-Indian elements who set off bombs and targeted the people at large in the crowded market places or in Hindu/Muslim shrines in order to promote communal bitterness and acrimony. It suited Pakistan to take advantage of the Afghan and Pakistani Talibans when it could use them against India. Now, when the government is at the receiving end of Taliban adventurism, it is inconvenient!

New Delhi and Indians at large will avoid drawing vicarious pleasure at Pakistan's current plight. After all, as long-suffering victims of global and Pakistani terrorism, India knows that terrorism has no nationality nor does it have favourites. Yesterday, it was India, today it is Pakistan, tomorrow who knows? But it will

*(Continued on Page 6)*

*Between the lines*

## Tragedy and conciliation

**Kuldip Nayar**

There was a genuine pain in India over the mindless killing of schoolchildren at Peshawar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked all Indian schoolchildren to maintain a two-minute silence in memory of the lives lost in Pakistan. He readily offered any assistance that India could render to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Such gestures transcend the borders. I wish this atmosphere could sustain between the two countries.

Unfortunately, the civil societies in India and Pakistan don't feel concerned over their youth nourishing enmity towards each other. They, including those from Bangladesh, are the best of friends outside the shores of the subcontinent. But, in their own countries, they are always in the midst of schemes to hit the other hard without realizing that hostilities may become inevitable.

The Pakistanis often say that once the Kashmir problem is solved both sides will live as friends. I have my doubts. Kashmir, according to me, is a symptom, not the disease. The disease is mistrust in each other. Even by some miracle if the Kashmir issue is solved, some other problem will crop up because of the suspicion.

The Indians and the Pakistanis are carrying on their enmity to everywhere they come into contact. It is sad that even cultural events suffer from the same thinking. The Quwals from Pakistan could not sing at the Delhi Press Club, supposed to be liberal. On the other hand, India was ridiculed with obscene gestures by the Pakistani players

after defeating India in a hockey match.

The visiting Pakistani MPs not meeting the Lok Sabha Speaker, although the Indian MP who arranged the meeting with the Speaker did not check whether she was free at that time. The Indian MPs should have made amends in some other manner but there was no such effort even for the courtesy sake. Such incidents indicate that even after 70 years of partition, the two countries have not settled down to normal courtesies, much less friendship. The future too does not look bright when enmity seems revealing the Hindu identity.

Yesterday it was Sanskrit, the language of Hindu scriptures. Today, it is conversion. The conversion of some Muslims has only downgraded India in the eyes of the world, particularly Pakistan. When the 'converted' say that they were coerced into and promised ration card or the BPL card that gives the poor the essentials at a subsidized price things seem to be murkier than one would imagine.

That fundamentalism is spreading in Pakistan does not surprise me. A state having such blasphemous laws as can kill a liberal Punjab governor with no action against the murderers is lengthening the shadows. It is unfortunate but when even the liberal voices are mute because of consequences, the fanatics are bound to grow in number and in impudence.

The real point of worry is what is happening to India. The country represents a democratic, secular polity and it is respected for this all

over the world. Unfortunately, New Delhi is rapidly become a goalpost of Hindutva, to the disappointment of the world and to the horror of minorities.

What the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has lamented without any serious challenge that the Hindu raj has returned to India after 800 years is bound to question our secular credentials. I am not surprised that the BJP has enrolled four lakh members in Delhi itself. The Congress which can stall the tide is too embroiled in dynastic politics. But in the past, the party's ideology of egalitarianism and pluralism was very much in the forefront, whether Jawaharlal Nehru groomed Indira Gandhi and she, in turn, Rajiv Gandhi. But today even Congress president Sonia Gandhi is seen as the right of the centre, not even the centre.

India's politics has been too engrossed in personalities. Today, it is Narendra Modi but not what he stands for. Development is too vague to mean any direction. India should have taken the initiative to develop the region on the whole. But when the ideology is sought to be based on parochialism, it is neither pervasive nor egalitarian in content. The common man feels as much isolated and marginalized as he has been all these years since independence.

The ruling party may have changed at the Centre but the political culture has not. We continue to be 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

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## A welfare state for the rich?

**Rajindar Sachar**

The Lok Sabha has passed the Bill to allow an increase in the FDI limit in insurance from 26 per cent to 49 per cent. The Congress and other constituents of the erstwhile UPA government initially opposed it. Ironically, it was opposed even by the BJP when the Congress-led UPA government had proposed it. The enormity of hypocrisy of both major political groups hits you in the eye.

In 1956, to strengthen its position in the 1957 general election, the then Congress government nationalised about 250 private life insurance companies and set up the Life Insurance Corporation, the justification being the interest of small persons. C. D. Deshmukh, the then Finance Minister, said that insurance in the developing country must be seen as an essential service which a welfare state should provide to its people and not as a business proposition or additional source of investment to those who put their money in the stock market. The capital contribution of the government in the LIC was a mere Rs five crore.

When general insurance was nationalised in 1973, Y. B. Chavan, the then Congress Finance Minister, declared: "This step has been taken to serve better the needs of the economy by securing development of general insurance business in the best interests of the community and to ensure that concentration of wealth does not result in to the common detriment".

However, in 2002 the BJP government permitted private companies with 26 per cent FDI. In 2011 the UPA government wanted

to increase the FDI cap to 49 per cent but the parliamentary standing committee headed by Yashwant Sinha of the BJP opposed it and the proposal remained on paper.

It is, therefore, intriguing why the present BJP government wants to increase the FDI limit. It cannot be justified by saying that the 49 per cent proposed increase in FDI would bring in more foreign money to be used by India in the road and house building sector. The income raised by insurance companies is all local through the premium which an average insurer pays. The result would be that profits of foreign investors would increase to 49 per cent instead of 26 per cent without the creation of any asset in India.

It is not as if the LIC has not delivered the expected results. Those favouring an increase in FDI falsely claim that it would lead to greater penetration of insurance in the rural backward areas. The government has not announced an inherent conditionality in the Bill that these companies would operate in rural areas so as to get 75 per cent of the total premium from rural areas and a failure to do so would invite a penalty. In fact, the private sector in insurance is not interested in life insurance business because of lower profits. This is shown by high lapses of life insurance in the case of private companies ranging from as much as 36 per cent in some cases to 51 per cent, while the LIC has only 5 per cent lapsed policies.

The penetration of life insurance in India under the LIC (3.4 per cent) compared favourably with the USA (3.6 per cent) and Germany (3.2 per

cent) in 2011. The same situation prevailed in 2012 - India (3.2 per cent), Germany (3.1 per cent) and the USA (3.7 per cent), which have private life insurance companies.

The argument that the public sector is a drag on the economy is a calumny. In the USA, one private life insurance company goes into liquidation every month. Over 370 general insurance companies became insolvent during 1982-2000. Even Lloyds of London, supposed to be the last word in stability and solvency, suffered a loss of over \$38 billion in 1991.

The lesson to be drawn from the economic crisis in the USA and Europe is clear, namely, that it were the oligarchic financial institutions that were chiefly responsible for it. The latest financial disaster in the USA relates to the case of J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, the largest in the US by assets, which faces multiple investigations and a \$5.8 billion loss on wrong bets on credit derivatives. Ironically, both the UPA and NDA governments still feel that the talisman for growth is in permitting these very foreign insurance firms and banks into the Indian market.

The loss that government funds are going to suffer will be immense. Before 2002, when private insurance was again permitted, vast sums were paid to the government. The LIC made an investment of Rs. 7,000 crore in the Sixth Plan and Rs 56,097 crore in the Eighth Plan. A sum of Rs. 30,000 crore of insurance funds was earmarked for infrastructure development as part of the Ninth Plan. It distributed to policy-holders a bonus of Rs 2,250 crore in 1992-93, which rose to over Rs. 3,700 crore in 1996-97.

In a developing country like India, the public sector is the only

instrument through which the social sector can be strengthened. The gross direct premium even in general insurance projected for the year 2030 is Rs. 13,000 crore. No amount of this fund will be available for public use if privatisation took place, but the money would go to private investors.

The increase in FDI is falsely projected as bringing in new techniques to increase the funds available. The argument that the increase in insurance FDI will lead to more competition and result in better services to consumers is a hoax. The reality is that in 2000 there were 3,500 general insurance companies in the USA but only 15 (0.4 per cent) of them controlled 50 per cent of the market. Six per cent together control 95 per cent of the business. So cynical is the slogan of competition in a private economy!

In the USA in the 'nineties a Senate sub-committee report on

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

it figuratively and not realistically because they, a very few, serve the country.

Modi has, in the process, buried Nehru's idea of non-alignment deep. True, the movement has lost its *raison d'être*, the confrontation between the Communists and the democratic bloc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the Communists lost the cold war. Still the movement had come to represent an idea that small nations should not fear the big ones because of their size or power. Modi is a product of the capitalist world. He has neither the pull of the Nehru era of socialism, nor that of Mahatma Gandhi's self-sufficiency. Modi wants the country to develop, whatever be the means and how big the economy may create a distance between haves and the have-nots.

rising insolvencies of insurers, submitted to the House of Representatives, detailed the "scandalous mismanagement and rascality of private operating insurance companies and ill-effects of frauds and incompetence leading to bankruptcies among 50 large-sized companies in the course of the last five years".

Insurance is not a sophisticated industry which may require the involvement of multinationals in order to obtain technology. We should heed the warning given by the U.N. Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, "the world's economic system was alert enough to protect the rich but too tardy to protect the poor and that the goal was not to have a global economy that ended up as a welfare state of the rich. Rethinking was needed on how to make the system more equitable and mindful of long-term concern".

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Before finishing the article, I must tell something which disappointed me. I mean President Pranab Mukherjee's book. It was indiscreet on his part to release a book on the emergency period. He knows that the office he occupies should not be exposed to political criticism. Still, the President has taken advantage of his position to have the spotlight on the book to justify what he did during the Emergency.

President Mukherjee was an integral part of the dictatorial rule at that time. He was the right hand man of Sanjay Gandhi, an extra-constitutional authority, who almost took the country to dictatorship. That Mukherjee, supposed to be a liberal, went along will always be questioned, however chest-beating he may do at this time.



# Caste across South Asia

Nidheesh J Villatt

Two years ago, a young man went to a roadside restaurant in Gaibandha district of north Bangladesh and asked for a cup of tea. The owner refused to serve him. The reason was that the young man, Nirmal Chandra Das, was a Dalit. Das' humiliation was doubled when he saw the pet monkey of the owner sipping tea from a cup.

In several villages of Tamil Nadu, Dalits are not allowed to have male dogs as pets. People from the upper castes fear that the "Dalit dogs" would mate with bitches owned by them and pollute the purity of their caste. There have been several cases in the rural areas of the state where the upper castes violently objected to the rearing of dogs by Dalits. What begins with the killing of the dogs often degenerates into untold atrocities on Dalits.

About a year ago, Bharo Bheel, a young poet, was found dead in Badin district of Sindh province in Pakistan. He was buried in a corner of a graveyard in the village. Three days later, an "upper-caste mob" dug up the grave and pulled out Bheel's body. Like in the first two cases, the reason was that Bheel was a Dalit.

These are just three of the numerous instances of the present-day apartheid - the caste system in practice - that were shared by some "untouchable" citizens from various South Asian countries at a meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal. They had gathered for the "People's SAARC" - an initiative of civil society movements from the region

that was organised parallel to the official SAARC summit.

"Without ensuring basic human dignity and inclusion for the Dalits in South Asia, what is the meaning of conducting the SAARC summit?" asks Paul Divakar, chairman of the Asia Dalit Rights Forum. "How can you talk of peace and security without addressing the systemic and systematic exclusionary practices that exist across the region?"

Indeed, caste-based discrimination is not just an Indian or Hindu phenomenon. It is a common feature that punctuates - often violently - the social, economic and political life of people across South Asia. While Brahminical Hinduism, which holds sway over the beliefs of a large section of the population, especially in India and Nepal, provides a theological justification for the caste system, the practices associated with it are also seen in communities following other religions.

Interestingly, Islam has also developed its own systems of hierarchy in the South Asian countries. Dominant Islamic jurisprudence justifies superiority based on descent and lineage and its manifestation is visible in countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. Even the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese society in Sri Lanka has invented its own peculiar systems of discrimination that have striking similarities with the caste system.

There are more than 260 million Dalits in the world, who

are distinguished by "low-status" occupations such as scavenging, segregated living spaces and severely restricted access to social, economic and political resources and opportunities. More than 80 percent of the Dalits live in South Asia. India leads the list with 201 million Dalits (16.6 percent of the population), followed by Bangladesh (5.5 million), Sri Lanka (5 million or 20-30 percent of the population), Nepal (3.6 million or 13.6 percent of the population) and Pakistan (2 million).

Human development indicators in the South Asian countries show that all the tall claims of development and growth initiated due to previous SAARC summits have a clear caste/ethnic dimension. "Credible academic studies have pointed out the correlation between caste-based discrimination and poverty in South Asia," says Divakar. "Yet, the official SAARC is not ready to debate it and develop policy initiatives to tackle it. This is against the spirit of the UN Principles and Guidelines on the Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent."

Dalits are the worst off in terms of deprivation indices such as landlessness, access to housing and medical facilities, malnutrition, underweight and stunting. Moreover, studies prove that they are disproportionately affected in disasters but systematically excluded from rehabilitation and relief packages. Caste identity worked against Dalits in accessing relief after the 2004 tsunami in Sri

Lanka, massive floods in Pakistan (2010), Kosi floods in Nepal (2008) and frequent floods in Bangladesh.

There are many similarities in caste discrimination and violence across the SAARC countries. Activists have documented numerous instances in various parts of India where the upper castes do not sell milk to Dalits. Apparently, they believe that if they do, it would affect the milk-producing capacity of their cattle. Non-Dalits are also advised not to buy milk from Dalit households. Such practices are also entrenched in Nepal, where the non-Dalits often invoke religious sanctions against the Dalits.

Many teashops and restaurants in all the South Asian countries display naked forms of discrimination. Many of them don't allow Dalits inside or ask them to use separate glasses, plates and spoons. Often the Dalit customers are asked to clean the utensils they use. In other instances, Dalits have to squat while having tea.

Forced prostitution with ostensible religious sanction, referred to as the Devadasi system, is still prevalent in India and Nepal despite the laws prohibiting it. In 2012, according to data compiled by the National Commission of Women, there were 48,358 Devadasis in India, most of them in states such as Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Independent agencies say that the actual figure is much higher. In Nepal, many Dalit women, especially those from the Badi caste, are forced into prostitution. The popular casinos and dancing bars in Kathmandu are said to have a disproportionate presence of Dalit women.

