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Towards another emergency?

S. Viswam

Large sections of our people must be forgiven for feeling apprehensive about the possibility of another emergency being imposed on the country. That such fears should surface in a situation where the country is being ruled by a party with nearly a two thirds majority in parliament and by a prime minister who rose to power on the crest of a wave of unprecedented popularity and public support is a telling commentary on the current political environment in India.

Within just a year, Narendra Modi's popularity graph has taken a precipitous downward curve and his administration is undergoing a crisis of confidence. A voluble prime minister has taken to silence in response to public clamour for speaking and seniors in his party are rushing to the media with their assessment that there is also a crisis of leadership. This has provided the basis for the fears that an emergency is on the way. It all but remains for the pressure on the government and the BJP to build up to hasten the loss of political will leading to a repetition of the emergency of a quarter century ago.

The first to hint that the prime minister was losing grip on the administration came from no less

a party stalwart than Lal Krishna Advani, who happens to be the senior-most BJP leader still active and involved in politics. He recalled that he resigned as an MP when his name cropped up in the hawala scam of the 1990s. This was clearly a hint that four senior party leaders, three of whom were ministers, should demit office in the wake of the allegations of irregularity and lack of probity against them. Hinting at public pressures building on the government, Advani expressed his fears of the situation moving towards an emergency.

He was followed by the RSS ideologue and former BJP general secretary M. N. Govindacharya who has said that issues and values had been given the go-by in the Modi dispensation and that the RSS had lost confidence in the Modi government after a year in office. He said that the prime minister's credibility was beginning to be eroded. Govindacharya said that there was a trust deficit in the party and leave alone participation in decision-making there was no opportunity even for members-leaders interaction. This was a scathing indictment of the state of affairs and comes after some other senior members like Kirti Azad and Yeshwant Sinha have raised voices of criticism against the leadership. Govindacharya went to the extent

of warning the leadership that the latest scandal to hit the party, namely Lalitgate, may well become the BJP's top scandal, like Bofors which tormented the Congress and the UPA.

The problem is that in the face of loud and persistent clamour from the opposition and even from within his own party for clarification about where the government stands in regard to the demand for the resignation of Sushma Swaraj and Vasundhara Raje, the prime minister has maintained a studied silence. His stone-walling strategy has exasperated the nation and has intrigued his own party. What Govindacharya said is on the lines of the general feeling in the nation. He said that the Modi government's support to ministers accused of acts, ranging from corruption to impropriety speaks of the political dishonesty of the establishment. The Modi government is no more people-centric. It had become power-centric, he added. When he was told that Modi was afraid that asking Raje to resign might lead to the loss of Rajasthan for the party, this is what Govindacharya said: Modi should be intelligent enough to forsake one state government rather than allow a scratch on his credibility.

The Congress is intimidating the BJP and pressurizing it to get Sushma Swaraj and Vasundhara Raje to quit. It has even offered to facilitate the passage of certain bits of legislation through the Rajya Sabha where it is in a majority in return for the exit of the two ministers. But it seems that Modi is determined to resist all pressures and has so far stood by the two ministers and two other party seniors like a rock. How long can he remain silent? Remains to be seen. The risk is that continued stone walling will lead to discontent and discontent in turn will lead to instability, which is the basis for the helpless resort to an emergency.

Notebook

Findings of Nimesh Commission

Investigation of all crimes particularly those involving national security issues should be very efficient and painstaking to ensure that the guilty are apprehended and also that the possibilities of any innocent persons being implicated are minimised. Unfortunately this remains badly neglected so that many innocent persons are frequently implicated. What is worse, there is a tendency to go on prolonging the painful injustice even when facts confirming innocence are revealed in course of time.

The reason probably is that powerful persons do not want to admit any serious mistake or error. However democracy and justice can be strengthened only by admitting such mistakes as soon as possible and then also taking adequate steps to ensure the release and rehabilitation of innocent captives.

In recent times the importance of such steps has been badly felt in the case of many innocent persons from minorities who were arrested for crimes they never committed. It was to probe such arrests that the R.D. Nimesh Commission was set up in Uttar Pradesh in year

2008 by the then Chief Minister Mayawati of the BSP government. The commission gave its report to the current SP government headed by Akhilesh Yadav in August 2012. The report was not made public by the government for quite some time, but some activist groups were able to get its copies. After waiting for nearly seven months for government to make known the findings of the report, the Socialist Party (India) released this report at a press conference in Lucknow in March 2013.

The Nimesh Commission Report has not only raised valid doubts about the arrests it was asked to investigate, in addition it has also questioned the procedures that were used. Finally it has made important recommendations so that chances of innocent persons being implicated can be reduced in future. These findings of the Commission deserve wider attention, as a part of wider effort to ensure that many complaints of false implications are properly investigated and whenever these are found to be true then, adequate steps for release and rehabilitation of unfortunate victims should be taken.

Prioritise neglected objectives

Educational reforms have been very widely discussed, yet it appears that some crucial aspects have been missed. This is apparent from the growing neglect of the most important objectives of education, and also the growing gulf between the real needs and the actual trends of education.

Certainly the most important objective of education is to prepare a strong foundation of the most important values of humanity to prepare children to be good and responsible citizens of tomorrow's world. These values include a deeply rooted sense of equality of all human beings; denial of any discrimination

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The Greek tragedy

D. K. Giri

Greece, the cradle of democracy, the land of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates, is in deep crisis today. The country has gone bankrupt, is becoming defaulter on its international debts, and is on the brink of leaving European Union, which was by far the best model of countries having a shared destiny. How has Greece come to such a perilous pass? The primary reason for Greece's present predicament is debt, internal as well as external. It could not collect the debts from people who had defaulted heavily on taxes and borrowings, and it cannot repay the sovereign debt it has incurred at heavy interest and costs. It is the sovereign debt that has caused descent of Greece into a catastrophe, and it is not certain how to stir out of the crisis. It is like an individual, say, a farmer or entrepreneur who is sucked into a vicious circle of debt and then, commits suicide as s/he cannot get out of it. As a country Greece will not commit mass suicide; but an elderly person took his life in the city of Athens as he did not want to see himself or his children live in perennial debt. Any country, and there are many, which is planning to grow on debt should learn these hard lessons from Greece.

Depth of the disaster

To start with, there are humanitarian issues like lack of food, medicine and essential items. The Greek government has ordered the closure of its banks until the referendum on 5 July on the creditors' demands. One can withdraw only up to 60 euros a day

from the ATM, that too if there is cash in the machine. So, a kind of financial emergency is declared. The youth unemployment in Greece has gone up to 60 percent. Many youths have emigrated from the country in search of job opportunities. There is hardly any domestic investment to generate jobs. The country has sold off most of its assets. The annual budget deficit has been 12.5 percent, which is four times of three percent limit set by European Union (EU) in the famous Maastricht Treaty. The Greek public debt stands at 130 per cent of GDP which is double the EU limit. The austerity conditions put by creditors has chaos in the country with violence and frequent blockades by farmers as well as demonstrations and picketing by the public.

Observers attribute the crisis to the profligacy of the state. Many accuse the socialist government of 2009-2011 of George Papandreou of reckless public spending without collecting the taxes. The banks did not recover their credits. Even the sale taxes were not collected by the state due to inefficiency and corruption. The tax dues that remained uncollected amounted to 10 billion euros a year. It was observed that George Papandreou's government failed to generate economic growth, but followed the neo-liberal policies. That crippled the economy. Papandreou made a shocking and revealing statement that, "the Greek economy is in the intensive care". He unveiled reforms measures which aimed at correcting the parlours state

of country's finances. They were mostly austerity policies which were met with protests and strikes. On 23 April 2010, Greece asked for 45 billion euro from European Union and IMF as a loan. After elaborate negotiations, a 110 billion package was agreed with conditions of reforms imposed on Athens. Greece had to adopt sweeping austerity measures to unlock the 110 billion packages. In the subsequent year, in 2011, a 120 billion bailout package was agreed with Greece. The state of economy had its repercussion on politics; Papandreou was replaced as PM by Lucas Papademos, a noted economist, and former Governor of the Bank of Greece. A year later, another election took place and Antonis Samaras became the Prime Minister. In 2012, Athens was gripped with violent strikes as 200,000 people marched against austerity. Alexis Tsipras, then the opposition leader, now the Prime Minister, had warned of austerity. On 27 November 2012, he said, "The austerity will shrink the Greek economy further". As IMF admitted that the austerity has done more damage to Greece than good, the anti-austerity mood of the country grew. In January this year, the anti-austerity far-left party Syriza came to power with a comfortable majority. And the debt negotiations have reached a dramatic phase in June 2015, in fact, a cross-road. An amount of 1.8 billion of loan repayment was due on 30 June 2015. Alexi Tsipras has called for a referendum on 5 June on creditors' demands.

Perspectives on the Crisis

Independent experts suggest that both, Troika - European Commission, European Central Bank, and IMF - on the one hand, and Greece on the other hand faltered, erred, and failed to resolve the crisis. They should have respected the parity between both sides, ensuring the country's fiscal, financial and debt sustainability. At the same time, the failure to strike a deal to pull Greece out of the brink on the part of Eurozone will be "colossal and collective". It will "undermine the 60-year long European project, the elements of common destiny and the solidarity that this entailed". Greece leaving the European family will be bad for Greece, Europe and perhaps, the world. Greece may be treated as a socio-economic and political pariah. There are two possible theories on exit of Greece, 'Grexit'. One, the Domino theory; which is, the Grexit may prompt other countries to quit. As the mood for anti-austerity, anti-Eurozone grows, people in other countries may force their governments to withdraw from Eurozone. Once Sweden held a referendum on Eurozone, and the Swedes said no. The second, the Ballast theory, that Grexit will not induce a chain reaction. On the contrary, it will save the Eurozone from recurring problems. It will also disprove the assumption that participation in Eurozone is irrevocable. Since the beginning of the 19th century, there have been break-ups of at least 67 currency unions.

In some quarters, there is a strong feeling that even if the crisis abates; restoring Greece as well as Europe to health will take years. That is because the countries facing economic crises need to reduce their government deficits, re-establish their sound

current accounts, and regain their competitiveness. On the other hand, noble laureate economist, Joseph Stiglitz says, the Greek problem is about "power and democracy more than money and economics". Eurozone is not a democratic process. The European Central Bank has the monetary sovereignty. It wants to control governments; it puts pressure on Greece to bend. What is more, the troika programme for Greece has resulted in 25 percent decline in country's GDP. The European leaders have still not learned. They demand Greece to achieve a primary budget surplus of 3.5 percent of its GDP by 2018. They want more austerity to be adopted by Greece, whereas austerity "impedes recovery, obstructs growth, worsens the debt-deflation cycle, and in the end, erodes Greeks' willingness and ability to see through the reform agenda". Stiglitz maintains that none of the loans has gone to Greece, only pittance. The money has gone to German and French banks, IMF does not need the money badly, and it is about control.

Eurozone must introspect and restructure its economic governance. In fact, the Greek crisis, as an oxymoron, has been sufficient to expose the management deficits. The European Central Bank President Mario Draghi endorsed this perspective, "The currency union is in dire need of institutional convergence". The underlying assumption of this convergence consists of: stronger governance, enhancing common monetary and fiscal instruments, debt mutualisation, shared sovereignty and common responsibility.

Role of Social Democrats

The Social Democrats are losing out to Conservatives and

right-wing radical parties. A regional expert John Costa-Font commented recently that "Socialism in Europe, mainly southern Europe, has been a reactionary movement to prevailing autocracies and conservative traditions". The traditional linchpins of social democratic agenda have been defence of the welfare state, a Keynesian economic vision, responsiveness to a pluralist electorate, support to the working class – these are all in shambles. In countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece, social democratic legacies have been simply austerity. The dilemma for the socialists is that when they have failed to stimulate economic growth, austerity has gone against their basic principles of more public spending.

It is evident that the voters in Europe want to have a welfare state, but they are unsure if the government is the best guarantor of the actual benefits of welfare. The welfare state is like a blanket, without sufficient growth, not big enough to cover you completely, you pull it down to cover your feet leaving some other parts exposed. Social Democrats therefore will have to increase the size of the blanket by drawing on multiple service providers, by bringing a synergy between government, business, and civil society organisations.

The Independent Voices

Twenty prominent economist including Joseph Stiglitz and Thomas Piketty have written an open letter to the European leaders to strike a deal. They have urged the leaders to allow a pathway to Greece out the crisis. After years of austerity, Greece should be enabled to make investment, and generate employment, and return to normalcy.

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Perils of covert operations

Praful Bidwai

The debate over the June 9 raids by the Indian Army's Special Forces unit against two Northeastern insurgent groups on Myanmarese territory has produced two main reactions. The first reaction, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's diehard supporters, is triumphalist and holds that the retaliatory operation's "great" success against National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) rebels must be trumpeted. The second reaction defends the present covert operation, but believes that publicising such operations is unwise, even self-defeating.

The proponents of the first view defend bellicose rhetoric and hashtags like #ManipurRevenge and #56inRocks by junior information minister Rajyavardhan Rathore, who wanted to tell all countries, including Pakistan, that India can and will strike "at a place and at a time of our choosing".

They hold that it was necessary to make the operation's details public - against strict military rules - because India needed to send out a signal not just to the NSCN(K) but to all the "hostile elements in the neighbourhood", that its national security approach has undergone a sea-change under its new "56-inch-chest" leader, who wants to end "a thousand years of servility masquerading as civility".

This argument is puerile. It comprehensively misunderstands both - history - India as we know it was not one nation for a thousand years - and contemporary geopolitics. Confident and prudent

nation-states don't casually violate their neighbouring states' sovereign borders; they know that healthy relations with their neighbours are key to their own security. Crude military machismo and cross-border "hot pursuit" adventures express not strategic confidence, but immaturity.

The "hot pursuit" doctrine has little validity in international law. It originated in efforts to control pirates/smugglers. If they commit a crime in your territorial waters, you can chase them into the high seas, which are normally free to all vessels. Its extension to land has been generally rejected.

"Self-defence" is a more plausible argument, but it too has been carried to an absurd extreme by the United States in declaring war on Afghanistan after the September 2001 attacks. After 18 of India's Dogra Regiment troops were killed on June 4 by a coalition of Khaplang-led separatists in Manipur, India could have conducted a joint operation against such guerrillas with the Myanmar army, with which it had good relations even during the long years of Aung Sang Suu Kyi's detention.

India entered into ceasefire agreements with both the Isak Swu-Thuingaleng Muivah (IM) and Khaplang factions of the NSCN respectively in 1997 and 2001. It had ample opportunity to renew the ceasefire with Myanmar-based Khaplang when it ended in March. Alternatively, it could have roped in Naga civil society groups to persuade Khaplang to explore peace with India. Nagaland Chief Minister

TR Zeliang has said such groups have the requisite credibility. Indian intelligence agencies did neither. They failed to keep the Manipur and Nagaland governments in the loop, and ignored the new emerging coalition between Khaplang, ULFA's Paresh Barua and tiny Meitei and Bodo factions, which launched the June 4 attack.

India's retaliation was hastily conceived. It chose to attack rebel bases close to the border for "political" reasons - and not because they harboured a large number of insurgents. Contradictory claims were made about the number killed: 20, 50, even 100; but only seven bodies were recovered, according to *The Indian Express*.

India says it informed the Myanmar government, which is in hot denial that it allowed its territory to be used by Indian troops, as any government would. Even assuming that the Myanmar government has recently reached conciliation with the NSCN(K), it wasn't impossible for India to negotiate a joint operation with the Myanmarese army to flush out the militants, as it has done with the Bhutanese and Bangladeshi governments.

The main reason why India didn't even try to do so derives from the Modi government's jingoism and its domination by super-hawks like National Security Adviser AK Doval and defence minister Manohar Parrikar, who believe in devious means and cloak-and-dagger methods - e.g. "neutralising" one terrorist with another terrorist. Doval, a former Intelligence

Bureau director, is a firm believer in coercion, not diplomacy, to resolve external security problems and domestic ethnic conflicts. He's on record as saying that peaceful co-existence between India and Pakistan is virtually impossible.

Imagine the implications of this, considering that both states are nuclear-armed, with such close geographical proximity between them that a nuclear exchange would lead to large-scale devastation and irreversible climatic change in the region. As South Asia's post-Pokharan-II history suggests, escalation of conventional war rhetoric has a real potential to lead to nuclear sabre-rattling, with consequences too horrifying to contemplate.

The second, seemingly more sober, reaction argues against chest-thumping jingoism. It recommends discretion: let covert operations remain covert and speak for themselves; don't talk about them and reveal your hand to your adversaries. Yet it fails to understand that protracted conflicts aren't decided by covert operations, but need strategic foresight and sustained, astute diplomacy. So it holds that a modern state must practise deception, skullduggery and lawless conduct in exceptional circumstances.

Implicit here are three assumptions: first, covert operations are usually successful in neutralising asymmetrical threats like those from insurgents or terrorists; second, it's legitimate for states to use extreme and inhuman methods like summary execution in special circumstances; and third, democratic states know where to draw the line; once the moment of crisis has passed, they can return to normal political and social negotiation processes.

All three assumptions are open to question. Take India's own experience. In the 1950s, India collaborated with the CIA in training and arming Tibetan guerrillas to instigate the so-called Khampa Rebellion against China. The CIA abandoned the operation after sacrificing thousands of Tibetans. India earned China's hostility, with dire consequences, which were revealed in 1962.

An even more dangerous CIA-sponsored covert operation was launched in 1965 to place espionage equipment energised by a plutonium power-pack on the Nanda Devi peak to monitor Chinese nuclear activities. An avalanche prevented its placement. It has remained untraceable, raising fears of radioactive contamination of glaciers, and eventually, the Ganga.

In 1987, India in another covert operation air-dropped "humanitarian" aid (food and medicines) in northern Sri Lanka, and imposed the India-Sri Lanka accord on Colombo, and later on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. This drew India into a terrible "peace-keeping" misadventure, in which it lost 1,200 soldiers - more than in all other wars cumulatively - and invited the LTTE's revenge through Rajeev Gandhi's assassination.

There are countless instances of highly sophisticated Western covert operations having gone sour or become ineffective, including drone-bombing in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Secondly, it is extremely difficult to draw the dividing line between military attacks calculated to kill, and methods like torture, hostage-taking and arbitrary executions/fake encounters. They are always rationalised in the name of

"compulsion", necessity to "deter" further attacks, choosing "the lesser evil" - all as one-time exceptions. They together form a slippery ethical slope, which permits increasingly brutal acts; ultimately, all limits collapse.

If torturing one person saves a hundred lives, wouldn't that be justified? This argument may seem attractive, but it's dangerously wrong. Not only does it permit the violation of a person's fundamental right to life; it often produces unreliable or false results. People lie only to escape torture; that might lead to yet more gratuitous violence by security agencies.

If a democratic state indulges in gross human rights violations, it undermines its own claim to following legality or a higher principle; it loses popular legitimacy. That's why "fake" encounters end up causing more resentment and adding to the cesspool of discontent and grievances that fuel militancy and extremism. That has happened for decades in the Kashmir Valley and the Northeast.

In Mizoram, the Indian state created Malaya-Vietnam-style "strategic hamlets" by grouping villages under the threat of the gun. In Nagaland, Manipur and Assam, it waged war on its own people. This bred more resentment and fuelled militancy. The more ruthlessly the militancy was repressed, the greater were the civilian casualties. Hundreds of civilians were dehumanised through torture, forced labour and arbitrary arrest in "Operation Loktak" in 1999 in Manipur, declared "successful".

Finally, the state doesn't know when to stop. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act was introduced in 1958 as a "temporary" measure. It gives impunity to officers who kill

anyone suspected of the intention to break the law. It continues to operate in Kashmir and most Northeastern states barring Tripura, including Assam (except Guwahati). The Indian police is responsible for an annual average of 1,400 custodial deaths, but still wants more powers through laws like TADA, POTA and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act—despite a conviction rate of one percent under TADA.

The Myanmar raid forms part of the same vile pattern. This must end. For real long-term peace, India must talk to its alienated citizens in good faith and without coercion. (IPA Service)

(From Page 4)

They suggest a debt swap with ECB bonds coming due in July and August in exchange for bonds from the bailout funds with longer maturity and lower interest rates. The letter says, “make a fresh start, bearing in mind two things, one, that contractionary austerity policies have been discredited, and second, the Syriza (the ruling party), leaders are committed to undertaking far-reaching reforms, If they can get the latitude to do so”.

In the next few days and weeks, the world will know what happens to Greece, Eurozone and the European Union. However, for Greeks, as it happened in the dramas of Greek tragedy, the hero, in the present case, Greece, due to its own failings, and the situations it could not deal with, has fallen into economic disaster. The people have been shocked, sad and angry. But, in the final act, there must be moments for catharsis, cooling off emotions, so that their mood turns to relief and hope. The Greeks certainly deserve better from their own leaders and those of European Union.

He always took pro-people stand

Vibhuti Patel

It is difficult to accept that Praful Bidwai is no more. Last week he passed away in Amsterdam, The Netherland. Now, who will spontaneously respond to right wing onslaught on the masses in these difficult times, both globally and within India?

I got to know Praful in 1974 in Mumbai in a meeting organised by the New Left group of young revolutionaries to which he belonged, when Com. Ernest Mandel, a noted Marxist economist visited India for lecture series. At that time, all of us known as “the New Left” believed that revolution was round the corner. Praful was intellectually versatile and spoke on any political issue with passion, data base, logic and aggression. Though he came from science and technology stream, Praful was strongly grounded in political economy. During 1970s, he was a star of New Left Group called Magova (English meaning of this Marathi word is road map) had a convincing style of speaking. While studying at Indian Institute of Technology, Praful and his friends got influenced by international youth radicalization shaped by anti-Vietnam war struggles, liberation struggles in Africa and Latin America, youth movement in Sri Lanka. During 1975-1977, most of us met in the informal study circles as the Emergency rule did not allow any public gatherings.

In the millennium year, after nuclear testing in Pokhran, along with Achin Vanayak, Praful founded the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace. Both of them also co-authored a book *South Asia on a Short Fuse-Nuclear Politics and the Future of Global Disarmament*

for which they were awarded the Sean McBride International Peace Prize by the International Peace Bureau in recognition of their work challenging development of nuclear weapons in South Asia.

In 1977, when I moved to Mumbai and got active in the women’s movement and trade union movement, Praful had become prolific in his journalistic career and was always, politically correct and wrote and spoke with unassuming courage of conviction. He wrote on wide range of strategically important issues - industrialization, human development, vested interests of sectarian forces, caste and communal conflicts, human rights, turmoil in the North East India, environmental issues, climate change, nuclear policy, national politics and arrest of a woman smuggler. He was never sensational or titillating in his writings.

Praful had thorough understanding of grammar of Indian classical music and regularly attended concerts. During 1977-1979, Praful, Gayatri Singh and me, all three of us, homeless activists, used to attend several cultural events in Mumbai city together. I was staying in a working women’s hostel, Gayatri and Praful had taken refuge in Sonal and Himanshu Shukla’s home.

In 1982, when his mother was detected with cancer, Praful was shaken. I got to meet his sisters who came from Nagpur with his ailing mother and got to see sensitive aspect of his personality. In his mother’s memory, he made contribution to Medico Friends Circle in which my husband, Dr. Amar Jesani was active.

In 1986, as a full-timer of Women's Centre I was entrusted with responsibility of organizing Asian Conference on Women, Religion and Family Laws in which delegates from 14 Asian countries had registered to participate. Even after making several trips to various government offices in Delhi, I could not get visa clearance for most of the delegates. I was running from pillar to post to get visa for the delegates from Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka without any success. When I told my difficulties to Praful who at that time was a senior journalist with the *Times of India*, Delhi office, he threw his weight around and got visa clearance for our delegates.

The most crucial contribution Praful made was after 1992 riots that gave major blow to the secular fabric of our country. He took head on confrontations with the cultural nationalists. He started speaking from public platforms against TNC-MNC controlled economic globalisation, neo-liberalism, capitalist crisis, nuclearisation of economy, communal tension, caste riots, violation of human rights, displacement in the name of mega development projects so on and so forth. His column for *Frontline* and the *Hindustan Times* created ripple effects among the activists of social movements.

Last time, I met him in May, 2014 at the Press Club to discuss the book he was planning to write on the Indian Left for which he interviewed me at length. During the interview, he was calm, asking questions on trade union movement, women's movement, left movement, Dalit and tribal struggles and so on. He asked me about our common friends and co-travelers in the people's movements since 1970s. Both of us were nostalgic about our revolutionary past. When I told him,

"How much proud we all are of your writings!" he coyly smiled.

Praful had a large fan following in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Agartala, Guwahati. Whenever he happened to be in these cities, he

would invite his buddies to discuss with him volatile political issues.

Untimely passing away of Praful Bidwai has created an irreparable loss for the cause of social justice, secular humanism, human development and human rights.

Black economy

The seminar on 'Black Economy in India, its Global Dimensions and Impact on Policies', jointly organised by CESP, JNU and Tax Justice Network, London was held on 26th June, 2015 in JNU.

The paper from Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) pointed to the continuing impact of money power in Indian elections because of expenditures before the elections and by parties on behalf of candidates. Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, former ASG, argued that governments have not been serious about tackling black money or bringing it back from abroad. Ashok Panda, senior lawyer, highlighted that the Supreme Court has complicated matters by changing its earlier stance as in the Azadi Bachao and the Vodaphone cases. Dr. Kavita Rao and S Kumar of NIPFP presented an estimate of tax not collected from the corporations and suggested that there is no tax terrorism. R N Biswas, researcher JNU, presented a study of 144 scams between 2005 and 2008 and pointed out that they result in the underestimation of national income. Prof. Arun Kumar, JNU, presented a way of estimating the size of the black economy and showed that by 2012 it had become 55% of GDP and that recently it has been growing at about 20 per cent annually.

Ashok, JNU, showed the high level of prevalence of corruption in the education system on the basis of his survey in some states of the country. Dr. Vivekanand

Mukherjee, Jadavpur University, argued that competition among bureaucrats is not a guarantee of lower levels of corruption. Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, independent journalist, highlighted cronyism as the cause of corruption in allocation of natural resources, like 2G, coal, mines, land and so on. Prafulla K. Prushty, IRS, discussed the misuse of the Settlement Commissions to circumvent provisions of Income Tax act due to the unethical nexus between businessmen, politicians and bureaucracy. Prasana K Dash, Election Commission, argued that while muscle power has been controlled, use of black money is growing and is the root cause of corruption in elections but the Election Commission is helpless since it does not have the power to derecognize parties. Krishna Raj Panta, Researcher from Nepal, pointed to failure of decentralization due to massive corruption and elite capture in local bodies. Prof. Saumen Chattopadhyay, JNU, presented an estimate of illegal financial flows from India and showed that the loss to the country between 1948 and 2012 works out to between \$1.2 and 1.8 trillion.

The sessions were chaired by Prof. Sunanda Sen, Anil Divan, lawyer, Prof Amit Bhaduri, and A K Bhattacharya, editor.

—Arun Kumar

Culture and Socialism

Asoka Mehta

Madras from 8th to 12th July 1950. Yusuf Meherally was to have presided over the conference. But he died on 2nd July 1950. The mantle of presiding over the conference fell on Asoka Mehta and he delivered the Presidential address. Even while criticizing the content of the address, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, a Congress leader at that time, said, "...the style superbly ornate is almost Tagorean in its conceits. Nothing of this nature has been heard for many years from the political platform in India or elsewhere". Till the Madras conference the party had only a General Secretary and no President. The Madras convention elected Acharya Narendra Deva as the President and Asoka Mehta was elected the General Secretary of the party. The Presidential address which is comprehensive in context, content, exemplary in its erudition and ornate in style is reproduced here.

—Bapu Heddurshetti

We meet in the shadow of death. Death has taken away from us our foremost leader. We were all looking forward to Yusuf Meherally presiding over this Conference. At the forking of road in our history, his mellow wisdom, natural kindliness and organic dream-sure understanding would have been of profound help to us. Every member of the party mourns his death as the loss of an intimate friend. To all who visited Bombay, Meherally's sick-bed was the place of pilgrimage, and his frail body was the fount of inspiration.

The cool courage with which he faced the ravages of his body, his seven-year-long duel with death, evoke our instinctive respect. These endless struggles however left no scar on his spirit; they made it all more radiant. His protracted illness and premature death are the price he paid for scattering his life in an endless spray of gifts, in fellowship and service. He taught us the meaning of friendship. Through his dedicated life and mute sufferings he has shown that

*"... such a price
The Gods exact for a song;
To become what we sing."*

We dip our flag in the memory of him the like of whom we shall never see again. His vast erudition, his integrity and his spontaneous goodwill for all had made him the conscience of the Socialist Party. That righteous voice is stilled today. None can ever take his place. His mantle can be borne, if at all, by the Movement as a whole.

To deputise for Meherally is well-nigh impossible. When I think of all those, the torch-bearers of our movement, who have preceded me in this highest

office in the Party, I am overcome by the sense of my unworthiness. To succeed Acharya Narendra Dev is to start with a handicap that can never be shaken off; with my puny steps how shall I walk in his great and graceful strides? Only the warmth of your affection can impact light to the damp embers of my being. That affection I crave from you.

Homage

I would like to pay your homage and mine to the ever-green memory of our friend, guide and philosopher, Sane Guruji. Less than a month back the Great Reaper gathered him for the eternal harvest. We were never worthy enough to claim Guruji for the Party; by his love and tireless labours he had, however, made the party his own. His life with its aroma of goodness was crowned by a death that has released the musk of greatness in him. He has shown, to the confirmed cynic, that even in the world of today, goodness is not robbed of its efficacy, that the path of the hearts of men is still the same that the ancient sages trod. He has proved again that the plain man's loyalties are aroused, affections engaged and courage kindled when he is accosted in the language of love. That an embodiment of such absolute goodness should have to seek the aid of death to stir us out of smugness and selfishness ought to provide the theme-song for our Conference.

Two other stars of the constellation of international Socialism have recently gone cold; Professor Laski and M. Blum. Laski was one of the great teachers of Socialism. His teachings had become so much a part of our intellectual climate that we have imbibed them without being fully aware of it. His pragmatic approach has brought new enrichment to Socialism, a new clarity

to our reflections on our times. M. Blum brought to the generation of Socialists, in the danger of becoming pure Utilitarians and opportunists, the living message of the cultured intelligence and moral integrity of Jean Jaures and Rosa Luxemburg. He imparted a much-needed glow to European Socialism.

Resolutions and Reports

We are today faced by a whole complex of problems; international, national and intra-party. You will be discussing and deciding them through the resolutions and reports you will be adopting at the conference. It would be an otiose endeavor on my part to cover the same ground, especially when I cannot do it with the same competence. The giant agony of the world must find a voice more strident than mine. The magnificent programme of National Revival that the Executive Committee has placed before you mirrors in cadenced prose, the best thoughts of the party. Its meaningful words come as a summer shower to the parched land of our political life. If we can carry its message with us, like the unshed rain by the clouds, to India's myriad fields and factories, a national revival must sweep through the country. We can, as I am sure we will, at this Conference, release, in Swinburne's words, the hounds of spring on winter's traces.

But are we as a party in good shape for this great effort? Are we a fit vessel for this exalted destiny? The General Secretary, with his wonted devotion to truth and his wide ranging vision, has drawn, in his Report, our attention to our strength as well as to our sores. "Thou aileth here, and here." In your discussion of his Report, as also of the Report of his perspicacious colleague, Madhu Limaye, you will, I am sure, uncover and uproot the causes of our organizational ailment. On these issues, that are to engage your attention for the next four days, there is little new that I can add to the resolutions and reports that are already before you.

I would therefore like, with your permission, to dwell in this Address on the wider aspects of the crisis. For sixteen years or more I have labored with many others in the vineyard of Socialism and I would like on this occasion to twine some of my significant impression into a wreath.

Though long was the night of slavery and arduous the twilight of the struggle for national emancipation, we never looked deeply into the basic problems of our people. It is the chronic indifference that has robbed the

dawn of freedom of its glow. The caste stratification of our society, backward and lop-sided development of our economy, the stubborn demographic and ecological problems - those of over-population and natural poverty - are so many challengers to our march towards Socialism that have not received the concentrated attention they deserve.

Fractured Culture

The absence of cultural homogeneity and the lack of social mobility are the two stubborn facts of our social life. India may or may not be, as some critics have maintained, many countries packed in a geographical receptacle but she undoubtedly is a place where many centuries jostle together. Side by side in our country, especially among the Hindus, wide educational and cultural differences exist-differences that are accentuated by the existence of rigid caste barriers. It was Swami Vivekananda who had pointed out that in Europe social intercourse is free and unhampered but thought, especially religious thought is divided by denominational fences; in India thought has universal sweep, but social behavior is carefully restricted. Whatever be the truth of this statement, when Swamiji made it, today, the fact is, that social life is cut up into many enclosures and thought that is reared on this social foundation, is fractured into many particularisms.

Not only the difference between the Hindus and the Muslims, that eventually led to the partitioning of India and uprooting of men, but even those among Hindus inter se, are ultimately sociological. Uneven development of different castes and communities and the dissimilarity in their response to the new ideas and pulls have brought into being a heterogeneous society.

There was a time when a common understanding, intellectual and cultural, if not social, was emerging between the Hindus and the Muslims. After centuries of conflict a common outlook based upon the recognition of the abiding truths of the two religions, on the recognition of a non-historical approach to life, was emerging in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. An ethic based upon the acceptance of common humanity in all men was being taught to the people through the teachings of the popular poets and saints. The devastating impact of the Western countries, with their superior economic technique and military might, scared the people back into the traditional shells of their castes and communities.

Any student of Indian languages knows the profound influence of the English language on the vernaculars.

But the crystallization of poetry into prose, and the development of a language into a competent medium of modern thought and expression have followed different time schedules and varying patterns of articulation when one surveys the Indian languages, from *Bengali to Pushtu*. A parallel dissimilarity of rhythm will be found, between the two major communities in their responses to new ideas and novel impacts. When the Hindu mind was receptive to Western ideas, the Muslims were withdrawn, engaged in a search of sources of strength from the pristine past of the Prophet's days. When the Muslims, moved towards an understanding of the West, the Hindu mind had swung back to the springs of its Vedic past.

Inside the Hindu community cultural discontinuity converted social rhythms into jerks and cut circles into segments. Caste and communal consciousness today distorts democracy. These group loyalties, narrow allegiances, strive to gain respectability by flaunting the colors of pseudo-radicalism. Castes, communal and regional particularisms appropriate to themselves the universal language of socialism.

It is such developments that led RammanoharLohia, the most fecund mind in our country to warn us against Socialism of envy and equate Socialism with sympathy. Mutual jealousies and internal antagonism, based upon difference in Language, religion, caste and education are destroying the creative possibilities and the fighting strength of the have-nots.

Cultural Upsurge

Social particularism based upon the many differences that fissure our society is a natural tendency of our people; habit and narrow vision incessantly push them in that direction. It is the business of Socialist to uncover these irrational roots and pulls and to cut lanes of lucidity in the labyrinthine corridors of custom and habit. Socialism has to become a mighty force that will dissolve the particularisms, limited loyalties and antagonisms, in the ranks of the working people, into a common food of sympathy and understanding. Naturally the depressed and the backward must receive special attention and their educational uplift must be the top responsibility of the Socialist Movement. In the confused Landscape of experience, Socialism has to become "the flashing stream," fierce and unswerving.

In our country, with its accent on illiteracy there is the danger of a 'class struggle' between the ignorant and the educated. The modern world is a complex world: its

technological problems need a cultivated understanding. The fact that new ideas and learning mostly come to our country through a foreign language creates new barriers between the educated elite and the unsophisticated people. The new ideas and learning do not naturally seep down, fail to become a part of the heritage and consciousness of the people, they remain a monopoly of the few from which they draw 'rent'. Nationalisation of modern knowledge is the *sine qua non* of effective democracy and free Socialism in our country.

While these barriers must be broken, let us not in our impatience equate ignorance with Socialism. A Spanish proverb says that there is a constant quarrel between Beauty and Chastity. Let there not be a similar quarrel between Socialism and Culture. The Socialist is an heir to the varied cultures of the past; to abandon the heritage is to make Socialism as unreal as the shell-heard sea.

Educational facilities must be universalized, technicalities of learning simplified but no premium be put on ignorance. Let not an aristocracy of ignorance be the answer to the arrogance of the educated.

Socialism, in the peculiar conditions of India, has therefore, to be a vast cultural force that would restore to the country the social mobility and social equality it has not experienced for centuries. The distinctiveness of different regions and religions need not be destroyed, they must however become parts of an integrated whole as the varied petals of a flower have but one perfume, and distinctive notes are woven into a harmony.

Such a cultural upsurge is not easy in a country suffering from economic stagnation. Economic difficulties sharpen internal antagonisms and envy and acquisitiveness become the dominant emotions. Each class, each group, each individual is engaged in grabbing and the sources of wealth get dried up. The economic strains accentuate the social tensions and disintegration grows apace. A climate of envy and insecurity debases the spirit of man.

Ethic of austerity

If India is to shake off the mood of frustration the economy must expand quickly and rapidly. Because our economy is backward it exercises special compulsions that we can ignore only at our peril. Economic development to be rapid must be based upon postponement of present wants for future plenty. The psychology of the people must cease to be compulsion-oriented and become

production-oriented. The vast capital needed for the economic reconstruction of India must come from the coordinated labour and self-denial of our people. Such a national effort, a vast festival of labour, is possible only in the atmosphere of equality and austerity. Socialism, in the conditions of today, is the sole basis of national survival.

But Socialism in a backward country means neither social security nor better life here and now, but economic equality, community of hard work and ethic of austerity. The hand of Socialism in India is knobby and stringy as that of a farm labourer and not soft and luscious as of an artist or an aristocrat.

In the past accumulation of capital, needed for economic development has come through condemning men to slums or to Siberia. In the West the exploitation of labour, national and colonial, organized the pool of capital. In the Soviet Union, the labour camps to which 15 per cent of the people are condemned have yielded the capital needed. As we reject both these inhuman and anti-social alternatives, our method must be of conscious self-denial, wherein ostentation becomes a social stigma and inequality a crime. We have to discover an ethic of austerity to give meaning to free Socialism.

The ethic of austerity demands a reorientation from the middle-classes. Their developing hostility towards the working people is not only short-sighted but self-destructive. If the talented men of the middle-classes back the Socialist efforts at planned and rapid economic expansion, broadening avenues of useful employment would open out before them. Socialism is not proletarianisation. The proletariat is a product of the prevailing social conditions. In him, as in the existing society, in the words of Karl Marx, "the human being has lost himself." The frustration of today is a result of our having become fractional men. To recover the wholeness, the ethic of austerity will have to be embraced for some time. If we will not consciously plan to end our poverty, poverty will encompass our end. May I respectfully appeal to the middle-class to stop turning the single-toned beads of irritation into a rosary of despair? The future belongs to the trained and the technocrats. Only a contracting economy of capitalism menaces the future of the middle-classes.

The principal obstacle in the path of national revival is the present Government. Its economic opaqueness and political pusillanimity fail to provide the needed direction or impart the inspiration that would develop

popular initiative and efforts. The lack of will and vision in the new rulers has robbed freedom of its driving power. Socialism alone can give point and thrust to the edge of freedom that the Congress rule has blunted.

The Fundamentals

That heavy responsibility can however be shouldered only if there is full clarity on the fundamentals. The growing divorce between words and their meanings is a major tragedy of our times. Evocative words in particular, like democracy, peace, freedom, are used in a manner that makes them not only meaningless but topsy-turvy. The fluidity in meaning of words creates a crisis in communication. Words instead of clarifying and crystallizing thought confuse it. Today counterfeiters have seized the temple of Saraswati. As false coins bring about the breakdown of an economy and society, so counterfeiters in language destroy popular confidence. Dull indifference is the only response when not the goblet alone but grapes are without wine.

The ultimate ideals of Socialism are clear: in the final lap of the development, in the words of Professor Haldane, "men will be able to think like Newton, to write like Racine, to paint like Van Eykes, to compose like Bach. They will be as incapable of hatred as St. Francis. And every moment of man's life will be lived with the passion of a lover or a discoverer." An enchanting vista, an ennobling vision. But the sense of betrayal has gone so deep that such a vision stirs little enthusiasm, it is dismissed like the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow.

Not ends but means divide the Socialists and spread confusion in the ranks of simple people. If we could bring honesty and understanding to this discussion we could be helping to lift the miasma of misunderstanding.

The instinctive, custom-bound community of the ancient world is dead. The tribe and the totem, notwithstanding their restrictions, gave security and coherence to the spirit and strivings of man. The security and coherence were of the primitive level, they could never be the eternal abode of man. It is the claim of Socialism to become the mansion for man's spirit where he recovers wholeness and integrity on a rational and conscious basis what in the dawn of civilization he had inherited on instinctual basis.

The Unbalance

In this grand pilgrimage of awakening and unfolding, certain strains and disharmonies have come in. In

recent decades particularly the march of Science has brought about an unbalance; the world has shrunk in size, but man's emotions and powers of apprehension have not expanded proportionately. The rapid changes in economic and political life are mostly beyond the range of man's intellectual understanding and aesthetic apprehension. The natural balance that existed between man and soil and between man and man has broken down. The result is that not only there is growing dependence, but mounting diffidence or self-distrust. And there is no hatred greater than the hatred of self.

Under capitalism the organic bonds between man and land and among men inter se have snapped. It was this fact that Marx elaborated in his passionate passages on 'alienation'. The massive alienation, the sense of utter loneliness, evokes a mood of frustration and, what Fromm has aptly called, 'the fear of freedom.'

In the modern urban and industrial agglomerations, not only there is no natural bond between man and nature - the sonatas and symphonies of the wider life around man are hushed in the cities of today - but there is neither the free, tacit communion between man and man. Sympathy and antipathy are emotions that man understands and responds to, but indifference freezes him. In the modern world the prickly thorns of indifference is the normal lot of an urban man.

"I came into the city and none knew me;
None came forth, none shouted, 'he is here!'"

The individual becomes an isolate. How are the shattered strings of harp to be restrung and their lost notes recovered?

Gandhiji's solution was to restrict the tempo of change and growth to man's powers of apprehension and response. With the over-grown population, return to traditional patterns of life is, however, not possible. The socialist answer, therefore, is the development of a new discipline that would enable man to cope with the complexities around him.

Pluralism

The new discipline cannot find full expression until far-reaching social and economic changes are made. But those changes can be fruitful only to the extent the complex world is broken down, here and now, into many layers and on each layer a new understanding and integration among men and between men and things are

attempted. Life's lotus is many-layered and every petal is precious.

Socialism therefore conceives of a pluralist world: political life becomes a pyramid of autonomous groups and economic life is thought of in terms of functional freedoms. Only in a republic of freedoms does man discover full Freedom.

Man's estrangement from man and nature can be corrected only through the pressure of responsibility. The fractional man of today, an exile from his dreams, rootless and foot-loose, can recover his poise, in a school of democracy. Through responsibility, that is the conscious acceptance of initiative and effort at the various levels of freedom, does man recover his integrality and joy. Either we must put back the hands of economic and technological changes and regain balance through the old institutional and instinctive aids, or we have to meet life in terms of varied groups of autonomy, is the core of socialism.

The founding fathers of Socialism were not unaware of these truths, hence Robert Owen, Fourier and Proudhon spent their lives in elaborating the institutional frame-work of the new society. Because the industrial revolution had just begun and its dynamics were not properly understood, in the foliage of their thoughts, they drifted away from the root of the matter. It was the glory of Marx and Engels to give the soaring vision the necessary astringent touch of reality.

With his characteristic practicality, Marx had greeted the Franco-Prussian war with the following letter to Engels,

"The French need a thrashing. If the Prussians win, the centralization of state power will be useful for the centralization of the German working class. German predominance would also transfer the centre of gravity of the workers movement from France to Germany, and one has only to compare the movement in the two countries from 1866 till now to see that the German working class is superior to the French both theoretically and organizationally. Their predominance on the world stage will also mean the predominance of our theory over Proudhon's."

Centralization then was as necessary as the ballast of iron facts that Marx gave, to golden fancies. The march of the movement in the intervening 80 years shows that today centralization needs to be tempered by federalism. Marx needs to be revised in the light of the pre-Marxians.

The decay of capitalism and the progress of socialism have made the pre-Marxists eminently topical! We need to explore, with Professor Martin Buber, 'The paths in utopia.' We are no longer engaged in extracting the ore of Socialism - rousing the proletarian consciousness - as Marx was forced to do, but with the final modelling, where dreams and designs must find constant references.

The thirty years of experiment with Marxism in the Soviet Union and the varied efforts, at Social Democratic Administration in parts of the world, demand of a total re-statement of the fundamentals of Socialism. To the thesis of capitalism, Kremlinism has offered the anti-thesis, it is the responsibility of newest generation of socialists - Asian socialists - to discover the abiding synthesis.

Whatever be one's views on the relationship between the two classes, it cannot be gainsaid that inside the class, among working people inter se, inside the party, among comrades inter se, Utopianism must determine the patterns of behavior.

The degeneration of the communist party - and the number of dead and living witnesses is mounting up - compels us to go back to the first principle, to return to the root.

Etatism

The Communists leave no area of life and thought private, that is, free. The all-embracing control robs man of his individuality and subordinates him to a collectivity. Instead of freeing man and endowing him with responsibility the Communists enhance his dependence and emphasise conformity. The old tribal unity is replaced by a new tribal unity, with its armoury of totems and taboos. The frightened, frustrated individual, instead of being taught the discipline of responsibility, of integrality, is subjected to a collectivist coercion. In the place of the free and humans being, a new and terrible mass-man, as Ernest Toller called him, has emerged.

The mass-man is taught to believe in the sacrifice of the individual to the collective, the substitutability of one individual by another, the non-validity of individual morality with respect to the collective, the necessity and inflexibility of hierarchical discipline and the inevitability and the strange beauty of violence.

The mass-man functions not on the human, but zoological level. Not only towards non-communists, but among communists themselves, the law of the jungle prevails. The exploitation of the dark impulses

in men for power political ends ultimately debauches all relationships. By exploiting the frustrations in men, power may be achieved, but effort is robbed of its ideals.

Man is not recognized responsible being. He cannot know his interest. Humanity is regarded as a herd of cattle to be driven to the selected pasture. "Every beast is driven to the pasture with blow." That denial of responsibility enters into the class and the party, and no restraints remain on the absolute powers of the leader.

Every aspect of life is controlled by the *raison d'état*. The diverse threads of life are gathered together into a political knot. Art, culture, education, science are controlled by the state. Thought wears a strait-jacket and the artist is put in uniform. The State becomes all pervasive; inside the State, the ruling party wields absolute power and within the party the leadership is supreme. Vamping man's weakness and frailties the Leviathan reduces all men to a dead level-interchangeable parts of a machine.

This invasion of life by politics has developed in normal persons a healthy aversion to etatism. The recent *eclipse* of politics in our country is a natural reaction: it shows man's effort to discover private domains of life and thought that are outside the compulsions of the State, to achieve social nexus that would temper the power of the state.

Because Socialism is pluralist, it permits, nay encourages, foliation of mind in directions other than politics. Tyranny and totalitarianism may frighten or fascinate man for a while, but the spirit of man is ultimately dauntless. An eagle may be shorn of its wings, but the desire of the sky cannot be plucked out of it.

It is the tiredness of the human spirit - in difference to positive exertions, callowness, emptiness, impatience with organic rhythm - that breeds totalitarianism. From over-all negation, from cynical repudiation of all values, from bitter nihilism, man swings over to the polar opposite - adoration of discipline and hierarchical order. The connoisseurs of misery exploit cynically the hungers and frustrations in man and adorn reason with cap and bells.

Against this drift and danger, Socialism must cling to pluralism: the foliation of spirit in non-political directions must be encouraged. It is a matter of pride to us that Achyut Patwardhan's profound sensitivity to the

tragic experiences of our times, have, in the words of Ignazio Silone, “carved out new dimension in soul”. He is anxious to bring to Socialism the varied regions of non-political life and thought. We shall watch his explorations with sympathy and claim to share his discoveries for we know that in the oyster of his mind, a new pearl is being shaped.

Ethics and Ethics

The worship of the State is made more demoniac by the double morality of the totalitarians.

The appeal of Socialism has been part socio-economic, part ethical. The socio-economic factors change and evolve but the ethical impulses are eternal. The ultimate truths of life are not historical and sociological. There, undoubtedly, are aspects of the ethics that are relative, but man’s deepest responses are to the absolute ethic, that nostalgia of life’s ultimate triumph over all limitations. It is man’s nature to live simultaneously in temporal truths and eternal verities. Socialism has mighty power because it inheres the amphibious nature of man.

The Communists reject the absolute ethic that is in Socialism. Their morality is purely relative, class conditioned, their value judgements are purely pragmatic.

There are two different kinds of, or better, layers in, morality; one, a system of prohibitions and regulations in matters of property, sexual relationships and social behaviour – this kind of morality is socially conditioned and subject to laws of historical evolution; the other, morality means an ordering of emotions, achievement of self-harmony, and acceptance of the rights and reality of other men. The latter morality has been recognized as the final fruits of all efforts, the end of all quests. To the extent human beings achieve the latter morality they transcend the laws and prohibitions of society sanctioned in the name of the former. The absolute morality provides the touchstone to judge and improve the historically conditioned morality. To deny validity to absolute ethic is to rob the ship at sea of its compass.