Dalit women in all SAARC countries are at the receiving end of the three-pronged violence of "caste, class and gender", points out Asha Kotwal, general secretary of the All India Dalit Women Rights Forum. "The Dalit woman's body is increasingly becoming a site where people settle scores and take revenge," she says.

According to Sono Khangharani, a noted human rights activist from Karachi, "brutal sexual violence" in Indian states such as Haryana and Maharashtra has "striking parallels" with the violence against Dalit women unleashed by feudal forces in the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan.

The situation in Bangladesh is no different. "In several areas, the landed classes use rape as a weapon to displace Dalit families from their land. Fatwas are deployed to psychologically and physically target Dalit women among Muslims," says Sunil Kumar Mridha, a Dalit leader from Dhaka. Even in post-civil war Sri Lanka, former women cadre of the LTTE belonging to the Dalit castes are specifically targeted, point out activists.

The education system in South Asia is also affected by the dark reality of caste. "In schools across South Asia, Dalit students are asked

to sit on the back benches," claimed a member of a group of students who performed a street play at the People's SAARC meet.

Social discrimination coupled with poverty leads to a high dropout rate among Dalit children. Many of the children who drop out of schools in rural areas migrate to cities and become part of the workforce in the informal sector, which is notorious for ruthless exploitation and discrimination.

Despite the efforts by civil society activists, the 18th SAARC summit chose to keep mum on the caste issue. A recent survey has shown that more than one-fourth of the citizens in India practice untouchability, but the country, which is one of the leading powers in SAARC, also opted for silence on the matter.

"A monkey could drink tea in a restaurant. Why can't I?" asks Das. But will the SAARC leaders address his question? A robust response to the question would involve addressing and putting an end to the caste system itself. Mahatma Gandhi opposed untouchability but not the caste system that enables it. Many activists believe that the persistence of the system has made it necessary to go beyond the way Gandhi dealt with the issue.

—PMARC

*(Continued from Page 2)*

do the government and people of Pakistan a world of good if violence-prone organizations like the Talibans are not encouraged to mix politics with religion. A tool that Islamabad found was ideal to be used against India is now turned against its own sponsors. It has claimed lives of innocent children. A heavy price to pay.

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# Religious fanatics groups: the fascists in the making

Farooq Tariq\*

It was the most deadly attack on any school by religious fanatics. 146 were killed in a Peshawar Army Public School, including 136 children, ages ranging from 10 to 17 years. They asked the children to recite Kalma and then fired at them. It was an attack on Muslim children by Muslim fanatics.

Tehreek Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility and sent a group photo of the seven militants who took part in the “operation” holding guns and bombs. This was in response to the posting on-line of the dead faces of the seven who were killed by the army in the counter attack, not before they caused maximum damage.

The fanatics claimed that they do not kill little children. Their claim was that the children of the “enemy” aged less than 12 are not allowed to be killed by their “Islam”. Almost 11 percent of the total children enrolled in the school were killed within 15 minutes of their occupation of the school.

The principal of the school was fired on to the extent that her body was not recognizable. Her fault: she guided children to escape from the school during the attack. Children were asked to line up and then were shot. Those who dared to run were chased and shot also.

Such was the devastating effect on children across Pakistan that my son aged 14 asked his mum what should he do in case they come to his school, “line up or run”.

The day shocked Pakistan and the world. The news of the killing of the innocent children was flashed all over the world as the main story of the day. There was a great anger and shock.

A spontaneous general strike in all parts of Pakistan was observed on 17<sup>th</sup> December a day later, not called by any political party, a dream of all the parties of the rich that they could be in a position to shut Pakistan for their own narrow political interests. This was one of the most successful strikes with no transport on the roads and almost all shops and institutions were closed. This reminded us of the aftermath of Benazir Bhutto’s killing in December 2007, when all of Pakistan was shut in grief and anger.

A two minute silence in all the schools in India, a so-called arch rival, was observed, with the Indian parliament passing a resolution condemning the attack.

On the same day, heads of all the political parties represented in the parliament met in Peshawar for a useless day agreeing to “work together” with no mind-set change and no concrete proposal for dealing with fanatics. How could they?

In the meeting was Imran Khan whose party is in power in Khaiber Pukhtonkhawa, where the incident took place. He was too busy in campaigning for the overthrow of the federal government with his sit-ins and rallies in other parts of the country while totally ignoring the task of securing lives in the province.

Imran Khan’s philosophy of “good and bad Taliban” meant that no action was taken against the fanatics who had built safe havens in the tribal areas. He was a strong advocate of “talks with good Taliban” to divide the fanatics. There are no good or bad Taliban. They are all in the same family of neo-fascism.

The ruling Muslim League had long term contacts with most of the religious fanatic groups and used them to win the 2013 general elections. Fanatics carried out suicide attacks on most of the opponents of PMLN and PTI, thus preventing them from running effective election campaigns.

Sitting in the meeting was Jamaat Islami, whose former head, declared dead Taliban as Shaheed (martyr) and army men killed by fanatics as dead. There was also Jamiat Ulemai Islam, the known political wing of one section of the religious fanatics. Also several other political parties who maintain regular contacts and links with religious extremist groups for their narrow political interests and subscribe to the same millenarian ideology of the Jihadists.

The meeting agreed to form a committee to formulate the security policy for the state within a week, as if in one week they could come up with any magic formula.

The Pakistani state failed miserably to curb the rise of religious fundamentalism. There is always a soft spot for them. For a long time, they were encouraged by the state

\*General Secretary, Awami Workers Party

as a second line of security. The security paradigm meant an anti-India enmity was the core purpose of state patronage. The process of Islamisation was accelerated by military dictator Zia Ul Haq with the full support of American imperialism.

Apart from creating and supporting Jihadist groups, for decades the state and military with the financial and political assistance of imperial powers, has indoctrinated millions with conservative Islamic ideology for the purpose of safeguarding its strategic interests.

The three decades since 1980 are seen as the years of madrassas, over 20,000 at present providing home ground for recruitment for suicidal attackers. Supported mainly by Saudi Arabia and many million Muslim immigrants, they have become the alternative to the regular school system. Most of the terrorist activities carried out in Pakistan and elsewhere are linked to the organizational and political support of these madrassas.

After 9/11, the state's close relationship with the fundamentalists has changed to some extent but not broken in real terms. The banned terrorist groups change their name and carry out activities on a regular basis. They hold meetings and public rallies, collect funds and publish their literature without any state intervention.

Pakistan has become more conservative, more Islamic and more right wing resulting in the growth of the extreme Islamist's ideas. Blasphemy laws are frequently used for settling personal and ideological scores. Religious minorities, women and children are the easy targets. These soft targets are paying the greatest price for this decisive right wing turn.

The rise of religious fundamentalism has emerged as the most serious challenge not only to progressive forces but also to the very foundation of a modern society. Education and health are the real targets of the fanatics.

Polio workers, mainly women, are killed by fanatics, on the assumption that a team working for the elimination of polio led to the discovery of Osama Bin Laden, leading to his assassination. The net result is that the World Health Organization has recommended a ban on all Pakistanis traveling abroad without a polio vaccination certificate.

The primary and high school syllabus in Punjab and Khaiber Pukhonkhawa provinces are amended to give room to more unscientific and pro-Jihad ideas in the name of religion. Education in most schools has been littered with war-promoting philosophy.

Religious fanatics groups are the new version of fascism. They are fascists in the making. They have all the historic characteristics of fascism. They kill opponents en masse. They have found considerable space among the middle class, particularly educated ones. They are against trade unions and social movements. They are promoting women as inferior to men, and aim to keep them in the home. Attacking the religious minorities has become a norm.

The religious fanatic groups are internationalists. They want an Islamic world. They are against democracy and promote Khilafat (kingdom) as a way of governance. They are the most barbaric force recent history has seen in the shape of "Islamic State" and Taliban. There is nothing progressive in their ideology. They are not anti-

imperialism but anti-America and anti-West. They have created and carried out the most barbaric terrorist activities in the shape of suicide attacks, bomb blasts, mass killings and indiscriminate shootings.

They must be countered. The American way of fighting back in shape of "war on terror" has failed miserably. Despite all the American initiatives of occupations, wars and creating democratic alternatives, the religious fundamentalists have grown with more force.

Fundamentalists are stronger than they were at 9/11, despite the occupation of Afghanistan.

A whole package is needed. The state must break all links with fanatic's groups. The mindset that religious fundamentalists are "our own brothers, our own people, our security line and guarantee against "Hindus", some are bad and some are good" and so on must be changed. The conspiracy theories are most favorable arguments among the religious right wingers. They do not want to face the reality.

There is no short cut to end religious fundamentalism. There is no military solution. It has to be a political fight with dramatic reforms in education, health and working realities in most Muslim countries. Starting from nationalization of madrassas, it must go on to provide free education, health and transport as one of the most effective means to counter fundamentalism.

Right wing ideas are promoting extreme right wing ideology. A mass working class alternative in the shape of trade unions and political parties linked with social movements is the most effective manner to counter religious fundamentalism.



## Extra Elections in Sweden

D.K Giri

In the general elections held in September this year, the Social Democrats had a curious victory, which was big news for social democrats across the world. Sweden has had a strong welfare state built assiduously by the Social Democrats who were in government for 65 year out of 85 years of democratic politics in Sweden. In the last September, they got 113 seats out of 349 parliamentary seats. They became the single largest party. But they got just one more seat than what they had in the previous general elections of 2010. According to the Swedish parliamentary tradition, the single largest party can form a minority government. The victory was curious as they did not win the elections but the Moderates, the party in government since 2004-2010 and 2010-2014, lost the elections. Their seats got reduced from 107 to 84. The Moderates, the centre-right party had formed coalitions in both the terms in government. The real gainer in the last election was Sweden Democrats, a far-right xenophobic party. Their seats went from 20 in 2010 to 39 in 2014. They had the critical number in deciding parliamentary majority.

In accordance with Swedish parliamentary tradition, once the Prime Minister is "appointed" by the Speaker, within days, s/he has to win a confidence vote, which the current social democratic Prime Minister won. Then after three months, in the month of December, the ruling party has to win the vote on its budget. In Sweden, the tradition, again, is that a party votes for its own budget proposal and abstains

from voting for other proposals. The Sweden Democrats deviated from that convention and voted with the Conservative alliance, not their own budget.

According to a note circulated by the international secretary of the Social Democratic Party, among the members of Progressive Alliance the Social Democrat Prime Minister, Stefan Lofven had offered the four parties in the Conservative alliance, the Conservative Party, the Christian Democrats, the Centre Party, and the Liberal Party several opportunities in order to avoid the Sweden Democrats dictating the rules. He was turned down on all occasions. The note added that, "it was irresponsible of these parties and their ways of acting are throwing the country into uncertainty".

This is the first time since 1958 that Sweden will have an extra election. The mid-term or the snap poll in Sweden is called an extra election.

What are the issues in Sweden politics today? The social Democrats maintain that the election campaign will be about the issues same as three months ago, when the general elections were held. They are: more jobs, better education, investments for the future and no more tax cuts for the rich. The issues in Swedish politics need a deeper analysis as it has had a strong welfare state, and Social Democrats had the longest run in government. Also, the current electoral status of the Social Democrats begs the question: why it has gone down? They were 112 seats in 2010 and gained just

one more seat in 2014. Could the decline be attributed to the slide of social democrats across Europe, or could Sweden be a different scenario from the rest? The other related question to probe is the phenomenal rise of Sweden Democrats, the "xenophobic anti-immigration Party". They got into the parliament with 20 seats having crossed the threshold percentage of vote i.e. five percent in 2010 - they had secured 6.5 per cent. In 2014, their vote share as well as seats doubled, which were 12.9 and 39 seats respectively. Intriguingly, after the extra elections were signalled by the Prime Minister in a press conference, as the elections cannot be officially called until the government has been in office for three months, only Sweden Democrats have gained in opinion polls. Therefore, the rise and rise of Sweden Democrats need to be studied incisively.

Talking of issues, one of the major issues was tax cuts. The last Prime Minister Reinfeldt, who ran the Conservative-alliance government for eight years was seen to be different from other centre-right leaders as he cut taxes without appearing to tinker with the welfare state or disturbing the famous Swedish model. But his tax cuts did not result in job creation, which was promised by his government. On the contrary, the unemployment which was 5 per cent in 2006 rose to 8 percent eight years later. Reinfeldt's economic approach was to reduce unemployment and sick leave benefits. Although he did not use anti-welfare rhetoric, the longer Reinfeldt ruled, the voters began

to realise that Sweden was moving away from social democratic model. Also, as a matter of fact, Sweden, in the last eight years saw the biggest surge in inequality of among OECD countries over the past 15 years. The other important issue that has tilted the voters against the Moderates, the leading party in the Conservative alliance was the defence cuts and ending conscription. With the war in Ukraine, and Sweden being just across the Baltic States was worrying its defence experts. The defence cuts prompted the Swedish supreme commander to famously say: ‘the country can now defend itself for one week only’. This perception has gone against the incumbent government.

The third issue was immigration, although paradoxically, it was not in public domain. A survey conducted during the election among the voters on ranking the issues, immigration did not even make it into the top ten. Then how did Sweden Democrats double its seat share? Of course for all those 12.9 per cent Swedes who voted for Sweden Democrats immigration was the main issue. One may like to add that the voters do not always reveal their minds even in Europe - that is why all the opinion polls or pre-poll surveys cannot be trusted. The most outstanding example is that of Britain in 1992 elections. Almost all opinion polls barring one went wrong. They all predicted that Neil Kinnock the opposition Labour leader would win the elections by defeating the Prime Minister-in-office John Major. But that did not happen. The Social Democratic Party had committed that all those fleeing from Syrian war would be given permanent residence. Some Swedes think that they need people from outside to get into service sector,

mainly health to cater to their aging population and such. But the general opinion may be: ‘when we have so much of unemployment, and we are a small country, how can we accommodate people from other countries!’ Although, in an age of globalisation movement of people, goods and services cannot be stopped, large scale immigration on economic or war grounds is not viewed sympathetically. The popular perception in the host countries is that such immigration puts extra pressure in terms of demographic, economic and cultural tensions. Immigration is a big humanitarian issue too. There have to be various ways in addressing this issue. One could be, to allow temporary immigration as war refugees, and then to focus on reverse migration, sending them back home as the conflict subsides. The developed countries will have to go all out to resolve the conflicts, help develop the “periphery” to avoid pressure on the “centre of affluence” so that they do not bear the burden of economic migration. It is instructive to recall what a common British lady told me on the fringe of a seminar on migration in Essex University in Colchester: “I do not mind people coming into my country, but how many this small British Island can take.” Immigration has become a politically explosive issue, although people do not speak out openly as it is also a very humanly sensitive issue.

The fourth issue that is confronting social democrats across Europe and elsewhere is how to reconcile ideas and interests, principles and power (governance), ideological consistency and contextual compromise. The Swedish social democrats may be facing the same moral and ideological dilemma.

The question all progressives and parties adhering to ideologies will have to ask themselves in electoral politics is: do we reflect the opinion and expectations of voters, or do we try to change their thinking through sensitisation and dialogue, or do we go to voters with our ideas, no matter what they think. To listen to people is important to win elections, but some would call it populism, not principle. At the same time, in a democracy, we need to go to the people for their votes as leaders are supposed to represent them. So how to reconcile the acts of leading and representing?

Finally, the issue of alliance building. It is commendable that Social Democratic Prime Minister has gone to all the parties in the Conservative alliance to seek their support in order to thwart the strategies of the Sweden Democrats, the xenophobic party, but they did not come around so far. Each of them, perhaps, calculates that if social democrats having the biggest and strongest party in Sweden falls, their electoral chances may be brighter. So, indirectly, they support the Sweden Democrats in pulling down the government. They are, obviously, riding a tiger, but the tiger does not hesitate to devour its own benefactors. It is to be seen how the Swedish voters, judge the social democrats, the progressives in Swedish politics, in the extra election. Will they be seen as a party that failed to build a coalition and run the government for the full term? Or that they have been wronged by other parties who pulled the government down by breaking the principle in voting on the budget, or refusing to bail the government out vis-à-vis the machinations of the xenophobic party? We can only know after the extra elections.

## Safeguarding Security and Sovereignty - III

C. V. Wigneswaran

As Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz cogently argue, any idea of human well-being beyond the satisfaction of biological needs, must give consideration to culture, which is created by collectives. If culture is recognised then it follows that it should be protected politically. If it is entitled to protection, Collective Security is also an essential part of Human Security. If it is a part of Human Security then it is but rational that culturally cohesive groups should have the right to govern themselves, for it is only they who can best protect their culture. It is this right that is self-determination. This has been recognised by successive Sinhalese leaders in the past. Even though he was to pass the Sinhala Only Act 30 years later as the Island's Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake, was reported by the Ceylon Morning Leader of 17th July 1926, to have argued that "the Tamils, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese had lived for over a thousand years in Ceylon and had not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their language, their customs, and their religion", and to have stated firmly that he was "convinced that some form of Federal Government would be the only solution".

When a group of people are threatened as a group it only strengthens their pre-existing right to self-determination. The level of threat that the Tamil Speaking Peoples have faced in Sri Lanka exponentially strengthens the right to self-determination.

In Sri Lanka national processes have failed and no reasonable person

could be expected to have any confidence in the internal processes. Barely a week ago even the usually euphemistic Commonwealth Secretary Kamallesh Sharma spoke of the lack of independence of the Elections Commissioner in Sri Lanka and the need for reduction of the Military activities in civilian life in the Northern Province. I know both these issues first hand.

It is a testament to the courage of my people in the Northern Province that they voted overwhelmingly for the Tamil National Alliance despite the terror and misinformation unleashed by the Sri Lankan military and associated militant groups. An entire newspaper was fabricated on the morning of the election, an entire village was prevented from voting, candidates were attacked, voters were bribed, beaten and intimidated and yet they voted. I have already spoken of the usurpation by the military of virtually every civilian activity in the Northern Province.

As I stated earlier, the judiciary has been beaten into submission – literally as well – the Secretary of the Judicial Services Commission who was seen as supportive of the impeached Chief Justice was assaulted outside his son's school. The public service has been completely politicised. Completing one year in office as the Chief Minister, I can attest to the interference by the Governor who was the Military Head of the Province during the War and the parallel administration that goes on. The Chief Secretary to the Provincial Council, the chief public servant in the province, was appointed in

violation of the law and continues in service, despite our objections. Just recently when important mobile services were being arranged for our people the Chief Secretary kept away, along with several others, citing sudden meetings at the Presidential Secretariat. Projects are agreed on the basis of political expediency and as election gimmicks without carrying out comprehensive needs' assessments or having transparent overarching plans or engaging with the relevant stakeholders.

The Sri Lankan Government method of dealing with issues is showcased with the way it is dealing with the UN investigation into violations of humanitarian and human rights' law. It attempted to canvass global opinion against the UNHRC Resolution and failed thrice. If Sri Lanka thinks that such a procedure undermines its Sovereignty and is illegal, it could request the General Assembly or the Security Council to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice for an Advisory Opinion. It could perhaps even seek to take the movers of the resolution before the ICJ, with their agreement, for a decision on the issue. As a worst-case scenario it could even withdraw from the UN, even though there are no formal provisions in the UN Charter for withdrawal. Instead Sri Lanka seeks to play the petulant scofflaw refusing to comply with its obligations. Worse still is the way in which it deals with the investigation itself.

In the last few weeks Sri Lanka is openly arresting and intimidating those who are trying to collect evidence for the investigation. The

basis appears to be that the evidence is false – is that not a decision to be made at the stage of evaluation? If we had proof that the evidence was false – is not the best course of action to forward proof of such falsity to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights? The State does not want to allow the evidence to leave the shores of the country – just as in the incarceration of the 350,000 Tamils, the primary aim was to let no evidence leave the shores.

So what can the Tamil Speaking Peoples of Sri Lanka do? They have no succour from the internal mechanisms. They have no confidence in the Judiciary, which not only has a history of holding against them, but which has become entirely subservient to the Executive in the last 5 years. I believe it was The Times that once opined of the House of Lords, “If our liberties are to be protected by them, they would prove a leaky umbrella.” We now have a sieve not merely a leaky umbrella. If the world had lent its ear to the plea of SJV Chelvanayagam in 1974, when he addressed the international community in his missive to the Commonwealth Heads attending the 20th Commonwealth Conference in Sri Lanka in 1974, much tragedy could have been averted. Explaining the systematic marginalisation of the Tamils and arguing that decentralised structure of government alone will make it possible for a participatory democracy where power will be people’s power rather than state power, he warned:

**This memorandum is presented to you in the hope that through you, world conscience will be awakened to the present plight of the Tamils in this country, who are being systematically subjected to a denial of human rights, various forms of racial discrimination and**

**other practices which could lead to the genocide of the Tamils.**

What should other countries do when they see this type of injustice; this type of violation of the Charters and Conventions and Protocols that Sri Lanka has signed? What should India do given its ancient and shared history with Sri Lanka? What should India do when it has nearly a hundred thousand refugees from Sri Lanka whose individual and collective rights are being denied by Sri Lanka?

It was the trans-boundary effect of tens of thousands of refugees pouring into India, in addition to the violation of international humanitarian law that prompted India to intervene in Sri Lanka in the 1980s and incidentally the intervention was also geared towards India securing her National Security and national interest. The legal relationship between India and Sri Lanka has been cemented further through the Indo-Lanka Accord. Indo-Lanka accord is an international agreement between two countries and the Government of India played the role of representing the collective interests and rights of the Tamils of North East. Hence it could be stated the government of India had played the role of a guarantor and underwriter of the Accord, bearing in mind the key aims such as addressing Indian strategic interests, Sri Lankan Sovereignty and the collective rights of the Tamils of the North East.

The military, political and intelligence assistance given by India to Sri Lanka during the final stages of the War, were clearly based on the premise and/or promise that there would be a meaningful political solution. Not only was that the promise made to India, on more than one occasion, but it was also the solemn undertaking issued to the

international community of nations as represented by the Secretary General of the UN. As the Joint Statement issued by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Secretary General of the UN recorded in May 2009:

**The Secretary-General welcomed the assurance of the President of Sri Lanka contained in his statement in Parliament on 19 May 2009 that a national solution acceptable to all sections of people will be evolved. President Rajapakse expressed his firm resolve to proceed with the implementation of the 13th Amendment, as well as to begin a broader dialogue with all parties, including the Tamil parties in the new circumstances, to further enhance this process and to bring about lasting peace and development in Sri Lanka.**

The well being of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, thus, has an international dimension and cannot be suppressed on the basis of Sovereignty.

Perhaps when Mr. Sinha spoke about undermining domestic processes he was not fully aware of India’s previous stances on issues as well as the domestic processes in Sri Lanka. India has taken country specific stances as dictated by principle as well as national interest. As Hardeep Puri, India’s former representative to the United Nations noted in an opinion piece in *the Hindu*:

**Following the anti-Tamil riots in Colombo in 1983, New Delhi mustered sufficient courage to spearhead a resolution against Sri Lanka in the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities. We vote in favour of similar**



**resolutions against Israel only because they deal with gross and systematic violations of human rights of Palestinian people in the occupied territories. We have never hesitated to take a position on country-specific resolutions whether on DPRK or Iran, whenever our national interest so demanded.**

As regards the domestic processes, if the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the United Kingdom could be assaulted by a Member of Parliament of Sri Lanka in New York, if the victorious Army Commander could be dragged across the streets like a common criminal, if the Chief Justice could be impeached in a despicable manner, can there be any hope for Tamils? It was only because of India's insistence that elections were held in the Northern Province last year having been postponed every year since the end of the War. It was only because of pressure from the United Kingdom that a minion of the regime was prosecuted and convicted for murder and rape. In the absence of external pressure there can be no hope of the Sri Lankan Government changing its recalcitrant position. We, in the Northern Province, remain open to co-operation, but have only faced broken promises and interference.

India has legal and moral obligations to ensure the welfare of the citizens in Sri Lanka. It should do so by holding the Sri Lankan government to its promises to India and to its obligations under International Law. It should do so by lending its support to international processes that are in furtherance of justice and truth. It should do so by supporting the return of the rule of law and democracy to Sri Lanka. It should do so by prevailing upon the Sri Lankan government to stop the

harassment and abuse of minorities; to return to civilian life; to reverse the militarisation. It should do so by urging the repeal of the odious Prevention of Terrorism Act of Sri Lanka, as India herself did with the TADA and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

India's obligations apply *a fortiori* with regard to the vulnerable Tamils, towards whom it has a fiduciary duty. It should do so by ensuring that the Tamil Speaking Peoples are not subject to torture and harassment; that their lands are returned; that the occupying force that is in their lands of habitual residence be withdrawn; that the urgent psycho-social needs of a war-ravaged society are addressed; that the safety of our women and children are ensured. It should do so by ensuring that the right of self-determination of the Tamil Speaking Peoples of Sri Lanka is realised within a united Sri Lanka. It should do so by ensuring that a proper 13 Plus Plus amendment is introduced into a Constitution shed of its unitary character. In so doing India would do well to take heed of the prophetic words of the Tamil leaders' letter of 28th October 1987 to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, pointing out the violation of the Indo-Lanka Accord and the insidious manner of the Sri Lankan government's dealings, the gross inadequacy of the 13th Amendment and the likelihood of abuse of its provisions. They predicted then that the North and the East would be separated, that the legislative powers of the Provincial Council will be sabotaged, that the Governor who was supposed to be ceremonial will play an interfering role, and the farcical nature of the 13th Amendment. India's actions as suggested would be in furtherance of Human Security and People's Sovereignty. It is critical to understand addressing the

inadequacies of the 13th Amendment necessarily entails revising the Constitution bearing in mind that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multilingual society. It should recognise and enshrine the collective interests and rights of the fraternity of communities that comprise our beloved but bloodied isle. This is where lessons of constitution making by the far-sighted leaders of Bharat are indeed a shining example - the spirit and deed in which the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, Indian body politic was preserved through a secular constitution, perhaps based on the premise of unity in diversity in post independence India.

The PUCL has a proud tradition of upholding the values of Human Security and People's Sovereignty. More importantly it appears to be acutely aware of the interconnectedness of our peoples. It has functioned on the basis that injustice anywhere is injustice to humanity. I am indeed indebted to the PUCL for its numerous efforts to ensure the realisation of these values vis-à-vis Sri Lankans. The PUCL has advocated that Sri Lanka be made accountable for war crimes; that the food and economic security of the one hundred thousand Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu be ensured; that the steps to deport Lankan refugees should be stopped; that support be given to the UN Probe - the list is endless.

We share a common vision – that of Human Security and Sovereignty of the People and the rule of law. It is a lofty vision and as Justice Khanna proclaimed “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and in the final analysis, its only keepers are the people. Imbecility of men, history teaches us, always invites the impudence of power.”

## Shanti Sena

Ram Rahim Shanti Sena's (RRSS) 2<sup>nd</sup> national convention took place in Delhi on 6th December. RRSS is a wing of Khudai Khidmatgar, with the prime objective of creating a better appreciation of all religions amongst people of different religions in peaceful times, and to restore peace and harmony in the unfortunate event of development of communal tension in any area. The Ram Rahim Shanti Sainiks are relentlessly working for spreading the message of love.

The Rashritiye Aam Sabha got inaugurated at the hands of the well known Gandhian, Radha Bhatt. She said that it is the urgent need of time where the youth are involved directly in the peace processes. She also viewed that it would be more constructive if we try to learn from each other's faith. Presiding over the gathering, Prof. V.K Tripathi from IIT, Delhi said that some opportunists are using every tactics from post to pole by utilizing the dirty politics where

the religion is used to produce and spread hatred in the young minds which goes directly against the basic values of our nation. A senior journalist from the BBC's Pakistan Service, Hafeez Chachar said that when they came to know that Khudai Khidmatgar has been revived by some young people in India, it was a great surprise for them. Since Pakistan has a political party named Awami League that claims to be based on the values of Badshah Khan, the founder of the Khudai Khidmatgar, still they are far off from its core values, while in India, the same values has got a shape. The Director of GSDS Manimala expressed her belief that the Khudai Khidmatgar is a new hope for a better society, a society that must represents values of the truth, peace, compassion and tolerance.

Khudai Khidmatgar national leaders Mahipal Saraswat, Sahab Shabbir, Fateh Nadvi, Inamul Hasan, Faizan Arish were also present to witness the occasion.

After the lunch, a new team was elected by an open house electoral college.

The new office bearers for the RRSS team are as follows:

Rastriya Adhyaksha – Muneshwar Kumar Sharma, U.P Rastriya Upadyaksha – Chinmay Khare, Delhi; Nargis Khan, Delhi; Gangasagar Saraswat, Rajasthan; Sadiq Chaudhary, U.P. Mahamantri – Bhupendra Tripathi, Madhya Pradesh. Rashtriya Sachiv- Kalu Ram Jakhad, Rajasthan.