Freedom, in fact, is both the necessary condition and a result of morality; it is for that reason that a sound political and economic organization tries to create conditions wherein responsible beings are able to realise full freedom whose content – self-awareness – is not socially determined. Because the values are absolute, they provide a standard of evaluation by which to judge political rulers and systems.

Moral relativism clothes Might with Right, for it the standards of right and rationality themselves vary, there is no ultimate court of appeal.

Recently in the Pravda, Marshal Stalin answered some questions on philology. To two of the questions (1) It is true that language is a super-structure imposed upon a basis? (2) Is it true that language was always, and remains, of a class character, and that there does not exist a common and unified classless general people’s language for society? Stalin replied in the negative. The crassly relativist teachings of Marx were dismissed as contrary to Marx.

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based on religion, race, colour, ethnicity, gender, etc.; care and compassion towards all forms of life, a deep commitment to environment protection and peace, a strong sense of justice, honesty, truth and commitment to helping others.

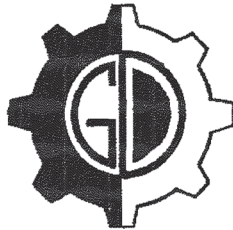
If a firm foundation of even the first mentioned value can become deeply rooted, then this single attribute can help to end so much conflict in the world. If all these related values can be imparted, even to a reasonable extent, then nothing can stop the creation of a better world. Such is the important role of education. Here we mean education not only at the school and college but also at the family and community level.

While the great significance of this objective of education cannot obviously be denied, in reality it is neglected all the time.

The second most important objective of education is to provide conducive and happy conditions in which the creativity of children can flower properly and adequately. This objective is of course accepted by educational institutions and quite a few of them insist that this is actually happening in their schools. However, when we look at the extent to which education is dominated by severe competitiveness and the race to get as much marks as possible, then in such conditions the objective of providing happy conditions for creativity of children to flower properly cannot get priority and cannot find its true expression.

It is extremely important for true reform of education that the two most significant objectives of education can be reclaimed and accorded their most important place in educational reforms.

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Kamalesh is no more

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Post-independent India has seen many scams, including some in which thousands of crores of rupees have been involved and in which ministers and top echelon officials have mulcted public money to enrich themselves. But the one sourced in the Bharatiya Janata Partry-ruled Madhya Pradesh, named the Vyapam Scam, is possibly the mother of all scams largely because a large number of deaths, estimated between 40 and 50 in number, are linked to it. As in all other scams over the decades in many states in the country, there is also a monetary side, with many crores being gobbled up by officials who managed to recruit teachers, doctors and students to abet them in their crime. This makes the scam unique in itself and possibly without a parallel anywhere in the world.

For the last few months two major scams have been coursing along the public domain and have taken in their nets netas and ranks alike, with a state governor thrown in for good measure, not to mention bureaucrats and police officials. The first, now known as Lalitgate, exposed the involvement of the Rajasthan CM, Vasundhara Raje and Union Minister Sushma Swaraj. The second, the Vyapam scam has the

dubious distinction of claiming the life of a young TV journalist from Delhi who journeyed to Madhya Pradesh to find out why so many were dying in the name and cause of Vyapam. The Dean of a medical college who had offered to help the investigators, was found dead in a Delhi hotel. As reported by an English daily, four deaths caused "more consternation" than many others: those of the son of the state's governor, a medical college dean, his successor and a television journalist. Add to this the death of a trainee sub-inspector, Anamika Sikarwar recently recruited by the state recruitment board whose body was found floating in a lake. And, if we view all these deaths against the background of the statement of a BJP Madhya Pradesh leader and presently Union Minister, Uma Bharati, we get a frightening perspective.

What is Vyapam all about? It is a racket run by a handful of people who get impersonators to sit for examinations to help students in return for heavy bribes in the medical and engineering disciplines and dishonest recruitment of teachers and doctors.

The impersonators sit and do duty for the students in the entrance

Between the Lines

Are MPs trustees of people?

Kuldip Nayar

scanning the system and involving a large number of middlemen and senior students. This involves the functioning of the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (MPPEB) or the Vyavsayik Pareeksha Mandal (VYAPAM). The scam, run on a highly remunerative system of bribery and corruption, was first exposed by a whistle blower in 2013 and saw the arrests of a number of people including the governor's son, who, however, later died in mysterious circumstances.

As public interest, concern and pressure grew and questions were raised about what was happening, a number of concerned citizens approached the Supreme Court with public interest petitions seeking the removal of governor Ram Naresh Yadav and a CBI inquiry.

The court fixed July 9 for a hearing of all petitions. Meanwhile, the chief minister Shivraj Singh announced that two inquiries, one by a Special Investigations Team (SIT) and another by Special Task Force (STF) were already ordered but the public wanted a CBI probe and hence he was recommending one. The CM has stated that it would be good if the Supreme Court agrees to monitor the probe.

Experience teaches us that whenever leaders attempt a cover-up or resist a probe, the public tends to view their statements with the proverbial pinch of salt. The same happened in Madhya Pradesh. This was why in public perception as admitted by CM Chouhan, the SIT and STF were seen as having no credibility. This was unfair to the probe agencies which were dubbed partial and pro-government even before they were asked to probe.

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Over the years, I have found the Supreme Court in Pakistan, a country under constant influence of military, is far more progressive than ours, although India has been functioning in a free, democratic environment. Not long ago, lawyers in Pakistan have fought and won the battle for supremacy of the Chief Justice who was sequestered and suppressed by the army chiefs like Zia-ul Haq and Pervez Musharraf.

Once again, the Pakistan Supreme Court has made us see our face in the mirror. In an epoch-making judgment, the apex court has held that the "massive expenses" incurred on the palatial President's house, Prime Minister's house or the various governors' houses, as well as the extravagant lifestyles of their occupants and the perks enjoyed by government functionaries at public expense were "a matter of government policy" involving "political questions."

How radical is the judgment as compared to our functioning? The Pakistan's Supreme Court said: "In a country burdened by foreign debt, where a substantial percentage of the populous lived under the poverty line with a lack of access to basic healthcare and education, such extravagant expenditure was not only against the traditions of simplicity of the Holy Prophet, but also violates the fundamental rights of the citizens."

This echoes the advice of Mahatma Gandhi to those elected to different offices in independent India. He said that they should behave like the trustees, not masters.

He wanted them to draw modest salaries so that their emoluments are not very divergent from the average income of a person. MPs, MLAs and those elected to top positions in municipalities seldom recognize that. There is no escaping the fact, as the Pakistan Supreme Court's judgment says, that public property is "a public trust in the hands of public functionaries."

I wish the court had commented on the perennial demand of the elected members for increasing emoluments and perks. But it refrained from doing so on the ground that they involved political questioning. Technically, the court was correct. But the judges' obiter dicta would have helped because the judiciary, still respected, would have initiated a debate on lavish spending by political leaders and their assistants.

Their style of living is not matched by politicians even in the advanced, rich countries in the West. Who would point out to them that they are already in a higher income bracket? The media once used to do so. But today the owners, the individuals and those in the corporate sector supervise and even dictate the headlines given to a story, apart from what the paper would print. Their personal prejudice or preference has played havoc with the media. This is, indeed, a sorry state of affairs. But no other better method has been found, not even in the West, where the press is more developed than in our part of the world.

The Press Council of India which was constituted to set higher

standards in journalism has got lost in its assertion to be the No. 1 in telling journalists and newspapers what to do or what not to do. I recall as a member of the council how during the days of press censorship the then chairman, a retired Supreme Court judge, curried favour with the government by writing to the then Information Minister, V.C. Shukla, that he, as the Press Council chairman, has been able to manage the Council members not to pass any resolution to criticize censorship.

The Janata government brought out a white paper to highlight this attitude even at the highest level during the Emergency. But when Indira Gandhi repeated the same thing after coming back to power in 1980, there was none in the media or at the Council to point a finger at her. Even today, when the Press Council has been reconstituted to give representation to editors and working journalists, it has hardly made any difference.

Probably, the Press Council of India has to be replaced by some other representative body as it has happened in the United Kingdom. There, too, it was found that the Press Council had run out of steam. In the eighties, the Press Council in the UK was replaced by the Press Complaints Council (PCC). The experience of media there has not been too happy, but none in the government or in the media has thought of anything innovative. The matter rests there. In India, I concede, there is no possibility of the re-imposition of censorship. Yet, the role of Press Council needs to be redefined to be more purposeful. Otherwise, it will be just an office on paper.

In the same way, I agree with former Speaker Somnath Chatterjee's suggestion that an independent pay commission should be constituted to look into the emoluments of

parliament members. There is no doubt that they need to be paid more to meet the rising cost of living. But there should be a proper study undertaken to assess how much increase would be in order. There is merit in what Chatterjee has said. MPs themselves cannot decide about the hike.

Similarly, there has to be a parity on salaries and perks drawn by the elected members in different states. At present, the Kerala legislators who are not ministers are said to be drawing a salary of Rs. 21,300 every month while his counterpart in Delhi gets Rs. 50,000 and in Punjab Rs. 54,500. The break-up of the Kerala MLA's reported pay packet is Rs. 300 as salary, Rs. 3,500 as

constituency allowance, Rs. 4,000 for telephone charges, Rs. 6,000 by way of fuel and railway coupons and a permanent travel allowance of Rs. 7,500.

Those elected should get one consolidated sum which should include all expenditures, including accommodation, transport, electricity, water, telephone, etc. This will enable the people to know how much an elected member cost the exchequer. Picture gets blurred and adds to confusion when emoluments are given under different heads. It would be better to have one yardstick for states and the centre. Only then will the nation know how far Gandhiji's advice on trusteeship has been followed.

Kamlesh is no more

Kamlesh Shukla, who preferred to be known simply as Kamlesh, and was a big force on the socialist intellectual circles during the 1970s, passed away in Delhi on Saturday, 27th June 2015, after a brief illness. He was 77.

Born in 1937 in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, Kamlesh did not complete his formal education, but was considered among the most well-read writers of his time. Before he became wedded to the ideas of Rammanohar Lohia and socialism he was an associate editor with Kalpana, a well-known Hindi literary journal. For many years he was associated with Dr Lohia as his personal secretary and assisted him in his parliamentary work.

Kamlesh spent his early days in UP before moving to Delhi. Considered "a man of big dreams" by his friends, he was well-regarded as a Hindi poet, and published collections of verse in 'Jaratkaroo', 'Khule Mein Awas' and 'Basav'.

Kamlesh was first the editor of 'Ingit' — associated with Rammanohar Lohia's 'Jan' and Mankind and then *Pratipaksh*, a forceful Socialist political weekly in Hindi, which had George Fernandes as its chief editor. Reputed literary names like Manglesh Dabhral, Giridhar Rathi and Ramesh Thanvi worked in his team. *Pratipaksh* held strong Socialist views and was an effective forum for political and literary arguments, often in conflict with the government of the day.

Kamlesh is best remembered as the focal point of thinkers who backed the Socialist movement in the 1970s. He was a 'Comrade in Arms' to many prominent leaders during the Emergency and was jailed 40 years ago in the famous Baroda Dynamite case, in which he was named co-accused along with George Fernandes. He was closely associated with the likes of Madhu Limaye, Madhu Dandavate, Surendra Mohan, Kishan Patnaik, Kedar Nath Singh, D P Tripathi, U R Ananthamurthy.

– **Qurban Ali**

Caste mode of production: An outline

K. S. Chalam

Mode of production (MoP) is a method of perceiving the nature and level of development of a society and economy. It is a method developed by Karl Marx and has been used by several scholars and activists since then. The debate is unending and is responsible for a number of fierce clashes within Marxist circles and outside. However, the approach has been used by Marxists to extend it to countries that are strictly not in the reckoning whereby they have used terms like colonial mode of production to mark countries like India. Interestingly, it never occurred to our colleagues in India to apply the typical caste system to scrutiny under this rubric. In fact some orthodox pundits tried to gloss over this even adversely commenting on Marx for his failure to see reason in the Indian character of feudalism. This has damaged the Indian Communists enormously and is partly responsible in alienating them from lower castes. I have been speaking on this question for about three decades and raised the issue of 'caste mode of production', but was promptly shunned by the dominant. Now the country is in such a situation that caste and religion have appeared once again as the stumbling blocks of liberation struggles. I think it is time that not only the Marxists and the left even the democratic intellectuals should debate about the use or abuse of the MoP as applicable to India.

The MoP in social sciences is a serious academic exercise undertaken by scholars to understand the successive stages of development of particular societies.

There are several competent Indian scholars of international repute that have participated in this debate and enhanced the capacity of the scientific world to understand the unexplored. In this context, the debate on the Indian version of development is explained with the introduction of a new MoP as an illuminating exercise. The economic structure of the Indian society during the colonial period and the stagnant nature of this structure were explained in terms of a "colonial mode of production". The construct was founded to be essential as the existing analytical tools of feudalism or state mode of production was found to be inadequate to explain the Indian situation. In fact, the debate itself has opened new vistas in the area of political economy of agriculture in India. However, the debate was not carried further particularly after the globalization theories gained momentum. It is in the tradition of explaining the unexplored area of social formation in Indian society, an attempt is made to formulate the Caste Mode of Production as an important analytical tool to understand the Indian situation.

What is mode of production?

The concept of mode of production is a dialectical method through which the structure of institutions and their relationships within a society can be explained in an historical outline. Scholars have so far identified nine modes of production. Though mode of production is a tool developed by Marx himself, the concept has been adopted by both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars in social

science discourse. It consists of four important analytical parts. In the process of production people use different implements and tools such as plough, axe, lathe, labour, etc. This is known as means of production. The second component is productive forces. No machine or a single factor can produce anything by itself. It requires the labour power, skills, experience and knowledge to put the means of production in motion. In the process of production, people necessarily enter into certain social relations known as production relations. This third component is dictated by the ownership of the means of production. The fourth component is analysed by Jairus Banaji by distinguishing relations of exploitation and relations of production. The surplus is appropriated from the labourers in colonial mode not as rent in kind through extra economic coercion. This relationship is only a relationship of exploitation and it is a very important component to understand the mode of production. All the above four components are combined together in explaining a historically determined society. In each of the modes of production, a dominant class emerges and controls the means of production. For instance, in the state or Asiatic mode, state is the dominant category, in slavery slave, land is fundamental for feudalism as capital is for capitalism. Though, Marx had mentioned about Communist, Asiatic, Slave, Feudal and Capitalist modes of production as successive stages of development of a society, scholars have been unearthing different other modes by studying different societies with the Marxist

tools. It is alleged that Marx and Engels have erroneously adopted the studies of Morgan's 'Ancient Society' in elaborating the historical stages, on the basis of his limited experience with some American islands. This may be one of the reasons for the limited use of the Marxian model as universal and scholars are now obliged to evaluate the original source material before undertaking studies on contested issues in the debate.

The studies of Frank, Amin, Weiskoff and other third world economists had brought out clearly that the characterization of some of the Latin American countries as capitalist or pre-capitalist is not a satisfactory explanation. They have meaningfully contributed to the Marxist intellectual tradition by introducing dependency theory along with the centre-periphery imagery to explain the specific conditions of their societies. In India, deep endeavours have been made by scholars to make India correspond with other European societies in its process of development by identifying similarities in these societies without recognizing the specificities and differences. In fact Marx himself was struck by the peculiarities of the Indian society with the limited information available with him and advanced the notion of Asiatic Mode of Production. Later, economists and historians realized the distinguishing features of India and have introduced concepts like Colonial mode, Asiatic mode, etc. Even these scholars have not been able to succeed in capturing the whole process of production in India. They have hardly touched upon the rural India particularly how the caste system of organisation encompasses production, exchange and distribution. Social anthropologists have studied these

problems as issues in village studies without an explanation why do they survive even today?

Features of Caste Mode of Production

It is necessary to identify the fundamental and differential features of the caste mode of production. In order to characterize the caste mode of production, we need identify a dominant category to classify the mode along with the other components. It is a known element that throughout Indian history, we come across the category of caste as a dominant player in all aspects of human actions. Even Marx recognized it and has recorded it in his main text in Capital Vol -I. It is at the stage of explaining division of labour and manufacture, Marx has mentioned about caste system. He said that, "the whole mechanism discloses a systematic division of labour, but a division like that in "manufacture is impossible" (emphasis added). He has further elaborated by saying that, "the law that regulates the division of labour in the community acts with the irresistible authority of law of nature at the same time that each individual artificer, the smith, the carpenter and so on conducts in his workshop all the operations of his handicrafts in the traditional way but independently and without recognizing any authority... this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness (emphasis added) of Asiatic societies. The structure of the economic elements of society remains untouched the storm clouds of the political sky" (vol.I, pp.338-339). It can be seen that the fundamental features of a caste mode of production is its 'unchangeable' feature. It was recorded by Marx while explaining the division of labour. Like several other scholars who were looking at India, including

the Indians, through a window of their own, Marx did not touch the "untouchable". We can find in history that there is some change in the occupational mobility of certain artisan castes that are now considered as other backward castes, but the conditions and life styles of the untouchables have remained the same through ages. B.R.Ambedkar recognized this and he has identified the untouchables with slaves and linked it with Hinduism. Had he used the economic explanation of its existence such as the mode of production or some other, he would have enhanced our understanding and a solution could have been found. He said that "most parts of the world have had their type of what was called the lowly. The Romans had their slaves, the Spartans their helots, the British their villains, the Americans their Negroes and the Germans their Jews. So the Hindus have their untouchables. Slavery, serfdom, villainies have all vanished. But untouchability still exists and bids to last as long as Hinduism will last"(Ambedkar B.R 1942). This is one way of explaining the existence of untouchability and discrimination. The unchangeableness of the conditions of the dalits(untouchables) needs to be sought in the mode of production to understand India in its totality. Caste system of India as many analysts comment is not related to untouchables, adivasis and others. It is a perpetual system and it is necessary to identify the typical economic factors that make it everlasting .No human being survives without food and it is to be produced in any society. Dalits are involved in the process of production not only as food gatherers(a mistaken description given by D.D. Kosambi for the low economic status for refusing to accept agriculture, but it did not occur to him Brahmins were

also not in agriculture and some are food gatherers), but even as means of production. They never refused to accept modern methods of production as some historians characterized their backwardness, but the main stream society made them to survive without any opportunities and socially excluded. It is necessary here to bring in history. The Indus and Harappan civilizations, which were basically urban and river valley in foundation have provided evidence on the life styles and the social institutions. There was no trace of untouchability and a group of citizens living outside the mainstream. It was only after the destruction/ decay of the urban culture and the introduction of alien or Aryan 'gram' or village mode of living that the caste system started developing as a gigantic social formation. But, those who survived the onslaught have remained outside as an independent social group and those who opposed the mainstream within its structure have also been thrown into this category. As a result, dalits emerged as a "residual" or as an experiment group. The social relations between the mainstream and the untouchables been maintained through a mode of production, otherwise they would have emerged as independent social group as is observed in the case of artisan communities in the mainstream. They are deliberately maintained as untouchables. But social interaction continued to make use of their productive forces. That is why, untouchables have founded to be surviving yet without any improvement in their living conditions. (The job holders constitute one per cent of the community and a fraction it if expressed as proportion of population). The productive forces play a dominant in the mode of production, the ex-untouchables are used, yet the developments in the

mainstream are restricted through extra economic coercion known as the caste restrictions/discrimination. The productive forces of dalits have remained constant (static) as they were forbidden to enter the mainstream society, enter literate learning and own property. These three important restrictions made them to stagnate with what they originally possessed as an 'indigenous community'. In other words the productive forces of dalits did not grow over a period of time due to these social and economic restrictions as distinguished from others. The situation did not alter very much as anticipated by Marx in the British raj. It was said that the British, "Fulfilled a double mission in India: one destructive; the other regenerating- the annihilation of Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundation of western society"(Marx, British rule in India,P.40). The British in fact recreated and strengthened the caste discrimination by rediscovering their Aryan roots in Hinduism and improved the productive forces of Brahmans and other dvijas. Trueman in his ' Aryans and the British rule' has indicated how William Jones looked at the Indians as long lost kin of British in his Asiatic society lecture at Calcutta in 1783. Therefore, we can see in India, the development of different modes of production existing simultaneously without any contradiction, but at the same time replacing one after the other for those who were ordained to grow and sustain without any difficulty. As characterized in the colonial mode of production and the productive forces were drained without affecting the mainstream elite. The colonial mode as analysed by scholars did not identify the groups who were responsible in collaborating with the British as 'agents' or managing agents. It was the same 'dvija' communities which

have acted as "collaborating elite" by making use of English education, technology, western culture, etc. At the same time, the artisans, the dalits have been exploited and their capacities have been drained. However, no scholar of repute has elaborated these peculiarities as unique features of India. Is there any difference between the British then and American colonialism and the compromises made by fundamentalists?

The caste mode of production was sustained with the 'jajmani' system and the unequal exchange between different communities in the village. Most of the social anthropologists have examined the self-sufficient nature of the village. But, the village was never self-sufficient. It was the self-sufficient agriculture that was sustained by the dalit labour and the labour of artisan communities in providing infrastructure for the self-sufficiency of agriculture. There were interactions between villages (gramam) and occasionally resulted 'sangramam'(disputes) due to unsettled issues. The remarks of some scholars that there was no interaction among villages are not well founded. The rent on caste is devised in a meticulous way through the restriction of numbers of 'dvijas'. In the Hindu social order, there is no possibility of entering the 'dvija hood' by others. One may aspire or even use the symbols to call themselves with pseudonym called 'viswa Brahmin', etc. But, it is never accepted and there are legal battles fought to deny this in the British India courts. The number of untouchables keeps on increasing as it is a residual category and anyone can be thrown into it. This has created surplus people (increased supply of labour reduced the wages) and the premium has remained constant and a subsistence wage

was paid. While the Brahmin kept on enjoying a higher premium with all the advantages including their number, they have extracted rents with the increase in population and demand for their services. One can see the constant and sometimes ever increasing demand for the services of Brahmins in Hindu order (it is noticed that in urban areas the value of rent of Brahmin rise as they can attend to secular calling and change dress and perform traditional duties) particularly after 2000. Therefore, the occupation of the Brahmins carries a premium. The dalits and others untouched by others and their mobility are unrestricted due to the premium. The dalits and others were pushed into 354 occupations, mostly into lowly paid jobs in the post-independent period. Even today the untouchables are not allowed to share (1) crematorium (2) water and (3) shrines indicating the continuation of the caste mode of production. The argument that, some positions in the public sector are occupied by the dalits through reservation can be an indicator of occupational mobility is to be understood as an external force, and not as an autonomous act within as in the case mode of production. Further, the number of such positions held by the dalits is estimated to be 1 per cent of the total dalit population (out of 1.7 crore jobs in the public at different levels only 16% or 27 lakhs belong to 20 croredalits) as compared to the total control of the means of production and their proliferation over a period of time by the dvija communities. The situations have not changed even after globalization. No dalit is benefited by the process of globalization! Not even a single individual out of 5814 foreign direct investment proposals (by 2000) was accorded to them in India. All the benefits of globalization including shares in MNC's, disinvestment,

scams and the like are appropriated by the Brahman and Bania and their lackeys indicating the strength of the caste mode of production even in the 21st century. How is it that

in a country like USA where the productive forces, the so called base of superstructure is different, Indian caste and religion persists?

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Soft Hindutva and hard Hindutva

Irfan Engineer

The theme of the NDA Government seems to be – lavish spending on cultural events, tax cuts for the corporate India and cuts in budgets on social welfare touching the poor, peasants, dalits, adivasis, women and other weaker sections. In the process, the BJP and those who shower their blessings on this Government – the Hindu Nationalists - push the oppressed, exploited and the most deprived sections of society further into cycle of hunger, debt and suicide. They enable the corporate houses and a few families to enrich themselves further. Both, soft Hindutva and hard Hindutva are tools to create “cultural pride” in the hearts of the people getting further marginalized and deprived and feel good as a result of NDA’s policies. But the “India Shining” and the “feel good factor” campaign of the BJP in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections was rejected by the people of India and yet they are trying the same strategy with a difference – trying to involve people in taking selfie with their daughter and feeling proud, doing yoga, cleaning and sweeping the streets and such other sundry activities.

The total social sector allocation in the budget has come down from 16.3 per cent in 2014-15 (budget estimates) and 15.06 per cent in revised estimates, 2014-15 to 13.7 per cent of the central budget outlay in 2015-16. Within this overall decrease the percentage of allocation for women and child development remains stagnant at 0.01 per cent of the total budget

(AIDWA, 2015). For gender budget, the budgetary allocations decreased from 4.19 per cent of the estimated total budgetary expenditure in 2014-15 to 3.71 per cent of the total expenditure in the 2015-16 budget. In absolute terms this constitutes a decrease in 12.2 per cent in the gender budget and almost a 49.3 per cent decrease in the allocation of the ministry of women and child development over the revised budget of 2014-15. The gender budget in the health sector has been reduced by 17.9 per cent over last year’s revised estimate. In disregard to girls education, the overall gender budget for school education came down by 8.3 per cent over last year’s revised estimate. The much publicized Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan got only Rs. 100 crore. For about 10 crore women and children who are the beneficiaries of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the allocation for this flagship programme of the government of India has been drastically cut by more than half, from Rs 18,108 crore in 2014-15 to a paltry Rs 8,245.77 crores.

The budget allocations for drinking water and sanitation are drastically reduced by more than 50 per cent, to a mere Rs 6236 crores from Rs 12100 crores, despite the announcement that each house will be provided with safe piped water (All India Agricultural Workers’ Union, 2015). The social sector spending has been slashed by a whopping Rs. 1,75,122 crores in one year alone – Rs. 66,222 crore cut in grants on social sector scheme, Rs.

5,900 crore cut by closing down the Backward Regions Grant Fund and Rs 1,03,000 crore cut was effected by not implementing the food security programme aimed at 67 percent of the country’s population. The cut affected women and child development, agriculture (engaging 49% of the workforce), irrigation, panchayati raj, education, health, housing, welfare of SCs and STs and others. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana funds were reduced by Rs 7,426.50 crore, funds for animal husbandry and dairy was cut by Rs. 685 crores, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna funds have been reduced by around Rs 8,156.22 crore, and funds for the National Livelihood Mission have been reduced by Rs 1,632.50 crore. The health budget was cut by 17%! In 2015-16 Budget Rs 30,852 crores were allocated for the Special Component Plan (for the Scheduled Castes) and Rs 19,980 crores were allocated for the Tribal Sub-Plan – much less than in the 2014-15 Budget. The objective underlying the SCSP and TSP is the development of SCs/STs, and allocation of funds in proportion to their shares in total population, which is 16.6 per cent for SCs and 8.5 per cent for STs. The budget 2015-16 only provided a meagre 6.63 per cent for the SCP.

The plan outlay for the department of school education and literacy was reduced from Rs 51,828 crores in 2014-15 budget to Rs 39,038.50 crores in 2015-16. The budget for department of higher education was cut from Rs

16,900 crores in 2014-15 to Rs 15,855.26 crores in 2015-16. Plan outlay for the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan declined from Rs 28,258 crores to Rs 22,000 crores. Plan funds for the all-important Mid-Day Meal Scheme have been reduced from Rs 13,215 crores to Rs 9236.40 crores. The fund cuts in real terms (after taking into account inflation) are much larger. Plan outlay for secondary education has declined from Rs 8,579 crores to Rs 6,022 crores. The funds allocated to the UGC have stagnated at last year's levels, which amounts to a cut in real terms. Technical education has witnessed fund cuts to the tune of Rs 434 crores. Science education and research would suffer as the allocation for the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research has been cut by 25 per cent (Students Federation of India, 2015).

The government abolished the wealth tax which the wealthy have to pay and sacrificed Rs. 8,325 crore on direct tax account by and reducing the corporate tax. On the other hand, the Govt. made the common citizens pay more as indirect taxes and gained Rs. 23,383 crores.

Upper caste culture

While the expenditure on social sector is being reduced along with corporate taxes, the expenditure on culture to promote the hegemony of the upper caste elite of the Hindu community is being scaled up. Yoga, which draws from Brahminical religious and philosophical texts like Patanjali, Hatha and Upanishads, largely practiced by a section of middle class, was sought to be promoted as India's soft power tool. On promotion by the Prime Minister Modi, the U.N. General Assembly

had in December 2014 adopted an India-led resolution, supported by over 175 U.N. member states, declaring June 21 as 'International Day of Yoga', recognising that "Yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being". Defence personnel, security forces, school and college students were mobilized and coerced to participate in a massive event on par with Republic Day celebrations with 150 CCTV cameras to enter Guinness Book of World Records. The World Record entry states "The largest yoga lesson involved 35,985 participants at an event organised by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India on the occasion of the first International Day of Yoga, on Rajpath, New Delhi, India, on 21 June 2015.

"The event was organised on a 1.4 km segment of the iconic Rajpath in the centre of New Delhi and 32 LED screens were streaming the live images of four instructors on the main stage. The event was opened with a speech by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who later participated practising yoga for the duration of the lesson. The event included (roughly) 5,000 school children, 5,000 national cadet corps, 5,000 central army forces, 1,200 women police officers, 5,000 union ministers and similar, 5,000 diplomats and foreign nationals, 15,000 from yoga institutions. To ensure that all participants perform Yoga to the best of their abilities, the Ministry shared a video of exercises to participants 2 months before the event to practice." The publicity budget of the event borne by the Information and Broadcasting ministry alone was Rs100 crore. The Ayush ministry put in 30 crores. Publicity budget of the Embassies were also to bear an unspecified amount. The expenditure on the

event and arrangements, including on security personnel is not known.

For the Kumbh Mela held in Allahabad in the year 2013, Rs. 1,151.83 were spent according CAG Report – Rs. 1,017 crore came from Central Govt. and Rs. 134.83 crores were spent from State Govt. contribution. 85 close circuit television cameras (CCTVs) installed. The estimated expenditure of the state for the Kumbh Mela to be held in Nasik in 2015 was Rs. 2,380 crores – more than double only in two years! The expenditure will include installation of 550 CCTV cameras of which 348 have already been installed. There would be 15,000 policemen deployed. Over 145 kilometers of pipelines for the water supply have been laid, plus 120 kilometers of connecting pipes. These would be serviced by 26 tubewells specially bored at the ghats and 450 kilometers of overhead power lines, serviced by 35 sub-stations to light up 15,000 streetlights.

Sanskrit which is neither spoken nor popularly used in everyday conversation, and the use of which once was restricted to only upper-castes is witnessing huge promotional efforts by the NDA Government. Sanskrit must be learnt by scholars who are studying Hindu philosophy and religious texts. However, it is pertinent to note that knowledge of Sanskrit was once used as a tool to oppress the lower castes. The Shudras who spoke Sanskrit were to be punished by cutting off their tongues, if they heard Sanskrit, molten lead was to be poured in their ears and if they read Sanskrit, their eyes were to be gouged out. NDA is promoting Sanskrit at massive cost. The HRD ministry made Sanskrit compulsory as a third

language in Kendriya Vidyalaya schools midterm in the academic year 2013-14 without adequate numbers of teachers and text books in place of German language. In the 16th World Sanskrit Conference held in Thailand from June 28 to 2nd July 2015, Government scaled up the delegation to 250 scholars led by the minister of External Affairs Shushma Swaraj. 30 of the 250 delegates were from RSS affiliated body Sanskrit Bharati. The Conference was held twice before in the years 2000 and 2003 when A B Vajpayee was the Prime Minister. The total expenditure on the World Sanskrit Conference and for promotion of Sanskrit in general is not known.

The Government is promoting soft Hindutva using tax payers' resources, while individual leaders of BJP, including some ministers and MPs promote hard Hindutva – using violent and aggressive language stigmatizing the non-Hindu religions and spreading hatred. The objective of hard Hindutva is cleans the country of non-Hindus or relegate them to status of second-class citizens without any citizenship rights, including voting rights through a war if necessary and establish Hindu rashtra. Just a few examples of such measures are the scores of communal riots obviously whether using cow protection, love jihad, accusation of violation of sacred symbols of Hindus, or conversions as a pretext. Pravin Togadia of VHP instigated Hindus to forcibly take possession of house bought by a Muslim in a Hindu locality, or blatantly hate mongering and constituting criminal offence speeches by Sakshi Maharaj, Yogi Adityanath, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, Giriraj Singh and others.

Soft Hindutva on the other hand seeks to promote the cultural hegemony of the upper castes through media, education, the scores of godmen and other platforms and to dominate the religio-cultural discourse. Hegemonizing the religio-cultural space undermines the diversity of religious practices, beliefs, cultural traditions, customs, and way of life. Today how many know about the Lokayata philosophy, the Nath Panthis, Siddha Panthies, hundreds of bhakti saints from all castes, cultures and traditions. Why not promote Buddhism as explicated by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as a tool of soft power? Or Jainism or Sikhism for that matter? The objectives of both – hard and soft Hindutva are same – they use different strategies for tactical reasons. Soft Hindutva is for those sections for whom violence and offensive language does not suit their tastes and does not appeal.

Soft and hard Hindutva are working in tandem and complement each other. Prime Minister Modi used hard Hindutva till it served his purpose and now uses soft

Hindutva to achieve the same objectives. Soft and hard Hindutva aid each other. For example, soft Hindutva is coming to the aid of those practitioners of hard Hindutva who were incarcerated for their role in terrorism and communal riots. Under the watch of the NDA Government convicted criminals like Babu Bajrangi and Maya Kondnani are out on bail and Rohini Salian has accused NIA officials that they advised her to go slow on Malegaon bomb blast accused Col. Purohit, Dayanand Pandey, Sadhvi Pragnya Thakur and the agency does not want her to win the case. Soft Hindutva in power emboldens the hard Hindutva to become more violent and aggressive and not to fear rule of law. Why does anyone expect the Prime Minister to speak on these issues? Soft Hindutva also mesmerises the people getting marginalized and slipping further into poverty and powerlessness by soft Hindutva filling them with false pride. But the feeling of pride won't last for long and the reality of poverty and powerlessness will soon mobilize people for their real empowerment.

The Vyapam scam is different from any other scam in Independent India. While scandals continue without let, many involving thousands of crores of rupees as we saw in the last decade, never has the country witnessed the frightening phenomenon of around 46 deaths taking place in mysterious circumstances of those associated with a scam. Some 'middlemen' died in 'accidents', the body of an accused was found on a railway track, yet others committed 'suicide'.

Pointing fingers at the Governor, CM, senior ministers, top bureaucrats and police officials, this scam has belatedly burst on the national scene – with recent fatalities including a young TV Delhi journalist who went to Madhya Pradesh to piece together the story. And he was dead the next day, the death made more tragic by the revelation of Congress leader Digvijaya Singh that he had cautioned him the previous day 'to be careful'. It has raised serious questions about the safety of journalists in the India of 2015.

–Neerja Chowdhury, *The Times of India*

The death of Congressism

D. K. Giri

Historian Ramachandra Guha in *Hindustan Times* and the political scientist Suhas Palshikar in *Economic and Political Weekly* have analyzed the rise and fall of the Congress party. In fact, Guha has made an appreciative critique of Palshikar's analysis. While Palshikar has focused on institutions and processes, Guha talks about the individuals and leadership. Guha says, "In my view, for a party's success or failure, the nature of leadership is a key explanatory variable. It can be as important as organizational robustness and ideological coherence." Guha is right, as a historian, in telling us as to how has politics been influenced by individuals, how have leaders created and destroyed parties, how have they arrogated themselves to the political institutions, mainly the parties. One could call the developments and decay in the Congress party as the 'old politics' and anything alternative to Congress as 'new politics'. At certain point of time, Congress began diluting its political values and organizational principles. The politics of the country and almost all political parties got infected with what was profoundly called 'Congressism' by the noted political scientist, Rajni Kothari. So there is a crying need for new politics in the country. The Aam Aadmi Party did herald a new era, but it soon recoiled into old politics, as, perhaps, it realized too soon that winning somehow is the name of the game in politics. But, it was good that AAP showed that, "common men and women (aam aadmi) could aspire for political

activism and public offices. The usual tools of money, muscle and mafia need not indispensably rule the roots in electoral politics.

When did the old politics or Congressism begin? It coincided with the journey of Congress, at a particular phase, which dominated Indian politics for about hundred years from 1885 to 1989. Palshikar divides Congress period since independence into three phases. The first phase ran from 1947 to 1967. Immediately after independence, the Congress party was the major and undisputed party at the centre. It inherited the legacy of the freedom movement - sacrifice, struggle, vision, selflessness, patriotism and so on. It ruled at the centre and in most of the states. The second phase was the period between 1967 and 1989 which began with the general elections of 1967. In these elections, the Congress lost many states to the opposition and the regional parties. Palshikar describes this period as a "time of confrontation". But, it was more than just confrontation. A host of new trends in politics set in under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. The unsavory tussle for power between the Syndicate and the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi led to split in the party since 1969. The Syndicate members who had brought in Indira as the leader were hounded as they resisted her centralizing the party. Trends of individualism and authoritarianism were displayed by her. Such trends came to a head in 1975 when Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency, having been found by the Allahabad High

Court guilty of malpractices in her constituency during the 1971 general elections. The Emergency of 1975-77 came to be known as the darkest period in Indian democracy. Secondly, political corruption got institutionalized when, in 1969 Indira Gandhi opposed the official candidate of the Congress party Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy and supported V V Giri for the highest office of the president of India. This act of Indira Gandhi undermined the authority and legitimacy of the party vis-à-vis the leader, be it the Prime Minister. Later on in 1978, after losing to Janata Party, Indira formed her own party, called Congress (I) where 'I' stood for Indira. Thus, in 1981, Congress(I) was recognized by the Election Commission as the real Indian National Congress. This was the height of personalized politics which subverted the party as a genuine modern organization.

During the second phase, the Congress lost power for 1977-80 at the centre and for much longer in the states. The trend, which was more vicious and harmful evident in this period, was sectarian politics. The Congress party which incorporated secularism into the Indian constitution began communalizing the politics. Secularism is an unworkable concept that failed to build a truly multi-cultural society in India. This is another debate which we have started here in *Janata* and elsewhere. Indira Gandhi sought votes in the name of religion. She had propped up a Sikh religious leader Bhindranwale in order to undercut Akalis. Bhidranwale became too

power-hungry to control. Indian army had to move into the Golden temple, the spiritual citadel of Sikhs to flush out Bhindranwale and his men. Indira Gandhi had to pay with her life for meddling in Sikh politics.

The third phase of Congress career began in 1989 and continues till date. Palshikar calls it the period of 'survival'. The vote percentage shows the survival struggle of the Congress party. In the general elections of 1989, despite losing power, the Congress party had secured 39.5 per cent of votes, but in 2014, the last general elections, its vote percentage was less than half of that figure at 19.3.

Since 1984, Congress has not won a majority in Parliament on its own and has grudgingly entered the coalition era. It lost power from 1989 to 1991 and from 1996 to 2004, and again it has gone into opposition since 2014. It has lost many of the states and has not recovered ground in any of them. Palshikar commented that, "when the Congress loses a state, it rarely recovers the space there". The states, where Congress had lost ground since long and is unlikely to recover are - Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, UP and Bihar. The Congress has badly lost another big state, Andhra Pradesh - now two: Andhra Pradesh and Telengana.

Both Palshikar and Guha attribute the decline of Congress to leadership style and organizational deficits of 1970s. Palshikar traces it to the decimation of the party by Indira Gandhi in 1970s, Guha ascribes it to marginalization of state party leaders, and weak central leadership after Indira Gandhi. Guha argues that Congress did not build or

promote any credible leader in states - in Tamil Nadu after Kamaraj since 1967, in West Bengal after B C Roy. Likewise, there has been no popular leader in UP after Lal Bahadur Shastri, in Bihar after Rajendra Prasad, and no replacement after Vallabh Bhai Patel in Gujarat, Y. B. Chavan in Maharashtra and in recent period, Bansi Lal in Haryana, Nandini Satpathy in Odisha, and Arjun Singh in Madhya Pradesh. Guha talks about the stalwarts of independence movement in the states, and authoritarian leaders in the states during Emergency period. Guha makes another interesting comparative characterization of three leaders of the family of Indira Gandhi. He says: Rajiv Gandhi did not have Indira Gandhi's understanding and experience, but was of scientific spirit and technology-driven; Sonia Gandhi did not have "compelling new ideas" of her husband, but was hard working and had dogged determination; Rahul Gandhi did not have any of the qualities of his grandmother, father, and mother - Indira Gandhi's social understanding, Rajiv Gandhi's belief in the power of technology, and Sonia's stamina.

Guha's analysis is lopsided and simplistic, and Palshikar's incomplete. Both of them miss practical processes driven by political values and behavior. Both of them overlook or ignore the serious issue of corruption that marked and marred the progress of Congress party. Rajiv Gandhi got an unprecedentedly huge mandate in 1984 and began his Prime Ministership as Mr. Clean but ended it in a huge controversy on the purchase of Bofors guns from Sweden. Narasimha Rao succeeding Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister

was involved in a scandal with stock broker, Harshad Mehta. Both Congress-led governments from 2004 to 2014 were mired in corruption - CWG, 2G, coal mines and so on. Corruption became a national issue prompting a massive movement against it. The new party, AAP defeated Congress party in Delhi which was in power there for three consecutive terms.

Congress-style politics marked by individualism, nepotism, dynasty, feudalism, (majority of ex-royals and landlords in the party), authoritarianism, corruption has reached a dead-end. BJP, for the lack of a better alternative has replaced it. But, the BJP and the other parties lurking around to replace BJP, even with the support of Congress, represent similar politics. There is no political party which has radically fresh ideas, different from those of Congress, nor a different organization culture. The country is desperately waiting for the dawn of new politics, which does not have any of the parlous political trends what I call 3C- Congressism, Communalism and Communism.

(Continued from Page 2)

It is not enough that a probe by the CBI has been ordered. The scam involves almost all departments of the government which hire personnel. Thousands of positions and placements in government and government-owned-subsidized and controlled are affected. The probe must be time bound and transparent. Chouhan has earned a good name as an honest leader who is taking the state forward. He has done well, albeit after dilly-dallying, in /ordering/ the CBI probe. He must now ensure that no more scandals occur in the state under his control.

Culture and Socialism - II

Asoka Mehta

If in language historical and social forces play only a limited part, in ethics they play even less. Language uses the collective unfolding of a region or a people, ethics is the collective unfolding of the entire human race. An absolute ethic alone provides direction to life.

The Communists adhere to moral relativism deliberately, because that is politically useful. By interpreting all cultural phenomena in terms of class struggle, by explaining man's beliefs by his place in the struggle, by subordinating ends to means, Communists reduce man, from the architect to the raw material of history. Individual is subordinated to a collective, and tyranny is enthroned. The cave of his conscience is at last occupied by the State.

The German poet Bertolt Brecht, one of the foremost exponents of Stalinist culture, makes one of his *dramatis personae* say:

“Who fights for Communism must be able to fight and not to fight, to say the truth and not to say the truth, to render and to deny service, to keep a promise and to break a promise, to go into danger and to avoid danger, to be known and to be unknown. Who fights for Communism has, of all the virtues, only one: that he fights for Communism”.

And who is to decide which of the alternatives he is to follow at any time? Not the absolute ethic, not his conscience but the writ of the Party.

Prometheus-wise fire is stolen from the heavens and surrendered to the Party. The singleness of mind and purpose evoke admiration, but it is steam without direction.

The darkness at noon that characterizes the Moscow skies is the inevitable result of moral relativism served in the interest of a one-party State. This denouement is a travesty of Socialism, a mockery of man's epic quest for freedom.

I must apologize for the long excursion in ideology. It was necessary because without clarity on fundamentals, faith falters and the sense of direction is lost. I know I have merely posed questions, stirred up controversies, and not resolved the doubts. The vestibule of enquiry is the farthest we can go today, other hands will have to build the full cathedral of thought – of our creed, Democratic Socialism.

It is not very difficult to define our creed; its application, however, is full of pitfalls.

Drift Towards War

The world is drifting towards a new global conflict. Democratic Socialism demands a policy that will be wider than that of passive neutrality. We cannot be inert spectators of nations losing freedom and peoples forfeiting liberties. An active policy demands ever widening circle of influence. Our federative approach must grow; the countries of South-East Asia must be encouraged to have a common foreign and defense policy

and coordinated economy and its development. Such a comity of nations would prevent a vacuum from arising anywhere in South-East Asia that would be filled in either by Russian infiltration or American intervention. Democratic Socialists must also encourage and support the Movement for World Government. Villages, tehsils, wards and towns should be prepared to declare themselves, through democratic expression of people's will, as parts of the domain of the World Government. World Government can succeed not precede world consciousness.

While these progressive moves are necessary it has to be realized that the Great Powers are not going to oblige us by leaving us alone. In international politics as in national economy, *laissez faire* is dead. Only a multitude of states, through intricate alliances and balance of power can ensure peace. Where only two Big Powers exist there is no scope for honest brokers of peace except through the federal approach that would embrace the small States.

The two Big Powers are unlikely to oblige us by leaving us alone. Their interference in the affairs of the small nations will tend to grow. The sole effective safeguard lies in collective security. Until the Third Force gathers strength to assert the people's will for peace the United Nations Organisation is the sole institutional expression of collective security. In the disturbed world of today, where the post-war phase has yielded place to the pre-war

period, we cannot equate Socialism with isolationism. That would mean serving the tyrant indirectly. From collective security alone can we fan out towards social security.

Our effectiveness in foreign policy will depend upon our influence over the internal policies. Only a rapid movement towards Socialism can make this country a bastion of peace.

With the war clouds gathering, the present economic policies of the Government become doubly dangerous. The reliance on big business in the context of war must lead India to chaos. Profiteering and corruption, and people's apathy and irritation will grow as polar opposites. We can face the world in arms, we can meet the challenge of invasion and infiltration, of external enemies and enemies within the gate only if the people are united and they are filled with hope. So long as the economic policy of the Government continues to be shaped by the presses and pulls of just a score of men who hold 800 directorships and control, directly and indirectly, the main industrial and financial concerns in India, there can neither be unity nor hope. Between 1939 and 1949 the concentration of economic power has grown and in the coming years, with the world's drift towards war, whether India gets sucked into its vortex or not, the concentration will be intensified. The economic pyramid cannot stand, for long, on a petering apex, that must lead to chronic disequilibrium.

The war crisis, if faced in the cavalier manner characteristic of the present Government, must lead to sky-rocketing of prices, pauperization of the middle and lower classes, economic disintegration and political polarization. It will mean

surrendering redoubts and turrets, one after the other, to merchants of disorder. The fort of our freedom is threatened by the wild men of Capital from within.

Back to the People

Only a drastic revision in the economic policy, a determined movement towards equality, austerity and Socialism can save the land from catastrophic centrifugal tendencies that have been the bane of our people for centuries. The slackened harp strings of politics have to recover the lost notes of Socialism.

The economic policies will not change shift towards Socialism will not be achieved, merely by denouncing the party in power. Its unenviable record undoubtedly provides a broad target for shafts of criticism. On the negative plane, however, criticism will be met by counter criticism and people's interest will flag. Democratic life cannot be built up on a trafficking in dirty linen.

It is best to acknowledge the adulthood of our people. Let us not hide the difficulties of the situation from them, nor deny full explanation of our policies. The vast majority of our people have, in the ultimate analysis, a stake in Socialism. Such frankness, which is the basis of Democratic Socialism, might give us an initial set-back, but in the end it will be to our advantage. We must be prepared to lose a pawn to win the queen.

General Elections, on adult vote, can prove a catharsis of discontent. In India, General Elections can prove to be a mighty force of social churning. If the people are prepared to insist on fair elections and early elections an easy way out can be

found from the cul-de-sac that frustrates them today.

The elections would teach the political parties that there is no short-circuiting the people. The impatient 'revolutionary' who pins his faith in minority action and dreams of barricades will realise when he sees the release of mass energy through elections that the march of history has outgrown his romantic beliefs. Socialism in India can come only through the conscious co-operation of the people. Democracy is the inescapable ethos of Socialism.

Fertilisation in Politics.

There are some in our ranks who yearn to live in the white-heat of struggle all the time. The only climate they favour is the climate of revolution. They seek to intensify discontent and no music is sweeter to them than the mutter of misery, and the blood red mark of hatred is flaunted on their forehead. It is undoubtedly true that we have to fight injustice, in an organized way. The profound sociological insight that Marx has given us is the core of socialist heritage. But one cannot live constantly in the rarified atmosphere of revolutions, in a state of obstetric excitement.

There is enough discontent in the country. There is no point in stirring that brew stronger. What is needed is to bring courage and cohesion to the people to resist injustice. The conservation of strength does not come through struggles alone.

The poverty of our agriculture is said to be due to the fact that we draw fertility out of land, harvest after harvest, without restoring any strength to the land. In political work too this truth holds good. We cannot draw response out

of the people without imparting strength to them. The one-way traffic spreads erosion and aridity in the soil of politics. To Democratic Socialists, class struggles, in all their manifestations, are welcome, but they have to be accompanied by quiet, unostentatious, constructive work. The rose unfolds in the sunlight but its roots seek darkness in the soil.

Recently in Bihar the people themselves have evolved a new pattern of constructive work – not individual but en masse. Whole villages turn out to build and better their environs: roads, bunds, repairs to tanks etc. Ek ghanta desh ko and Naya gaon banaayenge are the most potent slogans of our time. They bring to the people self-assurance and hope that the ek-tarof discontent can never evoke.

Accent on discontent must lead to spread of disintegration, and by scattering the acids of disintegration one merely creates a climate uncongenial to Democratic Socialism. In the Programme of National Revival that you are to consider at this Conference the combative and constructive elements are meaningfully blended together as firm knees and fine hands give good mount and good ride.

The facile belief fostered by some of our intellectuals that the Socialist consciousness emerges only in the furnace of struggle is a half-truth. Social psycho-analysis shows that the great danger in India is that social prejudices tend to attract supporting reasons as magnet the iron-filings. Reason is engulfed by irrationality. If these adverse forces are to be fought, Socialism, in this country, will have to be many faced, multi-pronged. The social heterogeneity that refracts

our efforts at social change can be overcome when Socialism comes as a great cultural upsurge. The strains and tensions of the shrinking world on an individual can be overcome only through the acceptance of the ethical core in Socialism. The apathy of men that provides valuable hostages to our enemy can be removed only through the recognition of the pluralist strain in Socialism. These facts of Socialism are as real and significant as the combative one. The subtle veracity quivers broadly and mercurially between the politics of conflict and the ethics of construction.

Weak though our Party is, it is the main hope of our people, the focal point of their destiny. Our weakness is part organizational, part ideological. The former is generally a function of the latter.

The footsteps on the stair-case, lead in our direction. We can respond to the knock of History only if we are united in the understanding of our faith and philosophy. The gathering gloom can be pierced by the incandescent clarity of our ideas. Since the Kanpur Conference, contents of Democratic Socialism have been defined with increasing precision. It is for this Conference to remove the last cob-webs of confusion and put a term to doubt and double-talk.

Illness and death are depriving us of the wise guidance of seasoned leaders. Their places must be taken by younger men; in the organization younger men must move to the helm. Nowhere, outside the folds of Socialist Party, is there such opportunity for the young to forge to the fore. From the ashes of today must leap forward the flame of tomorrow.

Years back Madras gave India the first promise of full independence; today Madras will give the pledge of Socialism. This time the sands of time are running out and there are no twenty years to wait. It is in that realization that we have to dedicate ourselves to the achievement of peace, freedom and prosperity for our people that Socialism alone can ensure.

- July, 1950

The Global Wealth Databook reveals some startling facts. The richest 1 per cent of Indians today own nearly half (49 per cent) of India's personal wealth. The rest of us 99 per cent are left to share the remainder among ourselves. And that too is very unequally shared. The top 10 per cent Indians own nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of the country's personal wealth. The remaining 90 per cent share a meagre quarter. At the other end of the spectrum, of the world's poorest 20 per cent people, nearly one in four are Indians. Just to show by contrast, China's share is a mere 3 per cent.

-Mihir Shah, The Hindu

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It is only an incurable optimist who would see after every India-Pakistan bilateral interaction hopeful signs of a breakthrough in relations. One reality of India-Pakistan interaction is that there is a pattern to the outcome of every interaction and a pattern to the follow-up of decisions taken. This pattern keeps repeating itself.

After the latest interaction, between the two prime ministers on the sidelines of an international meet in Ufa in Russia, the same pattern is visible. Yet, another reality is that despite absence of progress in efforts towards a breakthrough, both India and Pakistan behave as if they are incurable optimists where normalisation of relations is concerned!

The joint statement issued after the Narendra Modi-Nawaz Sharif meeting in Ufa held out enormous hopes of a significant thaw in relations. Apart from the lofty and peace-oriented sentiments expressed by the two sides, a meeting between the national security advisers of the two nations implied that the neighbours intended to settle down to some negotiated settlements of outstanding issues. In India at least there was genuine appreciation that

at last the stalled dialogue would resume and some serious efforts made towards normalization.

However, the pattern repeated itself. Pakistan threw cold waters on Indian hope. The joint statement that painted signs of a forward movement in relations was issued after the foreign secretaries of the two governments got approval for its contents from their respective principals. Yet, back home, Foreign Policy Adviser Sartaj Aziz took the position that there can be no dialogue unless Kashmir was put on the agenda and there can be no forward movement in the Lahore trial of LeT commander Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi unless more evidence was supplied to Islamabad. India contends that all evidence has already been passed on.

India nurtures the belief that Aziz's statement must be seen as "damage control" and that his positions on the issues on which there is agreement on including in the agenda are for domestic consumption strictly. India still hopes that if any engagement does take place it will happen on the lines of the joint statement. By raking up the Kashmir issue, has managed to stall the benefits of the Ufa statement.

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Making the right moves

Kuldip Nayar

To add to India's discomfiture, Aziz issued a statement declaring that Mr. Sharif had raised other issues of concern to Pakistan in his talks with Mr. Modi. One of them was that there was no progress in the ongoing trial in India of the accused in the Samjhauta Express case, and second that India was interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan by supporting insurgency in Balochistan. Nothing can be farther from the truth, but it suits Pakistan to beat India with any convenient stick!

Aziz struck an aggressive posture at his press conference, reiterating that Pakistan would continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to "our Kashmiri brethren". The tone of his statements is in total contrast and variance with the positive notes of cordiality and understanding expressed through the joint statement. As we mentioned earlier, Pakistan's response is consistent with a pattern followed by it in the past. Experience suggests that Pakistan has a vested interest, namely appeasing the Jihadi elements in the country, in not taking the dialogue forward.

It has been made clear by the Indian side that the joint statement is an accurate reflection of the spirit of the Modi-Sharif meeting in Ufa. This means that we would like to create conditions in which the follow-up action can be taken in favourable and positive atmosphere. Bilateral meetings are to be held at various levels - between NSAs and directors general of military operations, and Border Security Force and Pakistani Rangers. These are very significant meetings and their outcome can lead to an improvement in the bilateral atmosphere. India can only proceed on the assumption that

(Continued on Page 4)

Can we trust them? This is the burden of comments both in India and Pakistan after the meeting between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif. The reaction is no reflection on the effort the two are making to break the ice. However, it shows that even after 70 years of partition, the enmity between the two countries remains as entrenched as before. Any step taken to lessen the distance between the two is viewed with doubt and suspicion.

Not many people in the two countries dare to cross the line, apart from the border, which has come to be drawn between the two over the years. Both live under the fear of hostilities because of the threat one perceives from the other. Yet, there is no getting away from the fact that unless the two countries develop trust in each other they cannot reduce the defence outlay, which leaves very little for education, health or the old-age care.

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's demand for territorial division, however justified, was fraught with dangers. The two-nation theory was bound to create a gulf between Hindus and Muslims. This happened. Even today, the people on both sides are paying the price for it. However secular in intent, the polity in India is run by Prime Minister Modi whose Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is parochial in ideology.

True, after the creation of Pakistan Jinnah said that the people in the subcontinent were either Indians or Pakistanis and would cease to be Hindus and Muslims, not in the religious sense but otherwise.

However, he had not realized that the sense of nationality based on religion had got so entrenched that his advice not to mix religion with politics would go awry.

The fallout is that the enmity has got instilled. India and Pakistan are at daggers drawn. Even a small friction gets built up into a war-like situation. So much so, the Muslims in India bear the brunt of bias against them. At the time of tension with Pakistan, the Muslims in India are not considered part of the mainstream.

Take the case of voice sample of Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, who masterminded the terrorists' attack on Mumbai. The joint statement issued by Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif, who met at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit meeting at Ufa (Russia), was meant to prepare the peoples on both sides for a détente. But Nawaz Sharif's sharing voice sample with India misfired.

The Pakistani establishment reacted strongly against Nawaz Sharif's gesture. That no court is willing to pursue Lakhvi's case is apparent. It has become a prestige issue. When sentiment comes in the way of proving who is more powerful, peace becomes the first casualty.

No doubt, Pakistan Prime Minister's advisor on national security and foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz's sabre-rattling was in bad taste. Yet, the Modi government does realise that after its unilateral cancellation of the foreign secretary-

(Continued on Page 6)

RSS and Emergency

Ajaz Ashraf

In a piece for the Hindu newspaper, dated 13 June 2000, a fortnight before the 25th anniversary of the Emergency, Subramanian Swamy claimed that the then RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras and former Prime Minister AB Vajpayee betrayed the anti-Emergency movement by writing letters of apology to Indira Gandhi. Swamy is now a member of the BJP's national executive. In the piece, Swamy wrote, "It is on the record in the Maharashtra Assembly proceedings that the then RSS chief, Balasaheb Deoras, wrote several apology letters to Indira Gandhi from inside the Yerawada jail in Pune disassociating the RSS from the JP-led movement and offering to work for the infamous 20-point programme. She did not reply to any of his letters." Indira Gandhi, however, replied to Vajpayee, who, Swamy claimed, too wrote apology letters to her "In fact for most of the 20-month Emergency, Mr Vajpayee was out on parole after having given a written assurance that he would not participate in any programmes against the Government," Swamy declared.

Atal Behari Vajpayee and Indira Gandhi Agency

It seems the two weren't the only luminaries from the RSS who apologised to Indira Gandhi, precisely the reason why Swamy thought it was "ludicrous" of the BJP to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the anti-Emergency movement in 2002. He even recommended to readers that they thumb through Akali leader Surjit Singh Barnala's book which provides "vivid description of

other erstwhile Jan Sangh worthies who chose to walk out of prison on promise of good behaviour" (Jan Sangh was subsequently renamed the BJP). However, Swamy's wasn't a wild swipe against the entire RSS "Not all in the RSS were in a surrender mode," Swamy noted "The exceptions were Madhavrao Muley, Dattopant Thengadi and Moropant Pingle."

During the 1975-77 Emergency period, Swamy was an RSS insider, handpicked to represent the Jan Sangh in the Rajya Sabha. His credentials of resisting the Emergency regime are also impeccable. He was underground, crisscrossed India in disguise, and travelled abroad to campaign extensively against Indira Gandhi.

He became a hero when he walked into the Rajya Sabha on 10 August 1976 undetected. When Vice-President BD Jatti was about to complete the obituary references, Swami pointed to Jatti that he hadn't included democracy in his list of recent deaths. As the MPs stood up to observe a two-minute silence for the deceased, Swamy declared he was staging a walkout – and escaped from Parliament before he could be arrested.

Yet, considering Swamy's shifting political allegiances over the years, should his allegations against the RSS be taken seriously?

Stories about RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras apologising to Indira Gandhi have always been in circulation. It has

been reiterated, once again, in senior journalist Coomi Kapoor's recent book, *The Emergency: A Personal History*. Kapoor is Swamy's sister-in-law. In the chapter, 'Swamy on the run', Kapoor says, "Ironically, Balasaheb Deoras, who was put in jail, did not play such a heroic role. From prison he sent several letters to Indira Gandhi praising her leadership, and these were perceived as a form of apology and a plea for pardon." This echoes Swamy's allegation made in *The Hindu* in 2000. However, Kapoor is more sympathetic to Deoras than Swamy. She writes, "Others more kindly disposed towards Deoras argued that these letters were a tactical move meant to protect the interests of the organization and its members." But this argument could well be a retrospective attempt to present the RSS as a steadfast opponent of the Emergency.

Kapoor's own narrative illustrates vividly that Deoras wasn't the only RSS luminary who buckled under pressure. She categorically says that after RSS leaders, Nanaji Deshmukh and Dattopant Thengadi, were arrested, the morale of the men fighting the Emergency underground was shattered. Kapoor writes, "Many more 'Twenty Pointers' – paying allegiance to the Emergency powers, they declared their allegiance to Indira Gandhi's Twenty Point Programme and Sanjay Gandhi's five-point programme."

Swamy's indictment of the RSS, in contrast to Kapoor's, wasn't confined to individuals but extended

to the organisation as such In the Hindu piece, Swamy said it was RSS leader Muley who advised him to go abroad Why? Swami answered, "...A tearful Muley told me in early November 1976...(that) I had better escape abroad again since the RSS had finalised the document of surrender to be signed in end January of 1977, and that on Mr Vajpayee's insistence I would be sacrificed to appease an irate Indira and a fulminating Sanjay whose names I had successfully blackened abroad by my campaign "

Is there corroborative evidence to support Swamy's charge that Vajpayee struck a deal with Indira Gandhi? Kapoor says Vajpayee and LK Advani were arrested in Bangalore on 26 June Days later, Vajpayee was admitted to the city's Victoria Hospital, where he was operated for appendicitis This was a misdiagnosis – he had typhoid and, because of the needless operation, he developed septicaemia Vajpayee was subsequently shifted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, "kept isolated on the fifth floor" Kapoor says Vajpayee's foster family had to take recourse to lengthy procedure to meet him, involving, among other things, securing clearance from the Prime Minister's Office

Subramanian Swamy IBN Live

Did Vajpayee promise to cooperate with Indira Gandhi because of his understandable wish to have his foster family around? Kapoor doesn't mention the letter of apology which Swamy referred to But she does say, "Eventually, because he was bedridden, Vajpayee was granted parole to stay at home"

The mystery about Vajpayee's parole deepens even further when

Kapoor discusses the Opposition leader Charan Singh's negotiations with Indira Gandhi Singh was keen to come out of the prison, but was apprehensive that if he were to walk into freedom alone, his image would be tarnished He, therefore, submitted to the Congress regime a list of political prisoners who he wanted to be released along with him Kapoor writes, "*Charan Singh was released in March 1976... Most of the prisoners on the list given by Singh were released soon afterwards, except for (socialist stalwart) Madhu Dandavate BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee, bedridden after a slip-disc operation and suffering from septicaemia, was by this time on parole, but under house arrest* " This means Vajpayee had been on parole at least from August-September 1975 to March 1976

It is strange Kapoor shouldn't have asked Swamy whether or not Vajpayee apologised to Indira Gandhi Not only is she Swamy's sister-in-law, her book draws on her personal interview with him Nor is it that what Swamy wrote in the *Hindu* was the only time he accused Vajpayee of acquiescing to Mrs Gandhi.

For instance, *Outlook* magazine in March 1998 ran excerpts from Swamy's autobiography - Swami and Friends—a Few Enemies Too - which was serialized in the Tamil weekly Kumudham One of the entry quotes Swamy saying, "Just to get out of the prison on parole, Vajpayee had given a letter of apology to Indira Gandhi and had created a bad precedence □

As recently as 25 November 2012, *the Economic Times* quoted Swamy saying, "During the Emergency, Vajpayee wanted me to surrender

He felt that it would send the right message The RSS had told me not to, under any circumstances So I didn't " Swamy's animus towards Vajpayee is well known Could he have been exaggerating the story about Vajpayee's submission during the Emergency? That's possible Nevertheless, different accounts make it clear that Vajpayee spent much of the Emergency period on parole, albeit under house arrest Not the doughty opponent of the Emergency as he has been made out

Nor was it that the RSS remained steadfast in opposing the Emergency Its role in the resistance against the Emergency wasn't bigger than that of Socialists, without whom the movement to reclaim democratic and civil rights would have floundered

—from **First Post**

(Continued from Page 2)

Aziz's statement will not adversely affect what was agreed upon at Ufa. The Ufa interaction was all about how to talk to each other in a high-level focused way. Pakistan has to make its own contribution to make the dialogue a success. On such a hope alone can India enter into a dialogue. After all, the fact remains that it does indeed take two hands to clap.

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Japan: empowering the youth

Rajaram Panda

On 17 June 2015, the Japanese Diet passed a bill to lower the voting age to 18 from 20, adding 2.4 million new potential voters to the nation's current voting population of 104 million and to the country's rapidly greying electorate. Japan last changed its voting age in 1945 when Japanese women gained the right to vote, when it lowered the requirement from 25 to 20. This is the first extension of suffrage in Japan since then. Japan's decision is in conformity with the world's trend of empowering the youth in the process of governance. However, it is a matter of concern that Japanese youths are not particularly active in exercising their franchise. For example, less than a third of 20-something voted in the last general election. With 26 per cent of the country over the age of 65, Japan has the world's fastest aging population.

The legislation will come into effect when elections are held for the Upper House in the summer of 2016, unless, the more powerful Lower House is dissolved first for a snap election. It may be remembered that a similar law was passed in 2014 lowering the voting age to 18 in 2018 for national referendums on the Constitution. In an ageing society, politicians have often courted older voters with generous pension benefits, which have led to ballooning the national debt as Japan rapidly ages. In contrast to the voters' turnout in the younger age category, those in their 60s and over 70s were 68 per cent in the last general elections.

The intention behind the new law is to encourage younger voters who have remained politically

inactive so far. After the Lower House approved the bill to revise the Public Offices Election law, the Upper House unanimously passed it. Hereon, the "voices of young people will be more reflected in politics", observed the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga. This new law gives added responsibility to the teachers in senior high schools and universities to educate their wards the importance of exercising their right to vote. The promulgation of the revised law shall apply to both national and local elections whenever they are held.

Earlier a survey made by the National Diet Library in 2014 had found that over 80 per cent of the 198 countries in the world have set their minimum voting ages at 18. The lowering of the voting age would also mean that political parties need now to revise their electioneering strategies targeting not just the elderly but also take into consideration the aspiration and expectations of the younger lot. Drawing the younger voters to participate in the elections whenever they are held will be a new challenge because the elderly segment are more responsive whenever elections are held to cast their franchise. What this author has observed during his several visits to Japan is that the younger generation are least interested in the country's politics and the governance process. Therefore drawing this segment into the political process cannot be taken for granted. It is likely that the 2.4 million new voters shall remain relevant for only statistical purposes as not a higher percentage from this segment is expected to exercise their franchise. That seems to be a short-term scenario.

The question that arises is that given the apathy of the younger generation if there was no popular demand for lowering the voting age, what was the provocation for the Abe administration to do this at this point of time? Prime Minister Abe seeks to amend the war-renouncing Constitution for the first time since it took effect nearly 70 years ago. The minimum voting age for national referendums on constitutional amendments is already set to be reduced to 18 from 20 in 2018, under a revision to the national referendum law that was enacted in 2014. Simultaneously, the statutory age of adulthood may also be reduced from 20 and the maximum age covered by the Juvenile Law from 19. This could be a tricky issue as the issue of lowering the age ceiling in the Juvenile Law is controversial. There is no consensus on whether 18- and 19-year-olds should be punished in the same manner as adults. A related issue that too needs to be resolved is whether the minimum age for eligibility to run for public office lowered. At present, the minimum eligibility age to run for Lower House elections is 25 and 30 for the Upper House seats. There are other issues too. Empowering the youth in the age group of 18-20 in the category giving the right to vote would also mean empowering them to engage in election campaigns. But what happens if they are accused or suspected of committing serious violations of electoral laws, such as vote buying. Will they be prosecuted for such violations? There is no clarity on such issues at the moment.

There are many students who are upbeat at the new opportunity to exercise their responsibility; though some of them are disenchanted with

the entire political system, and also sceptical that much would change with the change. The young voters are critical of the most of the aging politicians and yet are unwilling to take up responsibility. That is basically the problem of the present Japanese society. Too much of materialism has insulated the youth from taking serious decisions as their perspective of life does not go beyond personal comforts. This lot has little interest in national affairs. This is a new challenge the Japanese society is facing. While many say that there are not many politicians who deserve to be elected, they are not prepared to offer any alternatives. Many of this empowered youth lack enough knowledge about getting involved in public affairs. This issue needs to be addressed while they are either in the senior high schools or at universities so that political awareness is cultivated.

Though the lowering of the voting age accounts for a mere two per cent of all voters nationwide; the induction into the political processes of the young voters may induce important changes in society. With low birth rate and Japan being a greying society, the government faces huge fiscal deficits and increased social security expenditures. The induction of the youth into the political mainstream could bring in new perspective to tackle this situation.

In order to achieve this objective, an element of activism into the nation's educational system needs to be introduced to create awareness among the youth about their political responsibility. The Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry plans to distribute supplementary materials explaining the election system and election law violations to all high school students this year, in cooperation with the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry.

Holding mock elections that simulate the experience of going to the polls could be another means to educate the youth. However, care needs to be given that such exercises do not drift towards political indoctrination and ensure that political neutrality is maintained. The extension of

(Continued from Page 2)

level talks in Islamabad last August, calling off the proposed talks again even before these are yet to begin would be diplomatically unwise. More so because the Ufa summit between Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif had taken place at India's initiative.

Even otherwise, the quick reaction of the US-led international community in welcoming the India-Pakistan summit in Ufa has further made it difficult for both India and Pakistan to wriggle out of the agreed roadmap. US Vice President Joe Biden was quoted last week as saying at a function in Washington that the Ufa talks would lead to more such dialogues in future. "The US strongly encourages both sides to build on this strategic avenue for peace," Biden said.

One could assume for the present that the Ufa joint statement is cast in stone as far as the Modi government is concerned and India will go ahead with not only the National Security Advisor-level talks in New Delhi sometime later this month but also two other reach-out sessions planned with Pakistan at the level of BSF-Pakistan Rangers chiefs and Directors General of Military Operation. Thus, all eyes will now be on the proposed talks between Indian NSA Ajit Doval and his Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz and possibly after these talks, the time and venue of the other two meetings would be decided.

Unfortunately, Sartaj Aziz has said that Kashmir is on the top of the agenda. Understandably, the Modi government's spin doctors have made

suffrage "should be regarded as an opportunity to increase youths' interest in politics and to implement more policy measures in which more importance will be attached to younger generations, who are the bearers of Japan's future".

light of Sartaj Aziz's remarks which they see as an attempt and meant for Pakistan's domestic consumption. They rejected the notion of Pakistan making a departure from the Ufa joint statement, maintaining that there was no question of Pakistan making a U-turn when the neighbour has not taken even the first turn. They used cricket analogy to drive the point home, further saying it was unfair to speculate about the slog-overs of the India-Pakistan match when the match had not even begun.

The India-Pakistan summit at Ufa is aimed at a long-term engagement as Modi has accepted Sharif's invitation to attend the next SAARC summit in Pakistan, scheduled for next year. For this reason, the political stakes are high for both the sides. New Delhi downplaying hawkish statements from Pakistani officials can thus be understandable.

I wish the slate could be wiped clean. One million people were killed by both the communities in the forced migration that followed partition. The Punjabis were the victims. They did not contribute to the two-nation theory. Yet they suffered the worst. Theirs is an example to falsify that the nationality is based on religion. Very aptly, they have argued that if someone among them changes the religion, he or she does not become a separate nation overnight.

Yet, this argument has not gone home. The people both in India and Pakistan continue to react to one another on the basis of religion. This is the biggest hurdle in rapprochement between the two countries.

The collateral damage of austerity

Robert C. Koehler

Officials in France and in Brussels said on Monday [6 July 2015] that they were unhappy and dumbfounded with the no vote, but let it be known that they would hold the door open to the possibility of a compromise between Greece and its creditors.”

Dumbfounded? Why? Because the godlike power of the creditors was insulted?

Mainstream coverage of economic matters - the above quote is from the New York Times - seldom cuts very deep into the world of money, seldom questions who's in charge, and seldom dares to suggest that an economic system ought to serve humankind rather than vice versa.

The austerity packages Greece has endured as its condition of economic bailout over the past half decade - dictated by those who wielded financial power and were determined to profit enormously off the suffering of Europe's economic losers - have not only further gutted the country's broken economy and prevented any sort of recovery toward self-sufficiency, but have shattered the socioeconomic structure of life for a huge segment of the Greek population. All of which is . . . you know, too damn bad. Money is as money does. The creditors have no choice but to impose severe restrictions on Greek social spending.

As Robert Kuttner wrote recently at Huffington Post, Greece's economic comeback, including needed governmental reforms such as more effective tax collection, “would be so much easier and more effective in the context of a recovery

program as opposed to a debtors' prison.”

Much of what I read about the situation reminds me of the way the mainstream media cover war: as both necessary and, in human terms, utterly abstract, with its consequences the stuff of separate, lesser stories, which have no bearing on the war's national value and ongoing necessity.

The collateral damage of Greece's austerity includes:

- An unemployment rate of more than 25 percent, and nearly double that for young people. “Meanwhile, our future flees. A quarter million university graduates have abandoned our nation. They have no choice: unemployment for those under 25 has hit 48.6 percent,” Michael Nevradakis and Greg Palast write at OpEd News.
- Pensions slashed multiple times, “two-thirds of pensioners live below the poverty line,” according to Nevradakis and Palast.
- Devastating cuts in healthcare, leaving nearly a million people without any, the U.K. Independent reported last year. The article quoted Dr. David Stuckler of Oxford University, lead author of a report on the crisis in the medical journal, *The Lancet*: “The cost of austerity is being borne mainly by ordinary Greek citizens, who have been affected by the largest cutbacks to the health sector seen across Europe in modern times.” The consequences have been particularly devastating to the most vulnerable, with

infant mortality rising by 43 percent between 2008 and 2010, and stillbirths up 21 percent, according to the article.

- “And, for the first time since World War II, widespread starvation had returned,” Nevradakis and Palast write. “500,000 children in Greece are said to be malnourished. Students fainting from hunger in frigid schools which cannot afford heating oil is now a common phenomenon.”
- Debtors' prison, indeed.

“Imagine,” Kuttner writes, “if the Europeans came bearing genuine technical assistance, investment capital and debt restructuring as opposed to more austerity demands.”

Imagine an economic system focused on serving human, and planetary, needs. Yet in the current dying howl of capitalism, human needs are reduced to frivolous luxuries. Where's the profit in good schools and healthy children? As the profiteers impose austerity on the vulnerable, indebtedness becomes a condition to be mocked. Yet we are all indebted. Our lives depend on the good will of others.

In the wake of World War II, for instance, Germany was forgiven most of its Nazi-era debt. “In the 1950s, Europe was founded on the forgiveness of past debts,” Thomas Piketty and other economists point out in an open letter to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, published in *The Nation*. This forgiveness allowed it to make “a massive contribution to post-war economic

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The work of raising of the Dam structure must be stopped forthwith

A Fact Finding Team consisting of Hannan Mollah, Annie Raja, Benoy Viswom, Soumya Datta, Prof. Raj Kachroo and Dr. Sunilam visited Sardar Sarovar Project Submergence Areas in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra on May 9-10, 2015. Following are the Conclusions and Recommendations of the report released by the team:

1. Prima facie, the claims by the Governments of India, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, that all the project affected families have been rehabilitated as per Award of Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal (NWDTA) and Supreme Court orders, are manifestly untrue. As thousands of families face submergence without any rehabilitation in sight, the work of raising of the Dam structure must be stopped forthwith, till proper assessment of number of and location of Project Affected Families (PAFs) are correctly ascertained and all these families are rehabilitated well ahead of submergence of any of their property.
2. Even at the dam height of 121.92 M, there are a large number of affected families awaiting rehabilitation i.e. thousands of PAFs from the 177 villages in M.P. and hundreds from the 33 tribal villages in Maharashtra and about 6-7 villages in Gujarat. There are hundreds of oustees at the resettlement sites in each of these states with Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) not complete as yet. Suitable and transferable agricultural land, arable and free from any form of pre-occupation, for allotting to PAFs must be identified and obtained by the concerned state governments on a high priority basis, and all pending land and livelihood rehabilitation done speedily.
3. A large number of families facing submergence have not been counted as PAFs, one primary reason being that the modelling exercise done by the CWC for calculation of Back Water Levels (BWLs) has been changed unscientifically after more than 30 years. The models used are not applicable to a reservoir that is 200 kms long and 1.5 kms wide. CWC must use DTM/GIS/Remote Sensing data etc. together with appropriate models, like HEC-RAS, to arrive at correct estimates of Back Water Levels. The FF Team notes that the MoEF Expert Committee has rejected the revised BWLs in Feb, 2009 itself. The change in BWLs, being, prima facie inconsistent with the procedure envisaged in the NWDTA and the 2000 judgement it tantamount to an unacceptable deviation from law and needs to be fully set aside. .
4. There are several examples in the world when flooding has occurred due to incorrect operations of gates. It is too dangerous to operate the cascade of reservoirs in the Narmada Basin without a proper flood forecasting, operations & warning system in place. The Narmada Basin flood forecasting & warning system must be reviewed immediately & redesigned. The Fact Finding (FF) team calls for a comprehensive Disaster Management Plan for the entire Narmada Valley as directed by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the M.P. High Court in his Order dt. 24-6-2014 in W.P. No. 18180/2014 pertaining to the ISP and OSP Canals.
5. Noting the fact that after the visit by the Oversight Group in July 2006 (constituted by the Former Prime Minister), there has been no visit / field assessment of the actual status of rehabilitation by any authority from the Govt. of India, over the past 8 years. It is necessary that a High Level Inter-Ministerial delegation of the Government of India, along with independent multi-disciplinary experts and eminent persons immediately visits the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) affected areas in the three states, before the onset of monsoon, in order to make a comprehensive participatory assessment of the actual status of rehabilitation.
6. All the rehabilitation sites must be fully developed with all facilities, and project affected people provided all necessary assistance in relocating there with proper living conditions. Till this is completed, the existing submergence area villages and towns must be provided with all facilities and normal developmental work continued there. All PAFs must be provided with proper housing plots in these fully developed rehabilitation sites and compensation for land

- beneath their houses.
7. Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA) must provide full financial and other assistance in developing the rehabilitation sites, and only after full facilities have been developed there, these should be handed over to the right civil administrations for continuation as villages or towns.
 8. All adult sons of project affected families must be counted as separate project affected persons – as per the NWDTA and Supreme Court orders, and given full, alternative rehabilitation, along with land.
 9. The Orders of the Grievance Redressal Authorities (GRAs) recognizing the various rights of the oustees to land and livelihood-based rehabilitation needs to be scrupulously complied with in a time-bound manner by the concerned state governments, especially Madhya Pradesh as per the Judgements of the Supreme Court of 2000, 2002 and 2005. GRA meetings must be held in or close to the affected areas, and not in cities, where PAFs find it difficult to reach. It is also necessary that all oustees who have not yet been rehabilitated are paid interim relief as directed by the GRA, M.P.
 10. The Government of India must await the Final Report of the Justice S.S. Jha Commission of Inquiry, as opined by the Former Attorney General of India as well, since the issues is under investigation, concerning the allegations of rampant corruption, irregularities and violations of law in M.P. have a direct bearing on the right to life and livelihood of thousands of oustees as concluded by the High Court of M.P. in its Orders of 21/8/2008 and 12/11/2009. Prompt legal action against corrupt elements and corrective measures on R&R, on the basis of the Commission's Report and directives of the High Court must be ensured.
 11. The oustees in the SSP affected areas must not be dispossessed from their lands and habitats in violation of the NWDTA, directives of the Apex Court and their rights as land-owners recognized as per Section 24 (2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.
 12. All the tribal villages should be accorded their full rights as per Constitutional provisions, and any illegal acquisition and /or displacement done without their consent must be cancelled. Fresh consent of Gram Sabhas must be sought as per the PESA Act, 1996. (precedence – Supreme Court order on Niyamgiri case).
 13. All the displaced PAFs/their cooperatives - with fishing as a possible livelihood option/choice, must be given exclusive fishing rights in the Sardar Sarovar Reservoir, with full assistance of boats, nets and other fishing gear provided to establish them in their new livelihood; likewise potters affected by SSP should be allotted land adjacent to the reservoir and rights to raw materials ensured.
 14. Concerted efforts must be initiated and carried out to identify, document and preserve the invaluable human heritage of pre-historic human habitations in the Narmada valley, and in-situ preservation should be pursued, as is the practice world-wide.
 15. Gujarat government must stop diverting the Narmada water and command area land meant for drinking and agriculture, to large scale industrial use. The State must utilise and distribute the available waters from the built reservoir as per original plans and following principles of justice.
 16. The administration must act swiftly to stop the large scale illegal sand mining in the SSP affected areas, from the river bed and near the villages, which is threatening many houses and damaging the river ecology beyond repair.
 17. A full systematic review of the proposed canal plans be undertaken immediately, so as not to spoil irrigated multi-crop land by constructing unnecessary canals through these. Government of M.P. must also ensure full compliance with the various orders of the High Court issued with regard to the Indira Sagar and Omkareshwar canals.

Post-Script:

As this Report was being finalized by the FF team members, news just came in that a senior official of the Narmada Control Authority, Afroz Ahmed, who served for many years as the Director (Rehabilitation and Impact Assessment) and played a pivotal role in monitoring and decision making as well as , a link between the Social Justice, Water Resources Ministries and the States Governments of M.P., Maharashtra

and Gujarat remained in the high post for years on the basis of a fake degree. He was recently promoted to the post of member (R&R). This finding came from an agency, no less than the CBI, which recommended that a criminal case be filed against him for abuse of public office.

The team is deeply disturbed with this development and calls upon Govt. of India to immediately suspend him and initiate action as per the CBI's recommendations. The legality of all decisions relating to SSP during his tenure must be verified by the Ministry of Water Resources. We look forward to a credible inquiry and review by the MoWR and Government of India of the status of rehabilitation and compliance with legal provisions and judgements of the Hon'ble Courts, in the light of the findings of this Report.

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growth and peace. Today we need to restructure and reduce Greek debt, give the economy breathing room to recover..."

And Kuttner asks us to "consider the many hundreds of billions of dollars of official aid that went to the big banks that caused the financial collapse of 2007-2008. Their sins, and the resulting damage to the global economy, were far worse than those of Greece. Yet they were showered with official aid. That double standard is also staggering."

A bogus moral authority seems to accompany the accumulation of wealth - a sense that one deserves it, while those without wealth deserve servitude and hopelessness. Beyond this moral authority lies the desperate need not to recognize the common humanity of those who are struggling to survive.

-TRANSCEND Media Service

Remembering Mir Mushtaq Ahmed

Qurban Ali

A veteran freedom fighter and a great Socialist Mir Mushtaq Ahmed, son of Mir Abdul Sattar, was born at Shimla on 25th April 1915, but after spending his childhood in Shimla, he came to Delhi in 1924, to pursue his studies. He settled in an old house in the Jama Masjid area of old Delhi. He took part in the freedom movement, like his father, Mir Abdus Sattar, had done earlier. Incidentally Mir Sahib was lodged in the same cell in Ambala Jail in which his father had been imprisoned.

After graduating from the Anglo-Arabic College (later Delhi College and now Zakir Hussain Delhi College), Mir Mushtaq Ahmed joined Congress in 1935. He was also associated with All India Students Federation and was secretary of the New Delhi District Congress Committee as well as of the Delhi unit of the Congress Socialist Party. Of Kashmiri descent, Mir Sahib (as he was universally known) came in contact with Faridul Haq Ansari and Satyavati Devi at a young age. He left the Congress in 1948 when there was parting of ways between the Congress and the Socialist Party. He was elected as Socialist member of Delhi Legislative Assembly in 1952 from Kuccha Chelan.

In 1937 he had invited Mohammad Ali Jinnah to speak at Delhi College, but the meeting ended with the Mir taking the distinguished guest to task for making remarks of communal nature. When the Viceroy visited a cinema house in Connaught Place, the Mir hoisted the Congress flag atop the bandstand, as an act of

defiance. For this he was jailed. He decided to live in India even though his whole family migrated to Pakistan after Partition.

Mir Mushtaq invited the then Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Delhi's Shahjehani Jama Masjid, and conducted an important public meeting on August 1, 1942, imploring people to side with the "Quit India Movement".

He was probably the first Indian to hoist the tricolor flag at Connaught Place prior to independence, when Connaught Place was considered the heart of imperial British India. He would hoist the tricolor at the bandstand in Central Park each year on 26 January.

After independence when Urdu was orphaned it was the Mir who with some of his friends took the cause of Urdu and formed *Anjuman Tameer-e-Urdu*. He was its founding president. Its office was also in one part of his house in Urdu Bazar near Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. He also launched an Urdu weekly, *Asia*.

In 1955, he was elected General Secretary of Delhi state Praja Socialist Party with Sucheta Kripalani as President and elected unanimously to the National Executive of the party for 1956-57. Later on he was elected Chairman of Delhi PSP.

But Mir Sahib resigned his primary membership of the Praja Socialist Party in 1961 and

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On proselytization

J. L. Jawahar

Talking of proselytization in the present context is a risky job, not only in the Indian context but even in the western context as the US President Obama himself tried to meddle with it. That is why I feel it necessary to clarify initially that I am an atheist and dislike all religions equally. With that background, without any fear of being misunderstood, I would like to make these few comments.

There is a tendency in India that anybody who criticizes Hinduism is a secularist; or that it is necessary for anybody to criticize Hinduism first to make any claim that he is a secular person. Whether we like it or not it is a fact that the Hindus are in majority in India. India has been a playground for all these religions in history. Whoever was in power encouraged and facilitated conversion of religions. I do not understand why it has become such an issue when Hindus try to do it. It is also a fact that all the Hindus are not religious minded and most of those who criticize Hinduism are Hindus by birth. In the modern society very few people think of religion in their day-to-day life. At the most, it is just a ritual on occasions. Unfortunately it continues to be a sharp weapon in the hands of politicians.

It is also a fact of history that there are many religions being followed in India and friction between them is rare though not ruled out. The trouble is they are very civilized to each other as individuals, but when the question of religion comes in any context they become beasts in groups. Religion is basically a matter of personal conviction and it is to be respected as long as it is confined to the individual.

Unfortunately, over time, the tendency developed to socialize religion and now every religion has its own institutions that are socially significant. In addition to many other problems posed by religions, India is facing the problem of proselytization. It is not new for India. It is going on for centuries there. The meaning of proselytization as given in the dictionaries is “to induce someone to convert to one’s faith”. It is clear that conversions do not happen without inducement. Does it mean it is voluntary? Religions are extremely adept in propaganda and advertisement. In fact the science of advertisement has developed taking religion as example. Instead of leaving the individual to adopt any faith of his choice, each religion started to expand its membership by inducing others to come to their faith. The scriptures of each religion support the process. Some cast a duty on its members to ensure enrolment of others into their religion, by hook or crook, sweet or sword. Having spread the religion with sword, they appear to have cooled down at present. But the aggressive branches like Al Qaeda and ISIS are again on the job. They offer only one alternative – “Either convert or else...” Of late they are also provoked by the actions of other religions to become aggressive and resort to extreme violence.

From the day of its inception, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has to bear the blot of being a religious organization in spite of being a political party. They made herculean effort to get recognition as a political organization. Ultimately they are able to get an overwhelming majority

in the recent general elections. If the religious blot prevented them from winning all these days, the image of being a national party has earned them the place in the body politic of the country. How did it happen? It appealed to the people because the policies of the governments of the day were patently antinational. It appeared as if the governments are there only for the benefit of members of the party in power and corrupt officials. The nationalist sentiment was wisely exploited by the BJP and they succeeded in coming to power. That earned them the votes of people who are not religious minded as well. In fact, those votes are more than the votes of their religious core. It is the most unfortunate thing for the country that immediately after they came to power they allowed the religious wing take command and dictate policies of government. In any organization the vociferous group rules the roost. The statements and behavior of Narendra Modi after winning the election were taken as a symbol of his dedication to the national cause and of his sincerity of purpose.

The cabinet members themselves started behaving in an irresponsible manner. Sushma Swaraj wants Bhagavad-Gita as a national book. What she meant by that and what she wants to achieve is not known, perhaps even to her. Other junior ministers also started to make religiously biased statements indicating that they do not deserve to be in the cabinet. Perhaps they were trying to convince the religious wing of their loyalty and fortify their position in the cabinet. If Modi fails to control them or get rid of them his

credibility itself would be at stake. Added to that, the religious wing started a program to attract people from other religions to Hinduism. To sanctify it, or to distinguish themselves from other religions, they called it "Ghar Vapasi" "come back to the pavilion". It indirectly referred to the long forgotten period of history when the rulers of different religions converted the people to their faiths. They used all means to do that, fair and foul. The people subjected to such conversion were obviously Hindus as they were the people in the country at that time before the foreign powers invaded. Now the Hindu conservatives are invoking that period to tell them that their ancestors were Hindus and they are welcome now to become Hindus again. But much water has flown under the bridge after that. Many generations were born and passed under the banners of respective religions. It makes the claim of Ghar Vapasi a foolish venture. But for that, there is nothing else that makes them different from what other religions are doing.

In fact, when Pope John Paul II visited India he declared that proselytization is his right. Is it? Then none of the so-called secularists or leftists dared to raise a little finger to object. Is proselytization a right? If so, what is wrong if Hindus try to do the same? Why should anybody demand a statement from the government now having kept quiet when Pope claimed the right? Can we demand a statement from the Prime Minister whenever any organization or individual exercises his right? In the state of Andhra Pradesh there has been a spate of aggressive moves from Christians during the tenure of late Y.S.Rajasekhar Reddy (YSR). They have tried to penetrate into the places held sacred by the Hindus and tried to get a portion of Tirumala allotted

to them for religious activities. It was felt encouraged by the fact that YSR was a Christian and the head of the party ruling in the Center is also a Christian. Even now reports appear frequently about the other religions trying to make inroads into the areas of Hindus. But none of these activities were criticized by the so-called secularists at that time or even now.

Leave alone the Ghar Vapasi. If proselytization is wrong, it must be so with any religion doing it. To avoid anarchy in this regard the government offered to bring in a legislation to curb it or to regulate it. But none of the parties sitting in the House accepted it. Still they demand that the government, particularly the Prime Minister himself, make a statement about it. Why so? What could be the statement that they wanted? The learned members of the Congress party stated that the bill will be against the Constitution as if they respected the constitution while in power. Does it mean that it is against Constitution for the Parliament to make a legislation? Is it not the responsibility of the Parliament to make laws to settle disputes? If not, how do you expect to solve such problems? Is the right of religion so sacred than all the other rights enumerated in the constitution? There are fundamental rights enumerated in the Indian constitution but there is no right that has not been circumscribed to some extent. Then why is religion so sacred?

What is meant by religious freedom? Is it different from and more important than secular freedom? Everybody has a right to believe in anything he likes, whether deity or demon. But is it a right to insist or allure that others also follow his faith? At present the religion of a person is determined by the

religion of the family into which he is born. After he becomes an adult, everyone is free to adopt any religion of his choice if he is left to himself. But tempting him to discard his religion and adopt a new religion on extraneous considerations must be considered a crime. It is the same thing as tempting a child showing a chocolate and kidnapping him or seducing the wife of neighbor. The right to convert voluntarily presumes a knowledge of the faiths – of the faith to which he belongs and of the faith to which he wants to go. How many of the converts know either? The troubles and predicaments of the person are taken advantage of and they are lured to come over to their faith by projecting a false image of their religion and making material offers.

Almost everybody blames Hinduism for its caste system. There is no doubt that it is a crime perpetrated in the name of religion. But the fact is there is no religion that has no layers within itself. Each layer has its own distinct position by whatever name it is called. That is what the caste system did for Hindus. It was condemned and discarded with the support of required law. There are Hindus who discarded the religion because of its caste system. They exercised their choice. If they want to come back to Hinduism or if they want to go to some other religion, they are welcome because there is no religion that does not accept anyone coming in. They are all anxious to invite such people.

People suffered over centuries for many generations under the cruel caste system of Hinduism. The governments adopted policies to give facilities and incentives to them to overcome their disabilities. The backwardness or disability was agreed to have been caused by the

religious system and to escape it many people got converted to other religions. Still the converts want the benefits made available to those who are still suffering under the caste system be extended to them. Those who converted want to enjoy both the worlds. The government did not dare to tell them that they are not eligible for those benefits. If the Hindu orthodox call them to come back to enjoy the benefits (ghar vapasi) is it right or wrong? Proper or improper? What should be the stand of secularists on this?

Regarding proselytization by Christians, there is a popular support because they are doing yeomen service by establishing schools and hospitals. By that they are supposed to have a moral right to convert people of other religions to Christianity. But is it ethically correct? Does it entitle you to take away the child from the parents? Leave alone ethics. Who cares for it now? Come to reality. There is no religion now that is free from politics. Every religion is wearing a political garb. Every political party is after religions to get votes for them. Every country is having legislation preventing link between political parties and religions. It is for a show of secularism. Earlier missionaries followed military power into colonies to save the souls of subjected people. Now the strategy is changed. Missionaries are sent in advance to prepare the ground for colonial rule. Some of the evangelists think they can earn a place in the heaven, in the kingdom of God, by bringing more people into His domain. That is how Mother Theresa also claimed to have done. She herself claimed she is doing the service to benefit Christianity. As Dr. Innaiah pointed out, she used to contribute to the Vatican regularly. When somebody pointed it, there was a cry as if it

is something unbecoming of them to say that. There is no doubt that she did yeomen service to the poor children. She deserved to be a saint. Everyone acknowledges it. The esteem is not affected by her contributions to the Vatican or by serving the faith of her choice. Why the hypocrisy and suppressing of facts? Does it mean that it is wrong for her to contribute to the Vatican? Or to resort to conversions? If it is not wrong on the part of Christians to do it, it cannot be wrong on the part of Hindus to do the same. If you agree it is not wrong, what is wrong in naming great people who acted as converters? Why double standards? We must be strong enough to accept facts and give value where it is due to the extent it is due. There are substantial number of Christians among the Bodos and Nagas in the eastern part of India. How did they come there? Is it not by proselytization? Who induced them to convert? Why? How did the government allow its citizens to be used by outsiders for ulterior purposes? Let us not forget, no religion is devoid of political ambitions. The American media goes to the extent of writing editorials teaching India about secularism. But they don't think the people of Palestine have a right to live peacefully. America gives every year \$3 billion to Israel just as military assistance. Against whom is the assistance used? Don't they know it? Could Israel pursue the same policy towards Palestine in the absence of support from America? It is Israel that dictates the foreign policy of America and it is not secular policy. The editorials prove the link between religion and politics and it is the danger inherent in proselytization.

Even from the political point of view it is necessary that the right of proselytization is regulated if

not forbidden. Religious freedom is not more sacred than the freedom of speech and expression which are severely circumscribed. Proselytization is not part of religious freedom. Religious sentiment is an invisible vicious weapon in the hands of unscrupulous people who invoked it for unsocial and objectionable purposes that played havoc with society many times. It is necessary to put an end to it.

(Continued from Page 10)

subsequently joined the Congress party led by Pandit Nehru and became the first Chief Executive Councilor of Delhi. Mir Mushtaq Ahmed was Presidents of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee during 1963-1966. He was Chairman, Metropolitan Council of Delhi in 1972-77.

He was first chairman of Delhi Waqf Board and also founded the Janata Co-Operative Bank that is still flourishing. Mir Mushtaq Ahmed was one of the eminent politicians of Delhi and was one of the few leaders who identified themselves completely with the capital. He loved the place. Meera Bagh an affluent residential colony in Paschim Vihar of Delhi was established by Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, under the aegis of Janata Cooperative Housing Society, which is situated in the western part of New Delhi.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi released "*Mazamin-e-Mir*" a book of articles written by Mir Mushtaq Ahmed, in various Urdu newspapers and periodicals over 35 years. He passed away on 29 June 2001, at the age of 85. With his death fifteen years ago Delhi lost one of the rare old faces of the traditional *Dilliwallah*.

Indefinite Fast by Dr Sandeep Pandey for RTE Act in UP

Today is the 6th day of indefinite fast by senior activist Dr. Sandeep Pandey, Adviser, NAPM and Vice-President, Socialist Party(India), at his Lucknow residence against non-implementation of provisions of Right to Education Act by a city Montessori School, which has refused to give admission to 31 children from economically weaker sections.

The Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA), Lucknow passed an order on April 06, 2015 within the ambit of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or RTE Act. Whereas the school has not only violated the national act and also went to the high court against the very decision taken by BSA. It is to be noted that the same school offers 40 per cent concession in fees

to children of IAS officers, MPs, MLAs, journalists and advocates. Maybe this is the reason why no action is being taken against the school.

UP government is not implementing the RTE act in totality to have 25 per cent reservation for underprivileged children under the RTE Act. The Act has the potential to impact 6 lakh underprivileged and poor children in Uttar Pradesh. If implemented honestly throughout India, it has potential to change the face of India by reducing the segregation in society. However, the report card of UP has been dismal with only 108 admissions in the last four years. Many elite and powerful schools have openly flouted the constitutional law by refusing such admissions.

The elite City Montessori School has not only ignored the Lucknow District Magistrate's orders to admit 31 such students in their school but has defied the RTE as well as Supreme Court's landmark verdict on 12 April 2012 by challenging the DM's order in the Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court. They are violating not only the fundamental rights of the 31 children but also the apex court's judgment.

National Alliance of Peoples Movements demands immediate implementation of the RTE Act by the Uttar Pradesh government and action against the City Montessori School management and other private schools that refuse to extend the benefits of the RTE Act to many underprivileged children.

– NAPM, July 15, 2015

Ultra rich

Emerging markets such as India and South Africa would see their millionaire populations swell in the coming decade, the report by Wealth X released on Wednesday said. India had the 14th largest millionaire population in the world in 2013-14, with the U.S., Japan, China and the U.K. leading the pack. However, other reports show that India does far better when it comes to ultra high net worth (UHNW) individuals — those with a net worth of more than \$30 million.