Koshadhyaksha – Krishna Nayak, Gujarat

Rashtriya Karyakarni- Anurag Shukla, U.P; Sayed Adnan, U.P; Yakub Qureshi, Rajasthan; Dr. Jaskaran Singh Saini, Delhi; Erum Khan, Bihar; Shabbir, J & K; Qutub Alam, U.P; Manmendra Das, Assam; Ishrat Jahan, Bihar; V.D. Malik, Maharashtra; Fazil Sultan, Delhi; Bhagwan Lal Banseewal, Rajasthan.

- Faisal Khan , Khudai Khidmatgar

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## Constitutional impropriety

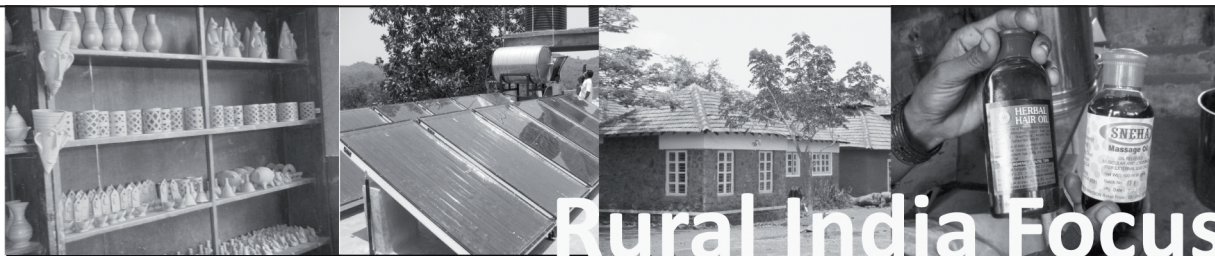
I am shocked at the constitutional impropriety of Uttar Pradesh Governor Shri Ram Naik's statement publically calling for the early construction of Ram Temple. His describing it as a desire by everyone is a crude partisan political statement. Surely he knows that this disruptive action of RSS has already done immense damage to the secular face of India. It is a gratuitous insult not only to the biggest minority in

the country but to overwhelming population of the country who are against creating a religious divide. It is still more shocking to people like us that it should have been spoken at Avadh University named after Dr. Lohia, the socialist leader, who throughout fought for communal harmony.

The Governor is expected to have an even handed approach to

all the citizens of the State. But when Governor Naik makes a statement which will inevitably cause grave alarm to 18 percent minority population of U.P., I have no doubt that at the minimum it is a fit case where the least that Central Government is expected to do is to transfer him to another state though frankly it is a fit case for removal of the Governor.

–Rajindar Sachar



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# janata

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## **Congress-mukt Bharat**

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Marta Harnecker

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There are many reasons to be peeved with Narendra Modi's performance or total non-performance in some spheres, but we cannot fault him on the issue of working zealously to achieve one of his stated political objectives, namely, to rid India of the (Indian National) Congress. The Congress-mukt target seems to be achievable as election results from assembly poll come in from several states. The latest electoral verdicts are from Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, and in both these states, the Congress emerges as a bit player with virtually no stake in government-formation. Indeed, the number of states coming under the ever-rolling BJP Juggernaut is rising. While only a few non-BJP non-Congress parties have benefited from the pro-BJP pro-Modi "waves", the Congress is a loser on all fronts. Electoral verdicts are notoriously undependable as barometers of political trends and preferences and hence it will be profoundly unwise to bet on the future. However, there must be many in the nation wondering whether the Congress will be around at all to participate in and field candidates for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The unfortunate aspect of the current political situation is that the

BJP Juggernaut to which we referred earlier is being allowed to roll on and on without a challenge. While this may be unfortunate, it is the reality which acts as a telling commentary on the steady decline of some major parties, specially the Congress and the Left groupings, and the failure of other parties to build an effective anti-BJP anti-saffron parivar opposition. While the Janata Parivar parties, all off-shoots of the parent Janata Party which had the blessings of great socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan are now awake to the dire need to stop the Juggernaut's roll, the party most affected, the Congress is still in slumber. A sleeping Congress is an advantage for the awake Janata Parivar, but the Parivar needs a little time to re-group and consolidate. While this situation seems to disturb the "traditional" Congressmen (meaning those who have been with the party all through the post-independence years attracted to it by its secular ideology), the Congress leadership personified by the mother and son, seem oblivious to the dangers ahead. The declining confidence in the capacity of the mother and son seems to have led to the public articulation of the demand for roping in Priyanka Gandhi to involve herself more

deeply in Congress politics and administration. According to “insiders” quoted by a news report in the “Deccan Chronicle” (December 24, 2014), the young Gandhi has not emerged as “a vote-catcher, effective campaigner or a strategist in the Lok Sabha (2014) elections and in the nine assembly polls in the last two years. Let us add Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand to the list, although the “young Gandhi” was not featured in the campaign in both the states. According to another report in the same paper, the BJP chief Amit Shah, is now strategizing victories in Delhi and Bihar, the two states which will go to the polls early in the new year. UP next. This gentleman is proving to be Modi’s electoral mascot, given the way states keep falling into the BJP kitty because of his magic. He has his eyes set on the south which has so far not fallen for the BJP.

The party feels it is best equipped, and backed by the irresistible Modi charisma, to fill this vacuum in Tamil Nadu, and exploit the favourable pro-BJP climate in Andhra and Telengana to its advantage and then edge out the Congress in Kerala. However, all speculation over the continuation of the BJP’s good fortune heavily depends on the election planks on which Modi built his campaign for seizing power from the Congress. The buzz word which delivered the goods to him was “development” but the emphasis on this seems to be fading and being replaced by other buzz words which are the saffron parivar’s favourites and the RSS’ war cries.

Indeed, the RSS and the BJP ranks have suddenly become over-active in selling the RSS doctrines. BJP stalwarts and the

*(Continued on Page 14)*

## Was Gandhi a traitor?

**Pannalal Surana**

BJP M.P. Sakshi Maharaj, while speaking in the Lok Sabha, eulogized Nathuram Godse, killer of Mahatma Gandhi, as “patriot”. After a volley of protests, the Maharaj expressed regret.

However, news appeared in a number of dailies that a number of persons belonging to some saffron organizations held ceremonies to pay tributes to Nathuram Godse on 15<sup>th</sup> November, Godse’s birthday anniversary.

There is reason to believe that there are many people belonging to that stream who share the sentiments of Sakshi Maharaj .

If Godse was a patriot, should we presume that Gandhi was a renegade.

The question arises –what constitutes patriotism? Godse and his ilk were angry with the Old Man because they felt that he was responsible for the partition of the country and further that he prevailed on the Government of India to pay Pakistan a sum of rupees 55 crores, which was due to Pakistan.

It is necessary to trace the history of partition. Second World War broke out in Europe in 1939. Hitler, then the supreme leader of Germany, attacked Poland for no reason. England, then a great world power, decided to plunge in the war because a great danger loomed large over humanity. It was the boastful philosophy of Hitler that only the Nordic Aryan race of Germany was capable to rule over the world. In his fascist philosophy, there was no place for democracy.

It was a frightening situation. However, Congress leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and Moulana Azad asked the British to declare that they would grant independence to India after the war was over, so that Indian people can participate in war efforts wholeheartedly. The British declined. Indian masses were ready to join freedom struggle. To drive a wedge in the unity of Indian people, the British had instigated secretly Muslim League Leader Jinnah to raise demand for Pakistan which he did gladly. This was not good omen. Congress Leaders carried on mass campaign to strengthen unity of the people and also be prepared for agitation. “Quit India” resolution was passed at the Congress conference on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1942. The Government rounded up all the main leaders of the Congress overnight. Next day there was mass upheaval. Thousands of people thronged the roads. The police resorted to ruthless lathi charge and firing. Hundreds of women and men lost their lives. However, the British rulers sent an emissary to talk to the Congress leaders over transfer of power. The Cabinet mission placed a plan of granting power to eleven provinces and 550 princely states if the Congress and Muslim League did not arrive at an agreed proposal. That was a frightening proposal. It would amount to liquidating the Indian nation-state. To avoid that calamity, Nehru and Sardar Patel agreed to Viceroy Mountbaton’s plan to partition the country in two parts – India and Pakistan. From there, they went to Gandhiji and conveyed the matter. Gandhi felt shattered. His two great lieutenants had given

*(Continued on Page 11)*

# Public sector insurance on sale

Neeraj Jain

The BJP government is attempting to get the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill 2008 passed by the Parliament, which is aimed at increasing the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in private sector insurance companies from the present 26% to 49%. The Bill also proposes to allow public sector insurance companies to mobilise money from the capital market, thus diluting the government's shareholding. Earlier, the UPA government had tried hard to get the very same bill passed by the Parliament when it was in power, but had failed due to opposition by the BJP; now, in a reversal of roles, the BJP government is attempting to get the Parliament to approve the Bill, and the Congress is trying to block it.

Ever since India began globalisation two decades ago, successive governments at the Centre have been attempting to gradually privatise the public sector insurance companies, which are amongst the best insurance companies in the world. These companies include the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) and its former subsidiaries, the Oriental Insurance Company, New India Assurance, United India Insurance and National Insurance Company. The first step was taken in 1994 when the government set up a rubber stamp committee, the Malhotra committee, to examine the problems afflicting the insurance industry. It duly recommended the entry of domestic and foreign private entities in the insurance sector

and denationalisation of the public sector insurance companies. Based on these recommendations, in 1999, the government permitted private sector firms to enter both the life and non-life business, with a cap of 26% on ownership by foreign firms. In 2000, the four subsidiaries of the GIC were made into independent companies, and GIC was converted into a national re-insurer — so that they could be privatised piecemeal. In 2008, the UPA government introduced the above mentioned Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill to hike foreign holding in insurance joint ventures to 49%; all attempts by the UPA to get the Bill passed in Parliament failed due to opposition from several political parties, including the BJP.

The opening up of the insurance sector has led to the entry of a stream of private players into the business. Presently, apart from the public sector insurance companies, there are 22 private life insurance companies and 18 general insurance companies (including two specialised State owned firms, the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India and Agricultural Insurance Corporation of India) populating the industry.

According to the government, raising the FDI cap will bring in much needed investment into the “suffering” insurance sector. Defending the Bill, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley claimed that it would help mobilise much needed investment in the insurance sector and help its expansion which is necessary as benefits of insurance

in India have not reached to a large section of the people as insurance penetration and density are very low.<sup>1</sup> Precisely the very same points had been made by P. Chidambaram when he was the Finance Minister and was attempting to get the Parliament to approve the very same Bill: “At present, the penetration of insurance, measured by total premium as proportion of GDP (gross domestic product), is only 4.4% in the life insurance segment and 0.76% in the non-life insurance segment. In a population of 120-crore plus, a very small number of people have insurance. The FDI cap of 26% must be raised and additional capital brought in to facilitate the faster spread of insurance. The insurance companies are in need of additional capital to expand their operations.”<sup>2</sup> The hope has also been expressed that this increase in capital investment into the insurance sector would also help increase investments in infrastructure, “one of the key priorities if growth is to be revived” — to quote an editorial in the *Business Standard*.<sup>3</sup>

Jaitley (like his predecessor Chidambaram) is lying through his teeth. India's public sector insurance companies are not suffering; on the contrary, they are amongst the best insurance companies in the world. Inviting private players, including foreign ones, into the domestic insurance sector is not going to increase penetration of insurance in the country, neither is it going to result in increased investments into infrastructure. On the other hand, what is definitely going to happen

is that frauds are going to increase, as private insurance companies are infamous for swindling policy holders. Let us examine these issues in greater detail.

### Insurance penetration

Insurance penetration is defined as the ratio of total premium income to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. Actually, the insurance penetration in India is bound to be low, comparing it to countries with much higher per capita incomes is totally meaningless. As the Swiss Reinsurance Company points out in one of its reports (called *Sigma*), “Demand for insurance depends on disposable income.”<sup>4</sup> The amount of income a person would be willing to spend on insurance depends on his income level. In a country where more than 70% of the population lives at or below subsistence levels, obviously the percentage of population with savings to spare for spending on insurance is going to be very small.

Despite this constraint, the performance of India's public sector insurance companies in mobilising premiums has been remarkable. The life insurance penetration in India at 4.4% is actually higher than the global average of 4%! Astonishingly, this figure is also higher than the United States' 3.5% and Germany's 3.3%!<sup>5</sup> This high level of insurance penetration is all the more remarkable, given that these countries have a per capita income 10 times that of India. In fact, even the IMF, in its 2013 *Country Report* on insurance sector in India, has admitted that 'India is a clear outperformer in terms of expected life insurance penetration and is broadly in line with expectations in the non-life sector.'<sup>6</sup> In another commendation of

the performance of India's insurance industry, the World Economic Forum *Financial Development Report 2012* places India at the top of global rankings in terms of life insurance density (measured as a ratio of direct premium to per capita GDP of 2011), and third in terms of non-life insurance density.<sup>7</sup>

This outstanding performance is obviously not because of the entry of private players into the insurance sector. Because of the painstaking efforts of the LIC, life insurance penetration has steadily increased over the years, even during the years when the LIC had complete monopoly over life insurance — it was 0.7% in 1985–86, and doubled to 1.4% in 1997–98. Data put out by the May 1999 *Sigma* report clearly revealed that India's LIC had outperformed the life insurance industry of far more developed countries by a huge margin. Post-liberalisation, the growth of the life insurance industry has been continued to be driven by the LIC. Even after 12 years of competition, LIC retains a market share of 71% in premium income and 83% in the number of policies (in 2012–13). In the non-life sector, the market share of the four PSUs was more than that of the other 18 players combined and stood at 58%.<sup>8</sup>

The reason for this creditable performance is that LIC has gone far beyond what can be called a profitable market (that is, those households who can afford insurance comfortably) into low profit areas. Since nationalisation, LIC has spread out its branches to rural and semi-urban areas in a big way. Through numerous socially purposive schemes, it has helped provide insurance cover to millions of low income households. This is

why the IMF *Country Report* quoted earlier admits: “insurance sector in India has a relatively large footprint relative to other forms of financial intermediation given India's income levels.”<sup>9</sup>