A Wealth X and UBS report shows that India had 8,595 UHNW individuals in 2014, with wealth amounting to \$1.01 trillion. This places India 6th in the global

rankings. Significantly, the number of UHNW individuals in India grew by 9.5 per cent in 2014, and their wealth grew by 8.3 per cent. This is higher than the global growth rates of 6 per cent and 7 per cent in the number and wealth of UHNW individuals, respectively.

An analysis by *The Hindu* of the number of billionaires per country shows that the number of billionaires in India is not commensurate with its relatively smaller GDP compared to countries like the U.S. and China. In 2014, India had 53.3 billionaires per trillion dollars of GDP, more than 2.5 times the figure in 2009. This number was 30.3 for the U.S. and 15.3 for China in 2014.

Apart from highlighting the growing affluence of the ultra-rich in India, these numbers, when combined with data on per capita income and the findings of the recently-released Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in India, underscore the stark inequality prevalent in India. The World Bank's most recent data show that India's gross national income per person rose to \$1,610 (around Rs. 1 lakh) a year during 2014 from \$1,560 the previous year. This was likely driven by the increase in wealth of a few individuals rather than an overall increase in income levels.

While the number of millionaires increased steadily, the SECC

found that most of rural India still languished in poverty — the highest

paid member of 74.5 per cent of rural households in India earned less than

Rs. 5,000 (around \$79) per month.

-TCA Sharad Raghavan, *The Hindu*

Popularion

On the World Population Day on Saturday(July 11), India recorded a population of 127,42,39,769, which is growing at a rate of 1.6 per cent a year, and could make the country the most populous in the world by 2050.

At 5 p.m. on Saturday, the number of Indians hit 127,42,39,769, and is 17.25 per cent of the global population, as per Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh or National Population Stabilisation Fund (NPSF), an autonomous body under the Union Health Ministry which has raised concerns about over-population related problems, if the rate persists.

Noting that India's population was growing at a faster rate than China, which is now the world's most populous country at around 1.39 billion, an official of the Fund said that the country could become the most populated one by 2050.

"If current growth rates continue, India will have 1.63 billion people by 2050 and will surpass China," the official said.

According to data from NPSF, the total fertility rate (TFR) in India has seen a decline and stood at 2.3 in 2013 although the decline is not consistent.

"Age at marriage has a significant influence on TFR, particularly in countries where childbearing occurs within marriage. A country where age at marriage is high, fertility is generally observed to be low because of the reduced number of

women at risk of childbearing," the official said.

The data suggests that a high percentage of female (21-26 per cent) are married below 18 years of age in States like Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Bihar.

The population of India, at 1.21 billion as per the 2011 Census, is almost equal to the combined population of the U.S., Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan put together.

-PTI



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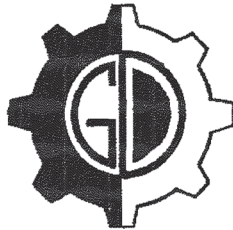
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**NRC Updation in Assam:
Prospects and Challenges**

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One of the controversies that keeps raising its head every now and then is the one that stems from an unresolved question: should India persist with death penalty for certain crimes or abolish it once and for all. We dare say that there are as many people who favour its retention on the statute books as there are favouring its abolition. This is an issue that needs closure urgently. The state has to take a decision fast if only to ensure that the controversy does not keep popping up every time a man is sent to the gallows.

The newspapers were full of the rights and wrongs of the issue on the morning of Wednesday, July 22, prompted by the dismissal the previous day by the Supreme Court of Yakub Memon's curative petition seeking reconsideration of the death sentence and life imprisonment imposed on him through earlier verdicts by the apex court. The extreme sentence was for 12 explosions across Mumbai on March 12, 1993. The convicted person is the younger brother of the now absconding terrorist Tiger Memon. The court ruled that the execution of Yakub will take place on July 30 at 7 am. The day happens to be Yakub's 54th birthday.

In its latest verdict the court described Yakub's role in the episode. It said that Yakub and his brother were the architects of the blasts without whom the plan would never have seen daylight. Interestingly, the reaction to the verdict has been uniformly positive, in the sense that it has been seen by one and all as being the correct one to serve as a deterrent against terrorism. The death penalty has been justified and it is expected to go a long way in acting as an anti-terrorism deterrent.

The court felt that the death sentence should stay as no fresh grounds had been cited in the petition to warrant a re-look at the verdict. The verdict in the case comes after a gap of 22 years after the crime. It again confirms the fact that one of the shortcomings of the Indian justice delivery system is that verdicts take inordinately long. This is particularly demoralizing for the victims of crimes. One of the victims, Kirti Ajmera who survived the serial blasts says he is still haunted by the physical pain and mental agony of that day 22 years ago. "It still gives me nightmares," he said. Apart from the delayed verdict, this man who suffered a great deal also said that he never received the sum of Rs. 25000

that was sanctioned by the then government as a relief to the injured.

Between the Lines

Story of two travel documents

Kuldip Nayar

It is good that at last a closure has been applied to the Yakub Memon case. But is it not the duty of the government to ascertain how many are still languishing in jails awaiting trial or awaiting sentencing. Leave alone terror-related cases, it has been observed that even in ordinary criminal or felony cases or even hit-an-run ones there is long delays in verdicts. This shortcoming cries out for remedying. Secondly, the report of the National Law University, prepared with help from the Law Commission containing information on persons given death penalty is also very disturbing. According to media accounts, the report has pointed out that many of the death-sentenced persons did not understand the charges against them and that many were too poor to engage competent defense lawyers to represent them in courts. This is a severe indictment of the justice system. We cannot continue to tolerate such systemic blemishes if we are to take pride over the fact that we are a strong, vibrant practicing democracy.

No effective answer has been found to the question that has been raised in countries which allow death penalty, namely that death is the last resort of any system that enforces man-made rules. Believers argue that only God has life-and-death powers, not mortals. Non-believers may not invoke God but none of them has decried the virtues of forgiveness. Where law prescribes death, it does not say that mercy is ruled out in all cases.

Whatever India wants, let the state decide and decide it soon. We have allowed the debate continue for long. The time has come for applying closure.

India's major political parties, the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) have rendered parliament to a place of *tamasha*. They pick up a small matter, hardly worth a mention, and stretch it to a point of debate in parliament. True, they attract the nation's attention but are making people more and more cynical about the highest elected bodies.

Take the cases relating to the issuing of travel documents to Syed Ali Shah Geelani, a hard-line separatist leader from Jammu and Kashmir, and Lalit Modi, wanted in India in connection with several betting and match-fixing scams relating to Indian Premier League cricket. Both are more or less of similar nature. In the first, Geelani wanted to visit his ailing daughter at Jeddah and, in the second, Lalit Modi wanted to be by the side of his cancer-stricken wife in Portugal.

The External Affairs Ministry, which issues passports, had said that Geelani's "application could not be processed in its present form." The denial of passport to Geelani was said to be because he had not spelt out his nationality in the passport form because he is a subject of Jammu and Kashmir, a "disputed territory." Both the BJP and its Jammu and Kashmir's coalition partner PDP were sharply divided over the issue.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti had argued that Geelani should be

issued a passport on "humanitarian" grounds while BJP was of the view that he should not be given the travel document till he "apologizes" for his anti-national activities. "Only when Geelani accepts that he is an Indian and won't indulge in anti-India activities should the government of India consider his request," said a senior BJP leader. In fact, the party's spokesperson for J&K, Khalid Jehangir, echoed his views. "Geelani is responsible for creating trouble across the Kashmir Valley. His views on Kashmir are known to everyone. I don't think it is in our interest to issue him the passport," he said.

Geelani, who had applied in May for the travel document, has now been issued a passport by the government that is valid for nine months. Now contrast this with what Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj did to help Lalit Modi obtain travel papers from the British government. She personally wrote to the UK minister to help Lalit Modi as per their country's law. She later explained she helped Lalit Modi on "humanitarian" grounds.

At best, it is a case of indiscretion and she should have been asked to apologize. Instead, the Congress demands her resignation. Not only that, the party creates a rumpus in parliament. When Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announces from the floor of the Lok Sabha that Sushma Swaraj would make a statement and thereafter have a debate, the

(Continued on Page 6)

A litmus test for RTE Act

Sandeep Pandey

The Lucknow Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) had ordered the local City Montessori School (CMS) to admit 15 children at the Primary level and 16 children at the Pre-Primary level. Of these, 23 children belong to Scheduled Caste category, 6 to Other Backward Classes and 2 to general category with their family's annual income below Rs. one lakh. The OBC and general category children are all from Muslim community. Hence all children belong to deprived sections of society.

CMS decided to move the court instead of admitting the children. CMS, which figures in Guinness Book of World Records as the biggest school, with 20 branches and about 47,000 students, has cited the reason of lack of space for denying admission to these 31 children and raised a question as to when there was a government school and a few private schools closer to children's home why was an order passed to admit these children to CMS? CMS has also claimed as inadequate the amount of Rs. 450 per child per month for compensating the cost of education which the government will provide. The school estimates that it will cost about Rs. 2,200 per month to educate one child. It is a shame the CMS, which gives 40 per cent concession to children of influential people, is giving the excuse of insufficient compensation for denying admission to the children of the poor.

The court has asked BSA to respond to issues raised by CMS. However, there is no stay on admission of children to CMS. In

spite of this CMS is not admitting the students. The BSA issued orders on 13 April, 11 May and in first week of July following up on the original order of 6 April, directing CMS to admit the 31 children. However, CMS in open defiance of the government and administration refuses to budge.

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government had implemented the 25 per cent reservation provision for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups under the Right To Education (RTE) Act last year. Only four children could be admitted then in Lucknow. This year a Municipality Ward has been defined as neighbourhood. According to the RTE Act, the children will get advantage of admission in a neighbourhood school. The government school being referred to by CMS near the children's home is not in the same Ward in which they live whereas the Indira Nagar branch of CMS is. If 40 or more students are enrolled in Class I in the government school then a child can claim admission in any of private schools in the neighbourhood. 52 children are already admitted to the government school now. In this Ward about 50 children are admitted under the 25 per cent reservation provision of the RTE Act to other private schools. In Lucknow 318 admissions have taken place against 467 ordered by BSA. Overall 2,817 admissions have taken place in UP against 3061 ordered. There are some other schools also who are not admitting children from underprivileged background but CMS is the only one which has gone to the court to oppose admission

of children from underprivileged background. Otherwise CMS works quite closely with the government in power. For instance, recently Shri Shri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living camp was organised for UP IAS officers at CMS. In response to what he'll do about it the UP Basic Education Minister Ram Govind Chaudhary says that he'll make the quality of government schools so good that people will withdraw their children from private schools and get them admitted to government schools! It is not clear when and how the Education Minister of UP will improve the quality of government schools?

Jagdish Gandhi, the manager of CMS delivers spiritual sermons preaching people to uphold high moral values. Being a follower of Bahai religion he talks about universal togetherness and global peace. Does he want to unite only the rich of the world? Where are the poor in his scheme of things? His insensitivity against the poor has come out openly in the case of 31 children who are seeking admission in his school under a national law.

CMS organises 30 international events each year at the costing Crores of Rupees. Its students and teachers go to foreign countries to participate in various events. In one of the programmes that Jagdish Gandhi organises he invites chief justices, serving and retired, from all over the world. However, by denying admission to 31 children Jagdish Gandhi is violating a national law. It now remains to be seen whether the judges invited to the annual event held at CMS will become the guests

of a man who is guilty of violation of a national law.

An important grassroots transformation is taking place in rural India, especially among the poor. It is not uncommon now to see reports in newspapers about children of daily wage workers making it to IIT. The poor in rural India is now awakened and wants his/her child to be get good education because he knows that only this will free his family from the vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation. As soon as the poor have enough money with them and at last can afford to send their children to private schools they do so. Awakened rural guardians also aspire to send their talented children to Navodaya Vidyalayas, which have acquired a reputation for quality.

The effect of Jagdish Gandhi's irrational behaviour is that other schools of Lucknow have also started turning away the children from poor families. Delhi Public School branch of Sector 19, Indira Nagar, admitted Aditya Kanaujia but later turned him down because he went to the press. Aditya's father Vinod, who irons clothes for living, on his own initiative single handedly managed to obtain the admission of his son by directly writing to the District Magistrate expressing his desire to educate his son at DPS. BSA office helped him in getting his application form filled and submitted. Universal Public School in Madiyaon has turned down the admission of two students as they couldn't buy uniform and books for themselves. Hence a cascading effect can already be seen.

If CMS is successful is not admitting these 31 children then it'll receive very few applications next year also as people will expect that their children would not be admitted easily. On the other hand, if the children are admitted, then

The indefinite fast which started on 10th July, 2015 on the issue of admission of 31 children from socio-economic weaker background to City Montessori School, Lucknow under Section 12 of Right to Education Act, 2009, ended on its 7th day with the High Court ordering the Basic Shiksha Adhikari to inspect the Indira Nagar branch of the school and submit his report to the Court whether there is space for 31 children to sit in the school or not.

In addition to Sandeep Pandey, Vice President, Socialist Party (India) who was on the fast for seven days, Mehboob Sadikote was fasting for last five days in Mumbai and Anil Mishra, Rajesh Maurya, Badri Narayan, Mamta Singh, Neetu Sharma, Rubina Khatun were also fasting on July 16 at the fast site near Gandhi Statue, Hazratganj, Lucknow.

Among people present during breaking of fast were Girish K. Pandey, Working President, Socialist Party (India), Professor Surinder Kumar, Director, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Professor Hiranmoy Dhar, Arundhati Dhuru, Shahira Naim, Richa Singh, Arjun Singh, Alok Singh, Paavan Srivastava, Pravin Srivastava, Chunnilal and about 50 daily wages workers.

every branch of CMS will receive hundreds of applications. This is probably what worries Jagdish Gandhi. That is why he is opposing the admissions tooth and nail.

It is people like him Gandhi who have become an obstacle in the education of poor children. Jagdish Gandhi caters to education of the

rich children. He runs his education empire like a private company and as a business strategy offers 40 per cent discount in fees to people like IAS officers, advocates, MPs, MLAs, judges and journalists; and 20 per cent discount to second line officials like Circle Officers – but no discount at all to the parents who feel the pinch of his high fee structure the most.

But if people like Jagdish Gandhi are not willing to follow a national law then government should take over the administrative part of his school and properly implement the Section 12 of the RTE Act. If this powerful school falls in line then other schools will follow suit. The owners may run the education programme of their schools but should not have any say in their administration. This will be the first step towards common school system.

But for the time being the 25 per cent reservation provision for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups must be implemented. So far the governments have not shown the political will to do so. In addition to the government apathy, if the CMS refuses to admit the children then other private schools will also not take this Act seriously. Thus many children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups will be denied the opportunity to get good education. CMS itself will have over 10,000 children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups studying in its various branches if the RTE Act is implemented in its spirit.

When CMS admits 31 students it'll not just be doing favour to these 31 children but it'll open the door for thousands of children to avail an opportunity to obtain life transforming education.

Reduction of GHG emissions

Bharat Dogra

In India (and elsewhere) we have several people's struggles which are protesting against displacement and trying to protect their sustainable life-styles and livelihoods based on farmlands, pastures and forests, rivers and coastal areas. These struggles involve farmers, forest-produce gatherers (particularly tribals), pastoral people, fisherfolk and others with related livelihoods. These traditional livelihoods have been passed on from generation to generation, but are now increasingly threatened on a scale never seen before because in the times of globalisation the pressure to start new mines, cut more trees, set up more industries, luxury townships and tourist resorts is greater than ever before.

While the struggles of these people to protect their livelihoods and life-patterns have always been well-justified in terms of the needs of sustainable development, environment protection, justice and ethics, it was nevertheless frequently argued by government officials and the corporate sector that these struggles have obstructed the country's development. These interests saw development only in terms of the high cash transactions involved in the context of the setting up of new mines and industries and the related MOUs. Frequently it was the narrow viewpoint of these interests that got the widest coverage in media, while the grassroots struggles were criticised for keeping people in backwardness.

Of course the struggles and

their sympathisers have been giving well-argued replies to this misrepresentation. But such has been the influence of the corporate sector and the so-called 'modern' sector that most of these people's struggles were generally presented as anti-development movements which are obstacles in the spread of new opportunities of development.

Now this can change with the increasing worldwide realisation of the great urgency of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The people of remote villages may not have heard much about the debate on reducing GHG emissions, but the reality is that any struggle which will protect forests and which will help to preserve the green cover will also help in the reduction of GHG emissions. In addition the life patterns based on rural, farms and forestry based livelihood and living in closer harmony with nature are inherently capable of much reduced GHG emissions compared to the model based on big mining and industrial projects or luxury resorts. The need is to strengthen the self-reliance of village communities so that in terms of meeting basic needs excessive reliance on unnecessary transport (wasteful energy use) can be avoided.

There is another category of struggles related to protecting the livelihood of artisans. This involves protecting the livelihoods of those weavers, spinners, crafts persons, food-processors who have traditional skills for providing a broad range of

quality products without using fossil fuels or keep this use as low as possible. The most obvious example is that of handloom weavers. Their capability to produce good quality cloth and a broad range of textiles at a reasonable price is well established, but they are subjected to unfair competition and injustice at various levels, and in the context of India, the benefits promised to them and fully agreed to by the authorities are frequently denied by them. There are several struggles in India to give a fair deal to handloom weavers. Now with the increasing emphasis on reducing GHG emissions, the case for protecting handlooms and hand-spinning becomes stronger as protection of precious human skills which do not involve the use of any commercial energy, fossil fuel use or the related GHG emissions has acquired a new strength, it can get more support than before. A fair trade clothing company People Tree (Dhaka, Bangladesh) says in its promotional campaign that the handloom saves one tonne of CO₂ from being emitted each year and creates nine times as many jobs as the the powerloom.

At a time when the need to reduce GHG emissions is so pronounced, technologies which do not involve any GHG emissions to create products of great value and utility should obviously be helped and protected, particularly in a country like India where despite mounting threats to handloom weavers and other artisans they have still survived in significant numbers and hence can provide the base for

a wider revival of these skills and technologies. A similar case can be made in the case of the traditional skills and technologies of several other traditional artisans, fisherfolk, cycle rickshaw-pullers and others. Particularly in the context of urban transport, the struggles to protect the livelihoods of cycle-rickshaw pullers and hand-cart pullers can benefit much from the new emphasis on reducing GHG emissions.

Traditional wisdom of farmers and pastoral groups also need to be protected and revived as these show the way of how adequate healthy food can be produced while avoiding heavy GHG emissions in farming and related sectors.

People and organisations that have been sympathetic and helpful to the people's struggles to save their land, resource-base and sustainable livelihoods should also take note of the new opportunities that are arising which can give additional strength to these struggles as struggles which, apart from protecting livelihoods, can also help to reduce GHG emissions.

(Continued from Page 2)

matter should have ended there. But the Congress demands her resignation first and the discussion later. Apparently, the Congress is short of issues. It cannot ask for the resignation before it is established that Sushma Swaraj was guilty of accepting any pecuniary or some other advantage in allowing Lalit Modi to travel.

True, Sushma Swaraj's husband is Modi's lawyer. But this is the position he has occupied for years. There is no evidence to assert that he got some bonanza or favour before Sushma Swaraj allowed Lalit Modi to travel. The Congress cannot

hurl charges without proof. Yet the External Affairs Minister will be well advised not to use her discretion in a way which raises eye brows. She is a respected leader of the BJP. Maybe because of her socialistic background, she is liberal in her views and actions.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), known for its hard Hindutva views, is not too happy with her, but the BJP leadership realizes that Sushma Swaraj's liberal image has been able to retain the support of those who sit on the fence. Their vote returned the party to power and it was seen for the first time since independence that the Muslim vote is not essential to come to power at the centre.

It is a sad lesson to learn for a country which has taken pride in following a pluralistic line in the face of religious sermons of the Muslim League on the one hand and the Hindu Mahasabha's incitement to the majority on the other. The pitiable condition of the Left is a sad commentary on India's secular credentials.

Part of the remedy is that those who believe in secular ideology must go back to the field and win over the people. It is not that easy but there is no other way. Despite the spell cast by the Muslim League, the Congress never deviated from the policy of secularism during the British rule. But its government's functioning over six decades made room for the divide between Hindus and Muslims. And we are suffering the consequences.

Coming back to the issue of the Congress tactics to stall parliamentary proceedings, it is unfortunate that its leader Kapil

Sibal has justified the obstruction saying it was part of parliamentary strategy and that the BJP had set the milestone in the past. At the all-party meeting, opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said the Congress will not let the House function unless its demand for the resignations is met. The bravado notwithstanding, a section of the Congress is apprehensive that its strategy may not find much support and the party may get isolated in parliament.

The fallout of these developments is not healthy. I fear that the entire monsoon session may be a complete washout. This will only sap the energy of India and come in the way of development. Like what Mahatma Gandhi said, if means are vitiated the ends are bound to be vitiated. It does not augur well for the country which is a parliamentary democracy.

We may have lifted 140 million people out of poverty during 2004-2014, but millions of Indians are still poor.

The Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) has brought out, starkly, the level of deprivation among the people. The picture of rural India is grim. 62 per cent of the 17.91 crore households are deprived. 13.34 crore households (74.5 per cent) have a monthly income of Rs 5,000 or less. 6.86 crore households (38.27 per cent) earn their livelihood through manual casual labour. 2.37 crore households (13.3 per cent) live in one-room kuchcha dwellings.

Data for the 6.47 crore households in urban India has not been released.

—P Chidambaram,
The Indian Express

Asian democracies

D. K. Giri

The *Economist* Intelligence Unit (EIU) had rated, in 2011, the democracies in the world, using indicators like political participation, political culture, rule of law, corruption, administrative efficiency, freedom of press, electoral practical and so on. It classified democracies into four categories: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid democracies, and authoritarian regimes. Out of 23 Asian countries, from among 167 countries assessed by EIU, it has put only two countries as full democracies, Japan (21) and Korea (22), and most others as flawed or fragile democracies including India which ranks 25th in the list, some as hybrid democracies, and a few authoritarian regimes. Admittedly, the scope and definition of democracy have changed and the Westminster model is no longer the only reference point. For instance, democracy need not be adversarial; it can be consensual and deliberative. Whatever may be the measure of new democracies across the world, there are universal values like freedom, fairness and opportunities for participation, etc. We would like to evaluate the problems and prospects of Asian Democracies in line with the prevalent democratic discourse. But first, let us glance at the assessment by the EIU.

According to EIU, the state of democracies in Asia is not so inspiring. Out of the two countries rated as full democracies, Japan has had only one party dominating its politics, the Liberal Party, for last the 60 years. In the opinion of the Japanese sociologist Sugimoto Yoshio, there is a trend of 'friendly authoritarianism' in Japanese

politics and society. Institutions and processes in Japan are subject to what he calls mutual surveillance. Some observers would argue that Japanese did not struggle for democracy; it was imposed on them by the Allied forces after the Second World War. Hence, democracy has not taken deep roots. On the other hand, Koreans fought for democracy for several years. Their leader Kin Dae-Jung who is known as Asian Mandela famously led the movement for democracy. So Korea has healthier democratic institutions and processes.

The next lot belongs to the second category of fragile democracies. Leading this group are India, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, Mongolia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. EIU does not consider them full democracies due to the democratic deficits like weak institutions, less freedom of press, corruption, electoral malpractices and political violence.

Of the fragile democracies, India and Philippines rank 85th in corruption list out of 167 assessed by EIU. India has pervasive poverty, a notorious bureaucracy and political gridlock. Institutions are weak in Philippines and elections are marred by violence, fraud and intimidation. In Singapore, the People's Action Party has been in power without interruption for the whole fifty years of its independence. Freedom of press is greatly compromised, it ranks 153rd in the World on this front. All domestic newspapers, radio stations and television channels are owned by companies linked to the Government. Indonesia is 107th on Rule of Law. Hong Kong

has no electoral democracy; the chief of Hong Kong is nominated by Beijing, since Hong Kong was taken by China in 1997. Malaysia is pro-business but has not seen a change of government for long. Its ruling party Barisan Nasional has been in power for long. Of late, it has been intimidating the opposition, persecuting Anwar Ibrahim on trumped up charges like sodomy.

The third category consists of hybrid regimes - Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal and Pakistan. The fourth group comprises authoritarian regimes which include Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, China, and North Korea. One observer said, "Of all the countries, Pakistan keeps me up at night as it alternates between military dictatorship and civilian rule". There are many countries which are regressing rather than progressing in democratic consolidation. China is a different case. It should progress from industrialisation, modernisation to democracy. But this continuum is a tortuous one. China may eventually become a democracy as there is a large middle class, more information, a growing civil society. The youths in China are internationally exposed and are conscious of their rights; it was evident in the recent agitations in Hong Kong for democracy.

In Asia, it is argued that one sees the structures of democracy, but they lack substance. In democratic politics, there is a lot more than elections such as civil liberties, functioning of governments and political participation. Modernisation, education and specialisation etc. should foster

democracies in Asia. But that is not happening. There is a rear-guard action by traditional elites who are fighting back democracies. Even Japan and Korea are oligarchies as there is often a nexus between big business, administration and politics.

Looking at the prospects of democracy in Asia, we should discuss at least four indicators which make us optimistic. They are economic growth, rapid urbanisation, growth of information and communications technologies, growth of civil society and independent media. In the whole of Asia, mainly South-east and East Asia, more countries are becoming middle income economies. This would lead to more freedom through travel, information gathering, and association. In turn, this should lead to more democracy, political reforms and political inclusion; although there are some exception to this trend, the most glaring being that of Singapore where income, information and education levels should have led the country to full democracy. In recent years, Singapore's GDP per capita was over \$40000, greater than that of France and closer to United States. But the transition to democracy is yet to happen.

Second, the growing urbanisation should lead to greater democracy. Across Asia, the growth of the process of urbanisation has been phenomenal. Seven of the 10 largest cities of the world are in Asia. In 12 Asian countries, more than 40 per cent of the population lives in urban areas. According, to UN estimates, by 2050, only two Asian countries - Sri Lanka and Cambodia - will have urban population less than 45 percent. People in the cities enjoy greater personal freedom, are exposed to diversity, have greater access to information and tend to seek more democracy. A professor

in China noted, "The opening up and the rapid rise of urbanisation have created a new set of reference points and people increasingly take a secure life-style for granted, seeing education, medical care, and decent housing as welfare entitlements". Rapid urbanisation has other drawbacks though, but the point is urbanisation process could be conducive to democracy.

Third element in democratic expansion is role of information

and communication technology (ICT). This trend is too obvious to elaborate. ICT is most effective in information dissemination and as a tool for mobilisation. Just to quote one figure, on the expansive use of the newest technology, the cell phone, over half of the population uses a cell phone in countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, China, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam.

(Continued on Page 12)

MPs sastill in transit-accommodation

It refers to RTI response from Lok Sabha revealing that still 47 Lok Sabha members are occupying transit-accommodations in various state guest-houses even after more than one year of their having been elected to Lok Sabha. RTI response also reveals that at least in 10 cases, they failed to shift to regular government accommodations despite these accommodations allotted to them were 'habitable'. Cost of transit-accommodation should be recovered from Lok Sabha members who continued enjoying luxurious transit-accommodation despite regular provided government accommodation becoming 'habitable'.

Earlier RTI response had revealed that Central government had already paid bills worth rupees 24 crores till 22.05.2015 with more bills to be received by Central government from five-starred hotels and luxurious state guest-houses because authorities failed to get government accommodations vacated from former Lok Sabha members in stipulated 30 days (plus maximum 30 days of grace) in time. Nothing can improve in this country until

responsibility fixed and guilty ones punished in governance for violation of rules. Supreme Court verdict dated 05.07.2013 in the matter 'SD Bandi vs Divisional Traffic Officer, KSRTC & others' (Civil Appeal number 4064 of 2004) specifically desired against over-occupation of government-bungalows after one month of losing entitlement with a grace of maximum one more month. Money spent of transit-accommodation of new members of Lok Sabha should be recovered from former Parliamentarians overstaying in government-accommodations, and those in government who failed in their duty to get government-accommodations evicted from erring members of earlier Lok Sabha not vacating government-accommodations in stipulated time also as a deterrent against such over-occupation of government-accommodations in future. On the contrary we have ideals like Shabana Azmi who went to attend her last day in Rajya Sabha after vacating her government-accommodation rightly stating that she would lose entitlement to retain it after she ceased to retain her membership of Rajya Sabha.

—Subhash Chandra Agrawal

Soil, papered over

Vandana Shiva

Science” is derived from the word *scire* — “to know”. Each of us should know what we are eating, how it was produced and what impact it will have on our health.

The knowledge we need for growing food is the knowledge of biodiversity and living seed, of living soil and the soil food web, of interaction between different species in the agro-ecosystem and of different seasons. Farmers have been the experts in these fields, as have ecological scientists who study the evolution of micro-organisms, plants and animals, the ecological web and the soil food web.

In industrial agriculture, the knowledge of living systems is totally missing, since industrial agriculture was externally driven by using war chemicals as inputs. Soil was defined as an empty container for holding synthetic fertilisers and plants were defined as machines running on external inputs. This meant substituting the ecological functions and services that nature and farmers can provide through renewal of soil fertility, pest and weed control, and seed improvement. But it also implied ignorance of the destruction of the functions by the toxic chemicals applied to agriculture.

This complex knowledge of interacting, self-organising, self-maintaining, self-renewing and self-evolving systems that farmers have had is now being confirmed through the latest in ecology. At the agricultural systems level, agro-ecology, not the mechanistic and blind paradigm of industrial

agriculture is the truly scientific approach to food production.

At the level of organisms, epigenetics and the new knowledge that cells are in constant communication with each other is leading to the emergence of a new paradigm of life as communication and intelligence. Living systems are not dead matter, assembled like a machine.

Yet, in recent times, only one kind of knowledge, the mechanistic reductionist paradigm, based on seeing the world as a machine and reduction of a system its parts, has been elevated to the status of science.

The emerging sciences of complexity and connectedness expose the oceans of ignorance in which the mechanistic fundamentalism is steeped. Because living systems are not machines, they are a self-organised complexity, knowledge of a small, fragmented part in isolation of its relationships with the rest of the system translates into not knowing.

This epistemic violence is now being combined with the violence of corporate interests to viciously attack all scientific traditions, including those that have evolved from within Western science and transcended the mechanistic worldview.

It is actually becoming anti-science.

Nowhere is this more evident than in how reductionism has been used to colonise the seed. Seed is self-

organised intelligence - it reproduces, it multiplies, it constantly evolves. Farmers, especially women, have combined their intelligence with the intelligence of the seed, and through breeding as co-creation they have domesticated wild plants, increased diversity to adapt to diverse climates and cultures, they have improved nutrition and taste, they have increased resilience, which is the evolutionary potential of the seed. Seeds have been improved on the basis of ecological and social criteria.

The rhetoric for taking over food systems and seed supply is always based on “improved seed”. But what is not mentioned is that industrial seeds are only “improved” in the context of higher dependence on chemicals, and more control by corporations.

The latest in the anti-scientific discourse of industrial agriculture is about reducing everything to genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Genetic engineering is used to redefine seed as a corporate “invention” to claim patents and collect royalties. Farmers’ suicides in the cotton belt of India are directly related to the extraction of super-profits from farmers as royalty. And this is illegal since Monsanto never had a patent on Bt cotton.

It is claimed the GMOs will increase food production but the technology does not increase yields.

It is claimed that genetic engineering is a precise technology. This is false for four reasons:

First, genetic engineering is based on the false assumption that one gene gives rise to one trait.

Second, it is so imprecise that antibiotic-resistance-marker genes have to be added to even know if the gene was actually introduced in the cell of the plant and genes from virulent viruses have to be added to promote the trait being introduced.

Third, because the genes come from unrelated organisms and include bacterial and viral genes, there are unknown impacts on the organism and the ecosystem in which it is introduced. This is why there are multidisciplinary sciences involved in biosafety, and an international UN law to regulate GMOs for their biosafety impact, called the Cartagena protocol to the Convention on the Conservation of Biodiversity.

Fourth, the anti-scientific claim that GMOs are accurate and selection and conventional breeding are inaccurate ignores the intelligence of plants and of farmers which is at play in evolution.

In fact, the emergence of antibiotic resistance indicates the intelligence of bacteria to evolve under the pressure of antibiotics. Bacteria, as intelligent beings, are remaking themselves in response to antibiotics. The emergence of superpests resistant to Bt. toxin in plants, and superweeds resistant to Roundup with the spread of Roundup Ready GMOs indicates the intelligence of insects and plants to remake themselves under the pressure of toxins associated with GMOs which are designed to kill them. But it is precisely on the denial of intelligence of humans and other species that the edifice of mechanistic reductionism is based.

“Intelligence” is based on the Latin word *inter legere* which means “to choose”. From the slime mould and bacteria, to plants and animals, including humans, intelligence is the choice we make in order to respond to changing contexts. Life is a cognitive system with communication constantly taking place in a network on non-separable patterns of relationship. Living beings innovate all the time to deal with environmental challenges that face them. As American evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin says, “The characteristic of a living object is that it reacts to external stimuli rather than being passively propelled by them. An organism’s life is constant midcourse corrections.”

Humans as a species, are falling behind slime mould and bacteria to make an intelligent response to the environmental threats we face. And our intelligence is being thwarted by the false construction of the living Earth as dead matter, to be exploited limitlessly for human control, domination and greed.

The mid-course correction we need is to move beyond the mechanistic paradigm, and beyond exploitation which is manipulating not just living organisms, but knowledge itself.

It is claimed that the Bt toxin in GMOs degrades, but it has been found to survive in the blood of pregnant women and fetuses. It is claimed that Round-up and Round-up ready crops are safe for humans because humans do not have the shikimate pathway — a seven step metabolic route used by bacteria, fungi, algae, parasites and plants for the biosynthesis of aromatic amino acids.

This is outright violence against science. Ninety per cent of the

genetic information in our body is not human but bacterial. Out of the 600 trillion cells in our body only six trillion are human, the rest are bacterial. And bacteria have the shikimate pathway. The bacteria in our gut are being killed by Round-up leading to serious disease epidemics, from increasing intestinal disorders to neurological problems such as the increase in occurrence of autism and Alzheimer’s.

The US Centre for Disease Control data shows that on current trends one in two children in the US will be autistic in a few decades. It is not an intelligent species that destroys its own future because of a distorted and manipulated definition of science.

As Einstein had observed, “Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity and I’m not sure about the universe.”

—*Transcend Media*

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Wuzu firing

Why did they fire at us? Was one question the villagers at Wuzu, Phor and new Phor asked when the Naga Students' Federation (NSF) and Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) team went for fact-finding at Wuzu village. A five members fact-finding team from 17th to 19th July 2015 visited and talked to the eye witnesses.

Sequence of events

July 15: Firing starts at Avankhu (Also known as Avankhung) area where two NSCN K cadres are killed by the Assam Rifles. The firing starts around 11 pm at night and lasted till 5 am in the morning of July 16.

July 16: The bodies of the two cadres were being taken to Meluri via Wuzu by the AR. Five AR vehicles convoy (three 407 truck, gypsy, and one tata truck) passes through Wuzu village by 6 pm, according to eye witnesses in the village. The villagers having learned that one of the slain cadres, Captain Puhachu belonged to Wuzu village decides to request the AR to hand over the body for proper burial in the village land as per Naga customs.

Firing inside Wuzu village: The village leaders of Wuzu and neighboring villages of Phor and New Phor stood by the side of the road and raise their hands when the Army convoys was passing through. The first three vehicles sped off without stopping however they stopped near the village community hall on seeing the Major stop his vehicle, which is a few metres away from where the villagers are standing. The villagers did not force the military convoy to stop.

The fourth vehicle carrying Major Surinder Singh and the last vehicle stopped where the villagers stood. The village leaders requested the Major who was well acquainted with them, if it were possible for the Major to handover the body to which the Major expressed his inability. So they requested the Major to at least take the coffin for the dead bodies to which the Major agreed. The conversation lasted for about two minutes when they started hearing gunshots from the direction of the AR truck near the Community hall which was followed by indiscriminate firing from the vehicle of the Major and the last vehicle behind the Major's vehicle. Aso and Tiizali were killed from the bullets of the Jawans who fired from the Major's vehicle, according to the eye witnesses. The villagers have also stated that the shots fired by the Jawans were not blank firing but aimed directly at the civilians. The firing lasted for about 20 minutes, we have been told.

Bullet marks are seen in the houses and trees in the whole stretch. The villagers have collected around 140 empty shells. Witnesses have claimed that there could be much more empty cases inside the AR vehicles as the maximum number of gunshots was fired inside the vehicle.

A civilian non-villager who happened to be at the site of the incident at that point in time witnessed the entire incident. He was by the site of the Community Hall next to the Army Maruti Gypsy vehicle where he witnessed the first gunshot being fired from the Assam Rifles Gypsy, he stated.

As per accounts of witnesses: Aso, 13, a class VII student of GHS Pholary, was the youngest child in her family. Aso is said to be a promising student. Her own grandfather was killed by the Indian Army in the 1960s during the battle of Thuda Phor. She was inside her relative's house when the jawans fired. The bullet hit right below her armpit and came on the other side of her body. And Tiizali, 14 years and Class 7 student of GHS Pholary belonged to the neighboring village Phor, which is a walking distance from Wuzu village. Tiizali was with his three other friends right above the road when the shooting started. His friends escaped but he was shot in the chest and the skull.

The fact finding team visited Esther Jorror, 24 years old, on July 19 at the Community Health Centre of Meluri. Esther was shot in the right arm by the Assam Rifles. She was carrying her one year and five months old baby when she heard the firing. She ran inside the house of Yichiili for cover but was shot in the arm while running for cover. It is the same house where Aso was killed. Esther saw Aso being shot. Esther's husband Ritu Jorror was also at the spot and is an eye witness to the firing by Assam Rifles.

The NSF and NPMHR team has taken pictures of the bullet marks in each houses which were shot. The Assam Rifles has claimed that the NSCN K had shot from the hilltops but the bullet marks and eye witness evidences indicates that the Assam Rifles shot directly at the civilians and the houses.

The Team called on Maj. Surinder Singh of the 46 AR C Coy at his camp at Akhegwo Post. In course of

the interaction, he admitted that he was not sure who shot the students in the village. He further told the Team to contact his superiors, particularly the IGAR, on the matter. The Team also noticed a group of Para Commando personnel of the Indian Army with their strange looks and unusual uniform. Maj. Surinder Singh also revealed that the assault team comprised of personnel from

the Para Commando personnel of the Indian Army along with the jawans from the Assam Rifles under his command. He also admitted that he had an Officer senior to him and some other Junior Commissioned Officers at the spot where the students were murdered. On being queried how he could claim that the NSCN (K) had killed the students, he responded that he was not sure

and requested the team to contact the IGAR (N). This is particularly interesting because it is ascertained that there was no presence of the cadres of the NSCN (K) in the vicinity. If the Major himself who was present at the incident of July 16 is not sure, then how can the IGAR (N) be so sure in their press statements that the two students were killed by the NSCN (K)?

—Boveio Poukai Duo, (NSF); Vibi Yhokha, (NPMHR)

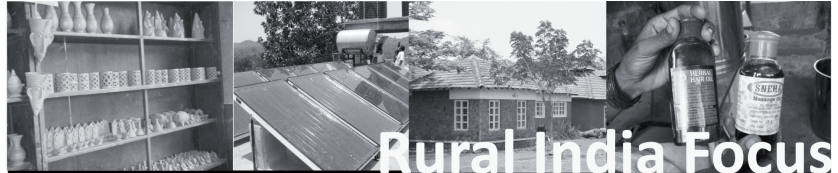
(Continued from Page 8)

Fourth, the growth of civil society and independent media, over the last 25 years there has been a proliferation of civil society organisations in Asia. They work in the areas of civil and political rights, women's rights, promoting rule of law, fighting corruption or defending workers etc. Even in semi-authoritarian states, civil society organisations are active in promoting democracy, although they often work covertly. The new media again is an obvious promoter of democracy. Thanks to new media, the issues which were purely national now soon become regional, drawing greater attention by the governments. For instance, Pakistan had to liberalise its electronic media in 2004, as Pakistanis switched to Indian channels for news and views after the Kargil war. The use of ICT is difficult to control through borders.

A word about the type of democracy in Asia is in order. The EIU has rated democracies using a particular matrix, which is largely influenced by the western experience. Some of the features are individual liberty, competitive parties, political debates, and homogenisation and so on. Asian societies are heterogeneous, multicultural and community-based. Hence the conventional western categories of democracy have to be

redefined in Asian context. However, the universal principle, the essential meaning of democracy is self-rule. Interpretation and formatting of self-rule may be Asia specific. The other

special features of democracy are self-reviewing and self-correcting. The beauty of democracy is that if you make a mistake, you can fix it soon.



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NRC Updation in Assam: Prospects and Challenges

*Amidst huge controversy and long debate under the orders of the Supreme Court India, the Government of India has started the process of updating the NRC of 1951. The objective of updation of the NRC is to help identify foreign nationals living in the state illegally. There is an apprehension among civil liberty groups that the process of updating NRC may not be fair and result in non-inclusion of the Muslim minorities and Hindu Bengalis who are often suspected to be illegal citizens. Political Parties and other organisations present in the state are also playing the drums in different bits on the updation issue of NRC. In order to study the whole process of the NRC updation, the **Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism**, Mumbai had formed a fact finding team on the process of present NRC updation of Assam. The team visited different places of Guwahati, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dhuburi, Goalpara, Morigaon, Baksa, Nagaon and Sivasagar districts from 22nd May to 26th May 2015. The team interacted with different community people, NRC Co-ordinator Prateek Hazela, officials of NRC Sewa Kendras, Gram Panchayat Presidents, BLOs (Booth Level Officers), notable citizens like Social workers, College Principals, Professors, Teachers, leaders of political parties, people living in shelter camps, and so on.*

The full form of NRC is 'National Register of Citizens' (NRC). It is the register containing details of all Indian citizens. On the directives of the Ministry of Home affairs (MHA), after conducting the Census of 1951, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was prepared by recording particulars of all the persons enumerated during the 1951 Census. The names of most of the citizens of Assam were enlisted in the NRC of 1951.

Limitations of NRC 1951

On the basis of the Census of 1951 the National Register of Citizens was first prepared. This NRC of 1951 was incomplete one as the Census of the year could not cover all the places of the state. Many riverine, *chars* and remote areas could not be reached by the enumerators. Moreover, Assam also witnessed a communal violence while the process of NRC was initiated. Statistics reveals that 53000 Muslim families fled to the then East Pakistan between 1948 and 1950 due to communal violence in western Assam. If we assume five to seven persons in a family in an average and multiply it with the

number of the figure of families it becomes 265,000 to 371,000 who left for East Pakistan from Assam in the wake of communal riots of 1950. Latter the Nehru-Liyaqat pact of 8th August 1950 provided them a window of two years to return to India. In between the NRC process was completed in Assam. Thus a big number of Muslims were dropped out in the total figure of 1951 NRC and the census. But when in the next Census of 1961 those dropped out citizens' names were enlisted the growth rate of Muslims in Assam was seen very high. Unfortunately the government did not bother to update the NRC of 1951 as it was expected.

Rise of anti-foreigners' movement:

Since 1961, a doubt started growing in the minds of a section of Assamese people that Assam is under aggression of migration. It was believed that people were coming illegally from East-Pakistan and taking settlement in Assam. In 1972 a major political development took place in the continent of Asia, as it had to birth one more sovereign state in the name of Bangladesh. The region 'Bangladesh' had to pass with different names in different

phases of modern times. Till 1905 it was a part of Bengal. Lord Curzon in 1905 partitioning Bengal named the region as East-Bengal and merged it with Assam and thus 'Assam and East-Bengal' formed one state. Again in 1947 when India obtained freedom from the hands of the British, the same region was carved out and incorporated with Pakistan. Thenceforward, the region was known as East-Pakistan. Finally, in 1972 the region came up as an independent state of Bangladesh.

During the British period there was considerable migration of poor peasants from Bengal and East-Bengal towards Assam that had changed the demographic pattern of the state. This process of migration though reduced continued from the East-Pakistan and it is also alleged that it has been continuing even from Bangladesh. Thus the 'migration issue' turned into 'foreigners' issue' in Assam.

Now, foreigners' issue became the prime agenda of the 'Assam Movement' (1979-1985) initiated by the 'All Assam Students Union (AASU) and 'All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP)'. They

demanding the deportation of foreign nationals from the state. During the period of the Movement, without making any statistical data the leaders deliberately exaggerated the number of the foreign nationals in the state. According to Jogen Hazarika (1979), the Chief Minister, the number of foreign nationals in Assam was two lakhs. Two regional parties of Assam- '*Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal* (AJD)' and the '*Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad* (PLP)' estimated the number of the foreign nationals in the state at 40 lakhs and 13 lakhs respectively. According to an ideologue of the movement the number of foreign nationals living in the state illegally was 45 to 50 lakhs, out of Assam's total population of 1,46,25,000. Another political scientist estimated the number of the foreign nationals in Assam up to 1981 at 40 lakhs. Another exponent of the movement named Bisweshwar Hazarika, counted the number of foreign nationals in the state at 77 lakhs. The All Assam Students' Union in one of their publications fixed up the number of infiltrators at over 45 lakhs, of whom over 15 lakhs had entered their names in the electoral rolls. If one accepts such fantastic figures, the percentage of foreign nationals would range between 10 to 50 percent of the total population of the state.

A series of discussions took place with the Movement Leaders and the State Government bringing no solution. The Movement Leaders now came in direct conflict with the Government. They decided to stop the general election of 1983 by any means and created an extremely explosive situation. In February 1983 thousands of people, mostly women and children belonging to the erstwhile East Bengal origin

Muslims were brutally killed at Nagabandha and Neilli of Nagaon District and other places of the state. After a strong controversy and debate a Memorandum of Understanding, popularly known as 'Assam Accord' was signed between AASU, AAGSP, Central and State Governments in the capital city of 'New Delhi' in the early hours of 15th August 1985. The Accord determined 1st January 1966 as the cut-off date for the purpose of detection and deletion of foreigners and allowed for citizenship for all persons coming to Assam from "Specified Territory" before the cut-off date. It further specifies that all persons who came to Assam prior to 1st January 1966 (inclusive) and up to 24th March 1971 (midnight) shall be detected in accordance with the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1939. Names of foreigners so detected will be deleted from the Electoral Rolls in force. Such persons will be required to register themselves before the Registration Officers of the respective districts in accordance with the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 and the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939. On the expiry of a period of 10 years following the date of detection, the names of all such persons who have been deleted from the electoral rolls shall be restored. Foreigners who came to Assam on or after 25th March 1971 shall continue to be detected, deleted and expelled in accordance with law.

AASU leaders considered Assam Accord as of their great achievement. They now formed a new political party '*Assam Gana Parishad*' (AGP) and contested the election of 1985. Deportation of foreign nationals from the state was the main agenda of their election manifesto.

Majority of the people of the state were also convinced by the notions of the students' leaders and unhesitatingly advanced their support to the newly formed political party. Thus '*Assam Gana Parishad*' at its first election became victorious with absolute majority. The new Government tried its level best to find out and deport the foreign nationals from the state. But it could not identify and deport even one thousand foreigners from the state.

The 'Assam Movement (1979-1985)', 'Assam Accord (15th August 1985)' and the failure of the Assam Gana Parishad Government to identify foreign nationals in the state still could not bring any political solution of the foreigners issue. Bengal origin illiterate poor Muslims and a section of Hindu Bengalis are suspected as to be the illegal occupants of the state. Many of their voting rights have been snatched away by the government on the basis of doubt on their citizenship.

'D' Voters Issue:

In 1997 the election commission of India identified a section of Muslims live in the *Char Chapari* areas of Assam, linguistic Hindu minority and even the Rajbongshi people of the state as 'D' voters. The process of identification of 'D' voters was unusual. It is alleged that the lower officials of Election Commission were asked to mark at least 10 to 20 people in each village of the state as 'D' citizens. Thus in many families wives or husbands became doubtful citizens keeping rest of the members Indians. Again in some families, sons and daughters were identified as doubtful citizens, where, their parents remained Indians. The officials of election commission did not follow any

criteria in identifying doubtful citizens. They ambiguously marked the names of voters in the voters list and are denied franchisee rights. 3.7 lacs people were marked as 'D' voters. Thirty two (32) Foreign Tribunals had been set up throughout the state to detect these large numbers of people whether they are Indian or foreigners. Out of 32 tribunals 13 are lying defunct without judges. Thus the progress of tribunal work is very slow. During 2006-2010 in the foreigners' tribunal of Bongaigaon against 9,222 registered cases only 1,333 got settled and four accused have been identified as Bangladeshis. That too, these four persons got such a verdict as they could not produce their documents within stipulated time given by the court.

Likewise in the Foreigners' Tribunal of Goalpara District, against 22,000 'D' voters cases only 6,00 have been settled till date and only one woman called Tarabhanu has been identified as foreigner. This Tarabhanu case created a huge controversy throughout the state as it is said that Tarabhanu is an Indian citizen and she has become the victim of state conspiracy. Tarabhanu was snatched away from her three months old child and was deported from the state which was inhumane in nature.

If the running 19 foreigners' tribunals become more active and settle 19 cases in a day and work for highest 200 days in a year these tribunals would be able to settle maximum of 3800 cases. Likewise, to settle all the cases that are lying in the Foreigners' Tribunals of that state, it will take more than 92 years. Consequently, these 3.7 lacs 'D' voters as well as their children who are fighting to get back their

citizenship rights from last 17/183 years will remain as 2nd class citizens and most of them will die before their cases get settled. Surprisingly enough, the names of those 'D' voters, who have cleared their cases in the Foreign Tribunals, have not been included in the voters' lists till date. The Deputy Commissioners of concerned districts are also seemed to be reluctant to take any action in this regard. In an interview, one of the Deputy Commissioners says that they can't take any action in regard to the 'D' voters issue until they receive any signal from higher authority.

NRC updation controversy

The NRC of 1951 was supposed to be updated from time to time. But the Government of India did not pay any attention to update the NRC of Assam in spite of heavy demands of different socio political organizations of the state. All Assam Students Union (AASU); Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, Assam (KMSS), Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (JYCP), Assam Public Works (APW), and many other organizations placed long series of demands to the Government to update the long pending NRC of 1951. The organizations believe that the updation of NRC 1951 will segregate the foreign nationals living in the state from the Indian citizens. After a long debate and with the interference of the Supreme Court of India, the Government of India through a notice had decided to update the long pending NRC of 1951. It is said that updated NRC would be an instrument to identify Bangladeshi infiltrators in Assam. The NRC is expected to be a reference point against which an individual can check his/

her citizenship status. According to Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, "NRC updating will bring to end issues revolving around the state's biggest problem of infiltration from Bangladesh. There are people who believe that infiltration (from Bangladesh) is still going on despite erection of a barbed wire fence and intensified BSF patrolling along the border."

Accordingly, the Government of India at the initial stage through a pilot project decided to update the NRC of Chaygaon Revenue Circle of Kamrup District and Barpeta Revenue Circle of Barpeta District in 2010. The works of updating NRC in Assam as per the provision of the amended rule 4(A) had been undertaken as pilot project in Barpeta and Chaygaon Revenue Circle in the district of Barpeta and Kamrup Rural respectively. As per this amended rule all the residents where most of the people were illiterate were asked to apply before the district magistrate along with several supportive documents, appear for hearing and prove their citizenship to the satisfaction of the officer concerned for inclusion of their names in the updated NRC.

(To be concluded)

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Last week's terror attack in Punjab has dashed to the ground such hopes as were raised by the Ufa accord between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan in respect of bilateral normalisation. India's post-independence history, as also that of Pakistan for the same period tells us that relations between the neighbours is always subject to intense ups and downs. From India's point, they have always been downs, but international relations cannot flourish in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and despair.

Unfortunately, there have always been bottlenecks to the normalisation process. One such has been created by the Gurudaspur attack. Reacting to the articulation of negative sentiments by Pakistani spokesmen after the Ufa agreement we had commented in these columns that it takes two hands to clap and that without Islamabad's cooperation the normalisation process cannot be taken ahead. It seems we need to emphasise this thought again since all evidence points to the complicity of Pakistan in mounting a terror attack on Indian soil. Prima facie evidence has been established with twin GPS devices recovered from three slain fidayeen, nailing the hand of Islamabad. The

fidayeen, obviously well trained professionals, came from Pakistan and their role must apparently have been master-minded by someone in authority in Islamabad's security establishment. This is not the first time that Pakistan has provided the bases for the launch of anti-Indian attacks by trained terrorists operating from safe havens in Pakistan.

Two points are worth mentioning. First, New Delhi must continue to proceed on the assumption that anti-Indian subversion and terrorism remains Pakistan's state policy and that there are large numbers of hard-liners in Pakistan, as there are admittedly in India, who do not favour normalization and demand a tough policy against each other. Secondly, no peace-oriented agreement with India by a civilian government will be allowed to sustain itself by the Pakistani military establishment which calls all the shots regardless of whether there is an elected government or not.

The bad vibes created in India in the aftermath of Gurudaspur raise an important question as to the need, desirability and justification for the scheduled dialogue between the national security advisers of the

Between the Lines

Resentful Kashmiris

Kuldip Nayar

two countries. The dialogue was projected in the Ufa accord between the two prime ministers. On all counts, a dialogue is a must, even if it be only to adhere to the principle that jaw-jaw is any day better than war-war. Even in ordinary circumstances of tense bilateral relations, a dialogue is preferable to the continuation of crises. Now, after the earlier Pakistani border intrusions, and now Gurudaspur, a dialogue is a must.

Indeed, if the dialogue leads to even a bare commitment from the Pakistani side that there will be no encouragement to cross-border terrorism a beginning would have been made towards gradual normalization. Such a commitment is important.

Gurudaspur is bound to cast its shadow on India-Pakistan relations in general and the impending dialogue in particular. But such situations have obtained often enough in the past and the two countries have had the good sense to put them behind them and carry the normalization process ahead.

It is a sobering thought that despite all the patience and fortitude shown by New Delhi so often in the past that no material breakthrough has come. But that is no reason to give up hope. Because, simply and honestly said, there is just no alternative other than war. And war, we all know and believe, is unthinkable.

The last meeting between the two prime ministers was held in Ufa in Russia on the sidelines of an international conference. That meeting produced an agreement that in turn signaled the revival

(Continued on Page 7)

Kashmir has changed beyond recognition. In less than five years when I visited Srinagar last, the valley has become visibly anti-India. This does not mean that it has become pro-Pakistan, although some green flags fly in the interiors of Srinagar. What it really means is that the alienation, which was perceptible even earlier, has changed into resentment.

However, the sunny sides like the Dal Lake and its bundh (bank) are as normal as they used to be. Tourists drive straight from the airport to the sites and are oblivious to the fact that the interior is the scene of militants who still lob grenades. I was in Srinagar when violence took place and some grenades were thrown in the interior of the town.

An invitation by an organisation of Kashmiri journalists took me to Srinagar. A few other journalists from Delhi were also among the invitees. Strikingly, no journalist from Jammu was present. Of course, none had been invited.

The Kashmiris' protest, more or less peaceful, is Islamic in tone and tenor. But it seems as if it is a way of expression, not the content. The content is that the Kashmiris want a country of their own. Most people in India suspect that an independent Kashmir is only a bogey. The real intension of the Kashmiris is to join Pakistan.

But I do not agree with this inference. The very idea of independence looks more like a

dream and it has swept the Kashmiris off their feet. If it ever becomes a reality, which is impossible, even the staunch supporters of integration with Pakistan will jettison their agenda and join the ranks of independence seekers.

The sequence of events reminds me of Quaide Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's way of thinking. He raised the demand for Pakistan as a bargaining counter to get the maximum concessions for Muslims in a country where the Hindus were bound to be in a preponderant majority. However, when he found a resounding response among the Muslims he came to own the demand for Pakistan, a homeland for the Muslims. Shaky in his belief in the beginning, he came to be its sole spokesman.

Therefore, there should be no doubt about the real desire of Kashmiris. I could see angry faces when I said in my speech that the Muslims in India would have a hard time if the demand for an independent Kashmir was ever acceded. The Hindus would argue that if even after 70 years of being part of India the Kashmiri Muslims wanted independence, what is the guarantee about the loyalty of some 16 crores Muslims in India?

The argument that India could not jeopardize its secular system by making Kashmir a separate country, which would be 98 per cent Muslims, was not even entertained at the conference. "Your Muslims

are your problem,” was more or less the counter argument.

I recall a similar reaction when after the formation of Pakistan I told its Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar that the Muslims in India—they were more than those at that time in Pakistan—were paying the price for the creation of Pakistan. He said that they had to make ‘sacrifices’ for a Muslim country, Pakistan, to take shape.

What has disappointed me the most was the disappearance of grey area in Kashmir, which was visible till a couple of years ago. The stances have hardened so much so that even social contacts between Muslims and Hindus have got snapped. I am sorry to bring in personal example. In the past, Yasin Malik would invite me to his house for dinner and conduct me to his house through the labyrinth of lanes.

True, he has turned what is called a ‘separatist’. But I vainly waited for a word from him. I do not believe that he did not know about my presence in Srinagar. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front he heads has posted his men at the airport to know who comes from India and when. Yasin Malik gets the “separatists” feedback.

I had Yasin’s fast unto death broken on the condition that I would personally conduct a probe into human rights violations by the Indian security forces. He agreed to my supervision instead of the Amnesty International probe. We produced a report and found Yasin’s allegations mostly correct. The report was quoted widely by Pakistan to the embarrassment of Indian government.

True, Yasin says that he is not an Indian. But our relationship

was not on the basis of nationality. Can bitterness snap even personal bonds? Should I presume that I wrongly assumed certain things and that personal relations have no meaning in the face of political exigencies.

To cite another example of how personal relationships are pushed into the background for political purposes, another Kashmiri leader Shabir Shah is changed person today. He was like my chela (disciple). He was then pro-India. He has changed into a staunch opponent. Yet, I do not know why personal relations should die. Is it the price that I have to pay for a change in Shabir’s ideas?

Kashmir, no doubt, requires attention, especially for those who believe in a secular and democratic India. No amount of opposition should swerve them from their commitment. If they change, it means that their earlier stance was only a façade.

This holds good for the entire India. We are in the midst of challenges to the very idea, propounded by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who won us freedom. It pains me to see that some voices have begun to appreciate the ideas of Naturam Godse, who killed the Mahatma. Were India to question its ethos, the Muslim-dominated Kashmir would feel insecure. A Kashmiri Muslim engineer, who dropped me at the airport, told how he was suspect even at a liberal place like Bangalore and harassed by the police.

Parties have reduced politics to the identification on the basis of caste and religion. People should assert themselves through liberal organizations or leaders and ensure that the poison of religion and caste

does not spread. If the nation fails, Kashmir and many other parts of India may flounder in the muddy waters of religion. The country is on trial.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has rendered excellent service by regulating banking structure in India. By extending substantial support to NABARD, credit needs of primary sector like agriculture are being met, though much needs to be done in providing cover to small and marginal farmers.

RBI’s interest policy has also been reasonable. It has helped rein in inflation to a considerable extent.

RBI should never be privatized. It must be controlled by statutory body accountable to the Parliament.

Proposal to provide for a chairperson and a committee on which four members would be nominated by the central government is totally misdirected. Autonomy of RBI must be preserved.

Some change in having more than one governor may be contemplated. On the pattern of Election Commission, three governors may be provided with one of them to be Chief Governor.

- Pannalal Surana

special issue

The next issue of Janata will combine the issues of August 9 and August 16, 2015 and will be posted on August 19, 2015 – Managing Editor

Addis Ababa agenda

D. K. Giri
Susan Cherian

On 13-16 July 2015, world leaders got together at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and reached an agreement to end extreme poverty by 2030. It is indeed a laudable step. But, like many such international agreements, which look good as intentions but fall far short of realization, this agreement is also being taken with a pinch of salt. However, before we go into the contents of the agreement, and its potential for fructification, it is in order that we briefly look into the background and the run-up to Addis Ababa.

In 1990, 42.3 per cent of the world population lived in extreme poverty. All of them belonged to the developing countries. This was followed by the Earth Summit in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This was a turning point in the international community efforts to promote human well-being by ending poverty, deprivation and backwardness. The famous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came in the subsequent Millennium summit in 2000 in New York. One of the eight MDGs was to end poverty and hunger in 15 years - by 2015. But, extreme poverty was reduced by 50 per cent, according to official reports. It was also acknowledged that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia made less progress in meeting the MDGs and the prospects there looked bleak. The Addis Ababa Agenda was prompted by the pressure from developing countries and a set of declarations ensued to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To recall the origin of SDGs, they were first thought of as replacing

the MDGs, at the conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio in June 2012 (Rio+20). The seventeen SDGs, remarkably begin with “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” (SDG 1)

Action agenda

The Agenda at Addis Ababa included several things aimed at advancing the SDGs: sustainable infrastructure and energy and domestic resource mobilization, essential social services for all, women’s economic empowerment, science, technology, innovation and data. The focus, however, was on how to raise finances to end extreme poverty. The Agenda represented the “world’s plan to implement and finance the new post-2015 development agenda”. It also drew a slew of measures “to help developing countries achieve self-reliance, and sustainable economic transformation”.

In the fairly detailed agenda, comprising objectives and action points, the international leadership vowed to take the development agenda forward. They declared “to identify actions and address critical gaps relevant to the post-2015 development agenda, including the SDGs.” They aimed at harnessing energies between the goals, so that realization of one will contribute to the realization of the other. They identified a range of cross-cutting areas to build on these synergies. They are a new social framework for the poor and vulnerable groups through the provision of social protection systems. They agreed to scale up efforts to end

malnutrition and hunger. They recorded that around 800 million people are starved of food. They would mobilize the international agencies to end the food crisis. They talked of establishing a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization. This was essential for the developing countries for economic growth, economic diversification and value addition. The countries committed to promote affordable and durable access to capital and credit for small enterprises. They talked of generating employment, decent work for all. The other two commitments were, protecting eco-systems for all and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

Mixed reactions

There were mixed reactions to the Agenda, mainly on the issue of ending poverty. In fact, Addis Ababa was the third international conference on financing the SDGs. Some commentators said that the Agenda was meant to “finance failure”; there were structural problems in the Agenda; there were declarations but no concrete commitments. It is estimated that the new SDGs will cost three trillion USD annually. The major source of money, according to the Agenda, is the domestic tax revenues, although the Under Secretary General of UN said, “This new framework aligns all financing flows and policies with economic, social, and environmental priorities.” But the action-line is not clear, according to many international finance observers. There was a demand for the creation

of a UN Global Tax body, which was rejected by the developed countries. A prominent civil society organization, the Action Aid called the rejection an “appalling failure and great blow to the fight against poverty and injustice.” There was also a campaign against tax-dodging by multinational companies. Hence the civil society bodies were asking for a say in fixing and monitoring global tax rules. Tax money lost in tax evasion could have gone to the provision of education, health care and other poverty-reducing public services. It is estimated that developing countries lose an estimated 212 billion USD every year to tax dodging by MNCs. The saving grace for the developing countries in the conference was that they made their voice heard, stood up to the challenge of setting global tax standards. Tov Maria Ryding, the tax justice coordinator of the European Network on Debt and Development triumphantly said, “we have managed to deliver a message loud and clear: the days of the rich deciding for everyone must end.” On the UN side, of course, there were jubilant statements made. As a sample, Wu Hongbo, the Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs said, “The action agenda provides a global framework for financing sustainable development and developing sustainable finance.”

What is extreme poverty?

While the international agreements provide a base and a framework, a realistic understanding of the issue in various contexts, formulating country-specific actions are essential. Extreme poverty or absolute poverty or hunger was defined by the United Nations in 1995, as “a condition characterized by severe deprivation on basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health,

shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but access to services.” Presently the extreme poverty index is below 1.25 USD a day (in 2005 prices) set by the World Bank.

E. F. Schumacher, the legendary development economist had said that absolute poverty was man-made and unacceptable. In his words “the starting point of all our considerations is poverty or rather, a degree of poverty which means misery and degrades and stultifies the human person; and our first is to recognize and understand the boundaries and limitations which this degree of poverty imposes.”

The spread of poverty is again important as we plan to tackle it. The vast majority of those in extreme poverty, almost 96 per cent of the poor are in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the West Indies, East Asia and the Pacific. In fact, half of those in extreme poverty live in India and China alone. The countries in this geographical area are middle income countries (MICs). Interestingly, majority of the people in extreme poverty live in MICs and about 35 per cent in low income countries (LICs). MICs have limited access to soft finance creating more extreme poverty. However, the situation will change, according to some economists by 2025 and poverty will be concentrated in fragile and conflict affected states like Pakistan and Nigeria. Others argue that a sizeable share of world poverty would remain in fragile MICs.

How do we tackle extreme poverty? Many donors believe that it is time the aid to MICs is reduced. Donors are of the opinion that, in MICs, poverty is a distributional issue, and it is fundamentally domestic in nature. Following from that premise, the international finance institutions are in a dilemma on whether the

international aid community should target poor countries or poor people. This is a facile position. Of course, the aid community will have to take the countries into confidence while targetting the poor. If we recall the aid-evaluation made in Michael Lipton’s “Politics of Aid”, he has suggested that aid is a quid pro quo by donors on market access to and raw materials from developing countries. The governments in developing countries squander the aid money in corruption, wasteful expenditure, etc. So mechanisms must be devised that the aid reaches the targets.

The other effective means to address poverty is to follow the Schumacherian approach of generating livelihood i.e. the use of appropriate technology which is decentralized, localized and draws on locally available resources. The three-step approach ensures sustainable livelihood and eliminates absolute poverty. The first step is to identify and appreciate the mode of living of the people. The attempt should be not to dislocate them and disrupt their mode of production or transaction. The second step is to value-add to their existing practices – for instance, if they are using hand tools, motorize them, give them a better tool to increase the output and efficiency, etc. The final step is to help them earn a disposable income, which means moving them over from subsistence income. The extra money they would earn will be used by them on education, health, social mobility, exposure to information, and reducing risks to their living. This will take them away from extreme poverty.

So, while Addis Ababa agenda is well-meaning, its implementation should involve a decentralized, situation-specific approach which creates “good practices” which are then replicated across the globe.

Islamist terrorism: the underlying politics

Ram Puniyani

The World at large has suffered massive inhuman acts of violence, terrorism in the name of Islam. There are many glaring insane, cruel acts which cannot be forgotten and condoned in any way. Be it the killing of nearly three thousand innocent people in the attack of 9/11 (which was upheld by Osama bin Laden), the attack on Peshawar school children, the abduction of schoolgirls by Boko Haram, attack on Charlie Hebdo, the violence by ISIS, all are equally condemnable and global society has to put its head together to stop this insanity.

Since 9/11 again, a new phrase has been coined, 'Islamic terrorism', associating Islam with terror. It is true that this Islamist terror has been very persistent and is a cancerous phenomenon. An impression has been created due to these incidents that this violence has something to do with Islam. The same has been strongly propagated by the US media to begin with and later other media also picked it up. Simply speaking if these acts have anything to do with Islam, why they are occurring more in the oil rich countries?

Adding to this misconception various writers have come with the thesis that reform in Islam will cure the problem. Some say that there is a need for 'religious revolution' to purge Islam of extremist tendencies. It's pointed out that Islamic fundamentalists, those indulging in terror have come to dominate and so reform in Islam will ensure the end to violence. The question is who gives power to

fundamentalists to shoot down the peaceful interpretations of Islam, is it Islam or some politics behind the mask of Islam. One concedes that what is going on is one of the most horrendous phenomena in the history of human kind and it must be condemned and uprooted.

While Islamist terrorists are holding the humanity to ransom, we need to go beyond the obvious to understand this phenomenon, how it has come up and who is behind it. We need to ponder whether theoretical reform can hold forte in the face of 'politics of oil' supported and secretly operated by vested interests to achieve their goals by any means. As such the political context, which gives birth to these violent tendencies in the name of Islam, needs to be unraveled.

There have been brilliant, humane interpretations of Islam by the likes of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and Asghar Ali Engineer; precisely around the time when the terrorists have been morphing from one area to another, executing one or the other horrendous acts of terror. Why these interpretations of Islam are not in the mainstream? Fundamentalists with their version of Islam have held the sway with inhuman acts and violent versions of Islam is stalking the streets. At the same time the voice of liberal-humane versions of Islam is in the margins. The books elaborating different meanings of the Quran, the movements for rationality are very much there but these are not the ones which are acknowledged by the terror factories created by the

politics, which aims to gobble up the 'oil wealth' to quench 'oil hunger'. What is argued by some is already there in the Islamic domain, the humane version of Islam; question is that this rationalist-reform version has been having insignificant impact due to extraneous economic-political factors.

The dominant political forces pick up and discard interpretations of religion to suit their political-economic agenda. The verses of Koran have to be seen in the particular context, as putting the text out of context is what the critics do. We refuse to see the political motives which are lying not so hidden under the mask of Islam. Thus while some Muslims may be living in denial mode for sure; the problem is not within religion. Problem is the use of religion for the sake of power and wealth. The core point is to understand 'the genesis and enfoldment' of fundamentalism-terrorism in the name of Islam. Today how come 'killing the kafirs' is the buzzword while Islam's 'All men are brothers' and 'Islam means Peace' lies in the bylanes of Islamic domain.

Today's terror acts have their genesis not too far ago in the politics of control over oil wealth of West (Central) Asia. While US supported-encouraged the creation of Al Qaeda, the Wahabi version of Islam came in handy for the Madrassas set up in Pakistan to create the 'Jihadis', to ally with armies taking on the Russians occupying Afghanistan. US equipped the Al Qaeda with

8000 million Dollars and 7000 tons of armaments, which also included the latest Stinger missiles. It was the progenitors of Al Qaeda who were presented by US President Ronald Reagan as the moral equivalents of America's founding fathers, in a press meet in White House. The overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Mossadegh (Iran 1953) led to the chain of events which paved the way for the violent interpretations of Islam being brought to the forefront and the liberal human versions being undermined. In the area; where Maulana Rumi put forward; 'Peace and Love' as the central doctrines of Islam (Sufi version), how come the Wahabi version is ruling the roost? The Salafi versions of Islam was put forward nearly two centuries ago; how come it was picked up as the Islam in these Madrassas just few decades ago? The version of Islam used by those involved in the business of killing and mindless violence was deliberately brought in for political goals to be sure.

If we have a slight peep into history we can see that religion has been used as a mask for goals of power throughout history. Kings doing Crusade, Jihad or Dharmayudh abound. During colonial period it was the declining sections of Landlords-Kings (Hindu and Muslims) in India which came together to form United India Patriotic Association (1888), the parent organization from which Muslim League and Hindu Maha Sabha emerged in due course. These communal formations resorted to hate propaganda which led to intensification of communal violence. The Nawab of Dhaka and Raja of Kashi were the founders of these organizations. So do we attribute 'religion-Hinduism and Islam' as causative factor for the

formation of these communal organizations or should we attribute it to the political context where the feudal lord-kings were declining and resorted to versions of Islam and Hinduism to safeguard their political interests? Currently in South Asia, we can see similar use of Buddhism in Myanmar and Sri Lanka where violent groups are formed in the name of Buddhism.

In current times if we see a bit closely; the Islamist terrorists came up primarily in the oil zone and not in the most populous areas of Muslims, say Indonesia for example. The cancerous seeds of terrorism were planted with the motivation of the economic goals of the superpower thirsting for oil, and not by any religious preacher. In present case Maulana Wahabb's interpretation which was already there dormant in the deserts of Saudi Arabia was refurbished and 'used' to create the present dread. The primacy of political context can be missed only at our own peril. It is the political powers and vested interests who choose which version of religion to pick, which will suit their goals the best. We should see that there are those opening girls' schools citing the importance of knowledge in Koran, and there are those gunning for the girls going to schools in the name of Islam again. The terrorist groups don't debate on the versions of their religions, the few phrases put in to their heads during the process of indoctrination is what converts a sensitive human being into the gun or bomb wielding beast.

The likes of Anders Behring Breivik, who shot 86 youth in Norway, are also not inspired by the teachings of Christ. Similarly belonging to same religion, a Gandhi will go out and make non violence

as the central creed of his teachings while another Hindu Godse will pump in three bullets into his chest, in the name of the same religion. Where is religion involved in the process? The present set of Islamist terrorist is the outcome of the indoctrination done in the madrassas supported by the superpower, United States. The initial implants have gone on to spread in the whole area, where the innocent human lives are being sacrificed at the altar of political goals of maintaining hegemony in West Asia. There have been reports which show the role of US behind the ISIS militants also. The offshoots of this type of political outfits do spread here and there, but the center of gravity of the terror factory remains in the West Asia and motive being oil wealth. During colonial period the politics came in the label of religion, different religions. In these areas the colonial powers chose to let the feudal powers persist even when industries were coming up. Now since the major inhabitants of the oil rich zones are Muslims, Islam has been used for the political goals and paradoxically Muslims have become the victim of their own wealth, the black gold!

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of the dialogue process. In turn, hopes were raised that bilateral relations would enter a new phase. The well-wishers of peace in both the countries must not allow those hopes to crash and fade. It is here that public opinion can be expected to play a constructive role by building a movement for peace and end to terrorism. Without the support of the people very little is possible, but with popular backing anything is. We must give peace a chance, however discouraging the situation may be.

Capital punishment brings out the worst basal instincts of a society

Irfan Engineer

The march of history has been from more brutal and violent societies to more humane, inclusive and less violent societies; and from authoritarian to democratic states. The objective of punishment awarded by the society to the delinquents and non-conformists too evolved from that of retribution to deterrence and reformation of the delinquent.

According to “Rational Choice Theory”, objective of any punishment should be deterrence rather than retribution. Punishments inflicted by the state during ancient times and medieval period included boiling to death, feeding to hungry lions, flaying, slow slicing, truncating (cutting the body below the ribs and leaving the delinquent to bleed to death), disembowelment, crucifixion, inquisitions, crushing by an elephant, stoning, blowing from the gun, burning at stakes, sawing, decapitation, guillotining, public hanging and firing squad. These are by no means an exhaustive list but only indicative.

These punishments were administered on those who rebelled against the state, practiced a different religion or were dissidents and non-conformists. Galileo, who defended heliocentrism and questioned earth as centre of universe was also tried and inquisitioned for his belief, he however retracted from his discovery and submitted himself to the doctrines of the Church.

By 1820 in Britain, there were about 160 crimes (down from 220

crimes during its peak) that were punished by death, including the crimes like shoplifting, petty theft, being in the company of Gypsies for one month and strong evidence of malice in a child aged 7–14 years of age. Many crimes punishable by death in fact protected the property of the wealthy. Henry VIII is reputed to have executed as many as 72,000 people. Sir Samuel Romilly addressed House of Commons on capital punishment in 1810 thus – “no country on the face of the earth in which there have been so many different offences according to law to be punished with death as in England.”

In the 19th century, Roman Republic, Venezuela, San Marino and Portugal abolished capital punishment. The Roman Republic banned capital punishment in 1849, Venezuela in 1854, San Marino in 1865 and Portugal in 1867.

Attitudes changed by World War II, class barriers came down and people felt sickened by the holocaust of Nazi Germany. In 1948, the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this was adopted by Britain in 1950. The last execution by UK was in 1964. The Labour Party Government of Harold Wilson suspended death penalty for five years through an enactment in 1965. House of Commons reaffirmed its decision to abolish capital punishment for murder permanently in 1969. On the 10th of December 1999, International Human Rights Day, UK ratified

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights thus totally abolishing capital punishment in Britain.

With the strengthening of democracies, there was increasing culture of tolerating dissent and differences. Sanctity of life is increasingly accepted and believed that society did not have the right to take away anyone’s life. Eye for an eye will make the whole world blind said Gandhiji. Collective conscience of a society should not be blood thirsty. There is increasing realisation of a possibility that person condemned to gallows could be under some mistake. Once executed the mistake cannot be corrected.

In 20th Century, Australia abolished capital punishment in 1973, Canada in 1976, France in 1981. In 1977, UN General Assembly affirmed in a formal resolution that it is desirable to “progressively restrict the number of offenses for which the death penalty might be imposed, with a view to the desirability of abolishing this punishment.”

On 21st November 2012, UN General Assembly’s Third Committee voted in support of its fourth resolution for a moratorium on the use of death penalty with a view to abolishing it. 91 member states sponsored the resolution, and it was approved with 110 votes in favour, 39 votes against and 36 abstentions. India voted against

the resolution. The world is slowly moving towards abolition of death penalty or moratorium on its use. Two-thirds of the country have abolished death penalty or have ceased to apply it. In most Latin American countries - in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. In Europe – Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland - and many of the States in the United States of America, have abolished death sentence. Death penalty is considered to violate human dignity.

However, 60 per cent of world's population lives in states where capital punishment is on their statutes, including China, India, US and Indonesia – the four most populous states, 58 countries actively practice, 97 countries have abolished it and the rest have not used it for 10 years, or used it in exceptional circumstances like wartime. Article 2 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibits use of capital punishment.

There is no evidence of any increase in crimes after abolition of death penalty. In Greece banditry decreased after it ceased to be punishable by death and in Canada instances of rape decreased after abolition of death penalty for the offence. In England there was no increase in crimes which ceased to be capital murders under the Homicide Act of 1957.

In the year 2011, 21 countries recorded executions, as compared to 31 countries 10 years ago. China executed maximum number of people. However, China recently eliminated death penalty for certain economic crimes and reintroduced mandatory review of all death

penalty cases by the Supreme People's Court. Though China does not officially disclose the number of people it executes, studies point out that up to four thousand were executed. Iran executed more than 360, Saudi Arabia executed 82, Iraq 68, US 43, Yemen 41, North Korea 30, Somalia 10, Sudan 7 and Bangladesh and Vietnam 5 each. India executed Dhananjay Chatterjee in 2004, Ajmal Kasab on 21st November 2012, Afzal Guru on 9th February 2013 and Yakub Memon on July 30, 2015.

Drugs, homosexuality and terrorism are issues on which some countries are expanding the scope of death penalty. 32 countries impose death penalty for drug related offences and drug offenders constitute majority of those condemned to die. Liberia, Uganda and other have launched efforts to impose death penalty for acts of homosexuality. Syria imposed death penalty for those arming terrorists in December 2011. India, Bangladesh and Nigeria have adopted laws expanding the scope of death penalty by including terrorist acts among the offences punishable by death. Indian Courts have adopted the doctrine of imposing death penalty in rarest of the rare cases.

Abolitionists and retentionists for capital punishment argue for and against death penalty on many grounds. However, generally the right wing nationalists who are ideologically oriented to building an authoritarian state and retaining hierarchical order tend to be retentionists. Investigators and prosecutors in criminal justice system too tend to be retentionists hoping that capital punishment would act as a deterrent. However execution of Ajmal Kasab did not deter terrorists from attacking police

station in Gurudaspur on 27th July 2015 killing four policemen, including the SP of police, and three civilians and getting killed in turn.

Whereas those ideologically oriented towards building a more humanitarian society with emphasis on equality, equity and social justice tend to be abolitionists. They argue that as inequities and injustices increase, so do crime, irrespective of retributive punishment. The person perceived as cruel criminal by a section could be fighting for justice and become a hero for others and any cruelty in punishment makes such a person a bigger martyr to be emulated by others. Therefore cruelty of punishment alone cannot deter crime. It is a just and equitable society where compassion for a wrong doer is a value and reformation is an objective that reforms the criminal. Reformed criminal is a louder and clearer message to deter crime.

Disproportionate number of people from marginalized sections of the society – poor, ethnic and religious minorities and lower castes are handed down death penalty. For example, 41 per cent of death row inmates and 34 per cent of those executed in US are African Americans though they constitute 12 per cent of US population. While there was little controversy in hanging Ajmal Kasab, and the Supreme Court in the case of Afzal Guru opined that death penalty would “satisfy the collective conscience of the nation”, Sessions Court Judge Jyotsna Yagnik in the case of Naroda Patiya (Gujarat) did not hand down death penalty to Babu Bajrangi who had slit the womb of Kauser Bano and hoisted the foetus on a trident though a reasonable man would say

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Who cares for the carers...

Dhruv Mankad

“Nursing is a practice discipline and a political act.”

- Canadian Nurses Association

One of the key problems in India's Health care services is an acute shortage of health workers including the nurses. India had 1 nurse per 1,264 of population in 2004 and 1.3 nurses per 1 doctor as against recommended by High Level Expert Group, as 1 nurse per 500 population and 3 nurses per doctor. The second and an important problem is human resource for health policy in public and private sector. Absence of human resource recruitment, retention, training, management and social security policies and practices drains out physically and mentally the workforce which is in great shortage. Their inter-state, intra-state and international migration is one of the results.

Nursing as a profession is highly women dominated workforce without engendered policy in its budgeting, work placement and practices. Also, 80 per cent of the nurses are employed in urban settings, mainly in private sector. The book under review, (*Who Cares? Socio Economic Conditions of Nurses in Mumbai* by Aarti Prasad, Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai) focuses on the socio-economic profile and working conditions of the nurses employed in health care facilities including those in public and private sector in Mumbai with a gender perspective.

Aarti Prasad has covered in her study the linkages of health and development: health for increasing productivity which leads to poverty

reduction and increase in accessing health care services leads to higher capability of the workforce. She also covers the history and the process of engendering the nursing profession and the trends during the planning phase including the globalization period in India. The book is based on a doctoral study she had conducted in Mumbai and it shares the objectives, the methodology, the literature review, the analysis and conclusions of the study.

Some of the key findings of the study conducted in the municipal and private hospitals as well as nursing homes in two wards of Mumbai Municipal Corporation are:

1. There is a predominance of nurses in the age group of 17-35 years in the respondents, most of them are women
2. Christian nurses from Kerala are predominant in private hospitals and Hindu nurses from Maharashtra in Municipal Hospital
3. Parents of unmarried mostly of 17-24 year age were less qualified than the spouses of married nurses.
4. Most of the nurses employed in nursing homes and several employed in private hospitals were not qualified nurses and therefore not registered in nursing councils. They were not member of the union also.

5. Poor working conditions and heavy workload was the main cause of attrition. They were:

- a. While most nurses employed in municipal corporation were 'confirmed', many working in private hospital or nursing home were on 'ad hoc' basis
- b. Remuneration of those in municipal corporation was higher than those in private hospital, as low as Rs 1000 per month in a nursing home
- c. Increments and provision of allowances like HRA was consistent with municipal corporation hospitals, it was mostly absent for those in private hospitals.
- d. Other facilities and services like food allowances, uniform allowances, medical services, interest free loans were inconsistent
- e. Provision of leave was available for confirmed staff, but difficult to those not yet confirmed particularly in private hospitals. Light duties was available for pregnant women in both municipal and private hospitals
- f. Restrooms, crèche and transport facilities were not available in any hospital, no entertainment facility too was available
- g. Except for large private hospitals there was no

induction process in place, however, advanced training and computer training was available there and sometime in municipal corporation's hospital

- h. Grievance redressal system seems to be thin particularly in municipal corporation and issue specific in private hospital

Prasad has rightly recommended that all these identified gaps should be filled in, which includes improvement in budget allocation for nursing education, in regulation of nursing education of nurses employed in private nursing homes, in working conditions both in municipal and hospitals – remuneration, allowances, workload, social security, welfare measures etc. An important recommendation is uniform application of rules and availability of facilities in all municipal hospital in the city and not limited to specific hospitals. Another important recommendation is greater participation of nurses in decision making.

In all, Aarti Prasad has pointed out the key areas which are deficient in basic requirements affecting the health of the nurses themselves who are supposed to take care of the ill and the aged. The surprise that the book gives us that even the municipal corporation hospitals although better in its working conditions are not able to cope up with the crisis of nurses due to overall shortage of nursing staff but also because of heavy workload. This situation is quite contrary to the welfare of its employee being a goal of a tax based run health care system. Cost cutting, under-costing the value of an important service providing segment

by recruiting less than required staff, employing non-qualified staff, long working hours and workload on the existing one is a routine path of profit making private hospitals as the Prasad's study points out.

Such a situation is generating low quality of services (not necessarily due to the nurses' performances as the study records the various complaints against nurses) at low cost to the patients with higher remuneration to the nurses in a municipal corporation simply due to overburden of the patients. It can be improved simply by increasing nurses and hospitals.

In the private hospital, high quality performances of nurses can be linked to higher remuneration, because in absence of which the growth in the hospital performance and the return in investment is jeopardized. As the study points out that in India, it is expectation of high quality of services from the nursing staff at high cost to the patients with a low remuneration to nurses. In a market economy, it is clearly seen that cutting cost of quality of service in fact reduces the return particularly in health care. A white paper by Washington State Nurses Association states,

“Over the past three decades, much of the focus on nursing's economic value has centred on issues of adequate staffing, particularly in hospitals. These issues came into focus in 1983, following the implementation of the Medicare inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS). Many hospitals initially responded by reducing their RN staffing. This situation reversed itself in fairly short order, however, as hospitals found that

shorter hospital stays—the key to financial health under IPPS—required a greater intensity of RN services. “

It recommends that

“Nursing Organizations should

- Continue efforts to identify and define the economic value of nursing. They should disseminate relevant research findings and conduct initiatives to educate nurses about nursing's economic value. However, these initiatives should present the economic value of nursing within the broader context of nursing's social and economic value.
- Target their messages on nursing's economic value based on distinctions in the economic, business, scientific and political cases for nursing care quality.

Considering these recommendations and those by Prasad, one clearly sees that there is contradiction in the previous welfare (both of nature of nursing and of remuneration) in mindset and in market economics on reality. In the era of globalization and liberalization of economy, the advocacy strategy has to be realigned at three levels:

1. Advocacy at the government level:
 - a. For the nurses employed in municipal hospital – improved implementation of the rights and welfare of the nurses as employees
 - b. For the nurses employed in private hospitals – legal provisions for occupational safety, regulation of their training along with punitive action on hospitals

not complying with implementation of their rights

2. Advocacy at the private hospitals: Regulation and monitoring of their quality of services with short stay as an indicator and quality of services to the nurses as a way of increasing their “economic value.”
3. Advocacy at the level nurses themselves: Organize, Educate and Agitate – whether ‘confirmed’ or ad-hoc, high qualification or untrained, in municipal corporation or in private hospitals/nursing home for their rights as health workers and as women.

In a nutshell, Aarti Prasad has done a comprehensive study of the working conditions of nurses presented as a book in a gender based economics perspective from a social viewpoint. It can generate further thinking from a political and economic viewpoint considering the political economic value of nursing in health care.

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such a crime was rarest of the rare case of brutality. Judge Yagnik cited the ground of human dignity for not handing death penalty. To conclude, death penalty and legal execution of any human being brings out worst retributionist sentiments and violent animal instincts of a society evident from the interviews of ordinary people on TV after execution of Kasab. The Federation of Hindu Organizations called upon the then President of India APJ Abdul Kalam to request him that “The sentence (of Afzal Guru) should be so amended that his right hand and left leg are cut off and one of his eyes is gouged out and he is allowed, in this state of mutation to freely tour the whole of India and make an exhibit of himself in order that no extremist or terrorist ever emerges in this country again.” The Federation wanted the President to prove his patriotism by allowing such amendment to Afzal Guru’s death sentence.

The sooner the world is free from such basal instincts, the better.

Gajendra Chauhan, whose choice as chairman of the government-run Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) has sparked a controversy, was not in contention for the position until about six months ago.

The ministry of information & broadcasting had in December drawn up a list of likely candidates who could help FTII “become a centre of excellence”.

This note, approved by ministry officials, suggested Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Jahnu Barua, the latter an FTII alumnus, as likely prospects. However, this list was ignored and more consultations were held. Actor Anupam Kher, whose wife is a Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker, was also in contention along with noted directors Shyam Benegal and Adoor Gopalakrishnan until the government decided to opt for TV actor Chauhan. A BJP

member since 2004, Chauhan had campaigned for the party in Haryana during the elections.

The ministry had also mooted the names of advertising executive Prahlad Kakkar along with others from the film and media world such as Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Imtiaz Ali, Pradeep Sarkar, Victor Banerjee, Rajat Kapur, Sumitra Bhave, Girish Kasaravalli and Shashi Kumar as members of the FTII society, a group of people who assist the chairman. The government decided to ignore that as well. Some of the appointees such as Anagha Ghaisas, Narendra Pathak, Pranjal Saikia and Rahul Solapurkar had Sangh Parivar affiliations. But it also named film personalities such as Vidya Balan, Raju Hirani, Santosh Sivan and others as members of the group. Sivan, Barua and Pallavi Joshi have resigned from the FTII society in the wake of the controversy.

Vasudha Venugopal, ET Bureau

NRC Updation in Assam: Prospects and Challenges-II

The task of Pilot Project of updating the NRC, 1951 started on 15th June 2010 in Barpeta Revenue Circle. The copies of NRC 1951, Electoral Rolls of 1961 and 1971 were to be reprinted by the district authorities. But the district authorities failed to reprint the documents in full. Moreover, there were numerous anomalies and confusions in the documents which were made available for the public.

1. Out of 146 revenue villages under the Barpeta Revenue Circle, NRC documents were not available for 24 villages viz. Metowakuchi Town, Metowakuchi Gaon, Joti Town, Gandhi, Goremara Gaon, Chakabausi Gaon, Vella, Veraldi, Joshihati, Aicharapara, Dewliapara, Kadamguri, Katlijar, Dhanbandha, Sonkuchi Gaon, Bar Agdia, Tatikuchi, Dokonia Beel, Rangialortari, Boriarpathar, Bontipur, Pakabetbari Pam, Pakabetbari Pathar, Phulikipara. Again, the electoral rolls of 1966 and 1971 were not available for 11 and 12 villages respectively viz. Metowakuchi Town, Gandhi, Dhanbandha, Bar Agdia, Rangialortari, Boriarpathar, Pakabetbari Pathar, Phulikipara, etc. with the district authority. On the contrary, no guidelines for other documents such as, land records, school certificates, etc. had been given in the application proforma and these were not accepted as valid documents as proof of citizenship by the authority.
2. There were wide spread discrepancies and anomalies in the re-printed NRC and electoral Rolls. Names of 1700 households have been dropped

in the re-printed NRC, 1951 under Ghilazhari and Howly Mouza. Surnames of women had been used for men and vice versa. Anomalies had also been made in case ages of the inhabitants. Again, same serial No. had been used more than once to identify different households.

3. In the reprinted NRC of 1951, many Muslim families were identified as Hindu families.
4. In various instances names of father/mother against their siblings were printed as 'Unknown'. In some other cases only the surnames and titles had been printed instead of full name. In some other cases siblings were mentioned as Kesua (babies) and "Amuk" (somebody). Males were shown as wives and females were marked as husbands.
5. In the reprinted NRC of 1951, birth places of a large number of people had been shown as to be Mymensingh, Dacca and West Pakistan though the original birth place of those people are different villages of Assam.
6. Though in Phulikipara and Deorikuchi villages Muslims have been residing since pre-independence period but these villages were identified as Hindu villages in reprinted NRC. (What is the intention behind it?)
7. People who have settled themselves in Barpeta and Chaygaon Revenue Circle areas after 1971 either by marriage or livelihood were not able to procure their necessary documents of inheritance as these are not published in their home districts or original places.
8. In the application form, in

Column 12 the word successor had been printed instead of predecessor.

9. The NRC updation process was silent about the fate of the 'D' Voters of Assam whose cases were/are still pending in different Foreigners' Tribunals/ Court.
10. R B Vaghaiwala, the then Census Commissioner, 1951 stated that the names of 68415 people were not entered in the said NRC and also a large number of Muslim people specially in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara were not covered by the said NRC. The Pilot Project was silent about the fate of those dropped out people.
11. In order to solve the foreigners' issue in Assam, the Assam Accord (5. (3)) signed on 15th March 1985 stated, 'Foreigners who came to Assam after 1-1-1966 (inclusive) up to 23-3-1971 shall be detected in accordance with the provisions of Foreigners Act 1944 and the foreigners (tribunal) order 1964. Names of foreigners so detected will be deleted from the electoral rolls in force. Such person will be required to register themselves before the registration officer in respective districts in accordance with registration of Foreigners Act 1939 and registration of Foreigners Rules 1939. For this purpose the Government of India will undertake suitable strengthening of the Government machinery. On the expiry of a period of 10 years following the date of detection, the names of all such persons who have been deleted from the electoral rolls shall be restored'.

Thus, in pursuance of the Assam Accord people, who entered Assam between 1966 and 24th March, 1971 were to be franchised after ten years. The processes of franchising those people have not carried out till date. The NRC Pilot Project was also silent about the fate of those people and their descendants.

Police firing

Noticing the anomalies in the mechanism of the NRC updation process, the 'All Assam Minority Students Union' (AAMSU) gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Barpeta, on 21st July 2010 demanding immediate postponement of the pilot project of the ongoing updation of the NRC. The organization also demanded the settlement of the D voters' problem before starting the process of NRC updation.

Thousands of processionists coming from different areas of District approached the DC office at around 11Am on 21st July, 2010. The leaders of the processionists wanted the Deputy Commissioner to come out of his office and take their memorandum which the later denied. The processionists were waiting in front of the DC office for about an hour under direct sunlight for the Deputy Commissioner. Meanwhile, a third party who was ready with stones and wanted to create havoc started pelting stones on the processionists. The mob now lost their nerves and became violent and in return started pelting the same stones to the DC office. Suddenly, the Superintendent of Police of the district appeared on the scene and ordered the police personals for firing on the mob. It took lives of four processionists and about hundred got injured. The died persons were Siraj Ali, 25, Majam Ali, 55, Matleb Ali and Moidul Mullah, both 30. The police could have controlled the situation

by applying tear gas or lathicharge. It is alleged that the police applied tear gas and lathicharge when the mob almost dispersed the place after firing.

It was noticed that while the processionists were running away to save their lives, many of them were caught by some unidentified youths and beaten up badly. Anwar Hussain, 35, one of the injured, told The Telegraph that he was beaten up by some unidentified youths. "I requested the youths with folded hands not to beat me but they did not stop till I became unconscious. I suspect there was a third force which fuelled the incident," he said[8].

The town also witnessed clashes between the protesters and residents, who started attacking the AAMSU supporters allegedly for shouting anti-AASU and anti-'Tarun Gogoi'[9] slogans. The clashes continued for over half-an-hour. The situation came under control following reinforcement of security personnel.[10] The state government immediately announced the postponement of the NRC updation process in the state.

The All Assam Students Union (AASU) activists did not pay heed to the demands of the AAMSU as the former consider the latter to be the saviours of the Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam. According to the AASU, in Assam, there are still lakhs of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. AASU is of the opinion that the mechanism which had been framed out by the Government for the Pilot Project did not bear any incongruity and hence its application will detect illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the state. Thus, the organization warned the government not to delay the NRC updation process.

Though the Pilot Project failed, the process of NRC updation could not be stopped. The Barpeta incident delayed but modified the process of NRC updation. Many of the anomalies of the Pilot Project were rectified and process of NRC updation works under direct supervision of Supreme Court has started in 2015. The Government of India has made the following mechanism for the NRC updation works.

What is nrc updation?

National Register of Citizens (NRC) updation basically means the process of enlisting the names of all citizens residing in Assam at the time of NRC updation.

On the basis of the Assam Accord 1985[11] the NRC will be updated as per the provisions of The Citizenship Act, 1955 and The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003. As per the two statutes, the citizenship status would be ascertained based on the NRC, 1951, Electoral Rolls up to the midnight of 24th March, 1971 and in their absence the list of admissible documents of Pre-1971 period. Following are the list of admissible documents-

1951 NRC and Electoral Rolls up to 24th March (Midnight 0, 1971) documents are collectively called Legacy Data. There is a list of other admissible documents in case someone's name is not found in the Legacy Data, then the applicant may also produce any of the following documents listed below claiming inclusion in NRC. :

List of other documents admissible for inclusion in NRC

- 3 Land records including tenancy records of relevant period up to midnight of 24th March, 1971

- 4 Citizenship Certificate issued by competent authority up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 5 Permanent Residential Certificate issued from outside the State up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 6 Refugee registration certificate issued up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 7 Passport issued by the Government of India up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 8 Insurance policy (LICI) of relevant period up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 9 Any license/certificate issued by the Government authority of relevant period up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 10 Document showing service/employment under Government/Public sector undertaking up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 11 Bank/Post office Accounts of relevant period up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 12 Birth certificates issued by the competent authority up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 13 Educational certificate issued by Board/Universities up to midnight of 24th March, 1971
- 14 Records/ processes pertaining to court up to midnight of 24th March, 1971

The documents placed below are only supporting documents and shall be accepted only if accompanied by any one of the admissible documents listed above.

- 15.1 Certificate issued by the Secretary of the Village Panchayat countersigned by the local Revenue official in respect of females from rural areas who have migrated to other is only optional and not mandatory.
- 15.2 Certificate issued by Circle Officer in respect of

females who have migrated from an urban area after marriage is only optional and not mandatory.

- 16 Ration Cards issued by competent authority with official seal and signature up to 24th March (midnight), 1971.

Abduction and killing of four constables

The People's Union for Civil Liberties, Chhattisgarh condemns in no uncertain terms the abduction and killing of four constables belonging to the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Force (erstwhile SPOs) attached to Police Station Bedre, district Bijapur by the Maoists. As per newspaper reports, these constables were killed in a Jan Adalat on account of atrocities committed by them during the Salwa Judum campaign. Two of the constables had been travelling in public transport – a bus – and were taken down by Maoists searching the bus. The bodies of the dead constables were left on the Kutru Road by the Maoists along with pamphlets and banners. PUCL reiterates its principled stand against such politics of abduction and murder. Human rights organisations internationally have repeatedly insisted on the Geneva Conventions being complied with by all parties to armed conflict. Meanwhile three villagers picked up by Maoists from Village Rawas, district Kanker were released.

The incident comes in the wake of the announcement made in May by Chavindra Karma, son of slain Salwa Judum leader Mahendra Karma, that Salwa Judum II would be launched under the banner of "Vikas Sangharsh Samiti". The Bastar IG SRP Kalluri and Chief Minister Raman Singh had supported this move. The Congress Party on the other hand had disassociated itself from such movement stating that the Supreme Court in its judgment in "Nandini Sundar & Ors" has directed disbanding of the Salwa

Judum and similarly constituted armed vigilantes as unconstitutional. A rally proposed by the Vikas Sangharsh Samiti a month ago had to be cancelled owing to Maoist threats.