### Mobilising for development

Insurance is one of the means of channelising domestic savings for meeting infrastructural and social investment needs according to national priorities. This was in fact one of the most important reasons for nationalising the insurance industry. At the time of nationalisation of the life insurance industry in 1956, there were 245 private insurers in the life insurance business. Explaining the reasons for nationalising the life insurance business, the then Finance Minister C. D. Deshmukh stated on 19 January, 1956 in a radio broadcast: “The nationalisation of Life Insurance is a further step in the direction of more effective mobilisation of the people's savings. It is a truism which nevertheless cannot too often be repeated, that a nation's savings are the prime mover of its economic development.”<sup>10</sup>

The LIC has fully justified the faith reposed in it. In its very first year of operation, it sold 794585 policies, which was nearly 30% more than the number of policies sold by all the 245 players combined prior to nationalisation.<sup>11</sup>

Ever since then, the public sector insurance companies have contributed huge amounts to successive five-year Plans. Thus, LIC has provided more than Rs. 7 lakh crores to the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007–2012) while the four general insurance companies and GIC of India have contributed about Rs. one lakh crore. A significant part of the investments made by the LIC



are in socially purposive schemes, such as housing, roads, rural electrification, municipal sewerage schemes and the like. Many of these schemes have been granted funds at a lower than market rate.<sup>12</sup>

What is even more amazing, around 25% of internal borrowings of the central government are met by LIC every year.<sup>13</sup>

The government of India invested Rs. 5 crores by way of equity in the LIC in 1956. On this initial investment, dividend paid by the LIC on this amount for the year 2012–13 was an incredible Rs. 1436 crores.<sup>14</sup>

The government of India is claiming that the private sector insurance companies, including foreign companies, would be even more successful than the public sector insurance companies in mobilising people's savings for investment in infrastructure. The reality is the exact opposite, as the government's own reports admit. Over the four-year period 2005–09, of the total investment of Rs. 57103 crores made by insurance companies in the infrastructural sectors, nearly 90% of the investment was made by public sector companies; the share of the private sector companies was just 10%, despite the fact that they had a market share of 30–35% in new premium incomes. Commenting on this, the *Economic Survey 2009–10* observed: private sector insurance companies are yet to make large-scale investments in the infrastructure sector.<sup>15</sup> Given this scenario, the *Economic Survey* admitted that meeting the infrastructure investment target of 9% of the GDP would be an extremely challenging task during the Eleventh plan period.<sup>16</sup>

Even assuming that the private sector insurance companies are successful in mobilising a larger portion of domestic savings as compared to the public sector companies (which of course they can never do, for reasons discussed below), why should the private insurance companies invest according to national priorities of development? They would be more interested in investing in sectors where they get the maximum returns. Allowing foreign insurance companies to take control of our domestic savings is even more stupid!

The huge difference in the approach of public sector and private sector insurance companies towards the funds mobilised by them in the form of premium incomes, is also illustrated by their Operating Expense Ratio (Salaries and other management expenses as a percentage of premium income). The IMF study quoted above also notes that the Operating Expense Ratio in LIC was just 6.6% in 2010, as compared to 20.9% of the private sector.<sup>17</sup> This implies that the public sector companies are much more responsible to their policy holders and the country, while the private sector companies are more interested in siphoning off money under various guises.

### **Risky business**

The performance indicators of the Indian public sector insurance companies given above clearly reveal that they have outperformed the industry of far more developed countries by a huge margin. Why have the public sector insurance companies been able to achieve such a high insurance penetration ratio?

The answer is simple: their public sector nature. Because of this, people are willing to entrust their hard-earned savings to them, they know that these public sector companies will not swindle them or run away with their savings.

Insurance is a very risky business. The insured (policy holder) pays a sum in advance (called premium) to the insurance company in lieu of a promise that the company will fully or partially meet the costs of some future event (such as an accident, fire, theft or sickness or provide for dependents in case of death), the occurrence of which is uncertain. The insurer deploys the funds in investments that offer returns that ensure the availability of adequate funds in case that event actually occurs and the insured person files a claim.

There are huge risks here. The insurance company will have to make an estimate of how many of the insured people will file claims, and will have to price the policy such that the sums collected and invested yield sufficient stable returns to cover the claims. The insurance company may underestimate the probability of claims arising. Or it may make wrong investment choices — like for example invest in risky instruments that promise higher returns, but have higher risks, like shares or derivatives. In either case, it can run into huge losses.

There is also another possibility. Since insurance is only a promise by the insurance company to pay the costs for some future event, it makes the insurance business particularly susceptible to fraud and malpractice. On a small equity base, massive funds can be mobilised, and then the insurance company can just declare

bankruptcy and vanish — making it an ideal hunting ground for fly-by-night operators.

This is precisely the reason why the insurance sector was nationalised in the first place. Insurance industry in India, from its beginnings in the last quarter of the nineteenth century till the initial years after independence, was in the private sector. In 1956, life insurance was nationalised; 245 Indian and foreign companies were taken over and amalgamated to establish the LIC. In 1971–72, general insurance was nationalised, four general insurance companies took over the business of 107 private companies, with the GIC as the holding company.<sup>18</sup> These decisions to nationalise were taken because the private insurance companies were indulging in innumerable malpractices and even outright swindling. Companies would simply declare bankruptcy and vanish, depriving lakhs of policy holders of their life's hard-earned savings. Most of the big private insurance companies were controlled by India's big business houses; the list included some of the best known industrialists — the Birlas, Tatas, Singhanias and Dalmias — and they would often siphon off the resources raised from policy holders into other enterprises. Legislation had proved totally ineffective in checking these frauds, and eventually the government was left with no alternative but to take over and nationalise the insurance sector.<sup>19</sup>

During the debate in Parliament in February–March 1956 on the nationalisation of life insurance, the then Finance Minister, C.D.Deshmukh, had made the following observation on the ingenuity displayed by the insurance

companies in circumventing legislation to defraud policy holders:

*... the number of ways in which fraud can be practised which was 42 in Kautilya's days has risen to astronomical figures these days.<sup>20</sup>*

### **Crooks, scoundrels...**

Such swindling in the insurance sector is actually a global phenomenon. In the US, insurance companies routinely pay people 40–70% less than what their policies promise when they suffer tragedies like their homes are destroyed in fires or they suffer car accidents, leading to soaring profits. Thousands of complaints have been filed with state insurance department and courts. Being politically very powerful, the insurance companies use all kinds of legal tricks to keep the cases dragging on for years, till the plaintiffs tire out and accept what the insurers offer. The US does not provide universal health care to its citizens. Health care in the US is very costly; however, health insurance premiums are so high — they rose by a whopping 159% between 1990 and 2010 — that the number of non-elderly uninsured Americans increased from 41 million in 2004 to 49 million in 2010.<sup>21</sup>

Worse, hundreds of insurance companies in the developed countries have been declaring bankruptcy every year, because of speculative investments and unethical practices.<sup>22</sup> Lloyd's of London, Britain's fabled insurance market, ran up billions of dollars of losses in the late–1980s and early 1990s that left thousands of its individual investors in financial ruin. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation, underwriting 'errors' was a major cause for its mounting losses, which

is a euphemism for recklessness and lack of principles.<sup>23</sup>

In the US, the number of failures reached such scandalous proportions that a sub-committee of the US House of Representatives investigated insurance companies' insolvencies. In its report titled *Failed Promises* submitted in February 1990, the committee found the US insurance industry to be marked by "scandalous mismanagement and rascality by certain persons entrusted with operating insurance companies, along with an appalling lack of regulatory controls to detect, prevent and punish such activities." The Report goes on to say:

*relatively few crooks, scoundrels and incompetents are capable of bankrupting huge companies and possibly the entire industry.... Fast operators in the industry are ignoring the rules, creating new schemes to enrich themselves, and walking away unscathed.<sup>24</sup>*

That was more than two decades ago. Things have not changed much since then, as the failure and \$150 billion bailout of global insurance major American International Group (AIG) in September 2008 made clear. AIG was the world's biggest insurer in terms of market capitalisation. It failed because it made huge investments in exotic financial instruments in search of high returns. So long as the going was good, no one asked any questions; but when the stock market collapsed in 2008, the investments became worthless and AIG verged on bankruptcy; the government was forced to step in and pour in taxpayers' dollars to bailout the company as its collapse could have triggered a chain of bankruptcies, threatening the stability of the entire financial sector.<sup>25</sup>

	<b>31-12-1957 (Just after nationalisation)</b>	<b>31-03-2013</b>
Premium Income	Rs.89 cr.	Rs.2,08,589 cr.
Life Fund (Sum total of premiums and interest earnings less expenses of management and claims)	Rs.410 cr.	Rs.14,33,103 cr.

**World record in claims settlement**

In contrast to this huge global insurance scam, the Indian public sector insurance companies have been beacons of stability. The performance figures for the LIC speak for themselves:<sup>26</sup>

The public sector insurance companies have conscientiously kept their promise to their policy holders. One of the best ways to measure the reliability of an insurance company is its claims settlement record. While the international claim settlement ratio (average) is an abysmal 40%, the figure for LIC for 2011-12 was an incredible 97.42%, a world record (and for the GIC, it was 74%). The percentage of claims repudiated was a mere 1.3%. [It is probably because of the LIC that the private life insurance companies in India are also forced to settle a high percentage of claims, much higher than their global counterparts, but lower than the LIC — their claims settlement record was 89.34%, and their percentage of repudiations was 7.82%, in 2011-12.]<sup>27</sup>

**Safety guarantees to go ...**

The government is seeking to privatise not just the public sector insurance companies, but also the public sector banks, the workers' provident funds corpus and pension funds corpus.

Just like the insurance companies, the public sector banks and provident funds / pension funds have played a crucial role in India's development plans. They have mobilised the savings of the common people to the tune of hundreds of thousands of crores of rupees, and put them at the disposal of the government for investment in national priorities like agriculture, small industries, housing, rural electrification, development of backward areas, infrastructure, and the like. Once the control of these institutions and funds passes into the hands of the private sector, they will utilise this capital for furthering their interests of profit accumulation rather than for national interests.

The deposits mobilized by the public sector banks alone had crossed Rs. 19 lakh crores as on March 31, 2007. Once the public sector banks are de-nationalized, there is no guarantee that their private owners will not indulge in financial mismanagement or outright cheating and declare bankruptcy. The East Asian financial crisis of 1997 saw numerous private financial institutions going into liquidation. Some of the biggest private sector banks in the developed countries have collapsed in recent years, especially after the 2008 financial crisis — they were all indulging in

speculation with people's savings.<sup>28</sup> In India, during the past many years, numerous cooperative sector banks have gone bankrupt because of fraud by their directors, resulting in lakhs of ordinary people losing their hard-earned life savings. However, because of government controls, no public sector bank in India has ever closed down. This guarantee will end, once these banks are privatized. Imagine what will happen if say the Bank of Maharashtra declares bankruptcy and downs its shutters all of a sudden one day!

Likewise, the government has also taken the first steps to privatise the management of the workers' provident fund corpus, which had by 2008 grown to a huge Rs. 2.4 lakh crores, and allow the private fund managers to invest the funds in the stock markets. Similarly, it is also moving towards privatising pension funds, allowing foreign players to gradually take control of these funds, end government guarantee on pensions and allow the pension funds to be invested in the stock markets in the name of higher returns. What happens when the stock market collapses?

The recent stock market collapse has led to the disappearance of billions of dollars from pension plans of workers around the world (that is, wherever they are privatized). In the USA, state and local governments' pension funds support some 27 million Americans, and many lost a fifth of their value when the stock markets collapsed in 2008.<sup>29</sup> The California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), the largest pension fund in the US and fourth largest in the world, suffered one of its worst annual declines since the fund's inception in 1932. In October 2007, it had

\$260 billion in assets, comparable to the GDP of Poland, Indonesia or Denmark; just a year later, the worth of CalPERS was down to \$186 billion! Tens of thousands of retiring state employees now face the stark choice of accepting much reduced pension checks or working past their retirement age.<sup>30</sup>

### Then why privatisation?

Why is the government seeking to privatise the financial sector, and hand over control of the country's domestic savings to foreign private corporations?

Why is the government hell-bent on privatising the public sector insurance companies

- which are amongst the best run, most trustworthy and reliable insurance companies in the world;
- which have mobilised such huge amounts of domestic savings, to the tune of lakhs of crores, and made them available to the government for investment according to national development priorities;
- which paid out a dividend of more than Rs. 1400 crores to the government in 2012–13 on its initial investment of just Rs. 5 crores.

Once the government fully recommends the Malhotra committee recommendations, privatises the public sector insurance companies and removes the cap on FDI inflows into the insurance sector, the control of the Indian insurance industry will gradually pass into the hands of the foreign insurance companies, as they are gigantic and far bigger than the Indian private sector insurance companies. That would mean:

- control over Indian savings will pass into the hands of foreign

investors (and their Indian collaborators);

- they will not invest the premium incomes mobilised by them into infrastructural and socially oriented sectors;
- instead, these 'crooks, scoundrels and fast operators' (epithets used by United States Senators to describe the US insurance companies) are then going to resort to all kinds of cheatings and loot these hard earned savings of the Indian people, like they have done all over the globe.

Why are our country's rulers mortgaging the interests of the people of the country, and the future development of our country, to benefit big foreign corporations?

### India on 'Sale'

It has actually been happening for the last two decades, since 1991 to be more precise. The Indian economy was on the verge of external account bankruptcy, it was trapped in an external debt crisis. India's foreign creditors, that is, the USA and other developed countries — also known as the imperialist countries — were looking for just such an opportunity. They had been forced to retreat and grant independence to India and other third world countries due to their powerful independence struggles. Since then, they had always been looking for alternate ways to bring the former colonial world back under their hegemony, ensnare it once again in the imperialist network, so that they could once again control its raw material resources and exploit its markets.

They now took advantage of this crisis to impose stringent conditionalities on the government of India. Through the World Bank and the IMF (which are controlled

by them), they arm-twisted the Indian government into agreeing to a restructuring of the Indian economy. The basic elements of this so-called 'Structural Adjustment Program' were:<sup>31</sup>

- Removal of all controls on import of foreign goods;
- Removal of all controls on foreign investment in all sectors of the economy;
- Privatisation of the public sector, including financial sector and welfare services;
- Removal of all controls placed on profiteering, even in essential services like drinking water, food, education and health.

This restructuring of the economy at the behest of India's foreign creditors has been given the high-sounding name of globalisation. Since then, governments at the Centre and the states have continued to change, but globalisation of the economy has continued unabated.