The past few months have seen widespread agitations in Bastar region on account of various proposed industrial projects. Thousands of villagers have been protesting against the proposed Ultra Mega Steel Plant at Dilmili and the Nagarnar- Vishakhapatnam Slurry Pipeline in district Bastar, and the Polavaram Dam in district Sukma. The Chhattisgarh government must seize the opportunity to have a dialogue with the village communities and instill confidence in them in the Rule of Law, the social welfare obligations of the State and the autonomy granted under the scheme of the Scheduled Areas. This would be much more effective in weaning the people away from violent rebellion, than mere military operations which often fail for lack of local intelligence. Today the concentration of security forces per lakh of population in Bastar region is 1773, as opposed to 139 for all-India, 169 for Chhattisgarh, and about 800 for Kashmir. Recently the DG CRPF Prakash Singh in a press conference in Koraput, Odisha had stated that if need be drones may be deployed to wipe out Naxalite camps deep in the forests of Bastar. On the other hand, of the 2,918 schools being closed down in Chhattisgarh on account of "rationalization", 782 of them lie in the Maoist conflict-affected region of Bastar.

–Lakhan Singh, President; Sudha Bharadwaj, General Secretary

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Democracy, Indian Version

Democracy manifests itself in many modes and garbs, depending upon the understanding of its concept by those who practice it or claim to practice it. We in India have demonstrated that we have our own concept and our own method of employing it. The Indian version has uniqueness about it, not very wholesome or exemplary but nonetheless a democratic and participatory one. In pursuit of that method, we have just washed out the entire monsoon of three weeks in purposeless exercise of one-upmanship. This version of democracy is unlikely to commend itself to the world at large, but that is neither here nor there.

The Congress, which is in the opposition, is the guilty party that ensured the collapse of the monsoon session. It had a pre-determined disruptive agenda which it enforced on a hapless House. The Congress may not have achieved its objective of securing the resignations of the External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje in the Lalit Modi affair, and that of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Chauhan for the Vyapam scandal, a demand over which it prevented transaction of serious business.

But it certainly achieved something else, an achievement that won it harsh criticism from the Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan who credited that party with the dubious honour of having murdered democracy. The Speaker felt that 40 members of one party cannot usurp the rights of 440 members, who wanted the House to function normally and were in no mood to pamper to the wants of a small party that was holding the House to ransom. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the Congress' demand, the party successfully demonstrated that 40 members can indeed come between normal work and chaos.

It was a prolonged logjam. But the law of diminishing returns appears to have visited the Congress party since a handful of parties that initially backed it later on turned against it. With a rift having splintered the opposition unity, the Congress was forced to do a quick re-think on its strategy. Some of the opposition groups were sympathetic to the Congress especially after last week's episode in which 25 members of the Congress were

suspended from the House for five sittings for disrupting the House. But even they seem to have found that the Congress-induced logjam turning counter-productive. Would the other parties allow the Congress to implement its strategy fully or go their own way? This would be known only as days pass and each party finalises its own strategy.

Talking of Indian version of democracy, it has been noted that the Indian Parliament is one of the noisiest in the world and at the same time quite active and vibrant. Disruption of the proceedings through noisy demonstrations has become a part of its personality. No one is surprised in India or shocked when the House is subjected to disorder and chaos. The surprise comes only when calm prevails in the House!

Often enough in the past, members of parliament have resolved formally and informally not to disrupt normal functioning of the two Houses, but these resolutions have not been followed up with necessary action. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said that the Congress party had murdered democracy by its conduct inside the House. But it is no secret that democracy has been murdered often enough in independent India if the chaos in parliament is the only criterion to judge its functioning.

However, in favour of our honourable members of parliament, let it be recorded that the Indian parliament is second to none of the democratic institutions around the world in safeguarding democracy and ensuring its successful practice. Countries of India's size and diversity can be managed either through the totalitarian or the democratic practices. India wisely chose democracy because the system was familiar to the people who had witnessed its functioning in the freedom struggle. The Congress, which was the main instrument of freedom, was a democratic party with even the Father of the Nation submitting himself and his leadership to the demands and conventions of democracy like contesting elections. Notwithstanding the frequent disruptions of parliamentary proceedings, Indian democracy has survived all the challenges it faced during the last nearly six decades of freedom and has justified its standing as the world's largest and successful democracy.

Candid Confession !

A bombshell. That would be the most appropriate word to describe the stunning disclosures, in respect of

Pakistan's complicity in carrying out anti-Indian terrorist activity from its soil, by a top-ranking security/strategy

official in Islamabad. These disclosures completely and unambiguously vindicate the Indian position on Pakistan's role in the 26/11/2008 mayhem. They come at a time when Pakistan has been accusing India of withholding evidence which would justify India's accusations. Thanks to these disclosures India is now in a position to counter Pakistan's claim that it does not have enough evidence against the plotters arrested by its own probe agency in 2009.

It will not be inaccurate to say, indeed far from it, that Pakistan has been on a life-long denial about its support to and participation in every kind of anti-Indian

terrorist activity. However, much to its chagrin, the former chief (director general) of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) of Pakistan has in a tell-tale article in the leading Pakistani English newspaper Dawn nailed Pakistan's state of denial. He has laid bare the soul of Pakistan's intelligence apparatus and revealed what is obviously most embarrassing details of an anti-Indian offensive whose authorship Islamabad has been consistently denying all these years.

The source of the latest disclosures which totally back India's claim is Tariq Khosa who has been bold enough to admit to some home truths which no one in his country has been prepared to acknowledge so far. News reports from Pakistan describe Mr. Khosa as a "man with impeccable reputation" and an "officer of high integrity." The data that he has chosen to take the public into confidence on is real explosive material which is why we called it a bombshell. He has obviously taken a calculated risk in going public, or he is so secure of his position, status and equations with the higher-ups that he can afford the risk. Otherwise, his head would have rolled.

The timing of the Khosa bombshell is also significant. At their last meeting on July 10 in Ufa, Russia, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit the prime ministers of India and Pakistan agreed to a meeting between the national security advisers of the two countries to discuss (a) issues related to terrorism and

(b) ways and means to expedite the trial of the 26/11/2008 case in Pakistan. The attack on India left 164 people dead. That scheduled meeting between Sartaj Aziz and Ajit Doval is just three weeks and India has some talking points handed over as if on a platter by Mr. Khosa.

Mr. Khosa set the tone for his revelations when he wrote what a country in Pakistan's position would be loath to say in public, namely, "Pakistan has to deal with the Mumbai mayhem, planned and launched from its soil. This requires facing the truth and admitting mistakes. The entire State security apparatus has to ensure that the perpetrators and masterminds of the ghastly terror attacks are brought to justice." Mr. Khosa goes on further and identifies seven set of facts as pertinent to the case, and most of these tell an unflattering tale against Pakistan.

India will no doubt benefit politically and psychologically from the Khosa bomb. But to gloat over its good fortune in getting a windfall drop into its lap will be childish and non-productive. India would do well to plan something in the Aziz-Ajit talks that would introduce an element of openness and frankness in India-Pakistan bilateral interaction in the future.

One immediate gain for India would be that the Khosa article will enable India to press Islamabad to challenge the bail granted to Lakhavi by a Pakistan court in April and also to expedite the trial of six other incarcerated 26/11 plotters. One related point of importance to India is that Khosa admits that terrorists sent to India receive training in special camps in Pakistan. This is another fact that Pakistan consistently denies.

Pakistan not only needs to come out of its state of denial of activities in which its complicity is proved, but also in its approach to problems of India-Pakistan bilateral relations. Indeed, greater transparency on Pakistan's part seems indicated, and also admission that anti-Indian terrorism has now become state policy for Islamabad. This has to change. As Mr. Khosa points out it is not a pleasant turn of events to experience an attack on Pakistani assets by pro-Taliban plotters or attack on schools and residential complexes.

– S. Viswam

This special number of Janata incorporates the issue of August 9, 2015.

- Managing Editor

Gender Equality and Decent Work

D.K. Giri
Susan Cherian

Progressive Alliance (PA), the network of social democratic parties, think-tanks, research and advocacy organizations and individuals held a conference on “Gender Equality and Decent Work” on 22-23 May 2015, at Rotterdam, the Netherlands. This conference was a part of the celebration of decent work worldwide; PA is revisiting it from different perspectives, like migration (Manila), inequality (Montevideo), education and equal opportunity (Lisbon). The Rotterdam conference discussed the issues of gender equality and decent work in great detail covering conventions on women, and decent work, barriers to job market, women and power, education and labour market, etc. It came up with 14 action points for the members of PA to adopt and adhere to.

The first point the conference took up, and rightly so, was to have a clear conceptual understanding of gender. Most of the terms, or concepts in public life are easy to use, but difficult to understand and internalize. Terms like participation, stakeholders, ownership, equality, dignity and identity are not deeply understood. Let us share an anecdote to illustrate the point. A few years ago, a donor agency invited the chief functionaries of its NGO partners for a training-workshop on gender. In all, twenty one organizations attended it. Interestingly, these organizations were implementing projects of high value on gender equity and gender justice. The training was to be conducted by a leading expert on gender. She asked those present to write on a piece of paper what they understood by gender, before she started the training programme. To everyone’s surprise, only one and half answers were correct. The full correct answer was of the person who had previously attended a training course run by the same expert. Having been in the social sector for over a decade, our experience is similar on other concepts as well. To our understanding, gender is the social construction of human beings on the basis of their sex and sexual orientation.

The Conference defined it as “Gender is the sum of social, cultural and behavioural aspects which are attributed to sex.” It also underlined the role of social democrats, “the liberation from the position

of powerlessness and the struggle for equal right, participation and opportunities is a core task of social democracy”. So, when we talk of gender equity and justice, we refer both to men and women, and others with different sexual orientation like LGBTs (lesbians, gay, bisexual or transgendered). However, usually in gender equity discourse and praxis, it is the women who are put in subordinate role all over the world. As women constitute almost half of the world population, and men and women do not exist without each other, treating women as inferior to men is a self-destructive trend for any society. Yet, we cannot ignore the reality and must address the issues that support such a trend.

Education and jobs

The major impediment to gender equality is deprivation of women in education. It is seen worldwide that education is a liberator and an equalizer. The importance of education for women cannot be overstated as they are the bed-rock of families, and carriers of values, culture and civilization through their children. The children receive their early education from their mothers; they learn to speak the language of the mother, so we all call it mother tongue. It is said, “If a man is educated, an individual is educated, but if a woman is educated, a family is educated.”

There is clearly improvement in women’s education across the world. Education was made one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet there are about 57 million children worldwide who are deprived of basic education, and half of them are girls. Secondary school is inaccessible to about 71 million children. If women are educated, they have greater opportunity for work, and can secure decent working conditions. A recent study by the ILO in 80 countries show that a better access by women to education leads to an increased female participation on the labour market. But women are far behind men in the labour market as they have less education.

In September 2014, the G20 Ministers of social affairs and employment met in Australia to discuss this issue and came up with the following, “we recognize that

promoting greater participation by women in the labour market and improving the quality of their employment, would contribute to stronger and more inclusive growth. Therefore, we commit to take the steps needed to close gender gaps in opportunities and in labour market outcomes.”

Before focusing on the barriers for women on the labour market, let us glance at the ILO standards on gender equity vis-à-vis the labour market. It lists three principles: (1) equal remuneration between men and women for work of equal value, (2) women must enjoy equality of opportunity; they must have equal chance to apply for a job, to receive education or training, to be eligible to attain certain qualifications, to join the workforce, to get promotions in all occupations or positions, (3) women must have equality of treatment; which means, equal entitlements in pay, working conditions, reconciliation between work and family, life and social protection.

Taking these principles further, ILO prescribes conditions for decent work. For the first time, the concept of decent work was used in 1999 by the Director General of ILO in his report to the 87th Session of International Labour Conference. It was stated that, “the primary goal of ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and progressive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security, and human dignity” (ILO, 1999a, P.3) Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive, provides security in the workplace, secures a fair income, and offers prospects for personal development and social integration. Decent work also gives freedom to workers to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality for all men and women. Thus, decent work ensures fair remuneration, rights at work, security in work conditions, such as rights to run organization and representation, and patterns of equality and inclusion.

In view of these principles, let us look at women’s work-situation. There are differences between men and women in salaries, wages, and differential access for women to labour market. Besides, women are subjected to sexual harassment at work places. Gender issue is put on back burner in big business and institutions. Recently, the IMF chief, Christine Lagarde, herself being a gender equity advocate, admitted that, “the IMF staff considered gender issue a distraction from the more pressing problems. That is a fallacy. Inclusion of women in the

labour market leads to economic growth of countries and financial stability of societies. Even in G20 countries, the problem of shrinking workforce is attributed to non-participation of women. The labour market share of women is 57 per cent compared to 83 per cent of men.

The other point of difference to be noted is the nature of work. Women work at home as well as outside. They carry the double-load of work. But their work at home is not recognized in monetary terms. This is unfair. Karl Marx distinguished this in terms of ‘value’ attached to the labour. Men’s work had exchange value, implying that it can be traded in the market, whereas women produced ‘use-value’ for consumption at home. Hence, men assume superiority because of the nature of their work. This practice has been interrogated by feminists and progressives and women’s household work is given a ‘value’ through social accounting.

Women and power

Women in positions of power are good for the economy as well as a society in any country. World Bank in their 2012 World Development Report stated, “Investing in gender equality is not only the right thing to do, it is also a smart thing to do”. Women invest more than 90 per cent of their income. The UN, in a research found that if the female farmers had equal access to information on aspects like land, material, etc as men did, they would produce 30 to 40 per cent more food than men do. Again, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) has found from their data collected from 162 countries that, the more women in power, better the country performs economically. Even in other sectors too, women who participate and are in positions make a qualitative difference. For instance, women participation in politics in India and enhanced leadership of women through quota system has resulted in an increase in public facilities, such as water, sanitation and schooling. Thus women in work add value to families, and women in public life enhance politics and societies.

To conclude, men and women are social equals. There is no difference, even physiologically, as was attributed in the past; which was the main reason for subjugating women. Patriarchy was based on this physiological dissimilarity and consequent sexual division of labour, and sex-typing of occupations. But this has gradually disappeared under increasing industrialization and modernization of societies. But what has not changed, or will not change is the unique reproductive ability

(Continued on Page 8)

No work, no pay

Kuldip Nayar

I was a member of the Rajya Sabha some 12 years ago. The house would be disturbed over one matter or the other constantly. During my six-year tenure, I saw both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party vying with one another in doing so, with no difference in passion or planning. On occasions, the parties tried to outdo each other.

I felt strongly that we, the members, were wasting public funds to the disappointment of the already disillusioned people. So the question was should we at all draw the daily allowances, particularly when we had not transacted any business. I wrote to the Chairman saying that I do not want any allowance when the house was adjourned without doing any work.

There cannot be any dispute over the contention of some members that they were “working” because at the end of the day the secretariat issues a bulletin to summarize the day’s proceeding. When there is no business transacted, it says so. The Chairman referred my request to the Law Ministry because there was no precedent to guide him on the matter. The Law Ministry upheld my plea. My daily allowance was deducted whenever no business was conducted in the house.

The Chairman informed the business committee of the house about the deduction of the allowance. None of the parties, including the Left, supported the idea and left it to the individual members to follow their desire. I forwarded the Law Ministry’s opinion to deduct the allowance to the then Lok Sabha Speaker, Somnath Chatterjee who, I believe, placed my case before the business committee of the house. But it rejected it.

I wish the 25 members, who were suspended by the Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, would write to her that they were not entitled to the daily allowances because they were not present in the house. If this were to become a practice, members would be less unruly and more disciplined. Ever since the proceedings in parliament were telecast there is an improvement in the dress the MPs wear. Earlier, some came in night pajamas!

The reason why I have placed my example here before the public is the precedent that exists. MPs should

introspect individually whether they are justified in drawing the daily allowances when they have not put in a spot of work. Yet, this does not provide an answer to the larger question: the working of parliament. The Congress stance that it would not allow the session to take place until Sushma Swaraj and the “corrupt” state chief ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh did not quit.

However weighty the Congress demand, there has to be a proper inquiry to substantiate the charges. The Congress demand for Sushma Swaraj’s resignation is not fair. The charge against her is, at best, the misuse of discretion to allow Lalit Modi, a fugitive from justice, to visit his wife, suffering from cancer, in Portugal. There is no money involved. It is unfair to make it a case of corruption.

The larger question is that of parliament’s session. The Congress defence that it was doing what the BJP had been doing is neither morally right nor intellectually proper. One wrong does not justify the other mistake. I am saddened by the otherwise courteous Sonia Gandhi. She is the one who is leading the cheer crowd and shouting slogans. The entire thinking and their action is juvenile.

In the same way, the sectarian reaction by a large section of the Muslim community to the hanging of Yakub Memon is astounding. He was tried by the different courts of law, including the Supreme Court of India. All of them found him guilty of master minding the 1993 bomb blasts in which 287 people died at Mumbai.

Still my opinion is that the death sentence awarded to him should have been converted into imprisonment for life because, one, he had cooperated with the government and, two, he had agreed to come to India from Nepal to face the trial. According to many reports, he had made such disclosures about Pakistan which the government could have never known on own.

But this does not mean that he was not guilty. Even his ardent supporters have had not put forth this plea in their defence. All that they pressed was that he should not be hanged. The Court in its wisdom rejected this line of thinking. How can the verdict be interpreted as the travesty of justice? In the past 22 years, the time

consumed on the trial, the supporters of Memon used all avenues available to them to have him free. The Supreme Court met for the first time past midnight to hear the last-minute plea on his birthday and rejected it. It looks that the Supreme Court, too, was keen to give the culprit every opportunity to prove his non-involvement.

But to communalize the issue is regrettable. Those Muslims who have done so have given a handle to the Hindutava forces, which point out that the Muslims, covert even a crime into a community issue. This once again proves how fragile is our secular polity. There is so much mistrust between the two communities that it ultimately dictates their attitude, even on minor things.

I must commend the Mumbai Police for handling the situation as any law and order problem would be tackled. It is an open secret that the police are influenced by the environment, which is becoming increasingly sectarian. People were generally divided on the basis of community to which they belonged. The police stood firm and did not allow passion to take over.

Examples which communalize the situation should not, however, lessen our faith in the idea of India - democratic and secular. The ethos of our national movement was pluralism. Some people who are trying to harm it are the ones who never participated in the freedom struggle. They cannot and should not be allowed to defeat the purpose of our freedom movement.

(Continued from Page 6)

of women. Only they can conceive and give birth to children, breast feed them. Maria Mies argues in "Social Origins of Sexual Division of Labour", in Women the Last Colony (1998, Zed Books, London), the period of dependence of the human child on its mother is very long, which makes women distinct as compared to men. Of course, there are women opting out of the reproductive process, and there are "test tube babies". But these trends are limited, and cannot substitute the process of natural human production.

However, the point is that immutable physiological difference, rather distinction, should be recognized and

privilege women, and not be seen as a disadvantage and made a cause for discrimination or deprivation. As T. K. Oommen argues in his latest book, Social Inclusion in Independent India (2014, Orient Blackswan, Delhi), women's role in the human reproductive process ought to be recognized as their fundamental contribution towards the very survival of humanity and this alone suffices to allocate higher status to them compared with men, based on the postulate of functional indispensability. Hence, the status of women in all walks of life, vis-à-vis men should be revisited and rectified. Promoting gender equality in all aspects, mainly at work, is an indispensable condition for a healthy and balanced society.

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Towards a Different Understanding of Economic Development

Bharat Dogra

“Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test : Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him.... to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and self melt away.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

“To think that the only way to promote economic growth in the so-called underdeveloped countries is to imitate as closely as possible the current practices of the advanced countries and to force every time-honoured institution into the service of material aims of purely Western inspiration, betrays not only an astonishing lack of imagination but also a truly ominous lack of awareness of the dehumanizing deformities of the modern west.”

- E. F. Schumacher

Ideally any economy should try to achieve the following:

1. The basic needs of all its members should be met.
2. All the adult members should be employed creatively in most jobs and activities that are fairly close to their chosen interests and skills to these basic needs.

It is the role of economists, managers and planners to meet these two objectives in such a way that the creative work of the people is linked to meeting their basic needs (and a few small comforts).

It is important to emphasise that this should be achieved without plundering any other economy or nation. The fulfilment of needs and a few small comforts should never be at the cost of depriving other societies from a similar aim.

This is why we emphasise that the objective is only to meet the basic needs and a few small comforts. We never say - provide as many comforts and luxuries as possible to all people. If an economy seeks to provide great comforts and luxuries to all its people, then in all probability this will be achieved by plundering the resources of other economies or nations, depriving their people of basic needs. In addition the resources within the economy will be recklessly used so that the needs of future generations will be sacrificed by the resulting ecological ruin. This should be clearly opposed and rejected.

Therefore it is clear that the economy should strive to meet only the basic needs and small comforts of its

people. We do not intend to be unnecessarily restrictive. This is why we add ‘small comforts’ to basic needs. So the joy of dolls and toys, birthday parties and picnics, honeymoons and bridal dresses are not ruled out in our ideal economy - our only plea being that all this should be within reasonable limits.

The market forces will be given adequate role, but this will be counter balanced by strong people’s movements which support environment protection and oppose the exploitation of other societies. There should be a strong movement which tells people how the interests of next generations - our own children and grandchildren - are best served by a simple life which does not impose a heavy burden on natural resources. In addition there should be strong movements to protect consumer rights and labour rights.

In rural communities and small towns, an attempt should be made to meet most of basic needs on a self-reliant basis by organic farming, artisans, cottage scale industry and local small scale industry. All the remaining goods can be purchased from the wider market. Big private companies will also play an important role in the production of those goods for which they are best suited but no one will be allowed monopolistic context, or unfair practices to gain dominance. The public sector will play an important balancing role in the creation of infra-structure and a few important consumer goods like essential medicines. Unnecessary and bulky spread of government in non-essential economic activities will be avoided.

Both corporate and public sectors will have to adopt transparency and public accountability in their

functioning. There will be strict checks and balance to prevent corruption and misuse of power, including monopolistic tendencies.

Saying Yes to Need, No to Greed

The concept of 'basic needs' is one of the most widely used concepts and yet this is also one of the most elusive concepts. Everyone seems to agree that 'basic needs for all' is a highly desirable objective, but at a practical level there are several difficulties as people have very wide ranging views on what constitutes basic needs.

The concept of basic needs has a very bloated and exaggerated meaning for an increasingly large number of people. Goods and services without which they cannot live (or think they cannot live) are so many that their 'needs' include what millions of poor people would regard as the biggest luxuries. Why does the modern man's perception of a satisfactory life include such a wide range of goods and services, a range that appears to be increasing all the time? Is this because we've lost something precious and try to fill this gap in our life by increasing acquisition of goods and gadgets? A desperate, but also futile, effort to fill a social and spiritual void with material goods?

It is amazing how everyone appears to be in such a big rush, and how little actually gets done to improve life. Several of us manage to convince ourselves that our very busy work schedule is of great significance, and to support this we hasten to acquire as many goods and services as possible which we perceive as necessary for this life-style.

A very strong force that leads to a bloated sense of needs is the constant advertising that bombards us from all side at all times. Advertising does have a role as far as giving relevant information to people about useful products is concerned, but present day advertising goes much beyond this limited role and constantly makes us yearn and crave for goods we do not really need. Advertisers take advantage of every conceivable human weakness and play on human emotions in the most reckless way to sell all sorts of products of dubious merit, or even clearly harmful products. Billions of dollars are spent every year in the advertising of liquor, cigarettes, junk food and useless or even hazardous drugs, cosmetics and pesticides.

Partly as a result of our own susceptibilities and partly as a result of heavy advertising, we've been steadily commoditising our life, vainly trying to fill social and spiritual voids with material goods. Understanding this is the first step towards changing our life-style in such a way that our needs are not in contradiction with the social

objectives of environmental protection and meeting the basic needs of all people.

Suitable changes in government policies and public utilities can also contribute considerably to reducing excessive private spending. Health and education are the most obvious examples. Availability of good public transport can reduce the need for privately owned vehicles. Community gatherings and celebrations can reduce the need for privately organised expensive entertainments.

Thus a combination of changes in personal life-style, enhanced role of community life and relevant changes in government policy can help us to modify our understanding of basic needs in tune with desirable social norms. The present day society and the state of environment simply cannot afford a very bloated view of needs. It will be difficult to fulfil an exaggerated sense of needs for everyone without inflicting heavy damage on already badly mauled environment. So reaching a realistic understanding of needs is essential if we want to create a world where basic needs of all can be met on a sustained basis without damaging the environment too much and protecting the interests of future generations as well.

The idea that the production of material goods and services is desirable only upto a point beyond which the pursuit of this objective should be given up voluntarily may appear strange to some growth addicts but it is deeply embedded in teaching of several spiritual leaders and social reformers who have enjoyed very large followings. If we can get rid of the dominance of some narrow-minded economic thinking of relatively recent origin and give due importance to the great spiritual and social movements of human history, then there are many sources of support for this idea. By drawing on these inherent strengths of various cultures and societies, we can build a new world which is free of greed and hence of most type of violence, where the basic needs of all people are met, where human relationships are valued, where there is genuine regard for other forms of life and for protecting natural environment for this and future generations.

Equality and simplicity are two important concepts which acquire their real significance only when taken together with each other. One without the other will not take us far, but the two taken together will help greatly in building a new, a better world.

Thus equality and simplicity (self-restraint) are the two pillars on which the foundation of sustainable development can be built. To be able to achieve this, very powerful vested interests have to be confronted and overcome, and very deep rooted economic and political

changes both at global level and at the local level have to take place. A well-thought out, dedicated and sustained campaign to convince more and more people that both happiness and security are best achieved by pursuing sustainable development based on equality and simplicity is the biggest need of our times. Once most people are convinced of this, even the most powerful vested interests will not be able to check change towards the path of sustainable development.

The concept of development needs to be freed from the terrible misconception of more and more accumulation and consumption. As long as production of material goods is increasing in a society to meet the basic needs of all, this is justified and in conformity with the welfare of this society. But significant production and consumption of material goods beyond this cannot be justified and

should be called 'wasteful destruction', not development.

Development should be redefined as the collective endeavour to reduce distress and suffering of all forms of life as much as possible. Some distress and suffering will always be there, but most of the distress and suffering of this world is caused by avoidable causes. Development needs to be seen as the efforts of human beings to check these avoidable causes of distress and thereby reduce the distress of all forms of life as much as possible.

This endeavour should take good care of the needs of future generations. We should protect the resources base so that future generations of human beings and other forms of life can meet their basic needs equally well or in an even better ways. This is the essence of sustainable development.



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The Elusive Goal of Education for All

Sandeep Pandey

Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen in their book 'An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions' have very clearly shown that while India has been leading the world in terms of GDP growth rate, its performance in social indices can only be compared with some sub-Saharan African countries. At the time of Independence we were second behind Sri Lanka in South Asia with respect to social indices, today we are barely above Pakistan. Rest of the South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal moved ahead of us.

All developed countries and most developing countries have achieved 99-100 per cent literacy rates. These countries have done so by adopting the common school system. This means all students have access to the same quality of education system. In India half the children don't complete their education. Half of them are engaged in child labour. In India two streams of education systems are in existence. Moneyed people send their children to private schools and poor are condemned to send their children to government schools in which the teachers don't teach. Thus education in India widens the gap between the rich and the poor. Whereas it opens up opportunities for the children of the rich that allows them to better their lives, the children of the poor are subject to exploitation. While the children of the rich get jobs in which salaries have skyrocketed due to implementation of sixth pay commission, the children of the poor compete for lowly jobs which are contractual, temporary and on daily wages, if they are not unfortunate enough to live as unemployed or underemployed. Most children of underprivileged receive such poor quality education that they end up getting their degrees using unfair means, acquiring no skills at all, making them unemployable in the market. Except for a miniscule percentage of elite institutions the process of education in India has basically become a farce.

In India there has been a recommendation of Kothari Commission pending since 1968 to implement the common school system as well as the inherent concept of neighbourhood school. However, successive governments have conveniently chosen to ignore this recommendation and after a lot of pressure by activists and other groups the Manmohan Singh government

agreed to 25 per cent reservation for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in all schools. Most states have not taken this provision seriously and children continue to be denied admission in spite of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 in place.

The only solution to the sorry state of affairs of government school system is to make it compulsory for children of all government servants and people's representatives to send their children to government schools. It is only when the children of ruling class will start attending these schools that their quality will remarkably change.

How often while eating at a road side joint or having tea at a tea stall do we realize that the hands that serve us and wash our dishes, should be holding pencils and books instead. We're talking of those Rajus or Chotus whose real name we never bother to ask. There are children working in bicycle or motorcycle repair shops. Weaving, glass, fire crackers are other areas which employ children on a massive scale. In addition a number of them also work as domestic help. It is a shame that our society allows this.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 recognizes child labour as cognizable offense. The long title of the said Act clearly states:-"An Act to prohibit the engagement of children in all occupations and to prohibit the engagement of adolescents (14-18 yrs.) in hazardous occupations and processes and the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

Articles 24, 21-A and 45 of the Constitution clearly do not allow child labour. The laws, in addition to the abovementioned one, which prohibit child labour include The Factories Act, 1948, The Mines Act, 1952, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act, 2000 and The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. However, with no dearth of laws to contain the ill the practice of child labour continues unabated.

The basic purpose of The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, is to safeguard the childhood

of every child in our country and to see that each and every child goes to school as per 'The Right To Education Act, 2009.' In the Amendment Bill 2012, the only exception made is for children helping their families after school hours and in vacations, in fields, home-based work (only for non-commercial purposes), forest gathering and also learning skills in schools and technical institutions as long as it does not adversely affect child's studies, physical and mental health.

If we're using any service which involves child labour, knowingly or unknowingly, we are an accomplice. In addition we have to ask the ethical question as to what right does anyone have to snatch the childhood away from Chotus and Rajus?

If the child is denied education then we're foreclosing the options before her to improve her family's socio-economic status. Poverty is often quoted as the reason why a child works but the child is unlikely to come out of poverty if she is denied education. Most of the children working are from deprived communities of the society - dalits and Muslims. Hence denying education is a sure way of continuing their condition of poverty. Most countries whose social indices have improved have used free education and health care services to improve the lot of their people.

One reason why universalisation of primary education is not taking place in India is because private schools have been allowed to exist and become strong. In spite of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in place it is an open fact that neither is education free nor compulsory. In fact, to get a good quality education one will have to pay quite a huge amount because the quality of government schools has degraded and so-called good quality education is available only in private schools.

The private schools are running in violation of government norms. They do not have proper infrastructure, they pay only meagre salaries to their teachers, who may not even be qualified to teach and yet charge heavy fees in one name or another. However, in collusion with education department officials they are allowed to run as commercial ventures. It is quite clear that the important task of education cannot be left to private institutions.

Yet, the trend in the government is to privatise the education sector. The government is shifting its responsibility of providing good quality education to

children to the private schools. The RTE Act has provision for 25 per cent reservation for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in all schools. Now such children constitute about 75 per cent of the child population. So, the question is why only 25 per cent reservation? Moreover, the number of private schools is not enough to accommodate all children of weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. Private schools have no incentive to run in remote areas and especially in areas where weaker sections and disadvantaged groups live. A private organisation exists to make profit. If it cannot even generate its running expenses from the fees paid by students why will it run schools?

Private schools are not admitting children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups under the 25 per cent reservation provision. The most they are willing to do is to run a separate school using the same premises as for the fee paying children with different staff. They feel that teaching children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups along with those of the rich will dilute the quality of education as the former will bring down the average performance of the class and the learning process will slow down. However, the RTE Act clearly says the children of the rich and those belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups have to study together.

Since the private schools, where the quality of education is good but they are fewer in numbers, and government schools, which can accommodate all children but where quality of education is lacking, can combine to meet the requirements of all children. The private schools should be nationalised, just like banks were nationalised by Indira Gandhi, and a common school system should be introduced in the country. This will ensure same quality of education in every school. A single Board will manage all schools and ensure that the children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups are not falling behind.

Every child will go to the neighbourhood school and it'll become the responsibility of school to ensure that no child in its neighbourhood is out of school. Since all schools will be of same quality it will not be the case where private schools will have to bear the major load of children and government schools will have very thin attendance. The population of children will be evenly distributed. The exploitation of teachers by private schools and that of students by government schools will end.

(Continued on Page 16)

Another Naga Accord

Rajindar Sachar

A pact has been signed between Government of India and Naga faction of NSCN (I.M.). The details will be officially released in due course of time. It is a good sign, if as reported by the government that NSCN(I.M.), which is admittedly the largest Naga group, has given up its demand for a sovereign State outside India, as was originally the demand of A.Z. Phizo.

It is also a good sign that T. Muivah has agreed not to insist on including the areas inhabited by Nagas in the other states of Manipur, Assam, Arunchal Pradesh in the state of Nagaland. This demand which required cutting off areas from those states was a non-starter. No government could afford to settle on terms which would provoke counter movements in other North-East states. Of course, it will require the Central Government to honestly abide by the spirit of Article 371A of the Constitution.

Right since 1947, the Naga question has been the unsolved knot leading to almost a war-like situation between the Nagas and the Indian government. Some respite came when the then Prime Minister I. K. Gujral, made the following announcement on July 25, 1997: "In recent talks with the Isac Muivah group of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), it has been mutually agreed to cease fire with effect from 1 August, 1997 and initiate discussions at the political levels." Of course, a serious drawback was that ceasefire did not extend to other North-Eastern states that had a considerable Naga population, even when subsequent governments were so advised by some of us. So the situation continued to remain unsettled and fluid.

I have had a fair deal of inkling of the open hostility and anger of Nagas towards India. As President of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, I had occasion to meet some of the top leaders of the Naga movement, including T Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu.

It was in 2000 that I was invited by Asia forum for a conference and also watched the proceedings in a Court at Bangkok (Thailand) where T. Muivah was being prosecuted for travelling on a fake passport. The delicate situation was because NSCN believed that the

information about the movements of Muivah had been given by the Indian government which later denied it.

I also attended the court proceeding and was able to chat with Muivah, courtesy the security guards. Later in the evening, some of us were invited by Isac Swu and his team, who were all underground, for dinner. We were taken from our hotel in a car with dark curtains on both sides, obviously so that we could not see the route from the hotel. We understood their delicate concern, because the place was in Bangkok itself. At the meeting we suggested to Isac Swu and his colleagues that in the meanwhile talks need not be stalled and Muivah (who was in prison) could nominate a team to continue the dialogue in his absence. We even then felt that Muivah and others were genuinely in favour of a peaceful settlement, especially when Rh Raising, member, NSCN Steering Committee, openly told us that "Nagas are totally committed to solving the problem through peaceful means. They want to solve any problem through mutual discussion, understanding, respect and consent". We told them plainly that no government in India can be a party to allow Nagaland to secede from India. Of course, a degree of autonomy can be worked out mutually within the broad parameters of the Constitution. It is thereafter that talks between Nagas and the Government of India, represented by its Home Secretary. K. Padmanabhaiah, started.

Even when both Muivah and Swu came to Delhi and a meeting was held by some of us, along with V. P. Singh, at the latter's residence. V.P Singh had ceased to be the prime minister. They reiterated their desire for settlement with more autonomy, in a dignified manner. It is a pity that it has taken such a long time for the accord. One may now be hesitatingly optimistic, especially when Muivah has openly welcomed it by describing it as: "Better understanding has been arrivedbased on the unique history and position of Nagas". It is also a sign of practical wisdom that the Indian government has agreed to facilitate the visit of the Muivah group to travel to Myanmar to consult and bring on board the Khaplang group. One has still to be cautious because the Prime Minister has isolated the Congress chief ministers of Assam, Manipur and Arunchal Pradesh by not sharing

details with them because they too have a similar issue about Nagas. It's a relief that the Centre has now told those states that the deal will not affect their territories and also assured them that the details will be discussed with them before a final accord is signed.

If it is any satisfaction, even Raj Nath the Home Minister, was excluded from the initial talks (when all the previous negotiations were held by the Home Ministry). It would seem that the Prime Minister, realising the gravity of the Naga problem, was keen to find an equitable settlement when he said in his speech : "We will

not only try to heal wounds and resolve problems, but also be your partner as you restore your pride and prestige and that the only path to peace and understanding can come about when we deal with each other in a spirit of equality and respect, trust and confidence; when we seek to understand concerns and try to address aspirations."

Would not the Prime Minister like to express the same sentiments and approach with respect to minorities in our country, especially to Muslims, the largest minority of 14 crore? This course is not only Raj Dharma but a practical and realistic approach that any top leader would adopt.

(Continued from Page 14)

Untill the private schools are nationalised it should be made compulsory for everybody drawing salary from the government and all people representatives from the Panchayat members to the Prime Minister to send their children to government schools. If this is implemented the situation of government schools will undergo drastic transformation overnight. There doesn't appear to be any other way in which these schools can be made to function properly. This is a necessary and sufficient condition for ensuring that the government schools provide good quality teaching to children.

It is a peculiar situation in which the education department officials are now investing their time and energy in getting children admitted to private schools instead of trying to ensure that their schools function better. It is a mockery of the RTE Act that BSAs of all districts in UP put together have been able to issue orders for admission of 2817 children as of 5 June, 2015 in different private schools. With so few students availing the advantage of 25 per cent reservation for

children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in all schools how does the education department ever hope to provide quality education to all children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups? Slightly more aware among the weaker sections and disadvantaged groups will get advantage of the provision of reservation for their children, but again the poorest and voiceless among them will be left out. Hence it is necessary that government nationalises all private schools and implements the common school system. The academic activities may be left to private parties but the administration must be taken over by the state so that it can get children admitted according to national law or policy.

If the government is serious about providing quality education to all children then it has no alternative but to nationalise all private schools and implement the common school system and the inherent neighbourhood concept like other nations which have achieved 99-100 per cent literacy rates have done.

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Understanding the Greek Crisis

Saral Sarkar

The phrase “classical Greek tragedy” occurred to me several times during the current economic and political crisis in Greece and the European Union. It did not occur to me in the usual sense of the term “tragedy”, i.e. in the sense of a sad failure with very bad consequences, but in the sense of classical Greek dramaturgy. The essence of the latter meaning is that the protagonists are entangled in a tragic situation, from which there is no escape, because it is their fate, which has been determined by the gods. No matter how much they try to evade their tragic fate, they fail. The very actions they undertake in that effort lead them to the tragic end. In the process, some innocent protagonists become victims of the guilt of others and themselves become guilty. Other innocent people become involved as causal factors in the tragedy. The best example of such a tragedy is the mythical story of *Oedipus the King*.¹

In this article I take it for granted that all my readers have been following in the media the details of the story of the current five years long crisis in Greece. So I shall limit myself to some analytical remarks on some aspects of the story, which lay bare some EU ideologies (in the sense of false consciousness) cherished by many EU citizens and some grand delusions (*Lebenslügen*) of the present-day Greeks. In the process it will become clear why the present tragic outcome of the whole story was inevitable, almost like destiny (fate) in classical Greek tragedy. Finally, I shall express some fundamental criticism of a few basic assumptions – comparable to articles of faith of a religion – of both the present-day economic system and the competing economic theories and ideologies that uphold it. Only then, I hope, we shall have a better understanding of the Greek crisis, and not only of the Greek crisis but of all crises of the modern world.²

Ideologies, Grand Delusions and Misconceptions

Recently, during a popular German TV talk show, the moderator quoted an experienced Brussels correspondent (Mr. Krause) of the channel (ARD) who had said: “Actually, Greece is a Third World country that is living like an advanced industrial country.” To this, the Greek participant in the talk show, Mr. Chondros, a member of the Central Committee of SYRIZA retorted angrily, and twice: “He is talking nonsense. Convey this opinion to him with my compliments.” Later, he added that the

Channel ARD was mostly spreading propaganda.

Despite all my sympathies for the Greeks, I must say that the root cause of the current Greek crisis lies here. Greece is certainly not a Third World country. But it has never been as prosperous as, e.g., Germany. From 2002 onward, when Greece joined the Euro Zone, it got much easier terms for borrowing at the international financial market. Whereas previously it had to pay roughly 25 percent effective interest on its state bonds denominated in Drachma, after joining the Euro-Zone it had to pay only 5 percent on its bonds denominated in the highly valued and strong Euro. The difference of 20 percent was a net gain for the Greeks. But at the same time, the state, perhaps also Greek banks, businesses, and ordinary citizens then became strongly tempted to borrow more than what could be economically justified.

And why shouldn't they have borrowed more? In standard economics borrowing is recommended for creating wealth and increasing income and prosperity. It is argued that an entrepreneur borrows money, invests it in some business, and makes profit. The state borrows, invests in infrastructure development or promotes industries, sometimes state-owned industries, and so the nation becomes prosperous. In both cases, the debt can be serviced or even fully repaid from the increased income.

In this connection it must be said that all those who participated in the media discussions, including Greek economists, failed to say even once that Greece's current problems are not entirely of its own making. The Great Recession that began in 2007–2008, and from which also several other countries are still suffering, exacerbated the plight of the Greek economy which had already been weakened by the debt burden.

Further below, I shall once more take up the economic causes of the present-day crisis in Greece. Here however it first needs to be remembered that the generation of politicians who had applied for and pushed Greece's entry in the Euro Zone had falsified the statistics on the basis of which the country was judged to have satisfied the criteria to become a member. That was the original sin, if you will, the consequences of which the young Greeks of today are bearing.

Ever since January 2015, when the left party SYRIZA came to power, some of its spokespersons and supporters in the other European countries have been repeatedly saying that despite all the troubles Greece is giving the Euro Zone, the place of the country that taught Europe democracy is in Europe and not outside. It has also been reported that in 2001 the EU bosses knew that the statistics were false, but they thought they could not deny Plato the right to play in the first division.

In 2001, Europe did not need to learn democracy from the present-day Greeks. The real reason why Greece wanted to be admitted to the Euro Zone were the economic advantages mentioned above. It is, moreover, dishonest to intentionally obfuscate the difference between the European Union and the Euro Zone. During the present crisis, nobody advised Greece to leave the EU. Only some courageous people, including some serious economists and the German finance minister Mr. Schäuble, said that it would be good for both the Greeks and the rest of the Euro Zone if Greece opted out of the Euro club for a few years. Exasperated at the continued obfuscation in the talk shows, a participant, namely Prof. Hans-Werner Sinn, cried out (in the general sense): but the Euro is only a currency; the Euro Zone is only a currency union and not an economic or political union based on values. A currency union cannot exist if all participants feel free to ignore the rules.

This obfuscation may only have been a tactic, with which the Greeks intended to get better terms for the new credits or even debt forgiveness. And their left and green supporters in Western and Northern Europe perhaps only wanted to show that they value solidarity and sympathize with the suffering Greeks, while the conservatives, like Merkel and Schäuble, were merciless and wanted to punish the Greeks for having elected a left party to power. But neither Tsipras and SYRIZA nor their supporters could suggest any other middle-term solution of the problem than the obsolete Keynesian one: further borrowing and spending and waiting for the time when the economy would again start growing. I shall below come back to these questions of economic policy.

After the referendum of 5th July, when 61.3 percent of the Greek voters said No to further austerity, leftists all over the world waxed eloquent about democracy. But neither before nor after the referendum did anybody know what Tsipras would do if the creditors remained stubborn and refused to give Greece what it wanted unless he agreed to their harsh conditions. Would he in that case lead Greece out of the Euro-Zone? This question, widely discussed outside Greece, was never discussed in Greece,

at least not in public. The referendum was therefore no good example of democratic decision making.

In other words, neither SYRIZA nor the Greek government had a plan B, for the majority of the Greeks simultaneously said No to further austerity and (in opinion polls) No to exit from the Euro Zone (Grexit). This question was a hot potato that no Greek politician dared to touch. Most No-voters simply imagined that the other 18 leaders of the Euro Zone would bow to the wish of the majority in a small member country. Yanis Varoufakis, the then finance minister said (in the general sense): If you have a debt of only 30 million, you are weak, but if it is 300 million, you are strong. This was at best naivety, if not a delusion.

After the overwhelming No vote to austerity, a few young Greeks said to TV journalists, they were very proud of Greece, etc. But what exactly were they proud of? Some said they were proud because Greece demonstrated resistance in spite of the very bad situation. But can any people be proud at all, if they are so heavily indebted as the Greeks are, and can they call their No-vote resistance if through it they ask their Prime Minister to go with a begging bowl to the same hated rich creditors and beg for further debt forgiveness and easier repayment terms? They would have had reason to be proud if they had declared: we herewith end this debt-slavery, we exit from the Euro-Zone, and introduce our own new currency. But they didn't take this path.

It is not correct to speak sweepingly of "the Greeks" and for that matter, of any people, e.g. "the Vietnamese". Like any society, Greek society too is divided into classes and interest groups. And particular political proposals are generally supported or rejected on the basis of personal and class interest in the given situation. During the hours long big demonstrations on the days before the referendum, political observers could easily find out that it was mainly young people, workers, students, the unemployed, and people with a low income who would vote No. These were the people who thought they had no future, had nothing more to lose, or things could not become any worse for them. The prospective Yes-voters were mostly teachers, multilingual intellectuals connected with Western. Europe, entrepreneurs, elderly people, pensioners, middle and upper middle class people, people with safe jobs, all of whom wanted to protect what they had.

After winning the referendum, Tsipras went to Brussels in a fighting spirit. But on 13th July he returned with a worse deal than the one he was offered before

and which he had asked his countrymen to reject in the referendum. He had to sign the worse deal, because he did not see any way out of the unsolvable dilemma he faced. In the words of Varoufakis, the Greeks “were given a choice between being executed and capitulating. And he (Tsipras) decided that capitulation was the ultimate strategy...”. So the SYRIZA leader, who had been celebrated on 25th January after winning the election, and again on 5th July, returned to Athens on 13th July as a defeated and humiliated general. After returning home, he said totally contradictory things: he did not believe the deal he accepted would save Greece; it would certainly cause more pain and further recession. But he had to sign it and, what is worse, he must also try to implement it, for “this deal secures for Greece conditions of financial stability, gives it opportunities for recovery”; he promised that after a period of suffering, there would be light. A truly tragic figure, an anti-hero.

After this outcome, some of his radical critics called Tsipras a pseudo-leftist, accused him of betraying the people who had voted for him. This is rather unfair. To use another classical Greek imagery, he, as captain, had to steer his ship, the Greek nation, between Scylla and Charybdis.³ But unlike Odysseus, the hero of the epic *Odyssey*, who succeeded in steering his ship out of the twin dangers with only moderate sacrifices, Tsipras has till now failed to achieve anything. Even the third debt relief packet, that the Euro-Zone bosses had dangled before him, may not materialize. Tsipras could not but fail. Why? I shall deal with this question further below.

The Pseudo European Idea and Its Pseudo Values

Before that, I must refer to another delusion. During the whole debate – both in Greece and the rest of the EU – there was a lot of talk about values and the European idea. Tsipras once said – that was, I think, a few days before his humiliating capitulation in Brussels –: “Europe is about democracy and solidarity”. It was a mockery of the reality. For throughout the crisis period, many insults were hurled by both Greeks and Germans at each other (e.g. the Greeks want to steal money out of our pocket, lazy, corrupt Greeks. In Greece, many placards depicted Merkel and Schäuble as Nazis. The Greek government demanded reparation from the German state for the destructions and crimes of the German Nazis in the Second World War. etc. etc.)

And note the angry tone and language of some Greek ministers. Already before the capitulation, Varoufakis had likened the negotiation positions and style of the creditors to “terrorism”. After the capitulation, energy minister Lafazanis said in a statement that the country’s

creditors had “acted like cold-blooded blackmailers and economic assassins”. Mr. Kammenos, the defence minister, angrily said: “They blackmailed the prime minister... This agreement is not close to our values.” He also characterized the deal as “a coup by Germany” and its allies. And in Germany, the opposition leaders, supporters of the SYRIZA government, accused Merkel and Schäuble of destroying the “great European idea”.

But the “great European Idea” and its “values” – democracy, solidarity, human rights, etc. are just ideology, instances of make-believe, a veil to cover up the reality. In real life, when something becomes a success, or becomes attractive for whatever reason, many opportunists want to belong to that entity, be it a political party, a nation, a football club, or an identity. They either expect to get some material benefit by joining that entity or they want to bask in the glory or good reputation thereof. Thus, in recent German history, I could personally observe how, in the 1980s, hundreds of unsuccessful leftists and members of established parties streamed into the Green Party as soon as the latter scored some electoral success. There, many of them made a political career, became MP or even minister. But there were also people who simply wanted to enjoy the satisfaction of belonging to the avant-garde of environmentalists without themselves being one.

Or take for example the young woman from Azerbaijan, whom I met sometime in the early 1990s at a youth conference in Germany. In her speech, she grumbled that her Azerbaijani money could not be exchanged anywhere in Western Europe. “How can we build up a united Europe”, she said, “if we do not even accept each other’s currency?” I was surprised. During a recess, I asked her: “You think Azerbaijan belongs to Europe? I thought it is a Muslim majority country in central Asia!” She replied: “Europe extends from the Atlantic to the Ural and the Caspian Sea.” I had a similar doubt when, in the mid 1980s, Gorbachev started talking about “Our Common House Europe”. At an international conference of the Green Party of Germany, of which I was a rather conspicuously brown and non-German member, I asked a senior delegate from the Soviet Union, Mr. Kolontai, a Russian, whether he could imagine that also the Kazaks, the Uzbeks, the Turkmens etc. – in those days citizens of the Soviet Union – would also live in that “our common house Europe”. Mr. Kolontai hesitated a little before answering: Yes.

So far as Gorbachev’s motive behind the idea was concerned, it was certainly not opportunistic. But today we see how hollow this idea in reality is. Not even all citizens of all the member countries of the EU are treated

equally everywhere in the EU, e.g. the Romas and Sintis. When e.g. unemployed Romanians and Bulgarians travel to Germany, German officials suspect them of trying to exploit their more generous social welfare system. To take another example, when recently the EU Commission tried to fairly distribute the burden of accommodating the tens of thousands of refugees among all EU member countries, some flatly refused to accept any. They insisted on the original agreement that the burden of accommodating refugees will have to be borne by those EU member countries where the refugees first arrive. Mr. Rentsi, the prime minister of Italy, that is bearing the heaviest burden of this kind, was so angry after the failure of the deliberations that he openly said in the direction of the refusing countries: "If this is your EU solidarity, then you can keep it." The second heaviest refugee burden is being borne, of all EU countries, by the most crisis-ridden Greece. Here too no solidarity. But, in spite of the no-bail-out clause in the Euro Zone treaty, member countries showed a lot of solidarity, at least in the beginning, with Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland when the issue was saving the Euro. After all, it was also their currency that was in danger, whereas the poor foreign refugees were only burdens. So much for solidarity and values. Crisis times are testing times. Against the background of and due to the economic crisis, this good image of the EU, which was false from the very beginning, is now rapidly unraveling. It is doubtful that in future the EU and the Euro Zone would remain as they are today. For some time now, ideas are circulating which want to see the EU divided into two groups: the Protestant-Calvinistic North EU and the Catholic South EU, EU of "two speeds", the economically strong countries and the economically weak ones.

To come back to the Greek crisis. Time and again, critics of the SYRIZA government pointed out that it is impossible for anybody to demand that poorer EU countries like e.g. Slovakia and Estonia – where the average wage, average pension and average social welfare benefits are lower than those in Greece – should also give surety for the huge credits already given to Greece and new credits that Greece was demanding. To this, the above-mentioned Mr. Chondros once replied: (in the general sense) the ideal of the EU is not to bring about equality among member countries by pushing down the standard of living of the different peoples to the level of Slovakia, Estonia etc., but by raising the standard of living of the poorer member countries to the level of Greece and then further to higher levels.

It seems to me that Mr. Chondros and all the leftists of the EU do not know what the EU in fact is and what it

is not. It is not a union of socialist republics, it is only a union of unequal countries, where neo-liberal capitalism, free market economy, and competition prevail. In fact, the rules of the EU and the Euro Zone do not even allow bailing out a member country that is in danger of going bankrupt. The reason why the Euro Zone leaders tried to save Greece was not sympathy, solidarity, etc., but the certainty that Grexit would entail loss of trust at the international financial market in the solidity of the Euro. In reality, they wanted to save the Euro, not Greece.

And secondly, they did not want to let Greece get out for geopolitical reasons. Most EU members are also NATO members. And Greece lies in a strategically important area, very close to the Balkan states, the Ukraine, Turkey and the Bosphorus Straight through which Russian war ships pass on their way to and from the Mediterranean Sea. This argument was openly articulated by Mr. Röttgen, the foreign policy spokesperson of the German ruling party CDU. It is no secret that geopolitical considerations had been the force behind the creation of the EU and the currency union. (a) Without the EU, every European country would be too small – in comparison to the USA, USSR, and later China – to have sufficient weight in world politics; (b) and it is well known that the then French President Mitterrand pushed the idea of the common currency Euro, because the French were afraid of Germany again becoming the hegemonic power in Europe.

Wrong-headed economic policy

A capitulation is not per se reprehensible. And no capitulator is ipso facto a traitor. When the German generals capitulated on 8th May 1945, it was, in the given situation, the best thing to do to serve the German people. Justifying his capitulation, Tsipras said in his speech in the Parliament: he himself did not believe this deal would solve the problems of Greece. If anybody knew a better solution, he should come and tell him what he should do. But his question was a bit unclear: What should he do to solve which problem or to satisfactorily perform which task? Was it (a) to immediately prevent the impending disaster, i.e. avert state bankruptcy and Grexit, and somehow getting the banks reopened and functioning again? Or was it (b) to overcome the economic crisis in the middle and long term?

I do not know whether any Greek MP came forward that night to present a better solution. But, in fact, already before Tsipras signed the humiliating deal, some serious economists outside the political class of Greece had made two convincing proposals for addressing these tasks: (1) The government could have immediately introduced a

New Drachma as a parallel currency. Euro would have remained in circulation for foreign trade. And the Greek government would have had the sovereign right to issue the New Drachma. This solution would not have had the immediate negative effects of a formal Grexit. In fact, there is a precedent for this policy, viz. Argentina in the crisis of 2001. (2) The government could have formally declared Greece's bankruptcy and the country's exit from the Euro-Zone, what many German economists, and Schäuble, advised them to do. The other members of the Euro Zone would have helped them in making a smooth transition to the New Drachma. And the creditors would have been compelled to agree to grant Greece substantial debt forgiveness.

In both cases the New Drachma would have been a weak currency suffering more or less rapid devaluation. It would have led to inflation by making imported goods dearer for those who would receive their income only in the new Drachma. But the weak New Drachma would also have had the advantage of attracting investors and buyers from outside and promoting exports and thus also export industries. In the short term, of course, there would be no advantage only more pain. Particularly the standard of living would continue to fall, while the advantages would have taken some time to come.

But Tsipras, also SYRIZA, had already rejected both options. Obviously, the majority of the Greeks thought they could not bear the pain any longer, did not want to make any experiment, and opted for the continuation of their debt-servitude – not a sign of a proud people. Only a few said, as far as I could gather, they would prefer to be independent again with a new national currency and were prepared to pay the price for that. What I found so bad in this story was that all the leftists collected in the SYRIZA – including ex-communist Tsipras – had not told the Greek public the truth about their situation. They had sold illusions just to win the general election. Even after winning the election, they did not at all prepare the voters for independence. So they had to capitulate. I have shown in a previous article in this blog⁴ that even the Vietnamese communists had to capitulate to the capitalists and imperialists soon after defeating the latter on the battlefield. And Tsipras and SYRIZA did not have even a fraction of the real power in Greece that the Vietnamese communists had in Vietnam after 1975.

Bankrupt economic theories

However, it may also be that they were misled by false economic theories. Till now, I have not come across any prominent standard economist from any school of thought who has not given the Greeks the (false) hope

that the Greek economy can again grow and the Greek people can again prosper. They all have projected for Greece the same perspective: export-led growth. They have only debated about the best path to growth. The economic advisers of the SYRIZA government must have been Neo-Keynesians (like Krugman, Stieglitz, Sachs, Flassbeck and Co.). They roughly said that it was only the austerity policies of Merkel, Schäuble and the sundry supply-side economists (Sinn, Fuest, Schuknecht, for instance), that were responsible for their misery as well as that of the whole Euro Zone, that not only Greece, but also the whole EU could return to the growth path, if they would (were allowed to) spend more on investments and/or stop cutting the incomes and social welfare benefits/services of/for the common people. None of them, however, answered the question how and from where Greece would get the funds for new investments if nobody was prepared to give them more new credits, even if the creditors would write off all its debts.

And the neo-liberal supply-siders, who nowadays dominate economic policy everywhere, also in Brussels and Berlin, went on repeating their Mantra, which are well known: Greece must implement radical reforms: i.e. cut costs of production by reducing wages and deregulating the labor market, i.e. reducing the rights of workers and their trades unions; Greece must reduce pensions and rights of pensioners, must privatize state enterprises etc. They also advised Greece to increase the tax rate – not for the personal income tax or the corporation tax, but only for the value added tax, that everybody has to indirectly pay and by which the poor are more affected than the rich. Only this way, they asserted, could Greece again become attractive for investors and competitive in the world market, and only this way could its economy come back to the growth path.

There are several common points between the views of the devaluationists (let us call them so), i.e. those who were advocating a Grexit, and those of the supply-siders. But the former also argued politically: If the SYRIZA government, for political reasons, cannot themselves impose more austerity on the people, then they should accept the demands for and proposals of their exit out of the Euro Zone. For in this case they can blame the Germans and the world market for the fall in the exchange rate of their new currency. They opined that for countries in a situation like that of today's Greece, devaluation is the only path left to achieve growth. I too would advise the Greeks to take this path, not because I think it would enable the Greek economy to come back to the growth path, but because it would enable the Greek people to free themselves from the shame of debt-servitude of the past five years and regain their independence and dignity.

Whatever path the Greeks may choose to take, their economy would not experience any growth in the near future. When Germany was experiencing a long stagnation at the beginning of the present century, supply-siders were saying that unit costs of German products were too high because wages and social welfare benefits in Germany were too high. Lafontaine, a former leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) replied to that view (in the general sense) that in the matter of wages, Germany cannot compete with China in the race to the bottom. So, Germans must concentrate their efforts on high-tech and sophisticated industrial products like machines, cars etc.

Greece too, with its average wage of about 15 Euro per hour cannot compete with other EU and non-EU countries in the same region, where the average wage ranges between 4 and 5 Euro per hour. And it cannot compete with, e.g., Germany, not even with France and the UK, in the matter of high-tech and sophisticated products or international finance. Low-tech goods are being produced in China, etc. Ordinary products like shoes garments etc. have long ago been out-sourced into really Third World countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia, etc. And even if a Greek government in the near future succeeds in making the economy competitive by implementing the recommendations of the supply-siders in Brussels and Berlin, where will it find the markets that are not already being supplied by its competitors? It can at most with great effort win a share of the world market in cheap products. That will, to be sure, create some low wage jobs for the Greeks and profit for foreign investors. But Greece will not become a prosperous country again.

There are three fundamental flaws in all the economic theories that were represented in the media discussions: (1) their age-old basic assumption that unlimited economic growth is possible, as if they have never heard of limits to growth; (2) their ignoring the fact that at the present level of world GDP, any further economic growth can only come at the price of severe, partly irreversible, environmental destruction that might outweigh all benefit that might accrue from the growth; and (3) their basic assumption that capitalist free market economy and competition are together the best way to make the peoples of all countries more and more prosperous.

But since there indeed are limits to growth in the finite world, it is not possible that all peoples of the world can continuously prosper. I think in the middle of the previous decade (around 2007) a new era in the economic history of mankind has begun. It can be called the era of

limits to growth and secular stagnation (sluggish growth, falling growth rates). In parts of the world one can even observe economic contraction. Some countries of the EU are examples of this thesis: Greece is only the clearest one. Signs of this change are not clearly discernible yet, because always, there are some economies that are growing and will grow for some time, and there are always some people who are prospering. But they are growing/prospering at the expense of others and at the price of continuous ecological destruction. It has now become a zero-sum game. This is quite evident, even among and within the rich countries. Just a few years ago, Ms. Lagard, then the French finance minister, held against Germany that its economy was growing at the expense of those of France and other EU countries. She said that Germany was purposely keeping the wages low compared to the productivity of its economy. And in countries like the USA, the income of a small stratum at the top (the 1%) is increasing rapidly while the middle class is shrinking.

Even some neo-Keynesians have realized this. One of them, Heiner Flassbeck, rejected the view that Greece can come out of the morass by improving its competitiveness through introducing and devaluing a new currency. He argued that this way Greece can for a short time become competitive, but only at the expense of the other nations that will not have devalued their currency; and these would subsequently also devalue their currency in order to recover their competitiveness. Competitive devaluation is a beggar-thy neighbor policy, which was largely responsible for deepening the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In sum, as Res Strehle wrote two decades ago, "In the future, supply-side economic policies and demand-oriented Keynesianism will alternate in the major economic centers like fashion trends. They may even be synthesized, because, alone, both have only a limited ability to avert capitalist crises: supply-side economic policies increase the degree of exploitation and thus attract investors; demand-oriented Keynesianism prevents a drop in mass purchasing power, but scares off investors. Keynesianism will only then finally come out of fashion when the interest payments on growing public debts cannot be financed any longer."⁵

This exactly is the situation in Greece for the last few years.

Prospects for the European Left

All that means, however much Greece may try and whichever economic policy it might pursue, there is

little chance that its economy would recover up to the prosperity level of 2007. That means there is no escape from austerity; austerity, more or less, is unavoidable. But it is not a bad thing, it is even necessary, in both economic and political interest of the Greek people as well as in the interest of the natural environment of Greece and the world. However, the pains and burdens thereof can be shared equally or unequally. Guarantying that these are shared equally or at least “fairly” is not possible without regulating the economy and a great degree of planning. That exactly is the task of a left government today. Pablo Iglesias, the leader of the new Spanish left party Podemos, of course expressed his disappointment at the deal that Tsipras had to accept on 13th July. But he also heaved a sigh of relief on noting that Merkel, Schäuble, and the Troika hawks failed in their objective, namely the overthrow of the [leftist] Greek government.

It is wonderful that in January 2015 the Greeks voted a left party into power. It was not just a protest vote, not just done in desperation. It seems a large section of the Greek people has realized that capitalism is the problem. That is why, in the years and months before this election, in many demonstrations, one could see placards and banners carrying anti-capitalist slogans. That was the case not only in Greece, but also in the other crisis-ridden countries of Europe. But in truth, capitalism is only one half of the problem. The other half is that there are limits to growth. It does not look as if the European Left (including SYRIZA and Podemos) has realized this. They are still talking of solving the problems of their people through economic growth.

But it is possible that they will come into contact with those who are propagating ideas like de-growth, post-growth economy, sustainable society, solidarity-based economy, eco-socialism, etc. If that happens, and if they could be convinced of the correctness of these ideas, they may take steps toward realizing them. After all, they now have some political power.

The first step could be to end the madness that Greeks import 60 percent of what they eat, e.g. Dutch tomato. They could emulate the Dutch and use bicycles rather than cars and buses for local transportation, etc. etc.⁶ Both tomatoes and bicycles could be produced in Greece, thus also creating more employment in the country. These changes would require government action. That would certainly give rise to conflict with the EU watchdogs of a neo-liberal free market economy. That could be the beginning of Greece’s latest independence struggle and transition to an eco-socialist society. If all these things happen, then the present crisis may after all have the

effect of a catharsis⁷. The story may then have a happy end.

Notes

1. In this story, King Laius, father of Oedipus, had committed the original sin of trying to sexually seduce a boy, son of another king, who was his friend. The oracle of Delphi prophesied that as punishment for this sin Laius would be killed by his own son who would then marry his widow (mother of his son). In the end, this also happened without any of the protagonists (other than Laius) having knowingly done anything wrong. What is more, through this incestuous relationship with his mother, Oedipus also fathered two children, who were also his siblings.
2. I have expressed this criticism in detail in my book *The Crises of Capitalism* (Berkeley, 2012, Counterpoint), and in the brochure *Understanding the Present-day World Economic Crisis – An Eco-socialist Approach*. <http://eco-socialist.blogspot.de/search?q=Understanding>
3. Scylla and Charybdis were mythical sea monsters noted by Homer; Greek mythology sited them on opposite sides of the Strait of Messina between Sicily and the Italian mainland. Scylla was rationalized as a rock shoal (described as a six-headed sea monster) on the Italian side of the strait and Charybdis was a whirlpool off the coast of Sicily. They were regarded as a sea hazard located close enough to each other that they posed an inescapable threat to passing sailors; avoiding Charybdis meant passing too close to Scylla and vice versa. According to Homer, Odysseus was forced to choose which monster to confront while passing through the strait; he opted to pass by Scylla and lose only a few sailors, rather than risk the loss of his entire ship in the whirlpool.
4. *Victorious in War But Defeated in Peace -- How Development-Socialism Ended in Capitalism* <http://www.eco-socialist.blogspot.de/2015/05/victorious-in-war-but-defeated-in-peace.html>
5. Strehle, Res (1994) *Wenn die Netze reißen: Marktwirtschaft auf freier Wildbahn*. Zurich:Rotpunkt.
6. Cuba adopted a policy like this when, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, they could no longer get cheap (because subsidized) oil from their former allies.
7. Catharsis (from the Greek κάθαρσις katharsis meaning “purification” or “cleansing”) is the purification and purgation of emotions—especially pity and fear—through art or any extreme change in emotion that results in renewal and restoration. It is a metaphor originally used by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, comparing the effects of tragedy on the mind of spectator to the effect of a cathartic on the body. (from Wikipedia, English)

Western Railway Employees' Union

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WREU, the oldest trade unions in the country, earlier known as BB&CI Railway Employees' Union, is in the services of Railwaymen since 1920. WREU, a free, independent and democratic trade union, is a founder member of AIRF and HMS.

WREU fought for upliftment of railwaymen and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 94 years. WREU / AIRF is instrumental in creation of PNM, grievance solving machinery in 1951, payment of PLB to Railwaymen since 1979, implementation of series of Cadre Restructuring in Group 'C' and 'D' categories in Indian Railways, implementation of recommendations of the 4th, 5th and 6th CPCs with modifications and RELHS Scheme for Railwaymen.

WREU was led by prominent trade union leaders, viz. late Miss. Maniben Kara, Late Com. Jagdish Ajmera, Late Com. Umraomal Purohit, Late Com. Chandrashekar Menon, etc. In memory of late Maniben Kara, WREU established a charitable trust namely "Maniben Kara Foundation" with the objective of fighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Check-up Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HIV-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Safety Seminars, Trade Union Education Class, Adult Education, Guidance Camp, etc. are conducted for the benefits of the railwaymen and the general public.

(R.C. Sharma)
President

(J .R. Bhosale)
General Secretary

The ‘Quit India – the Hour of Socialists’ Glory

Bapu Heddurshetti

“Ever since its birth in 1934 the Congress Socialist Party had struggled to get the Congress to adopt militant action against the British as the most effective method of ending British rule in India. Its advocacy of this policy had involved it in unremitting controversy with leading members of the Congress. This eight year old controversy came to an end on August 9, 1942 with the arrest in Bombay of all the members of the All India Congress Committee. The national movement was thus without either leadership or an active policy despite the fact that the country was everywhere in ferment and on the verge of revolutionary upheaval. The mass arrest of all the members of the AICC gave the CSP, at this juncture, an admirable opportunity to prove the effectiveness of its own theory of struggle against British rule and to justify its consistent condemnation of the Gandhian techniques of non-violence and satyagraha.”¹

When the Second World War started, socialists were hoping that Mahatma Gandhi would give a call for an all-out fight against the British to seize freedom. They had drawn plans to go underground and lead the movement. N. G. (Nanasaheb) Goray writes: “we would resist arrest, we would go underground, if necessary, and we would even take to violent action. The only saving clause was that we would try to avoid, as much as possible, violence against persons. But so far as the destruction of government property was concerned, we would not stay our hand”

The Congress Working Committee which met at Wardha on 14th July 1942 passed a resolution demanding complete independence from the British government. The resolution proposed massive civil disobedience if the British did not accede to the demands. However, while Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad expressed reservations but did not challenge Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership, C. Rajagopalachari resigned from the Congress in protest. Socialists wholeheartedly supported the resolution. Both the communalists of Hindu Mahasabha and the Communists opposed the call for disobedience. The communists were rewarded with the removal of the ban on the Communist Party of India.

Before the All India Congress Committee met in Bombay on 7th and 8th of August 1942, the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) met at the residence of Purushottam Tricumdas at Malabar Hill in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 6th August 1942. Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, Ganga Saran Sinha, K. B. Menon, K. K. Menon, Moin-ud-din Harris, Munshi Ahmed Din, P. Y. Deshpande, Purnima Banerjee, Purushottam Tricumdas, Ram Nandan Mishra, Rammanohar Lohia, S. M. Joshi and Shibnath Banerji attended the meeting. Jayaprakash Narayan had already been arrested on 7th March 1940 for a speech delivered at Jamshedpur in February 1940 and was in jail. The meeting decided to support the proposal for a mass struggle and accept Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership of the same.

“Yusuf Meherally was in direct touch with Mahatma Gandhi. He was convinced that a mass struggle was inevitable. In order to create opinion in favor of this line of thinking, he collected excerpts from Gandhiji’s articles in Harijan and published a booklet entitled “Quit India”. It was priced eight annas² and distributed among the AICC delegates”.³ The credit for naming the struggle as ‘Quit India Movement’ hence should go to Yusuf Meherally, for though the resolution passed on 8th August 1942 did speak about withdrawal of the British Power from India, it did not use the words ‘Quit India’.

On 7th and 8th August 1942 the historic session of the All India Congress Committee took place at Gowalia Tank Maidan⁴ in Bombay. On 8th the revolutionary resolution was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru and was seconded by Vallabhbhai Patel. Among other things the resolution said: “The AICC repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power in India. ... On the declaration of India’s independence, provisional Government will be formed. ... Its primary function must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command... The committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India’s inalienable right to Freedom and Independence, the starting of a mass struggle, on non-violent lines,

on the widest possible scale... Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken. ... A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions to reach our people and when no Congress committees can function. ... Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the Independence and deliverance of India. ... The Power, when it comes, will belong to the whole of India”.

The words ‘with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command’ in the resolution were un-Gandhian and were not to be found in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee. Louis Fischer says that they were ‘inserted by the Nehru-Azad school’.⁵

On 8th August, Acharya Narendra Deva spoke at the AICC in support of the resolution. He said, “Gandhiji has now decided that inaction could not continue any further. ... People are fed up with inactivity ... the people are ready, ready as never before, to fight and achieve India’s freedom and they want to do something.”⁶

The Session went beyond midnight. Mahatma Gandhi addressed the session for nearly two hours in both English and Hindi, shortly after midnight and said, “The actual struggle does not commence this very moment. You have merely placed certain powers in my hands. My first act will be to wait upon His Excellency the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. This may take two or three weeks. What are you to do in the meanwhile? I will tell you. There is the spinning wheel. But there is something more you have to do. Every one of you should, from this very moment, consider himself a free man or woman and even act as if you are free and no longer under the heel of this imperialism”.⁷

The resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority. However, the 12 Communist members of the AICC, and Dr. P. Subbarayan⁸ voted against it. Apprehensive of the coming massive struggle, “Within a few hours of the passing of the historic resolution, the gigantic repressive machinery of the Government of India came into operation. All the members of the Working Committee were arrested en bloc and while Mahatma Gandhi was taken to the Aga Khan Palace,

other members of the Working Committee were detained in the Ahmednagar Fort prison. This was followed by the arrest of hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the country... People of Bombay rose to the early hours of 9th August to see the police and military patrolling the streets. ... Before night fell, the news had reached the farthest nook and corner of the country. The day was followed by disturbances breaking out at numerous places throughout the country.”⁹

Do or die

After the ‘Quit India’ resolution was passed, “we (Socialists) got a message to gather at Yusuf Meherally’s house. There was nothing more to be discussed. Meherally said that the night was momentous, and whatever needed to be done, should be done at that moment. Some of us might get arrested that night, because in a non-violent struggle unless a few leading persons got arrested right in the beginning, people would be demoralized. We discussed details as to, who should offer himself for arrest, who would stay outside; how to organize the underground movement and how to maintain communication with the central office.

“The next morning we were to meet Gandhiji at Birla House. According to prior arrangements a bus arrived early in the morning on 9th August to take us to Birla House. The telephone lines had been cut so we were not aware of the arrests already made. .. (in Birla house) There we learnt that Gandhiji had been arrested and his secretary Pyare Lal passed on to us a brief typed note. It had about six or seven lines saying ‘Paralyse the Government and from today we are free. Do or die’”.¹⁰

However, “the Labor Party (of United Kingdom) maintained that Mahatma Gandhi had not launched the struggle nor had he given any directive for action, so there was no justification for arresting him”.¹¹

When most of the leaders of the Indian National Congress were arrested, the entire movement became directionless. Jayaprakash Narayan was already in jail. Nanaheeb Goray was in Nizam’s jail in Gulbarga. Acharya Narendra Deva was arrested on 9th August and imprisoned in Ahmednagar Fort jail. “Socialists who had assembled for the AICC meeting at Bombay decided not to court arrest passively. They resolved to build an underground movement. Yusuf Meherally and

Asoka Mehta were also arrested. Jayaprakash Narayan was already in prison. Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Purushottam Tricumdas, S. M. Joshi, Shiru Limaye and the rest of us went underground. Aruna Asaf Ali joined us later.”¹² After his release from the Gulbarga jail, Nanasahab Goray also joined the underground.

Hence, some Socialists who had avoided arrest established a Central Directorate in Bombay. Prominent among them were Achyut Patwardhan and Rammanohar Lohia. “The use of bombs, tommy machine guns and some of the other most modern military devices was made. A secret radio station was set up by Rammanohar Lohia and was operated by Usha Mehta of Bombay. It was her voice that said ‘we are speaking from somewhere in India’ and recited Vande Mataram accompanied by her other colleagues.”¹³ There were many instances of sabotage. Nath Pai stole arms from the police station in Thalakwadi, Belgaum and escaped, though was arrested later.

Parallel governments were set up in Ballia in United Provinces, Midnapore in Bengal and many other places. Achyut Patwardhan guided parallel government in Satara in Bombay Presidency with Nana Patil and others. This government was known as “Prati Sarkar” (Opposite Government). It had its own seal and issued orders under it. Courts were held to decide disputes. Hundreds of villages came under its control. Armed guards were maintained by the Prati Sarkar. It was called Toofan Sena. (Tempest Troops) In the district of Midnapore in Bengal a parallel Government was established under the leadership of Satish Chandra Samant in December 1942. It was called the ‘Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar’. A military force was also established called, Vidyut Bahini. However, the parallel government was dissolved at the call of Mahatma Gandhi in September 1944.¹⁴

In view of these activities of the Socialists, the British Government banned the CSP.

The severity of the people’s upsurge could be gathered from a personal communication which Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, sent to Winston Churchill, the then Prime Minister of United Kingdom on 31st August 1942. He said, “I am engaged here in meeting the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security. Mob violence remains rampant over large tracts of the countryside

and I am by no means confident that we may not see in September a formidable attempt to renew this widespread sabotage of our war effort. If we bungle this business we shall damage India irretrievably as a base for future allied operations and as a thoroughfare for US help to China”.¹⁵

The British Government and the Viceroy were in for more trouble. Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been shifted to the Hazaribag prison escaped from it on 8th November 1942 which was the Diwali day. The escape was preplanned. The prisoners of Hazaribag Prison made elaborate preparations for celebrating Diwali, a festival of lights which comes on a no-moon day. A procession was taken around all the wards of the prison. The prisoners danced to the music of a popular Hindi film song which was sung loudly. Even the prison staff participated. At that time a table was kept beside the 17 feet tall wall of the prison by some prisoners and a prisoner by name Yogendra Shukla stood on it. On his shoulders another prisoner stood. Thus one after the other five prisoners climbed and jumped to the other side of the wall to their freedom. Jayaprakash Narayan was one of them.

Daring feat

However in the melee they forgot to take along the two bundles carrying some food and their civilian clothes and footwear. The jail was surrounded by jungle. The prisoners had to run through the jungle without food and footwear. They could get food only after running for about 45 hours. They could cross the jungle only after running for four nights and three days. Thereafter the prisoners parted company and Jayaprakash Narayan reached Benares.¹⁶

‘This daring feat made J.P. a national hero in the eyes of the Indian people’.¹⁷ He immediately joined the underground movement and took up its leadership. He said that the Central Directorate should work in the name of the CSP but most other leaders contacted by him wanted it run in the name of Indian National Congress and he agreed.

The underground group felt that since guerilla tactics would be needed, it was necessary to start a center for training the underground operatives and that it should be established in Nepal. Jayaprakash Narayan entered Nepal dressed as a bridegroom sitting on an elephant followed by a palanquin with Achyut Patwardhan’s younger sister Vijaya acting as the bride. About 40

volunteers were collected from Bihar and eastern Bengal and training began. The volunteers trained were known as Azad Dasta. Later Rammanohar Lohia also joined the group.¹⁸

Soon the Government of India put pressure on the Ranas of Nepal to curb these activities. Jayaprakash Narayan later wrote, "The Ranas of Nepal resisted for a considerable period of time British pressure and arrested me only when the pressure became irresistible for them."¹⁹ Hence, though Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia and some others were arrested the security was lax. The prisoners were to be handed over to the British at the Indo-Nepalese border. They were taken in a bullock cart to Hanuman Nagar²⁰ which journey took two days. On the way, on one morning Jayaprakash Narayan met a friend and told him to inform Suraj Narain Singh to come to Hanuman Nagar and free them. After they reached Hanuman Nagar, the Nepalese Police put them in a prison and awaited news from the Indian Government as to where on the border they should hand over the prisoners. On the third night about 50 members of Azad Dasta, under Suraj Narain Singh's leadership attacked the place where the prisoners were kept. One policeman was killed on the spot and another was injured. Others were sleeping. There was hay in the compound and it was set afire. Those policemen who were sleeping woke up and ran towards the fire. The volunteers of Azad Dasta seized their weapons. In the melee, Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia and others escaped. After running for eight hours they reached the Indian border and later reached Calcutta (now Kolkata).²¹

Later in June 1947, Jayaprakash Narayan wrote to the Maharaja of Nepal expressing regret at the death of a Nepali policeman and injuries caused to several others during his escape from Hanuman Nagar in Nepal in 1943 and offered a modest compensation of Rs. 2000/- to the bereaved family. He also requested the Maharaja to release all political prisoners and permit Nepali National Congress to function as it would be doing so within the limits set by the constitution. He also requested that the books seized at the time from him be returned since they were rare. The Maharaja wrote back to him saying that the bereaved family of the dead had been given a family pension and the injured Policemen were granted rewards in the Hanuman Nagar incident and he further assured that the political prisoners would get a fair trial and that the books had been handed over to the British and that he

would be requesting the British to hand them back to Jayaprakash Narayan.²²

Thus Jayaprakash Narayan was back in India. Government of India announced a prize of Rs. 10000/- on his head. Once he was spotted in Calcutta but before the police could lay their hands on him, he escaped from the city by air. However, later his pilot was arrested and tried.

"Max Harcourt's account of the struggle runs like this: "After the arrest of the first line of leaders, the Socialist leaders of the second line took command. These leaders proved effective because they had foreseen things and they were ready for the revolution. The workers of this Socialist Party and the Kisan Sabha spread in the villages and they led the dissatisfied farmers. Thereafter, they attacked the Government institutions and town headquarters. British administrative authority in most of the area had collapsed in August. It could be re-established with army corps, planes and armed vehicles and that too temporarily. In the areas where people had taken control of Government posts, parallel Governments were set up. Attempts were made to set up modern states. This was different from the 1857 situation when the rule was handed over to the princes and landlords. The freedom fighters of 1942 were connected to a well-disciplined political party and the temporary Government set up by Jayaprakash Narayan and Lohia in the Terai region were loyal to inter-provincial and All India Government. Their contact with the freedom fighters of Western India indicated that this rebellion had inter-regional awareness, which was quite different from pure farmers' revolts".²³

Letter to freedom fighters

Jayaprakash Narayan addressed three letters "To All Fighters for Freedom" - two when he was underground and the third after his release. Interestingly the first of these letters issued in February 1943 was published by Sir Richard Tottenham in his book 'Congress Responsibility for disturbances' and is hence available today.²⁴ Excerpts from the second of these letters were published by the Communist Party of India in one of their pamphlets and are hence available today. The third of these letters is available in full.

In the first letter²⁵ written in February 1943, referring to the uprising of August 1942, Jayaprakash Narayan said, "It truly was the 'Open Rebellion' envisaged

by our incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi. The Rebellion, no doubt, seems to have been suppressed for the moment. The history of all Revolutions shows that a revolution is not an event. It is a phase, a social process. And during the evolution of a revolution, tides and ebbs are normal. Our Revolution is at present going through the period of low water so soon because of two important reasons.

“Firstly, there was no efficient organization of the national Revolutionary forces that could function and give effective lead to the mighty forces that were released. Secondly, after the first phase of the Rising was over, there was no further program placed before the people. A Revolution is, not only a destructive process, it is at the same time a great constructive force. No Revolution could succeed if it only destroyed. If it should survive, it must create an authority to replace the one destroyed”.

To the question what next, Jayaprakash Narayan said, firstly we should banish all depression from our minds and create an atmosphere of joy at the success achieved; secondly we must keep the objective of the revolution steadfast in our minds. Criticizing the efforts of leaders like Rajagopalachari to have a National Government, Jayaprakash Narayan said, “There is no compatibility between the slogans of ‘Quit India’ and of a ‘National Government’. The complete overthrow of imperialism then is our objective”. Thirdly he said we should prepare for the next major offensive.

“There was some violence indeed under extreme provocation, but it was remarkably little as compared with the magnitude of the Rising and the staggering manifestation of individual and collective non-violence. I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practiced on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but where such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure. I should make it clear that preparation does not mean that fighting entirely ceases for the moment. No. ‘skirmishes’, ‘frontier activities’, ‘minor clashes’, ‘sniping’, ‘patrolling’ – all these must go on.

“In the end, comrades, I should like to say that it has made me inexpressibly happy and proud to be able once again to place my services at your disposal. In serving you, the last words of our leader ‘do or die’

shall be my guiding star, your cooperation my strength and your command my pleasure”.²⁶

In the second letter addressed on 1st September 1943, Jayaprakash Narayan said, “Every fighter for freedom is free to choose his own method. And the least that those who follow a different path should do is not to come in the way of one another and waste their energies in mutual recrimination. Where ‘do or die’ is the mantram of action, there is no room for recrimination whatever.

“Every time India launches a fight for freedom this group sets out to ‘resolve the deadlock’. The fact that men like Shri Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, K. M. Munshi, whose rightful place was in the midst of fighters, have joined the association of saboteurs of the freedom movement, should make no difference. It is highly disloyal of these Congressmen to initiate a policy of retreat when the generals are in the firing line. It is for the generals to consider these issues. Mahatmaji and Azad are in jail, but in the matter of peace and war the initiative is still with them. Mahatmaji could easily ‘resolve the deadlock’ whenever he wanted, by surrendering. He has not elected to do so. This means that he wants the fight to continue or, to put it at the worst, the deadlock to continue.

“You probably know that Shri Subhash Chandra has formed a free Provincial Indian National Government at Shonan (Singapore) which has been recognized by the Japanese Government. He also has organized an Indian National Army which is said to be growing rapidly. No doubt that it is true that all the necessary resources of money and equipment that he has, have been supplied to him by the axis powers. But, in the first place, the men he has in his Government and the National Army are Indians who hate British rule, and burn with a desire to free their motherland.

“It is fantastic to believe that Subhash’s Army, no matter how large, can defeat the allied armies in India. If any army can defeat them it may possibly be the Japanese. But, if the Japanese defeat the British in India, they would not quietly hand over India to us whatever the understanding between Tojo and Subhash. We must be ready in the event of an axis and allied clash in India to seize power ourselves.

“The war can be truly ended only by the common people of the world. But their voice is stifled. Russia

which could have become the champion of the common man has herself suppressed him at home and disowned him abroad by trucking to the imperialists and super-capitalists of Anglo-America. Neither allied nor axis victory is our aim, nor do we pin our hope on either. We work for the defeat both of Imperialism and Fascism by the common people of the world.

“Non-violence does not permit secret functioning. Yet, during a struggle organization must be secret. ‘Do or Die’ remains my guiding star as it is yours. Let us therefore, do or die.”²⁷

When S.M.Joshi and Nanasaheb Goray met Jayaprakash Narayan in Delhi and informed him that the movement was getting dissipated. Jayaprakash Narayan expressed his desire to contact Subhash Chandra Bose. He felt that if the Azad Hind Fouz, the Indian National Army, raised by Subhash Chandra Bose could put its foot on the India’s soil, the movement would regain its lost momentum. He told the visitors that he was planning to raise the Azad Dasta in Chittagong and Dhaka. But Jayaprakash Narayan was not successful in contacting Subhash Chandra Bose. Then the underground group felt that they should try to get some help from Afghanistan. Jayaprakash Narayan prepared to go to Afghanistan and travelled by train from Delhi to Rawalpindi, dressed in a suit and travelling in first class. However on 18th September 1943 he was arrested, soon after the train left Amritsar and made to get down at Mughalpura station and was taken to the fort prison at Lahore. Later in a press interview when it was suggested to him that a political party, implying the Communist Party of India, was behind his arrest, he replied that he would not believe it unless he had some proof and said that he did not know who earned the Rs. 10000/- award on his head which had been announced by the British Government.²⁸ He had spent about 10 months underground and now he was to spend 31 months in prison, out of which he spent about 16 months in the Lahore Fort Prison.

A great debate raged in the country as to whether the revolutionary activities carried on during the ‘Quit India’ movement by the Socialists had been sanctioned by the Congress and by Mahatma Gandhi and as to whether the movement was a Congress movement or was it a movement carried on by the Socialists only? As also as to whether the underground activities conducted by the Socialists did not amount to violence and against the Congress creed of non-violence?

The attack on the Socialists and the underground activities came from two sides. On the one hand, the British Government accused the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi of being responsible for the violence for which mainly the Socialists were responsible and on the other hand while Mahatma Gandhi disapproved the underground activities during the Quit India movement as violence per se, the Congress leaders blamed the Socialists for violating the Congress creed of non-violence and bringing a bad name to the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. Socialists were even called the ‘enemies of freedom’.²⁹

In the second letter addressed on 1st September 1943, Jayaprakash Narayan had referred to this allegation and answered it. He had said, “It has been claimed by some, who have gone so far as to suggest that a rump AICC should meet to withdraw the Bombay resolution, that since Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested before they could make a formal declaration of war, this struggle is not a Congress struggle at all. When you are on the war path, it is foolish to expect the enemy to allow you the leisure to complete all the formalities required by a peace-time constitution. Be that as it may, to fasten the August program on Gandhiji is a piece of perjury of which only the British Ruling class can be capable”.

But it is interesting that officially, the Indian National Congress neither approved of the violence in the form of sabotage during the Quit India movement nor disapproved it. While Jawaharlal Nehru approved of what had happened Mahatma Gandhi, totally disapproved of the same, as can be seen from his correspondence with the Viceroy. When the British Government started the propaganda that the Congress was responsible for the disturbances that took place after passing of the Quit India resolution and the arrest of the leaders, Mahatma Gandhi went on a fast from 10th February to 2nd March 1943 in protest against such propaganda.

Socialists defended themselves from both the attacks. On the British accusation about the use of violence by the freedom fighters, Jayaprakash Narayan said, “Have the British pledged non-violence if the rebels adhere to it? So let them keep quiet as to how, we fight them, it is our business entirely to decide that”. He pointed out the difference in the understanding of non-violence between Gandhi and the Working Committee. He said, Gandhiji is, in no event, prepared to depart

from non-violence. However, the Working Committee had said that if India became free it would resist aggression with arms. In the first letter “To All Fighters for Freedom” that he wrote from the underground, he said that the “Congress itself had declared in favor of fighting ‘aggression violently if the country became independent’ and hence he said “We have declared ourselves independent, and also named Britain as an aggressive power; we are therefore justified, within the terms of the Bombay resolution itself, to fight Britain with arms”.

He reiterated his position in his second letter “To All Fighters for Freedom” also. He said “What is it that those who deny the authority of the Congress for the struggle would desire to have happened on the 9th August, after the cowardly attack on our leaders? What do they think was the desire of the Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi in the event of arrest? Would the detractors of the present struggle have been happy if there had been no reaction to the arrest of the leaders, if the country had calmly bowed its head before imperialist jack-boot?”

“Or was it expected that only protest meetings should have been held demanding the release of arrested leaders (as was advocated by certain erstwhile Revolutionaries) and when they were not released, further meetings should have been held, till the audiences became too disgusted to attend, after which the ‘protestants’ could have gone to sleep with a clear conscience?”³⁰

To those who had called the Socialists ‘enemies of freedom’ he replied from behind the walls of the Lahore Fort Prison, “it makes me sad to reflect on this inglorious end of ‘the last fight for freedom’ – a fight, which, it now appears, the Congress never started, though thousands of poor fools died in the course of it and many more thousands lost their homes and properties and yet many more thousands lost their ‘freedom’. They were enemies of the freedom of their country anyway, so what does it matter?”³¹

“Violence, it seems, is a terrible sin, but only when used against British rule. For, don’t you see how Mahatma Gandhi himself is straining his utmost to have a ‘National Government’ established, at the command of which hundreds of thousands of Congressmen – the young ones, of course – will shoulder a gun and march forth in the shadow of fluttering tricolors to murder and

mutilate the brutal Jap and the bestial German? That would be violence too but not sinful, for, were it so, how could Gandhiji himself be so anxious to make it possible for Congressmen to commit sin? Gandhiji is a deadly dialectician and there is no doubt he could make any intelligent person understand his logic. The trouble is I have no intelligence.”³²

Lohia also rebutted the Government and the Congress charge of use of violence during the movement. In his letter to Harold Laski, which Yusuf Meherally published in the book ‘The Price of Liberty’ edited by him, Lohia said, “it does not lie in the mouth of the British Government or of any other, to throw about this charge, for the right to violence is, in the dominated world, linked up with some of the finest efforts of man. If I were to follow the British Prime Minister Mr. Clement Atlee or the Archbishop of Canterbury I would have to call it the sacred right to violence”.³³

In the open letter written to the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, Lohia wrote, “No plan was imposed from above on the revolution that broke out on the 9th August. If the clay is the passion for freedom, the potter is a revolutionary technique evolved by a people who have consciously discarded the use of arms. For the first time in history, the common man has revolted. His weapon is his spirit, for he does not own arms. Frightened by your own conscience, for even you must have one, or by the wrath of the people, you may yet release Gandhiji. But, whether you do, or don’t, the passion for freedom will haunt you until you surrender”.³⁴

Mahatma Gandhi protested that sabotage amounted to violence. “Soon, however, a heated controversy arose amongst the members of the Central Directorate itself, over the ethics of the use of violence. Those who disapproved of violence formed a separate committee called the ‘Satyagraha Samiti’ under the leadership of Sucheta Kripalani and Anand Prasad Chaudhari. The other members, who had no scruples about the use of violence, were all Socialists.” The Socialists decided to separate the sabotage activities from the activities of the Central Directorate and established a separate unit called *Azad Dasta* which carried on sabotage activities.³⁶

Gandhiji's attitude

Mahatma Gandhi was released, because of his ill health, on 6th May 1944 from the Aga Khan Palace

in Pune where he had been held. After his release, on 28th July 1944, he issued a statement about his views on the underground activities. He said, "The question most discussed with me by visitors is whether I approve of underground activities. These include sabotage, the publication of unauthorized sheets, etc. I say unhesitatingly, that underground activities, even though utterly innocent in themselves, should have no place in the technique of non-violence. Sabotage and all it means, including destruction of property, is in itself violence. Though these activities may be shown to have touched the imagination and enthusiasm, I have no doubt that they have harmed the movement as a whole. To the workers who are still underground, I advise: If you share my conviction that underground activity is not conducive to the growth of the spirit of active non-violence, you will discover yourselves and take the risk of being imprisoned, believing that imprisonment, thus undergone, itself helps the freedom movement."³⁷

In answer to this call by Mahatma Gandhi to surrender, the members of the Satyagraha Samiti and its supporters surrendered but the Central Directorate and its followers refused to do so. They wanted Mahatma Gandhi to issue an order to that effect to make them comply. Mahatma Gandhi did not want to do so. So he said that those Congressmen who considered underground activities to be wrong should alone surrender. Taking advantage of this, Socialists continued their underground activities.

Jayaprakash Narayan was arrested on 18th September 1943 from Amritsar Railway Station and was taken to the Lahore Fort Prison. He was kept in solitary confinement for a month. Later when asked by the Criminal Investigation Department officials of the Punjab, Bihar and Bengal police he said that he would not say anything about his underground activities and that he had no more to say than that he was an enemy of the British Empire of India (not of Britain or British Commonwealth) and that he was working for the freedom of his country and would continue to do so till either the object was achieved or death intervened.

Torture in Jails

He was then subjected to torture. He described the torture in his petition to the Punjab Government. He wrote, "The final stage of my harassment, which turned them into a form of torture, was to allow me no sleep during day or night. From morning till 12 pm I

would be continuously kept in the office then be taken to the cell for an hour, brought to the office again for an hour or two, taken back for an hour against and so on till the morning. The interrupted parcels of hours that I got in my cell could hardly bring me sleep, for just as I would be dozing off the time would be up and I would be brought out again. On paper this process perhaps does not appear to be so torturous, but I can assure you in all honesty that when continued for days it is a most oppressive and nerve-racking experience. I cannot describe it as anything but torture. Suppression of political opponents is of the essence of Nazism and Fascism, torture of political prisoners their most characteristic feature. I am conscious of the argument that those who believe in violence as a political method, as I do, must be prepared to be forcibly suppressed. It is laziness of thought and conscience to believe that investigation of crime is not possible without torture".³⁸

He wrote several pieces of prose in the form of jottings and letters. The writings included his views and comments on the statement of Viceroy Lord Wavell³⁹

Correction

I am thankful to Bhalachandra Raje for pointing out certain factual errors in my article on the 'Rise of the CSP' in Janata, May 17 and 24, 2015. He is right in pointing out that Lala Lajpat Rai was not alive when the CSP was formed. He has also pointed out that Junnar, the town in which S. M. Joshi was born is in Pune District and not Ratnagiri. Shri Rajje is right when he says that Nanasaheb Goray was born in Hindale and not Hindala. It is also true that when the 'Quit India Movement' began on 9th August 1942, Nanasaheb Goray had been arrested by the Nizams' police and was in Gulbarga Jail. He was released after 10 months' imprisonment and was again arrested within a few months by the British Government in Bombay; and could not have been underground through the entire period of 1943-46. The errors are regretted.

With the help of conscientious and well-meaning readers of Janata like Bhalchandra Raje, I can hope to produce a reliable history of the Socialist movement in India.

-Bapu Heddurshetti

that the British Government would not release the Congress leaders; the statement of Rajagopalachari that he would not mind if the country was divided into ten different parts; the three constitutional problems confronting the country, namely the problem of the Muslims, the States and the economy; the Indian Policy of the British Government of prolonging the war; the rejection of the Finance Bill by the Central Assembly due to the combination of the Congress and the Muslim League; the question of revising Marx and the dissolution of the Comintern; economic planning and political decentralization; the place of the village in free India; Gandhiji's release; on possibilities of a Gandhi-Jinnah agreement; on Hindu Muslim unity; on news that Roosevelt prayed to God, and many more varied subjects.

He read many books and wrote reviews and comments on several of them like 'The Crisis of the Modern World' by Rene Guenon; 'Underground Europe Calling' by Oscar Paul; 'Russia Fights on' by Maurice Hindus; 'All Our Tomorrows' by Douglas Reed; 'Jail Journey' by Jim Phalen; 'Make This the Last War' edited by Sir Julian Huxley; 'Gandhism Reconsidered' by M. L. Dantwala; 'A week with Gandhi' by Louis Fischer; 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' by Earnest Hemingway; 'Fear of Freedom' by Eric Fromm etc.⁴⁰

Jayaprakash Narayan petitioned the Lahore High Court twice in vain. His third Petition on 2nd January 1945 bore some result.⁴¹ "J.P.'s purpose in filing these petitions was to draw the court's attention to the brutalities to which political prisoners like him were subjected in the Lahore Fort so that those who were taken to that place after him could be saved from them. However the concerned Judge failed to take note of it and rejected the petition on the ground the Central Government had informed the court that J.P. was soon to be transferred to an ordinary prison outside the Punjab. The judge went on to remark that J.P.'s purpose had been served by the Government's decision. Although J.P. was happy to be transferred to an ordinary prison, the remark of the judge pained him, for as mentioned earlier, his purpose had not been to seek transfer many other kind of redress for himself".⁴² Jayaprakash Narayan was transferred to the Agra Central Jail on 1st February 1945.

Rammanohar Lohia was arrested on 20th May 1944 in Bombay and was lodged in the Arthur Road Jail there. He was shifted to the Lahore Fort Prison on 22nd

June 1944. He petitioned to the Punjab High Court on 13th December 1944 and again on 19th January 1945. Both were dismissed perhaps because the Government said that it was shifting him to another prison. He was shifted to the Agra Central Prison. From there Lohia appealed to the Federal Court – that appeal was also dismissed.