The essence of globalisation is that the Indian government is now running the economy solely for the profit maximisation of giant foreign corporations and their junior partners, India's big business houses. These corporations are on a no-holds barred looting spree. They are plundering mountains, rivers and forests for their immense natural wealth. They are seizing control of public sector corporations, including public sector banks and insurance companies, created through the sweat and toil of the common people, at throwaway prices. Privatisation is also enabling them to enter essential services — including education, health, electricity, transport, even drinking water — and transform these into instruments of naked profiteering. Because these are



essential services, the profits are huge.

The government of India has given up all concern about the future of the country, about the livelihoods of the people of the country, about making available essentials like food, water, health and education to the people at affordable rates so that they can live like human beings and develop their abilities to the fullest extent, about conserving the environment for our future generations. It is now only concerned about how to provide new and profitable investment opportunities for foreign MNCs and their Indian cohorts.

### **FDI in Insurance**

Taking control of the financial sector is crucial to the designs of the foreign corporations and their governments if they are to transform this country into their economic colony. Economic colonies must not develop according to their own priorities; they must develop according to the priorities of their masters sitting far away in Washington. And so, ever since India began globalisation in 1991, the World Bank, the IMF, and the imperialist governments have been demanding that the government end its control over the country's financial sector, in other words, privatise it, and allow foreign investors to enter and take it over. The Indian government has been more than willing; the Malhotra committee that recommended the privatisation of the insurance sector was essentially a rubber stamp committee that only echoed the wishes of India's foreign creditors. If it has proceeded slowly to implement its recommendations, it is not because of any resistance on its part, but because of the strong resistance put up by the insurance sector employees.

Two decades of globalisation has pushed the Indian economy further into the clutches of India's foreign creditors. The globalisation conditionalities have led to a rapid worsening of India's foreign exchange crisis. Import liberalisation has led to a sharp rise in our trade deficit. It has increased from \$2.8 billion in 1991–92 to a whopping \$191 billion in 2012–13. As a result, our current account deficit has shot up to \$87.8 billion for the financial year 2012–13, the highest levels since 1991; and our external debt has zoomed to an astronomical \$390 billion at the end of March 2013, a rise by more than 4 times over 1991–92!<sup>32</sup>

This spiralling whirlpool of foreign debt has made the country more and more dependent on foreign exchange inflows (or FDI) to prevent the economy from once again plunging into foreign exchange bankruptcy. And so the foreign corporate armies and their concubine governments are able to impudently trample upon our honour and dignity, yankee-kick us into implementing more and more economic reforms, force us to open up more and more sectors of the economy for gigantic multinationals to invest and plunder.... A requiem for Swaraj in just over half a century!

With foreign pressure mounting to accelerate economic reforms, the government in September–October 2012 announced a slew of decisions to win the approval of foreign investors and international credit rating agencies. Among the measures announced were clearances for FDI in multi-brand retail and civil aviation, hikes in diesel and petrol prices, changes to the forward contracts regime, and permission for FDI to enter the pension fund

industry subject to a ceiling of 49%. As a part of these decisions, the Cabinet also announced a package of "insurance reforms" on October 4, that included hike in the ceiling on foreign equity ownership from 26 to 49 percent in the insurance industry. (This liberalisation in the insurance industry is only symbolic, as it requires Parliamentary approval.) The purpose of announcing so many reforms in quick succession was to establish that the government was committed to economic reforms, and persuade the foreign investors not to withdraw their investments from the country and instead increase their investments.

India's elites have been euphoric over globalisation. The capitalist classes are no longer interested in the long-term growth prospects of the economy; they are keen to become the junior partners of foreign MNCs and increase their profits. The swanky upper classes are in raptures over the entry of foreign MNCs, as the world's most trendy consumer goods are now available in the country. Hoarders and blackmarketeers are having a field day — as laws controlling their activities have been relaxed in the name of freeing up the markets. And so, for their narrow selfish interests, the Indian elites too are demanding that the Indian government open up the insurance sector for FDI. Their faithful servants, India's traitorous intellectuals, have launched a huge propaganda offensive to convince the Indian people that 'FDI in Insurance' will lead to increased FDI inflows, more infrastructural development, more jobs, blah blah blah.

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

consent and it was evident that the British were bent upon dividing India. After the conclusion of the war, a cold war ensued between Britain and USA on the one hand and Soviet Union on the other. Britain wanted a strong military base south of the Soviet Union. India under Congress would not agree to that. So they wanted an obedient country which Pakistan would agree to be. It is a fact of history that the British were responsible for the partition and not Gandhi.

It is to be noted that when Mountbatten's partition plan was published, nobody from the RSS or Hindu Mahasabha dared to challenge it. They remained silent and started hurling abuses towards Gandhi.

Now, the issue of Rs.55 crores. As India would get capital city of

## Fraud on the Constitution

That the Central Government should unashamedly admit that it is issuing ordinances because it could not get the legislations passed in parliament is by itself a solid reason for the President to refuse to issue the ordinance. If the matter was so urgent why was the parliament sessions not extended. The Supreme Court (1987) has categorically held that the ordinance making power "is in the nature of emergency power to take action when the legislature is not in session, this power is to be used to meet an extraordinary situation and it can not be allowed to be perverted to serve political ends".

Is the urgency born out of compulsions to honour a secret pact with foreign invertors, who in any case will not invest in this uncertain state of law. Why this unseemly hurry. L.I.C. has given to the Central government dividend for the last 5 years, namely (5% surplus fund in crore)

2008 – 09	2009 – 10	2010 – 11	2011 – 12	2012 – 13
929.12	1030.92	1137.62	1281.23	1436.38

The Ordinance on Coal Mines is in violation of the Coal Mines Nationalization Act., which prohibits mining of coal by private parties. This device is a crude attempt to set at naught coal nationalization law by ordinance which is totally impermissible. It is to be hoped that President will decline to issue the Ordinance.

**- Rajindar Sachar**

Dehli with all the buildings, etc. while Pakistan would have to build new capital city. So as it happens at the time of partition of a family estate, India had to agree to pay Rs. 300 crores to Pakistan for that. Till December. 1947, Rs 245 crores were paid to Pakistan. However, the latter was not transferring large amount as price of properties of the refugees who had crossed over to India. On 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1948, Sardar Patel met Gandhi and said that: as Pakistan is not transferring refugee property money, we would like to defer payment of balance Rs 55 crores to them. To that, Gandhi said: that now India is a member of world community, other nations would feel India to be untrustworthy as it does not discharge treaty obligations if you do not pay Rs 55 crores. Gandhi wanted to protect the trustworthiness

of our nation. That should not have been taken as offering gift to the Muslims. The whole approach of Hindutva section was prejudiced.

But can Gandhi be labeled as a traitor? Right from 1915 to 1947, he led many struggles against British rule. Also he roped in thousands of men and women in constructive activities like Khadi, public cleanliness. prohibitions, mass literacy and removal of untouchability. The present Prime minister has launched Swacch Bharat Campaign as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. In his *man ki bat* sermons Narendra Modi exhorted people to purchase at least one dress of Khadi. As also give up vices like drugs and drinking. Is this all anti-national?

# Do voters matter

D. K. Giri

Democracy is like a muscle; in order to keep it fit, it has to be trained regularly, not just running round on the day of elections. But that is exactly what is happening. That is why, libertarian politics is called electionised, not democratized. The irony is that the voters or citizens are supposed to be sovereign and custodians of democracy, but they flex their muscles only on the day of elections. It is another matter that voters are let down even if they cast their votes in large numbers and with great enthusiasm. In 1971 general elections, Indira Gandhi said '*garibi hatao*' (remove poverty) and people voted for her overwhelmingly, and she imposed internal Emergency four years later, curtailing the civil liberties and political rights of India's citizens. Next, Janata Party came to power under the exemplary mentorship of Jayaprakash Narayan to restore democracy and provide progressive governance. But the party fell by the wayside mid-way under the weight of their own internal contradictions, mainly their inability to handle internal party democracy. Voters were let down again. In 1984, Rajiv Gandhi came to power with an unprecedented majority with the image of 'Mr. Clean' but came up against a mega scam that drew unprecedented media attention and public outrage. Voters were betrayed.

Another factor letting down the voters is the measure of representation in a democracy that is representative. In the first-past-the-post system, a party with minority of votes polled can get the majority of

seats in the legislatures. For instance in the last elections, BJP got 31 per cent of the votes, but got the absolute majority in the parliament and is ruling with 69 per cent of voters not voting for them.

The right and opportunity to vote once in every five years normally is what the voters have got. In between the elections they are helpless bystanders in the political or governance process. Hence they feel let down, become cynical and take to unlawful actions to vent their frustration and alienation. The ruling elite begin to worry and try to pacify them, dance around them during elections, and thus the cycle of alienation-allurement-alienation continues. There is another cycle of voters' alienation, the cycle which feeds on itself. The more the voters withdraw from public participation excepting voting, the more leaders/their representatives ignore them, the more irresponsible and untrustworthy the leaders become, the more voters withdraw in anger and helplessness.

The leaders who are basically the representatives of the voters or to be politically correct, citizens (we use voters as they are active and structural part of a democracy), wonder why their voters do not like them and how they would win them back to continue in power. But it is not happening and that leads to the weakening of democracies and absence of good governance. The attempt in this essay is to explore options of making democracies vibrant, effective and people-friendly

by structurally engaging voters - as a matter of fact, restoring the primacy of voters in a democracy.

In order to do so, we need to appreciate the place of voters in a genuine democracy. Woodrow Wilson, the noble laureate and 28<sup>th</sup> president of United States said, "a democratic republic cannot endure unless a great many of its citizens stand ready and willing to sacrifice for the nation if need be". He complimented the citizens' role and said, "The American Constitution has functioned well, most of the time, because conscientious men and women have given it flesh". Another renowned and popular president of United States, John F. Kennedy had said, "American constitutional democracy requires the dedication of an attentive, knowledgeable, and reflective citizenry".

Democracy is based on a few assumptions vis-à-vis the voters which must be examined and tested occasionally to see if they are working truly or not. First, government is people's creation, not their masters. Thus, if people/voters are sovereign, it is their responsibility to take upon their shoulders the task of seeing that democratic law and order, justice and freedom are maintained. The second assumption is that citizens/voters would undertake the responsibility for the ordinary functioning of the civil social order and manage their own affairs. Thus the success of democratic political structure is a function of voters engaged, politically and socially, on a daily basis; voters



serving on school boards, taking part in neighborhood activities, protecting common resources, petitioning legislatures, supporting the government in different ways and so on. The third assumption is: the citizens in a democracy would enjoy certain rights - political, social, economic and human - some of which are fundamental and cannot be abridged.

The above assumptions are based on the concepts of rights and responsibilities. The rights approach undergirds liberalism, whereas the responsibility approach relates to communitarianism. Both approaches, in combination, define democracies. It is universally agreed and believed that the well-being of a democracy depends upon the informed and effective participation of citizens (voters) concerned with preservation of individual rights and promotion of common goods. But, there has to be a fourth assumption that becomes both glue and the gear for rights and responsibilities. That is reward. Compared to libertarian (rights-based) and communitarian (responsibility-based), this approach is pragmatic (reward-based). This approach needs elaborate discussion across democracies and integration into political structure. Without concretely defining and providing for reward for voters in the political system, voters shun politics beyond voting and democracy wanes. Voters cannot be made to stay away from politics as Adelai Stevenson profoundly said, "citizens are the ruler as well as the ruled, the law-givers as well as law-abiding, the beginning and end in democracy".

Let us now discuss all the three types of assumptions - Rights, Responsibilities and Rewards. The first type needs no elaboration as

rights are written into a constitution, and they have to be given. Of course, there are social, economic, cultural and even political obstacles to accessing rights. For instance, women are equal to men in law, but cannot secure the equal status because of social and cultural impediments; likewise child labor is banned, getting free education is the right of a child, but the children, out of school, languish as child labourers. But violations of rights are due to social anomalies, economic deprivation, and political inefficiency, which can be corrected. Rights are entitlements, constitutional guaranties, and the state cannot deprive the voters/citizens of them. On the other hand, responsibility is a voters' domain, the onus is on them to deliver it. This is a major part of democratic political system and the governance process that is forgotten. In all democracies, mainly the developing ones, a mighty effort has to be launched to make the voters aware of the principle of democratic governance, and of their responsibilities to their neighbors, the society, the state and the country.

There is a contradiction that we, the voters, are living with. On the one hand, we recognize that the freedom we cherish cannot be secured unless we take part in public life, in our own self-governance. On the other hand, we resist doing so preferring instead to pursue our own interest and private lives. Interestingly, we are glued to a libertarian democracy where we are concerned about our own rights, not responsibilities. We are not embracing a communitarianism that emphasizes responsibilities in terms of civic habits, common good over personal desires, mutual support, group action, generation of social capital, etc. The communitarian

or responsibility-approach is conspicuous by its absence from democracies. Voters are not active beyond voting, they are not engaged in social and political action. A handful of those belonging to political parties are into various protest activities. But common voters do not go to political meetings except in times of elections, do not join neighborhood activities, do not contact public officials, do not join advocacy groups, nor do they take part in boycott, picketing, demonstrations, no expressing of opinions in public fora, etc. They are not into mutual support or compassionate action like attending to an accident-victim, or saving man or a woman from violent attacks. A few days ago, there was an acid attack on a lady doctor in a busy, populated area of New Delh , no one bothered to catch the culprit or attend to the victim. Few people bother to report or mend a water tap leaking, or illegal felling of trees or garbage thrown into public place and so on.

The above sad situation begs the question, why are the compassionate actions, civic duties not done? Was it always like this? Or they are declining. We may look at the source of inspiration for such acts of common good. Earlier, they were taught in schools, families and religions. Modern civilization, increasingly influenced by materialism, social atomization has lessened the influence of schools and families. Role of religion has become controversial. More so in India as we followed a nebulous concept called secularism, partly out of Marxist influence, that pushed religions out of public domain. This is, of course, a separate topic of intensive discussion that we need not engage in here, suffice it to say that, religions hardly inspire any more

the virtues of compassion, common good, and responsibility.

So, how do we make the voters maintain their responsibilities: engage in politics, participate in social and political life? That can only be done by rewarding them. Modern civilization does not offer many inducements to performance of duties, except perhaps monetary payment. There must be rewards for good behavior, for performing civic responsibilities, respect for law, civility, and civic-mindedness etc. What are rewards for voters? Effectively none. How can we ask the voters to vote in every election - local, state, national -, ask them to perform their social and political functions and civic duties without any reward whatsoever? Look at the rest of the performers in a democracy - the legislature, judiciary, and executive - councilors, MLAs, MPs, ministers, judges, bureaucrats, any service providers, government or private receive, cash rewards. In fact, the so-called people's representatives get good salaries, pension for life besides lots of perks and privileges. Voters get nothing when they are supposed to defend and maintain democracies and everyone else in the system. Is it not an absurdity that voters, the custodians of democracy, are left high and dry after each election?

The old moralistic argument that voters must be moved by patriotism and attachment to the constitution, not by money, no longer holds. If democracy has to be viewed as way of life, which it is, a civic culture in which voters creatively participate in public life beyond voting, then we must get the voters involved and reward them, in monetary terms, like anyone else in the system. Voters get some money

into their accounts every month for being actively participatory and responsible. The money has to be judiciously calculated and linked to good conduct like that of any other salaried functionary. For instance, if any voter is committing an unlawful act, or is accused of dereliction of his civic duties, (s) he should be punished like any other salaried functionary that includes cutting down, suspension and withdrawal of money to his accounts. Such a practice and a provision would largely contribute to good governance and better law and order situation.

The other reward is: voters must have power, both constitutional-political and relational power. The first type of power will enable voters to recall their representatives if they are found to be corrupt or

irresponsible, to co-decision making by participating in various bodies, for instance police-public cooperation body, and to co-legislation on certain important matters, through referendum. The details of such powers could be worked out. The second type is relational, which enables the voters to do certain things, if power is seen as an enabler. For instance, the voters could have powers to build social capital, run social bodies clubs, neighborhood groups, without government interfering or controlling them, such social innovations are caught in bureaucracy. That must end. Finally, for good governance, and a viable and vibrant democracy, there is no substitute to engaging voters in politics on a daily basis and rewarding them with purse and power.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat have already announced the arrival of Hindu Rashtra and the "ghar wapsi" programme of re-converting Muslim converts back to Hinduism was nothing but bringing the strays back home arguing that those who had embraced Islam had not done so voluntarily but were forced to do so. But even more serious is the news report quoting one of the "ghar wapsi" programme organizers in UP saying that the intention is to make India a Hindu Rashtra by 2021. Muslims and Christians would either be converted to Hinduism or forced to run away from India. It will be upto Modi to decide whether the Indian Constitution remains in force always or is to be replaced by a new one written by the RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other saffronites.

Acharya Javadekar



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# Papal Bomb

Sankara Narayanan

Pope Francis has been known for his unconventional and radical views on earthly matters. In the first manifesto after becoming the head of the Catholic Church eight months ago, he called the church to renew its focus on the poor and launched a salvo against global capitalism. Using unusually blunt language, he sharply criticized the market economy.

The pontiff adds, ‘Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “Thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality’.

“Such an economy kills,” wrote Pope Francis, denouncing the current economic system as “unjust at its roots” and one “which defend(s) the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation.” Such a system, he warned, is creating a “new tyranny.”

Pope Francis seems to move the ball considerably in the direction of the idea that the market has far more power—the power to do good for humanity as well as to dehumanize—than the state. The new document from the 76-year old pontiff, the first to be elected pope from the America and the first non-

European to hold the office in more than 1,000 years, aims at renewing the church’s evangelical role.

Pope Francis, who was elected in last March, has shunned much of the pomp and perks that come with being the head of more than one billion Roman Catholics. The Argentinian Jesuit lives in a Vatican guesthouse and drives a Ford Focus as he promotes a church that “is poor and for the poor.”

The pope urged care for the weakest members of society, particularly the homeless, the addicted, refugees, migrants and elderly. At a recent mass for the sick, he publicly embraced a badly disfigured man, creating an image that became a sensation around the world.

In reaching out to such groups, the church must be prepared to be “bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security,” he wrote in the document. The pontiff singled out as a major challenge of the contemporary world an economic system that produces vast income inequalities, arguing that it leaves the oppressed and marginalized as “leftovers.”

His argument is that the material progress that accompanies the expansion of the market is based on the exclusion and suffering of the powerless, and that this is immoral.

He writes: In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-

down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting.

To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.

Even the tribunes of Occupy Wall Street rarely rose to the rhetorical heights of the new Pope, who goes on: “While the earnings of the minority are growing exponentially, so, too, is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. The imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation.... A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly

imposes its own laws and rules.... The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits. In this system, which tends to devour everything that stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule.”

But the Argentine Pope isn't just a priest who swallowed bits of “The Communist Manifesto”—the more acute bits. Parts of his argument also hark back to the anti-growth and anti-consumerism movements of the sixties and seventies, which have recently seen a rebirth in many parts of the advanced world, particularly among the young.

The core of the Pope's critique is moral and theological rather than economic, and that is what gives it its power. Referring once again to the idolatry of money, he writes: “Behind this attitude lurks a rejection of Ethics and a rejection of God. Ethics has come to be viewed with a certain scornful derision. It is seen as counterproductive, too human, because it makes money and power relative. It is felt to be a threat, since it threatens the manipulation and debasement of the person. In effect, Ethics leads to a God who calls for a committed response which is outside the categories of the marketplace.”

Once again, the latest heir to St. Peter doesn't hold back: ‘Money must serve, not rule!’ The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect, and promote the poor. I exhort you to a generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favors human beings.

*(Continued on Page 18)*

## Kilings in Assam

PUCL strongly condemns the shooting down of unarmed tribals in and outside their homes in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar districts of Assam on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014 by armed squad of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit) (NDFB (S)) faction. Reportedly there are over 75 people killed, including scores of women and children, which largely included many Adivasis and some tribals. PUCL is deeply concerned over the outbreak of deadly, murderous attacks once again. It is apprehensive that unless the situation is handled both firmly and sensitively, a situation of mass death, destruction and displacement will once again recur as it did during the ethnic killings in mid-2012 in Kokrajhar and neighbouring districts resulting in nearly 100 people being killed and over 400,000 people fleeing their homes.

PUCL demands that the police and para-military authorities immediately ensure the safety, security and protection of lakhs of people in the districts of Kokrajhar, Sonitpur and other districts of the Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts adjoining the border areas of Assam – Bhutan. At the same time, it should be stressed that unless the roots of the conflict are addressed and resolved, such violent attacks are bound to recur.

We learn that the NDFB (Songbijit) faction itself is led by a non-Bodo and does not enjoy the support of wider sections of the Bodo people themselves. We also learn that there is great popular resentment, even amongst the Bodos, against the NDFB(S) faction due to their extortionist activities and illegal

and forcible collection of taxes from all communities, including the Bodo. Despite public knowledge of such illegal activities, the state government has done nothing to curb the unlawful activities of this group which is using arms to terrorise local population. In such a situation, to cloak what is clearly criminal activities using the term ‘terrorist’ is to lend legitimacy to the group and give an impression as though they are pursuing a political demand.

At the heart of the Bodo conflict is the long simmering sense of frustration, anger, alienation and disaffection caused by decades of neglect and mistreatment by successive regimes, both at the state and centre, which has kept large sections of the Bodo people in a state of deprivation, impoverishment and backwardness.

There is also a perceived sense of historical injustice to the Bodos in their own homeland. The substantial influx of outsiders coming in as migrant labourers who eventually settle in the area has changed the Bodo – non-Bodo population demographics. In turn this has created communal resentment and tensions which is cynically used by political forces to foster violence. This will need to be firmly put down.

The Governments, both State and Centre, should seriously initiate a major programme aimed at reassuring the Bodos of their historical identity and ensuring their inclusive development. At the same time, the governments should work to bring about greater community integration and harmony amongst different social sections



in the area. Solutions cannot be found through enforcing police or military actions but only through genuine efforts at reconciliation and development which are actually seen to be implemented in the field. Equitable and inclusive development must be seen and felt to be occurring and benefiting all the communities, especially the Bodos. This can be the only sound basis for engendering communal harmony.

PUCL also calls upon all the political parties, especially the ruling Congress (I) party in Assam and the NDA at the Centre, not to indulge in games of finger pointing or apportioning blame but to work together to bring about communal harmony, reconciliation, amity and peace.

**Dr. V. Suresh,**  
*General Secretary, People's  
Union for Civil LibertiesA*

***(Continued on Page 16)***

Last but not the least is this master stroke from Pope Francis: It is not necessary to believe in God to be a good person. In a way, the traditional notion of God is out dated. One can be spiritual but not religious. It is not necessary to go to church and give money - for many, nature can be a church. Some of the best people in history did not believe in God, while some of the worst deeds were done in His name.

**Unquote:** I earnestly wish some of our elected Ministers and MPs pick up the thread from Pope Francis and address the basic bread & butter issues of the people at large instead of frittering away their mandate, time and energy on emotive and volatile issues which have nil relevance to the poor. There is no dearth of Daritra Narayans and Narayanis in the religion they claim to serve and save.

## Low budget ...high benefits

**Bharat Dogra**

At a time when big dam projects with high costs and prolonged construction periods have proved to be a disappointment in many areas, much better results are being obtained at many places from small-scale, low-budget water conservation and rainwater harvesting projects implemented with close involvement of villages.

The success of this approach can be seen in many water conservation projects taken up by the famous Barefoot Collage in Ajmer district. The Jawaja field-centre of the Barefoot College has taken up 8 water harvesting works in Badkochra panchayat - 7 nadis or ponds along with the Paluna anicut project.

Hans Swarup, co-ordinator of Jawaja field centre says, "In these works most of the budget is paid to villagers in the form of wages. In the Bherukhera project particularly 95% of the budget was paid as wages."

Sushila, senior activist at this centre says, "Villagers and particularly village women have a lot of practical wisdom in guiding where the water should be collected, where the structures should be built. Working with their involvement is thus important for success"

Ramkaran, co-ordinator of Barefoot College says, "Relationships of trust established over a long period of interaction with village communities make it possible to get their close cooperation."

Humrai nadi project in Bherukhera village of this panchayat is an

inspiring example of highly cost-effective water harvesting work. The sprawling water body created at a cost of just Rs. 1.75 lakh has created a very useful and beautiful water body which has never gone dry during the last decade. It has recharged wells and hand-pumps in many villages, increasing availability of drinking water as well as irrigation. Drinking water to countless farm and dairy animals as well as wild animals and birds has also been provided.

Chunnilal is a farmer of Saroth village. Thanks to the better water availability in wells as a result of water recharge provided by the pond, he says, he is now able to grow several fruits including guavas, anvlas and lemons, as well as many vegetables. Many villagers not just in Ajmer but also nearby Rajsamand district have benefited, he asserts.

Paluna anicut has been built at a considerable height. Camels were used to bring cement here. Mostly only local materials were used. Only some cement had to be purchased. A pucca cemented wall has been created here to provide storage upto 15 feet. Then there is provision for overflow to a pond. About 100 check dams have been created in the water path heading towards the main structure. All these help to moderate the water flow and improve water retention, contributing to water recharge.

Chunni Singh is a social activist and farmer living near this anicut who worked very hard selflessly

***(Continued on Page 23)***

# 21st century socialism requires a new culture on the left *a Latin American perspective*

Marta Harnecker

When Chávez won the 1998 presidential elections, the neoliberal capitalist model was already foundering. The choice then was whether to re-establish this model, undoubtedly with some changes such as greater concern for social issues, but still motivated by the same logic of profit-seeking, or to go ahead and try to build another model. Chávez had the courage to take the second path and decided to call it “socialism,” in spite of its negative connotations. He called it “21st century socialism,” to differentiate it from the Soviet-style socialism that had been implemented in the 20th century. This was not about “falling into the errors of the past,” into the same “Stalinist deviations” which bureaucratized the party and ended up eliminating popular participation.

The need for people’s participation was one of his obsessions and was the feature that distinguished his proposals from other socialist projects in which the state resolved all the problems and the people received benefits as if they were gifts.

Chávez was convinced that socialism could not be decreed from above, that it had to be built with the people. And he also understood that protagonistic participation is what allows people to grow and achieve self-confidence, that is, to develop

themselves as human beings.

I always remember the first program of *Aló Presidente*, which was broadcast on June 11, 2009, when Chávez quoted at length from a letter that Peter Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist, wrote to Lenin on March 4, 1920:

“Without the participation of local forces, without an organization from below of the peasants and workers themselves, it is impossible to build a new life.

“It seemed that the soviets were going to fulfill precisely this function of creating an organization from below. But Russia has already become a Soviet Republic in name only. The party’s influence over people . . . has already destroyed the influence and constructive energy of this promising institution — the soviets.”

That is why very early on I believed it necessary to distinguish between the socialist project and a model. I understood project to mean the original ideas of Marx and Engels, and model to refer to one form that this project has historically taken. If we analyze Soviet-style socialism, we see that in those countries that implemented this model of socialism, one that Michael Lebowitz has recently called the *socialism of conductors and conducted* based on

a vanguardist mode of production, the people were no longer the protagonist, organs of popular participation were transformed into purely formal entities, and the party was transformed into an absolute authority, the sole depository of truth that controlled all activities: economic, political, cultural.

That is, what should have been a popular democracy was transformed into a dictatorship of the party. This model of socialism, which many have called “real socialism,” is a fundamentally statist, centralist, bureaucratic model, where the key missing factor is popular participation.

Do you remember when this socialism collapsed and there was all this talk about the death of socialism and the death of Marxism? At the time, Eduardo Galeano, a Uruguayan writer that all of you know, said that they had invited us to a funeral we did not belong at. The socialism that died was not the socialist project we had fought for. What happened in reality had little to do with the kind of society Marx and Engel envisaged would replace capitalism. For them, socialism was impossible without popular participation.

Marx and Engel’s original ideas were not only distorted by the actions of the Soviet regime and the

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*Excerpts from the talk given by Marta Harnecker in Spanish on August 15 in Caracas, Venezuela, where she received the 2013 Libertador Prize for Critical Thought for her book Un mundo a construir: Nuevos caminos (Casa del libro, 2013). This article is adapted from the translation by Federico Fuentes published in Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal*

Marxist literature disseminated by that country among the left; they were also downplayed or simply ignored in those countries outside of the Soviet orbit, given the opposition generated by the model that came to be associated with the name of socialism.

It is not commonly known that, according to Marx and Engels, the future society they called communist would facilitate the integral development of all the potentialities of human beings, a development that could only be achieved through revolutionary practice. People would not develop by magic, they would develop because they struggle, they transform (in transforming circumstances, people transforms themselves).

That is why Marx affirmed that it was only natural that the workers with whom the new society would begin to be built would not be pure beings as “the muck of ages” would weigh on them. Which is why he did not condemn them, but rather placed confidence in them, that they would go about liberating themselves from this negative inheritance through revolutionary struggle. He believes in the transformation of people through struggle, through practice.

And Chávez, probably without having read these words by Marx, also understood this. In his first *Aló Presidente* on June 11, 2009, he warned communities that they have to be on guard to avoid sectarianism. He explained:

“[I]f there are people, for example, residents who are not participating in politics, who do not belong to any party, well, it doesn’t matter, they are welcome.

“What’s more, if some from the opposition live there, call them. Let

them come and work, come and demonstrate, be useful, because, well, the homeland is for everyone, we have to open spaces. You will see that through praxis many people will transform themselves because praxis is what transforms a person. Theory is theory, but theory cannot touch the heart, the bones, the nerves, the spirit of the human being and in reality nothing will change. We will not transform ourselves by reading books.

“Books are fundamental, theory is fundamental, but we have to put it into practice, because praxis is what really transforms humans.”

It is also the case that the “collectivist” practices of real socialism, which suppresses individual differences in the name of the collective, had nothing to do with Marxism. Remember, Marx criticized bourgeois law for trying to make people artificially equal instead of acknowledging their differences. By pretending to be the same for everyone, bourgeois law ends up being an unequal right. If two workers collect potatoes and one collects twice as much as the other, should the first be paid twice as much as the second?

Bourgeois law says yes, without taking into consideration that the worker who only collected half as much that day may have been sick, or was never a strong worker because he was always malnourished growing up, and therefore perhaps while putting in the same effort as the first person was only able to do half as much.

Marx, on the other hand, said that any truly fair distribution had to take into account people’s differentiated needs. Hence his maxim: “*From each according to his ability, to each*

*according to his needs.*”

Another of Marx’s ideas that was distorted by both the bourgeoisie and Soviet practice was his defense of common or collective property.

What did the ideologues of the bourgeoisie say? The communists (or socialists) will expropriate everything, your fridge, your car, your home, etc.

How ignorant! Neither Marx nor any socialist or communist has ever thought of expropriating people’s personal belongings. What Marx proposed was the idea of giving society back what originally belonged to them, that is, the means of production, but which was unjustly appropriated by an elite.

What the bourgeoisie does not understand, or does not want to understand, is that there are only two sources of wealth: nature and human labor, and without human labor, the potential wealth contained in nature can never be transformed into real wealth.

Marx pointed out that there is not only real human labor but also past labor, that is, labor incorporated into instruments of labor. The tools, machines, improvements made to land, and, of course, intellectual and scientific discoveries that substantially increased social productivity are a legacy passed down from generation to generation; they are a social heritage — a wealth of the people.

But the bourgeoisie, thanks to a whole process of mystification of capital — one that I don’t have time to go into here — has convinced us that the capitalists are the owners of this wealth due to their efforts, their creativity, their entrepreneurial capacity, and that because they are the owners of the companies they

have the right to appropriate what is produced.

Only a socialist society recognizes this inheritance as being social, which is why it must be given back to society and used for society, in the interest of society as a whole, and not to serve private interests.

These goods, in which the labor of previous generations is incorporated, cannot belong to a specific person, or a specific country, but must instead belong to humanity as a whole.

The question is: how do we ensure this happens? The only way is to de-privatize these means of productions, transforming them into social property. But since the humanity of the early 21st century is still not a humanity without borders, these actions must begin on a country-by-country basis, and the first step is therefore the handing over of ownership of the strategic means of production to a national state which expresses the interests of society.

But simply handing over the strategic means of production to the state represents a mere juridical change in ownership, because if the change in these state companies is limited to that, then the subordination of workers to an external force continues. A new management, which now calls itself socialist, might replace the capitalist management but the alienated status of the workers in the production process remains unchanged. While formally collective property, because the state represents society, real appropriation is still not collective.

That is why Engels argued, “state ownership of the productive forces is not the solution to the conflict” although “concealed within it are the technical conditions that form

the elements of that solution.”

Furthermore, Marx argued that it was necessary to end the separation between intellectual and manual labor that transforms workers into one more cog in the machine. Companies need to be managed by their workers.

That is why Chávez, following through on his ideas, maintained a lot of emphasis on the notion that 21st century socialism could not limit itself to being a state capitalism that left intact work processes that alienate workers. Workers must be informed about the production process as a whole, they must be able to control it, to review and decide on production plans, the annual budget, and the distribution of the surplus, including its contribution to the national budget. Wasn't this the aim of Plan Guayana Socialista?

But, then we have the argument of the socialist managerial bureaucracy that says: How can we hand over management to the workers! They are not prepared to participate actively in the management of enterprises! And they are right, minus some rare exceptions, precisely because capitalism has never been interested in providing workers with the necessary technical knowledge to manage enterprises. Here I am referring not only to production, but also to matters related to marketing and finance. Concentrating knowledge in the hands of management is one of the mechanisms that enable capital to exploit workers.

But this, for a revolutionary cadre, cannot be a reason to not advance towards the full participation of workers. On the contrary, processes of co-management must be initiated that allow workers to appropriate

this knowledge. To do this, they must begin engaging in practical management, while at the same time acquiring training in business and management techniques in order to reach a stage of complete self-management.

And at the level of communities and communes, an issue like many others that I would like to talk about but can't go into detail here, I always remember what Aristóbulo Istúriz said: “We have to govern with the people so that the people can learn to govern themselves.” I understand that President Maduro is seeking to do this by promoting the participation of the organized people in his government through what he has called Councils of Popular Government.

I have said on various occasions that, for me, 21st century socialism is a goal to aspire to, and I refer to the long historic period of advancing towards this goal as a socialist transition.

But what type of transition are we talking about? We are not dealing with a transition occurring in advanced capitalist countries, something that has never occurred in history, nor of a transition in a backward country where the people have conquered state power via armed struggle as occurred with 20th century revolutions (Russia, China, Cuba). Instead, we are dealing with a very particular transition where, via the institutional road, we have achieved governmental power.

In this regard, I think the situation in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s is in some way comparable to that experienced by pre-revolutionary Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. What the imperialist war and its horrors



was for Russia, neoliberalism and its horrors was for Latin America: the extent of hunger and misery, increasingly unequal distribution of wealth, destruction of nature, increasing loss of our sovereignty. In these circumstances, our peoples said “enough!” and embarked on a new path, resisting at first, and then going on the offensive, making possible the victory of left or center-left presidential candidates on the back of anti-neoliberal programs.

Faced with the evident failure of neoliberalism as it was being applied, there emerged the following choice: either the neoliberal capitalist model is rebuilt, or advances are made in constructing an alternative project motivated by a humanist and solidarity-based logic. And as we said before, it was Chávez who had the audacity to take this second path and I believe President Maduro is trying to continue with his legacy. Other leaders such as Evo Morales and Rafael Correa later followed him. All of them are conscious of the fact that the objective economic and cultural conditions and the existing correlation of forces in the world and their own countries, obliges them to coexist for a long time with capitalist forms of production.

And I say audacity because these governments confront a very complex and difficult situation. They not only have to confront backward economic conditions but also the fact that they still do not have complete state power. And they have to do it on the basis of an inherited state apparatus whose characteristics are functional to the capitalist system, but are not suitable for advancing towards socialism.

Nevertheless, practice has demonstrated, contrary to the theoretical dogmatism of some

sectors of the radical left, that if revolutionary cadres run this apparatus, it can be used as an instrument in the process of building the new society.

But we must be clear: this does not mean that the cadres can simply limit themselves to using the inherited state. It is necessary — using the power in their hands — to go about building the foundations of the new political system and new institutions, creating spaces for popular participation that can help prepare the people to exercise power from the most simple to the most complex level.

This process of transformation from government is not only a long process but also a process full of challenges and difficulties. Nothing ensures that it will be a linear process; there is always the possibility of retreats and failures.

We should always remember that the right only respects the rules of the game as long as it suits their purposes. They can perfectly tolerate and even help bring a left government to power if that government implements the right’s policies and limits itself to managing the crisis. What they will always try to prevent, by legal or illegal means — and we should have no illusions about this — is a program of deep democratic and popular transformations that puts into question their economic interests.

We can deduce from this that these governments and the left must be prepared to confront fierce resistance; they must be capable of defending the achievements they have won democratically against forces that speak about democracy as long as their material interests and privileges are not touched. Was it not

the case here in Venezuela that the enabling laws, which only slightly impinged on these privileges, was the main factor in unleashing a process that culminated in a military coup supported by right-wing opposition parties against a democratically elected president, supported by his people?

It is also important to understand that this dominant elite does not represent the entire opposition. It is vital that we differentiate between a destructive, conspiratorial, anti-democratic opposition and a constructive opposition that is willing to respect the rules of the democratic game and collaborate in many tasks that are of common interests. In this way we avoid putting all opposition forces and personalities in the same basket. Being capable of recognizing the positive initiatives that the opposition promotes and not condemning a priori everything they suggest will, I believe, help us win over many sectors that today are not on our side. Perhaps not the elite leaders, but the middle cadres and broad sections of the people influenced by them, which is the most important.

Furthermore, I think that we would gain much more by combating their erroneous ideas and mistaken proposals with arguments rather than verbal attacks. Perhaps the latter are well received among the most radicalized popular sectors, but they are generally rejected by broad middle-class sectors and also many popular sectors.

Another important change these governments face is the need to overcome the inherited culture that exists within the people, but not only among them. It also persists among government cadres, functionaries, party leaders and militants, workers

and their trade union leaderships. I'm talking about traits such as individualism, personalism, political careerism, consumerism.

Moreover, advances come at a slow pace and, confronted with this, many leftists tend to become demoralized. Many of them saw the capture of governmental power as a magic bullet that could quickly solve the most pressing needs of the people. When solutions are not rapidly forthcoming, disillusionment sets in.

That is why I believe that, just as our revolutionary leaders need to use the state in order to change the inherited balance of forces, they must also carry out a pedagogical task when they are confronted with limits or brakes along the path — what I call a pedagogy of limitations. Many times we believe that talking about difficulties will only demoralize and dishearten the people, when, on the contrary, if our popular sectors are kept informed, are explained why it is not possible to immediately achieve the desired goals, this can help them better understand the process in which they find themselves and moderate their demands. Intellectuals as well should be widely informed so they are able to defend the process and also to criticize it if necessary.

But this pedagogy of limitations must be simultaneously accompanied by fomenting popular mobilizations and creativity, thereby avoiding the possibility that initiatives from the people become domesticated and preparing us to accept criticisms of possible faults within the government. Not only should popular pressure be tolerated, it should be understood that it is necessary for helping those in government combat errors and deviations that

can emerge along the way.

I feel a sense of frustration not being able to talk about so many other issues, but I need to finish up, and to do so I want to read out some of the various questions that I pose in the book, and which I believe can help us evaluate whether or not the most advanced governments I have mentioned are taking steps towards building a new socialist society:

Do they mobilize workers and the people in general to carry out certain measures and are they contributing to an increase in their abilities and power?

Do they understand the need for an organized, politicized people, one able to exercise the necessary pressure that can weaken the inherited state apparatus and thus able to drive forward the proposed transformation process?

Do they understand that our people must be protagonists and not supporting actors?

Do they listen to the people and let them speak?

Do they understand that they can rely on them to fight the errors and deviations that come up along the way?

Do they give them resources and call on them to exercise social control over the process?

To sum up, are they contributing to the creation of a popular subject that is increasingly the protagonist, assuming governmental responsibilities?

In this regard, I believe the proposal to open up a national discussion that includes all social sectors in the country over the

issue of the price of petrol is of transcendental importance. I believe it is transcendental because it is calling on the people, not the party, to discuss this issue. I believe the role of the party should be to fully involve itself in the discussion as an instrument for facilitating the debate.

I would like to finish up by insisting on something I never tire of repeating:

In order to successfully advance in this challenge, we need a new culture on the left: a pluralist and tolerant culture that puts first what unites us and leaves as secondary what divides us; that promotes a unity based on values such as solidarity, humanism, respect for differences, defense of nature, rejection of the desire for profit and the laws of the market as guiding principles for human activity.

A left that understands that radicalism is not about raising the most radical slogans nor about taking the most radical actions, which only a few follow because the majority are scared off by them. Instead, it is about being capable of creating spaces for coming together and for struggle that bring in broader sectors, because realizing that there are many of us in the same struggle is what makes us strong and radicalizes us.

A left that understands that we have to win hegemony, that is, that we have to convince rather than impose.

A left that understands that what we do together in the future is more important than what we may have done in the past.

## Good Governance

We the Associations of JNU are issuing this appeal in the context of the Central government's recent diktat to all educational institutions to mandatorily conduct various programmes on 24-25 December 2014. Circulars have been issued to all Navodaya Vidyalayas, CBSE and other government-run schools to observe 25 December as *Good Governance Day*, marking the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Hindu Mahasabha leader Madan Mohan Malaviya. As per the order, the Christmas holiday will be cancelled and the onset of the winter vacations in schools will be postponed. We believe that this order is unfortunate and an assault on the autonomy of educational institutions.

There is an unfortunate lack of transparency. While Union Ministers such as Smriti Irani and Arun Jaitley declared on the floor of the Parliament that the participation in the Good Governance day programmes was to be 'online' and 'voluntary' but this is far from the truth. Conducting the programmes is NOT 'online' and 'voluntary', and in fact institutions have to send a 'compliance' report to the MHRD on the same. In this light, JNU too has issued a circular to observe a 'Good Governance Day'.

Universities should ideally reserve the right to organize functions within their academic spaces as and when they deem fit. Forcing the entire academic community to engage in a programme dictated by the Central government is surely an assault on the very idea of an autonomous, thinking and independent university. As several commentators have pointed out, the celebration of 'Good

Governance' on *Christmas day* is no coincidence.

This move to observe December 25 as Good Governance day is no aberration. We are currently seeing a concerted move to rewrite history, to change the curriculum in schools, colleges and universities, and to present a highly obscurantist, divisive and communal vision of history and society. Earlier in the year 2<sup>nd</sup> October witnessed how a national holiday was converted to a media-centered choreographed photo-op on 'Clean India', even as the real issues of the sanitation

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workers and even continuance of manual scavenging remain ignored.

It is unfortunate that the JNU administration has decided to follow the government's diktat to observe Good Governance Day rather than assert its autonomy.

We, therefore, appeal to the entire JNU community to support and strengthen our collective struggle to defend JNU's autonomy by resisting the government dictated celebration of Good Governance Day on 24-25 December.

*(Continued on Page 23)*

and without any payment for its successful completion. He says, "Its success can be seen in many villages in the form of more water in wells, more greenery and improved environmental conditions, improving agriculture and providing more opportunities for several households."

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