After two notes to the Central Government and an application to the Allahabad High Court, he was allowed to meet his lawyer Madan Pittie. On 27th October 1945 he wrote a note for his lawyer in which he narrated the tale of torture meted out to him in Lahore Fort Prison. In the note he wrote, "I was taken to a cell where my person was searched. I was expected to wash and bathe inside the cell and the small space between the cell-door and the flooring was both a gutter for dirty water and a passage for food. A fairly powerful light bulb was kept on overhead throughout the night. They would hold me handcuffed in their office throughout the day, when they tried to mix the arts of flattery with subtle hints of terror and the unknown. About mid-July I was kept awake for five days and nights. Inspector Mohammed Hussain, supported by his constables and sentries, kept me awake from about 14th to 30th September with a break on the Id Day".⁴³

Jayaprakash Narayan's notes written in the Lahore Fort Prison were later published as a book entitled 'In the Lahore Fort' by Sahityalaya of Patna in 1947. In his foreword to the book he described the life in Lahore Fort Prison. He wrote "Those who have experience only of prison life, cannot understand what it means to have spent sixteen months, under the watchful, malignant eye of the Punjab C.I.D.⁴⁴ in the Shahi Qila, Lahore. A prison gave one company, and, at least in the higher divisions, opportunities of recreation, and ordinarily fair treatment. In the Lahore Fort you were surrounded with an evil atmosphere, and with people who, to say the least, were dehumanized, having no human standards or values, and who accordingly treated you not as human being but as an animal that they called *mulzim*.

"A *mulzim* (accused) in the world outside is an ordinary enough creature, but in the Lahore Fort he is definitely sub-human. No human sympathy should be shown to him; the sweeper or the bhisti should never speak to him; no superior being such as a C.I.D. constable should show him any courtesy or talk to him as a brother-creature or an equal.

“The *mulzim* should be kept under lock and key all through the day and night, and a sentry with rifle and bayonet must stand guard at his door which is barred, bolted and heavily padlocked anyway. When talked to, the sentry must turn deaf or into a statue of stone, but his ever wakeful eyes must follow faithfully every move that the animal made in the cage.

“Whenever this *mulzim* creature left his cell, or rather, was taken out, he had to be put in handcuffs and chain; and when he was taken out for exercise, two sentries with loaded rifles had to parade, fore and aft, supporting a C.I.D. officer who formed the middle, carrying a loaded revolver at his hip and a garland of bullets around his neck. This was one’s normal life in the Fort”.⁴⁵

Thereafter, one after the other Socialists leaders, were arrested and jailed but they became heroes in the eyes of the Indian masses. While other leaders of both the Indian National Congress and the CSP were released in June 1945, Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia were still detained. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the British Government to release them. Both of them were released on 11th April 1946.

Release of Heroes

A huge meeting was organized at the Delhi Railway station to welcome the heroes of the ‘42 struggle/Quit India movement. Jayaprakash Narayan addressed the meeting. Prabhavati, who had been arrested in Patna in August 1942 and was released in 1945 from Bhgalpur jail had come to the Station.

Mahatma Gandhi, who had criticized the use of sabotage as an act of violence, said at his prayer meeting on 13th April 1946, “You know Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia. Both of them are daring men of action and scholars. They could easily have become rich. But they chose the way of renunciation and service. To break the chains of their country’s slavery was their sole passion. Naturally, the alien Government regarded them as dangerous to its existence and put them into prison. We, however, have different scales to weigh merit, and we regard them as patriots who have sacrificed their all for the love of the country which has given them birth. That they would be found wanting in the scales of non-violence is irrelevant today. What is relevant is that independence of India is today a common ground between the British and us. Their freedom, therefore,

is no longer considered dangerous by the Government. Viewed in that light, their release as also the release of INA men yesterday must be regarded as an earnest of the honesty of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. We must be thankful to them for this earnest and prayer of thankfulness should ascend to heaven for the wisdom with which God seems to be endowing them”.⁴⁶

On 28th July 1946, Jayaprakash Narayan addressed his third letter “To All Fighters for Freedom”. In the letter he described the futility of the British-proposed Constituent Assembly and reiterated that our task was to prepare for a final onslaught on the British. He said that we should wage a battle against the British through ‘mass sanctions’ and explained what he meant by ‘mass sanctions’. He gave a detailed program for the Congressmen and the Socialists to implement. As to which organization should carry on the said programs, he said that while the uprising of August 1942 was under the Congress banner, it could not be done now that that the Congress was following a policy of compromise and constitutionalism. But then, he said, the Congress was an instrument par excellence and that it should be used as long as the possibility existed of its being utilized for a revolutionary purpose. To resolve the contradiction he suggested that CSP should be the organization to carry out the programs and thus become the organization of all Fighters for Freedom.

On 21st April 1946 a huge reception was accorded to Jayaprakash Narayan at Patna. Sri Krishna Sinha, the Prime Minister of Bihar presided. It was attended by Ramdhari Singh Dinakar, a famous Hindi poet and writer. In his speech Jayaprakash Narayan remembered those who had sacrificed their lives and liberties during the Quit India movement. He said, “Seven hundred Police constables at Jamshedpur revolted and refused to raise their hands against their own people at the behest of their alien masters or their paid Indian agents. About 10,000 to 15,000 British and Indian troops had to be dispatched to suppress this rebellion. The great upheaval which resulted cost the lives of about 40,000 of our countrymen, men, women and children.”⁴⁷

The glorious ‘Quit India’ movement, which in Jayaprakash Narayan’s words was swift, elemental and cyclonic, waned. It was the biggest movement India had witnessed in the 20th century. According to the figures given by the government itself, by the end of 1943 the number of persons arrested was 91,836.⁴⁸ During the struggle 940 persons were killed by bullets

of the police or the Army and 1630 were injured. 44 persons were sentenced to death'.⁴⁹

Answering a question from the reporter of the journal *The Leader*, on 18th June 1945 Acharya Narendra Deva said "The movement (Quit India) has failed in the sense that it has not achieved its objective. But no sacrifice cheerfully undergone for freedom and democracy is fruitless. Our people have shown wonderful spirit during these last three years, and have demonstrated to the world their earnestness and determination to achieve their freedom".⁵⁰ Jayaprakash Narayan lamented that since the movement was perceived as having failed, it was disowned by the Congress leaders.

Acharya Narendra Deva was right. The movement was successful in rousing the conscience and the spirit of freedom in the people. However, this was achieved in spite of several odds. The British Indian Government of course, naturally opposed it and tried to suppress it. Most of the major political parties opposed it and many actually supported the British. It became another point of departure between the Socialists and the Communists. The Communists not only did not support the movement but also co-operated with the British. Muslim League also opposed the movement. The leader of the All India Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah said that the 'Quit India' movement was not against the British but was against the Muslims and sought to perpetuate the Hindu dominance over the Muslims.⁵¹

The Indian National Congress officially neither supported nor opposed it. In his statement issued to the Press on 26th December 1945, Acharya Kripalani, the General Secretary of the Congress, referring to the 'Quit India' movement said, "We were pleased with the happenings in 1942 as a mother is pleased when abused by her child learning to speak. Misuse of power is better than absence of power. Violence is better than cowardice. But we have accepted non-violence as our creed, and it should be followed by all Congressmen".⁵² However, many Congressmen openly opposed it. Mahatma Gandhi also opposed it on the ground that the underground activities during the movement amounted to violence. The Princes also opposed the movement. In spite of all these odds, though the movement did not bring freedom to the country, it certainly left the British with the impression that they cannot hold on to India any more.

S. S. Batliwala who had been a member of the Communist Party of India made a serious allegation

of espionage after his resignation from the C.P.I. He further alleged there was a confidential file of correspondence between P. C. Joshi, the Secretary of the C.P.I., and Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member of the Government of India, and he was positive that the publication of this correspondence would prove conclusively that P. C. Joshi had placed the services of C.P.I. members at the disposal of the Home Department for purposes of espionage against Indian nationalists.⁵³

Shri Batliwala further alleged that P. C. Joshi "had detailed certain Party members, without the knowledge of the Central Committee or the rank and file of the Party, to be in touch with the Army Intelligence Department, and had supplied the chiefs of the Criminal Investigation Department with such information as they would require against nationalist workers who were connected with the 1942 struggle, or against persons who had come to India on behalf of the Azad Hind Government of Netaji Bose."⁵⁴ He repeated these allegations in a letter to a columnist in the *Bombay Chronicle* weekly, which was published in its issue of 17th March 1946.

In July 1946, Jayaprakash Narayan called for observance of 9th August 1946 by hoisting of the National Flag and taking out processions and observing *hartal* on that day. However, Abul Kalam Azad who was the President of the Congress said that there should be no *hartal* and hence Jayaprakash Narayan had no choice but to abandon the plan to observe *hartal* on 9th August. However, other programs chalked out for the day continued.

After the release of the Socialists from prisons, they started thinking of preparing for the next struggle which according to them would be a final and successful assault on the British Raj. Achyut Patwardhan issued a circular invitation to those who were actively involved in the 'Quit India' movement. In the circular he said that "the 'Quit India' movement was the greatest event in their lives. But another struggle had to be launched because the goal had not been achieved. Hence our only objective at present is to prepare for the final struggle". He proposed to invite some friends from each province who were actively involved in the 1942 struggle for a meeting to discuss the contours of the coming struggle. He said that the meeting would be held from 18th to 20th May 1946 at Bombay to be presided over by Jayaprakash Narayan. He also enclosed a questionnaire to help

draft the policy and strategy of the coming struggle. He wanted to know the attitude of the Socialists towards Socialism in view of both the Democratic Socialism of Britain and Socialism of Russia were only trying to draw them within their own circle of influence. He wanted to know what would be the foreign policy of the Socialists and to what extent the Socialists were agreeable with the Gandhian method of treating the village as the pivot for social reconstruction as also as to what should be the attitude of the Socialists towards the ministries and how best they could help in making the ministries work better and how best they can use the ministries in organizing the forces of Socialism and freedom.⁵⁵

The underground days brought another benefit to the Socialist movement. If in the Nasik Jail the idea of starting the Congress Socialist Party germinated, in the underground germinated the idea of starting a journal for Socialist movement. Edatta Narayan was working closely with Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali during the underground movement. They then felt the need to have a printed media to spread Socialist ideas. Hence in the summer of 1945 they planned to bring out a weekly. However, it was delayed for some time and the first issue of '*Janata*', weekly, was brought out under the editorship of Edatta Narayan on 26th January 1946, the Independence Day.

During the 'Quit India' movement, most of the Socialist leaders were either in jail or were underground. Hence the work of organizing the party had taken a back seat. In 1946 most of the Socialist leaders were released from Jail. The ban imposed on the party was lifted. Then a question arose as to whether the Socialists should reorganize the CSP or function within the Congress as the 'Augusters'. While some advocated the latter line, Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan favored the reorganization of the party. Hence, in the first post-world-war conference held in Kanpur, it was decided to reorganize the party and function as a political party.

Madhu Dandavate says, "From the point of view of the future of the Socialist movement, this was a correct decision. If the Party had been dissolved and the Socialists had functioned only as the 'Augusters' after the transfer of power the 'Augusters' group would have dissipated. As a result of the absence of an organized Socialist Party a vacuum would have been

created in the Socialist movement and the leadership of the socialist movement would have passed on to the anti-democracy communists."⁵⁶

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1. A History of Indian Socialist Movement: by Hari Kishore Singh: P 26.
2. Half a rupee
3. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 115
4. Since renamed as August Kranti Maidan.
5. See The Life of Mahatma Gandhi : Louis Fischer: P. 479.
6. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma: Volume 2. P. 29
7. See The Life of Mahatma Gandhi : Louis Fischer: P. 479-80.
8. Father of Mohan Kumaramangalam.
9. History of the Congress Socialist Party: P. L. Lakhanpal. P. 92-3.
10. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 117.
11. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 124.
12. Madhu Limaye in 'August Struggle' quoted by Mastram Kapoor in Volume 1 of 'Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia' P. 53.
13. History of the Congress Socialist Party: P.L. Lakhanpal. P. 96-7. Indumati Kelkar says that the Radio operated from 13th August 1942 to 14th November 1942, for 94 days.
14. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma. Vol. 2. P. 156. Fn.2.
15. Quoted by Mastram Kapoor in "Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia" Vol. 1 P. 56
16. See page 340 'Jayaprakash' Souvenir Edited: Narayan Desai and Kanti Shah: 1982
17. Bimal Prasad in his introduction to Vol. 3 of Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad.

18. See page 342 'Jayaprakash' Souvenir Edited: Narayan Desai and Kanti Shah: 1982.
19. It is interesting that afterwards when the Nepali Congress and the King of Nepal began fighting against the Ranas, Jayaprakash Narayan procured arms for the Nepali Congress against the Ranas, from the then Burma.
20. Present day Raj Biraj in Satpari district of Nepal.
21. See pages 342-3 'Jayaprakash' Souvenir Edited: Narayan Desai and Kanti Shah: 1982.
22. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 4.Pp. 160 and 275.
23. Quoted by Mastram Kapoor in "Collected Works of Dr. RammanoharLohia" Vol. 1 P. 56-7
24. It was also published by Gopinath Singh of Lucknow in 1946.
25. For full text see, Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3. P. 110
26. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3. P. 110
27. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3, P. 116
28. Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 4. P. 13-4.
29. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3.P. 198.
30. History of the Socialist Movement in India : Hari Kishore Singh
31. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3. P. 198
32. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3. P. 198-9
33. Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia: Ed. Mastram Kapoor: Vol. 9. Item 350.
34. Linlithgow was viceroy from 18th April 1936 and Wavell replaced him on 1st October 1943 and retired on 21st February 1947. However, Dr. Mastram Kapoor's Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia: Ed. Mastram Kapoor: Vol. 9 item 351 mentions Lohia's letter as having been written to Lord Linlithgow and dates it as 2nd March 1946.
35. History of the Socialist Movement in India : Hari Kishore Singh. P. 80-81
36. History of the Socialist Movement in India : Hari Kishore Singh. P. 80
37. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3.P. 343.
38. Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3.Item 45.
39. Archibald Percival Wavell (1883-1950) Viceroy from 1943 to 1947.
40. See Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3.Item 46.
41. This was his third petition. The texts of his two earlier petitions are not traceable.
42. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 3. P. 236 fn
43. For a full picture of the torture endured by Lohia, see Collected Works of Dr. RammanoharLohia: Ed. Mastram Kapoor: Vol. 9. Item 347.
44. Criminal Investigation Department of the Police Establishment.
45. Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 4. P. 133-4.
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47. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 4.Item 3.
48. 'Mee S.M.': S.M.Joshi: P. 142. Mastram Kapoor at Page 57 of volume 1 of Collected Works of Dr. RammanoharLohia puts the figure at 60,229.
49. See 'Collected Works of Dr. RammanoharLohia' Edited by Mastram Kapoor. Volume 1.P. 57.
50. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma: Volume 2. P. 65
51. Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works: Ed. Bimal Prasad. Vol. 4. P. 20

52. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma. Vol. 2. P. 261-2. by M. R. Masani, in The Communist Party of India, pp. 82-84.
53. A History of Indian Socialist Movement: by Hari Kishore Singh: P 75-6. 55. See Samajavadi Andolanake Dastavej (1). P. 293-7.
54. Press Conference, Bombay, February 22, 1946, Cited 56. Bhaarateeya Samaajavaadaachi Vaatachaal: MadhuDandavate: P. 22

I am attempting to write a brief history of the Socialist movement in India. P. L. Lakhanpal's 'History of the Congress Socialist Party' ends with the mutation of the Congress Socialist Party as the Socialist Party and Hari Kishore Singh's 'History of Socialist Movement in India' ends at the split in the PSP in 1955. I am neither a historian nor a writer. Still I felt that even the treatment of the period from 1934 to 1955 needs elaboration and also that it was necessary to carry forward the developments in the Socialist movement in the country after 1956 at least till 1977 when the Socialist Party merged with the Janata Party. Hence this effort.

Hari Dev Sharma who has edited 'Acharya Narendra Deva's Selected Works' in four volumes and Bimal Prasad who has edited 'Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works' in ten volumes have done a very good job. I have taken the liberty of using the biographical sketches of Socialist leaders from both the books which may help in better understanding of the evolution of the movement. However I have given the biographical notes only of important leaders of the Socialist movement. The 'Collected Works of Dr Rammanohar Lohia' edited by Dr. Mastram Kapoor in 9 volumes also has been of great help.

I will be grateful to the readers of Janata if they can help me with their comments, suggestions and material for my efforts.

—Bapu Heddurshetti

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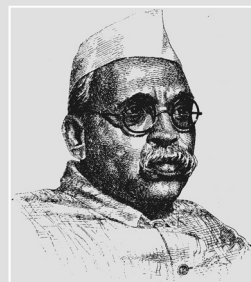
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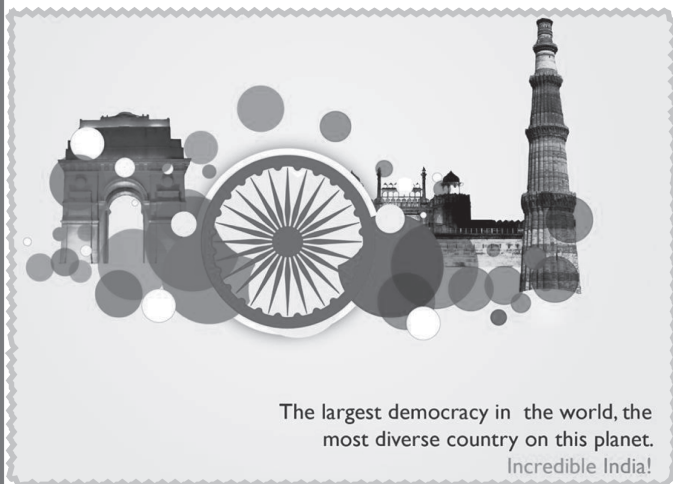


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Patels on warpath

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You only have to look at the photographs of the Maha Kranti rally organized by the Patel community in Ahmedabad on Tuesday to get an idea of how a mass movement can impact on civil life. Clearly, the Patels are on the warpath. It is so difficult to believe that the normally mild-mannered and gentle Patels can mount a powerful offensive against the government. It is even more difficult to believe that a 22-year-old youth with no background of agitational politics can galvanise an entire community into action against the government and involve people in a mass action. It is an example of mass mobilization at its organizational best. A news report says of the rally that it brought the city to its knees and left the administration rattled.

The figures of attendance at the rally vary. Some estimates put it at half a million, while the organizers claimed that 18 lakh people participated in it. The government seems to have been told that had a massive movement was in the making because it waived the roadways toll and also the rental for the government land where the rally was held. Even so, it would seem that the community holds the upper hand in the confrontation. The young leader who leads the

movement, Hardik Patel, has warned that the chief minister would have to come to him personally to collect the memorandum prepared by the community, which is locally known as the Patidars. Hardik has said that the Patels and allied communities, which together constitute the Patidars had a strength of 24 crores in the country. He has said that the community could if it wanted to paralyse the state's economy by calling a transport strike halting railways and highway traffic.

The media has provided us with some hitherto unpublished data about the community which we are told makes up for 15 per cent of Gujarat's population. Patels make up more than 50 per cent of the eight-million-strong Gujarati NRIs. The Patels are a trading community basically and the individual Patel is a highly enterprising gentleman. The community derives its wealth—it is an affluent community—from massive land holdings, trading, agriculture, construction and industry. The Patels are known for their competitive spirit and their readiness to enter into new fields of endeavour. They have a flair for business. The agitation is for a quota for the Patels in Gujarat government jobs. The demand was unexpected since the community is

No prospect of normalcy

Kuldip Nayar

strong socially, economically and politically. The Patels are a known community in the US too. The term “Patel” is synonymous with Patel dominance in the motel business in the US, seventy percent of highway hotels run by the NRIs are owned by Patels.

If the agitation has become worrisome it is because it has assumed, much to everyone’s surprise, political dimensions. Hardik has warned that if the community is not given reservations in government, the “lotus will not be allowed to bloom in Gujarat in 2017. Else the lotus will never bloom in the state.”

No speedy end to the confrontation is in sight. Schools in Gujarat are expected to remain closed till the agitation lasts, and Hardik has also announced a 48-hour-fast by him and three supporters to force Chief Minister Anandiben Patel to come to the agitators to receive a memorandum from them.

Secondly, Hardik is also critical of Prime Minister Modi and the entire BJP leadership for cold shouldering the Patidar community whose votes helped the party to get power in the state and the centre.

Support has come to the agitators from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who is described by the agitators as a Patidar. He has said the demand for inclusion among the OBCs is justified because in other parts of the country similar castes are getting the OBC facilities which are denied to the Patels of Gujarat.

The ball is now in the court of Chief Minister Anandiben Patel. It would seem that the size of the offensive mounted by the Patels

(Continued on Page 4)

My reading is that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has had a second thought on the talks with India after fixing the meeting of Chief Security Advisors of the two countries. Otherwise, he would have intervened to clear the air and said that when he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ufa, Russia, they had agreed to confine their talks to tackle terrorism which was bleeding the two countries. It is possible that the army pulled the rug out from under Nawaz Sharif’s feet. It is hard to buy this theory. Pakistan would not have fixed the meeting’s date if its Chief of Army Staff had been opposed to the talks.

The criticism of the Pakistan army in this regard is not fair. What seems to have happened is that the omission of word, Kashmir, from the joint statement issued by the two Prime Ministers at Ufa infuriated the radical elements in Pakistan. It is they who put their weight behind the demand not to have talks if Kashmir was not on the agenda. Even tactically, Pakistan went wrong. While talking on terrorism, it could have raised Kashmir during the meeting. If India had walked out, it would have lessened its stock in the eyes of the international community.

Unfortunately, the impression that has gone around is that the talks between India and Pakistan can never take place. Naturally, people on both sides are disappointed because they had expected some sort of normalcy to return and a let up in violations of ceasefire at the

line of control, bristling with troops and weapons. It must be hell for the farmers who have stretched their cultivation right up to the border. The breakdown in talks has left a feeling of emptiness which may take the two countries still more apart. It may take months before the thread is picked up again. Behind-the-scene-channels take time to come into being and function fruitfully.

Nawaz Sharif could not sell to the army and radical elements in his country the idea that the talks are only confined to terrorism, without discussing Kashmir. Their reaction in Pakistan was hostile when the people there did not see the mention of Kashmir in the joint statement issued after the meeting between the two Prime Ministers.

Where do we go from here? Much would depend on the outcome of meetings between the Directors of Military Operations and chiefs of security forces on the border. Pakistan’s National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz said that even after the cancellation of dialogue between the chief security advisors meetings at the other levels would take place as scheduled. Fortunately, the meeting between the chiefs of BSF and Rangers has been fixed. However, I wonder if they would come to anything concrete when the main talks did not take off.

Voices from Pakistan are that the two countries should have a third party to mediate. One, it would violate the Shimla Agreement between Prime Ministers Indira

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High Court asks for compulsory common primary education

Sandeep Pandey

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's well known slogan was that children of President of the country and an attendant should study in the same school. Socialist Party (India) has always advocated for common school system and the concept of neighbourhood school, as recommended by Kothari Commission in 1968. Socialist Party (India) has been intensively running a campaign for the last two years demanding that it should be made compulsory for the children of people receiving salaries from government and all people's representatives from Panchayat members to Prime Minister to go to government schools.

So, it was a welcome surprise on 18 August, 2015 when the Allahabad High Court delivered a judgement to this effect. The court has held the government officials solely responsible for the sorry state of affairs of government schools. It has directed the Chief Secretary of UP to ensure that children/wards of Government servants, semi-Government servants, local bodies, representatives of people, judiciary and all such persons who receive perks, benefit or salary, etc. from public exchequer or public fund send their child/children/wards to Primary School run by the UP Board. It further says the appropriate provisions can be made to ensure that child/children/wards of abovementioned categories are compelled to receive primary education in Primary Schools run by the Board. The court could not have been more emphatic. It even proposes a penal provision for

people who do not agree with this idea. This order will benefit the 90 per cent of children in India who have presently no choice but to attend sub-standard primary schools where there is hardly any teaching. When the quality of these schools will improve only then every child in India will be guaranteed quality education at the primary level.

The court comes down heavily on the government for lack of infrastructure, not being able to provide basic amenities, like drinking water or space for natural calls. It concludes that in spite of spending huge amount of money every year the conditions of these schools do not improve because there is no involvement of responsible people with these schools. It puts schools in three categories – the elite, semi-elite and common men's school. For the common men it says they have no choice but to accept 'as and where it is'.

The court says there is misappropriation, maladministration and widespread corruption at the highest level in education department because of which standard of teaching becomes the biggest casualty. The court goes on to suggest that political parties are competing to create committed voters by appointing persons who are not competent to teach. Certainly the elite class would not like their children to be taught by such teachers. The State has appointed para teachers instead of regular qualified teachers and is now trying to regularise them on permanent positions. The

court questions whether State is answerable to people at large on the issue of appointment of competent teachers, the kind who will qualify the government schools on par with schools where the elite send their children to. The court harps on this point repeatedly and holds the elite responsible for having abandoned the government system of education.

The court also thinks that making it compulsory for responsible people to send their children to government schools will result in boosting social equation by allowing children of the poor and the rich to study together. The children of poor will get a different kind of atmosphere, confidence and opportunities bringing about a grassroots revolution.

Some people could argue whether court order is not violating their right to choose the schools they like, the education system they like and their preferred language of instruction. However, this freedom cannot be at the cost of violation of the same rights of majority of deprived people of this country. Everybody should enjoy the same right. This is the strongest argument in favour of common school system.

How alarmed and threatened the ruling elite opposed to an egalitarian society must have felt from this order can be gauged from the fact that the petitioner in the case in High court, Shiv Pathak has been suspended by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari of Sultanpur. The UP government needs to be condemned for this action.

Socialist Party would like to make the basic proposal of this judgement more stringent. It suggests that only those people who have studied at government schools and who sent/are sending their children to government schools should be allowed to contest elections for any public posts and only such people should be eligible for any kind of government jobs and government contracts. This would definitely improve the quality of government schools.

The court should also be petitioned to place a ban on coaching institutions.

The coaching institutions have seriously deteriorated the quality of school education. The schools should also take responsibility to prepare children for competitive examinations so that they don't feel the need for any extra coaching. The people who're teaching in coaching institutions should be absorbed as teachers in regular schools.

Emphasis should be on learning rather than examinations. In fact, examinations can be completely done away with in favour of a qualitative system of evaluation

where the teacher just indicates whether the child has learned or not.

Once the quality of government schools improves, then people will automatically start sending their children to government schools and the private schools will slowly go out of existence. Most countries which have achieved 99-100 per cent literacy rates have done it through government run education programme and common school system.

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led by Hardik is formidable and the challenge from him would have to be met squarely in the face. The chief minister can face the challenge by appointing a committee which will go into the Patel demand and see if it is based on a solid case. Often enough the committee route is the best to buy time while considering the demands of agitators.

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Gandhi and Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto. When the 90,000 Pakistani soldiers were India's prisoners after the fall of Dhaka in 1971, Pakistan had agreed not to demand the third party in future to settle the matters between India and Pakistan.

Two, which country in the globe is altruistic in its approach to the world problem? A third country would try to introduce its own point of view, keeping its own interest at the top. There is no alternative to an uninterrupted dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad. True, nothing has come out from the attempts made so far. But war is no solution either, particularly when both countries have nuclear weapons.

Both Modi and Nawaz Sharif will be in New York to attend the opening of the UN General Assembly session. They should meet to clear the impediments in the way of a dialogue. The partition is a reality. I wish the line drawn had not been on the basis of religion. This has created bad blood between the two countries. Muslims in Pakistan may have benefited. But they have ceased to count in decision making in India. The two-nation theory has told upon the Muslims and they lost the importance which they enjoyed in India before partition. The hostility between the two countries has affected relations between them. There does not seem to be any prospect of their normalizing relations, much less strike friendship.

I never liked Modi-type of politics, parochial and point blank to the right. His hand behind the killings of Muslims in Gujarat in 1992 made me more distant. However, when I found him getting an absolute majority in the last Lok Sabha election, I tried to search qualities in him so that I would be positive in my comments.

I really believed that his claims of *ache din ayenge* (good days will come) had a ring of truth. After one

year of his prime ministership, I feel I was led up the garden path. There is not even a semblance of change from the slow, slovenly rule of the Congress government.

True, economic reforms have a gestation period. But some seeds should have sprouted by this time. In fact, the agriculture has come down from the four per cent growth to mere one per cent. The industrial sector is shrinking relentlessly. And the much-needed employment has not expanded at all. There is no implementation of steps promised for development or improving the lot of the common man.

Modi still has more than three and a half years of his rule ahead. He should abandon such measures which have not yielded any fruit and adopt new ones will help the country to develop. The plus point in his favour is that despite the relentless criticism of the Congress party, people on the whole expect him to do something for their betterment. Now it is up to him to take stock of the situation and introduce reforms and other measures to let the economy grow. For this, as he must have realized, relations with Pakistan have to improve.

Sitting ducks for Dwija as well as non-Dwija rulers

Sankara Narayanan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an earlier election rally in Bihar ridiculed the leaders like Nitish Kumar and Lalu Yadav that caste was in their DNA. Modi was only partially correct. That the caste is in the DNA of each Indian will be a far more correct assessment. We very often see people toot toot proudly in public: Hamara Aadmi Hain meaning the subject is from one's caste. Amara Loka, Manavaadu, Nammaaluetcin in various vernaculars reveal the same caste DNA.

Journalist Aakar Patel reveals how Patels dominate the legislature and cabinet of Gujarat. It tells up on the caste DNA of Gujarat. The number of upper caste ministers holding key portfolios in Modi's cabinet is another pointer. To check the caste DNA of Modi, it will be interesting to count how many Dwijas are there among the jumbo staff in PMO. Yet another way of calculating the caste DNA of BJP government is to study the caste configuration of central ministers from UP and Bihar, the two states going to polls soon.

For most of the time after independence, Hindi heartland states (undivided Bihar, undivided MP, Rajasthan and undivided UP) have all along been ruled by Congress or Jansangh/BJP, barring the spells of rules by the social justice heroes and Mayawati in UP and Bihar. Caste DNA of the two national parties will be more than revealing if you look at the names of Chief Ministers who ruled earlier

and are now ruling the Bihar states.

The Apex Court was cornering the centre and the states to assess the correct strength of OBCs to decide the quota case. When it was forced on them to collect caste-wise socio-economic data, there was a chorus of NO from leaders cutting across parties. Those who opposed the caste-wise census were Somnath Chatterji, Subramanian Swamy, Murli Manohar Joshi, Anand Sharma and a few others. Does the august list not expose the caste DNA of our Dwija Netas?

A documentary produced by 'Cobrapost' and screened in Delhi on Aug 17 exposes the caste DNA of BJP thoroughly. The Hindu newspaper (Aug 18) and Cobrapost documentary reveal that the retired Justice Amir Das, who inquired into the massacre of 58 Dalits in Lakshmanpur Bathe village in Jehanabad in 1997, has stated on record that BJP leaders Murli Manohar Joshi, Susheel Kumar Modi and C.P. Thakur, were responsible for instigating members of the Ranvir Sena, an armed private militia of landowning upper caste men, to commit the murders. Justice Das is also quoted naming Janata Dal leader Shivanand Tiwari as one of the politicians who also played a part in instigating the Ranvir Sena.

The on-camera confessions of the members of the Ranvir Sena make it amply clear that the dreaded private army had political patronage

both at the state and at the centre, and they drop a few big names including those of a former prime minister who helped the outfit get modern weapons that the Indian Army sells as rejected scrap, a former finance minister who is alleged to have helped the Sena with money and some political bigwigs belonging to the BJP who tried to influence the police probe.

Apart from political support right from the NDA ruling dispensation at the centre, the Ranveer Sena had staunch supporters in strongmen like Anand Mohan Singh and Arun Kumar. Pramod Singh, a Sena chieftain, recounts how Jahanabad LJP MP Arun Kumar would help them escape the police net after they had executed a mass murder operation.

When the nation wondered aloud about the source and purpose of the Purulia arms drop on December 17, 1995, an immediate beneficiary was the Ranveer Sena which got such lethal weapons as AK-47 by the dozen. Says Pramod Singh (Sena leader): "Jaise Puruliamein gira ... Purulia se bahut hathiyar aya yahan par (There was this arms drop in Purulia ... we got a lot of weapons from there)."

Four major massacres of Dalit men, women and children occurred in Bihar between 1997 and 2000, and in all these cases the accused, who were convicted by the trial court, were mostly let off by the Patna High Court.

‘Operation Black Rain’, the sting operation Cobrapost conducted, exposes how justice has been delayed and denied to the victims. An undercover journalist (K. Ashish) travelled to villages of Bihar in Jehanabad, Bhojpur and Gaya in search of the witnesses to the killings and many of them have deposed before the camera recounting the horrors of the incident.

The six Sena mass murderers viz. Chandkeshwar, Ravindra Chaudhary, Pramod Singh, Bhola Singh, Arvind Kumar Singh and Siddhnath Singh not only reveal how they planned and carried out killings on such scale with precision and ruthlessness of a war machine but also candidly admit who trained them, who armed them, who financed them and who lent them political support, naming some big-time politicians.

The film also exposes the impunity with which the Sena carried out the murders. Chandeshwar Singh has been captured on camera talking about how he murdered 32 Dalit villagers in Bathani Tola using mostly unlicensed weapons.

Some other Sena members also confessed to committing murders. All of them went scot free after acquittal. The documentary also contains an interview with Bhola Rai, who is considered absconding in the massacre cases, where he is quoted as saying the Sena members were trained by the military to use weapons. Pramod Singh narrated how weapons were procured for their army from the 1995 Purulia arms-drop incident.

Documentary also captures the history of the Ranvir Sena

as narrated by Siddhnath Rai. Formed by Dharicharan Singh of Belaur village, Bhojpur district, to contain rural unrest among landless agricultural labourers, who had begun to organise themselves under the CPI-ML, the Ranveer Sena resorted to murder provoked by these labourer’s increased demands for better wages. The outfit was named Ranvir Sena after Dharicharan’s kin, Ranveer Chaudhry, a retired army man.

In all, 144 were killed in the six massacres including several women and children. It was not a coincidence that the Justice Amir Das Commission of Inquiry was abruptly dismissed as soon as the JDU–BJP alliance came to power in Bihar, and Justice Das categorically states that it was because his report could have implicated some prominent politicians for their support to the private army he was asked to close the shop without submitting a report. Perhaps, never in the history of Independent India was an inquiry commission investigating mass murders asked to demit office.

The ruthless killers of the dreaded Sena did not spare even the pregnant women, tearing their wombs open and putting the unborn to death. This kind of psychopathic butchery was witnessed again in 2002 Gujarat riots when rioters tore open the wombs of pregnant Muslim women and cut the unborn into pieces in full public view as they rejoiced at their barbaric feat.

We are aware that the upper caste leaders from BJP, RSS and JD(U) helped, instigated the Sena men to kill and protected them from prosecution after the massacres. Was the role played by Nitish

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India’s anthem, like those of its neighbours, is a lyrical celebration of attachment to a homeland and a culture rather than a nation in competition with other nations. South Asia is one of the few clusters of countries where all the national anthems are non-militaristic. It is no accident that three of these anthems — India’s, Bangladesh’s and Sri Lanka’s — are written by the same poet, Rabindranath Tagore. National anthems are often sung out of habit, rather than with thought or reflection. Yet the anthems of our region highlight a legacy of patriotism as a joy untainted by preoccupation with either enemies or wars and conflicts. They bring alive the distinction between patriotism and nationalism... But it is on the Indian subcontinent that anthems old and new express a love of the homeland’s beauty with no reference to any foes. Perhaps the most lyrical of these is the “Sayaun Thunga Phool Ka”, which Nepal adopted as its national anthem in 2007: “Woven from hundreds of flowers, we are one garland that’s Nepali/ Spread sovereign from Mechi to Mahakali/ A playground for nature’s wealth unending”. Pakistan’s anthem, “Qaumi Tarana”, though dedicated to “this sacred land” makes no reference to it being an Islamic nation but instead lauds “the might of the brotherhood of the people” and invokes the “Shade of god, the glorious and mighty” to secure a future of progress. “Jana Gana Mana”, as a celebration of divinity in nature “echoes in the hills of the Vindhyas and Himalayas, mingles in the music of the Yamuna and Ganga”. South Asia’s anthems speak for those who seek harmony and cooperation of a kind that would convert borders from walls of barbed wire to friendly fences.

- Rajni Bakshi in Indian Express

Demographic shift in eastern India

Mrinal K Biswas

Even diehard secularists view with trepidation the inroads made by extremist Islamic groups in the country's eastern part who seem determined to keep alive the fearful memories of India's partition and its undesirable consequences. A demographic shift is slowly taking place, which, in a miniscule form, is bound to come to the fore in the wake of the recent Indo-Bangladesh agreement.

The historical exchange of enclaves between India and Bangladesh has doubtlessly removed distortion of landmasses in possession of both countries arising out of 1947. Point to be noted is that exchange of population remained excluded on the partition agenda but not this time as people have the option of migrating to either of these countries post-de-enclave. The Land Border Agreement (LBA) signed between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 6, 2015 has allowed absorption of 111 Indian enclaves into Bangladesh and 51 Bangladesh enclaves left isolated inside India into the Indian Republic.

In political geography an enclave is a group of land which is totally surrounded by a foreign territory. This piece of land is politically attached to a larger landmass but not physically co-terminus with it, being surrounded by a foreign territory. By a queer piece of historical circumstance, India's partition led to some parcels of land belonging to India politically left out in East

Pakistan, now Bangladesh and some Bangladesh land groups remained stranded in India. These enclaves have now finally been removed through LBA after long aborted efforts in 1958 and 1974.

With LBA becoming a reality, it is obtained that only 979 people living in 111 enclaves surrounded by Bangladesh have given the option of leaving their old habitats to settle in India to retain, if not regain, their Indian citizenship. So long they were beyond touch of the States they were fated to live post-partition as Stateless persons de facto bereft of civil rights and facilities like their counterparts in 51 Bangladesh enclaves inside India.

The joint boundary working groups in their latest census report in September 2011 decided that land transfer and population swap would affect 17,158 acres and around 37,000 persons living in Indian enclaves respectively while 7,110 acres of Bangla enclaves would be transferred to India with 14,000 persons given the similar right to change their citizenship. This broad exchange programme got the go-ahead signal through tortuous constitutional amendment processes which India had gone through since the Nehru-Noon (the then Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan) agreement on Land Border Agreement in 1958.

This is not the end of the story. As British civilian Radcliff sitting in London drew in haste the international boundary between

India and Pakistan in 1947 partition process without a direct knowledge of the geographical positions showed 2777.038 acres of Indian land on the border line to East Pakistan and 2267.682 acres of the neighbouring country's areas to India, which were adversely occupied so long by both the countries. These areas are also being exchanged through LBA, sans constitutional obligations. However, these adverse possessions gave comical experiences to border peoples as it was often found that may be an Indian had his residence in this side of the boundary while his toilet and cultivable land remained on Bangladesh side and vice versa. The exchange of enclaves and adversely possessed areas would end the absurd boundary lines through LBA, with redrawn borders getting fenced.

However, on the broader landmasses, these 111 Indian enclaves have total headcount of 37,269 and non-leaving of them automatically become Bangladesh citizens. By invoking option formula, leaving Indian enclaves to resettle in Indian mainland would be 222 families with total headcount of 979 of which 146 families owe allegiance to Hinduism and rest 76 families are Muslims. They will get the benefit of Rs 3,000 crore package olive branch offered to West Bengal Chief Minister by Prime Minister Modi to ensure LBA fructified.

In contrast, all 14, 214 persons living in 51 enclaves surrounded by Indian territories will stay back by shunning their Bangladesh

citizenship and obtaining instead Indian identity cards, a significant portion of them being Muslims though.

These little figures show the shift in the demographic graph of the eastern part of this sub-continent, little known to rest of India. Hindus are declining in Bangladesh while increasing number of Muslims are also seen showing their preference for India for apparently fathomless reasons.

Along North Bengal border lines the ethnic Rajbanshi population dominate in Cooch Behar district within which all the disappearing 51 Bangladesh enclaves exist. As most of the Rajbanshis being Hindus they along with their Muslim settlers there will practically stay out of any population swap programme and stay put in the India- merged disappearing Bangladesh enclaves.

A different story tells that 111 Indian enclaves now being merged with Bangladesh having 222 families consisting of Muslims as well who will depart to Indian geographical entity. Further to the trepidation of a section of West Bengal population, steady and continuous emigration from Bangladesh threatens to upset the demographic balance in this part of the country. A steady flow population pours into India through porous border boundary lines often without legal documents, Hindus venturing it out of sheer sense of insecurity and Muslims may be because of economic deprivation.

Official calculations may go wrong, which estimates that after de-enclaving not more than 979 persons will seek settlements in India from the isolated land groups which existed as Indian territories but were

surrounded by East Pakistan which was converted to Bangladesh after 1971 war.

This little number of new settlers has not unexpectedly raised a new controversy between Mamata Banerjee's West Bengal Government and the Central Government as the centre wants to bring down the resettlement package of Rs 3,000 crore to a meager figure of Rs 50 crore. Obviously, the centre's preparation for a larger influx after de-enclavement was reassessed to the discomfiture of Mamata Banerjee. If she insists on an enlarged package it is not because of resettlement of 222 families with Rs 50 crore, but there are reasons to believe that more immigrants are not ruled out.

West Bengal along with Assam and other east Indian border States have suffered grievously with influx of population due to desertion from the neighbouring country. There were two massive exoduses from Bangladesh first, post-partition, in 1950, a Hindu refugee deluge and again in 1971 Bangladesh war when millions of people desperately crossed over to adjoining Indian States to escape the war ravages. West Bengal reeled under the sudden influx of 10 million safety-seeking people most of them being Hindus.

Post-partition, in the Greater Calcutta alone, 11 million Hindus (1 crore 10 lakh) came over to India leaving their home and hearth to live on tenuous help from the government till they secured a footing through extreme struggles. Even after the 1971 Bangladesh war most of the 10 million people, mostly Hindus, refused to go back to the 'liberated' Bangladesh fearing a communal backlash despite a secular

looking regime coming to power under Hasina as Prime Minister.

As a result of these emigrations from the other side of the east Indian borders the Hindu population dwindled in Bangladesh from 12.1 per cent in 1982 to 8.2 per cent in 2011. Other side of the coin takes the form of a menace as flow of immigrant. Allegedly infiltrators, sweeping over border districts of West Bengal. Even former Chief Minister Jyoti Basu brought this fact to the notice of Prime Minister Sk. Hasina which she dutifully denied. Fact is that these illegally incoming people get the help of whoever the ruling party in this part of Bengal for inflating their supposed vote bank.

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Kumar, the then CM, to scuttle the probe and help the culprits escape from the clutches of law in any way a lesser crime? Lalu, the other social justice hero, would have certainly been aware of the perpetrators of the killings and later the help rendered by Nitish (his sworn enemy then) to ditch the probe. Why didn't he make it an issue during the JD – BJP rule? Less we talk about the Dalit leaders like Ramvilas Pasvan, the better.

OBC DNA of Nitish and Lalu did not help the unfortunate Dalit victims. One can certainly draw a conclusion - whether the leaders are from OC or OBC or any C, Dalits are expendable. So much for the pure Desh Bhakts from BJP and social justice warriors of JD(U) and RJD.

Yet the PM takes pot shots at the caste DNA of his political rivals completely forgetting the shameful roles played by the upper caste leaders of his own party.

Narmada Satyagraha

“We are with Narmada Ghati, Not with Narendra Modi”, declared eminent citizens and supporters from across the country who joined thousands of oustees from the Sardar Sarovar project affected region on August 24, 2015, the 13th day of the indefinite Jeevan Adhikar Satyagraha, on the banks of Narmada. Sardar Sarovar, is one of the worst symbols of political conspiracy and corporate loot and we will intensify the 30 years long struggle to ensure justice to the lakhs of people and environment of the valley and also to assert our development paradigm, based on justice and equity, not “jhoot” and “loot”, declared the valley and the supporters, in a united voice during the Mass Convention on Land, Livelihood and Housing Rights organized at Rajghat, Badwani.

Numerous representatives of people’s movements, political groups, social organizations, intellectuals, artists and activists adopted “Rajghat Resovle” in the middle of Narmada, in the presence of thousands of adivasis, farmers, fish workers, landless workers and potters. Exactly a year ago, on 24th August, 2014 thousands of oustees declared that they are “owners” of the acquired properties as per the New Land Acquisition Act, as the possession continues to remain with the people since 10-15 years. Once again, today the people thundered that neither the *Sardar Sarovar* nor *Sarkar* can submerge their lands and villages.

Talking to the thousands of oustees, Yogendra Yadav from Swaraj Abhiyan and Jai Kisan Andolan said that Sardar Sarovar

is symptomatic of the obnoxious political culture of the country. “The illegality and inhumanity of the SSP, is now exposed in the Courts and on the field and the Government must stop installation of the gates of the Dam forthwith”, he demanded. He also stated that “Even as we have to resist the height of the SSP and weight of the political bigwigs tooth and nail, we must also move towards strengthening an alternative political culture and system, based on the cherished values of the *Andolans* of this country”. “This is not development, it is political arrogance”, he said. The politics of this country should learn from the *Andolans*, if it must be truly pro-people, he said,

Ousteas from the three states of **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat** spoke their hearts out and demolished the claims of “rehabilitation”, and stated that even in 2006, when the dam height were raised to 122 mts, thousands were yet to be rehabilitated and even as on date, thousands of farmers-adivasis are yet to get alternative land, alternative livelihood is nowhere in sight for the landless, fish workers are being denied the fishing rights. Shri Modi is busy rehabilitating those who have supported his party in the elections, including Adani, Ambani and Coca-Cola; but there is no rehabilitation or rights for us, said ***Shanta behan and Shanno behan.***

Senior Gandhain activist, Anil Trivedi said that the 30 years struggle of Narmada is testimony to the fact that not just Gandhian thought, but the practical possibilities of non-violence struggle are still possible and even effective. The

Narmada Bachao Andolan is a living university of non-violence and is both a re-invention of Gandhi and re-assertion of Ambedkar at the same time. Aradhana Bharghav, Kisan Sangrash Samiti, Chhindwada challenged the anti-farmer policies of the Central and state governments and said that the country can survive without Collectors and corporates, but not without the crops of the common Kisaan.

Eminent peace activist and leader of Socialist Party (India), Sandeep Pandey, who just returned from the Veda Dam affected areas stated that in dam after dam and state after state, the issues, challenges and political insensitivity is similar. What we need in these trying times are united struggle against the political malaise. He declared that the dam work being illegal, it must stop immediately and a review of the project must be initiated.

Speaking on behalf of the entire adivasi belt, Ghokru, Noorji and Jikubhai from the three states accused the Government of betraying the fundamental constitutional values and committing mass atrocity on the tribals, by limiting the special protection to scheduled areas and PESA Act only to paper. We have not consented to the SSP, to the fraudulent land acquisition and R&R process. Sitting in the rally of 20 boats in Narmada, they said, “Narmada Valley is ours; Sardar Sarovar is yours; Shivraj-Modi Go Back”.

Activists Mahendra Kumar and Kamayani Swami saluted the struggle of the Narmada valley spanning over four generations and

said the entire country stands with the valley. C K Janu of Adivasi Gotra Sabha lashed out at Narendra Modi for his cruelty to the Narmada valley and his approach in treating the people. She said the curse of the ordinary people of his country will hit him very soon. She equated the struggles between the adivasis in Kerala and Narmada and stated that the adivasis-dalits of the country must launch an intense battle to preserve their identities, dignity, right and resources in this country.

Subhash Lomte called for a joint action by the workers of the urban and rural areas to defeat the anti-worker approach of the present Government. Modi will have to retract very soon, just as he did on the Land Acquisition Bill, he said. Raj Kumar Sinha and Navratan Dubey condemned the corporatization in the name of development and said whether Bargi, where the dam water is being diverted for nuclear plant or SSP, where water is given to Coca Cola, the anti-poor approach of the State is crystal clear and we must unite to defeat this hoax of development.

Medha Patkar questioned the reluctance of the Government in reviewing mega dam projects across the country, which have led to massive environmental degradation and displacement of millions of people, over the past 60 years. She pointed out to Sardar Sarovar as a classic example of failure of large dams and said the Government must be held accountable to the nation not only for the 90,000 crores investment but also for the sacrifice of 2.5 lakh people and for its cozy relationships with the corporate. We will not allow the gates to be installed and we will fight with our life, she said. "Our challenge is

greater than that of Governments", she added.

Numerous students from different colleges in Delhi, (including Ramjass, Furguesson, TISS, Malegaon, etc.) expressed solidarity and stated that what is not taught in colleges and universities is learnt from the Andolans of this country and therefore "we come again and again", to gain strength, wisdom and learn from the people.

Supporters of the Andolan at Badwani including the Congress party called for a Badwani Bandh on that day in support of the people's

—Rahul Yadav, Pema Bhai and Sunita Kamal

“Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai...”

On August 1st 2015 members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad exhibiting habitual hooliganism forcefully stopped the screening of Nakul Singh Sawhney-directed documentary, 'Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai..' at Delhi's Kirori Mal College. Videos witnessing this incidence of violent disruption of the screening can be seen in Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

'Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai..' is a documentary film that quite courageously reveals the conspiracy of the ruling class political parties which deliberated communal massacres to grab political power by-hook-or-by-crook, in their opportunist alliance with the new lumpen capitalist and feudal forces in the society during August-September 2013 in Uttar Pradesh. This documentary is significant in the times when the media, co-opted by the crony capitalist corporate forces, has turned into a fabrication

struggle against the Sardar Sarovar. Towns and cities, dependent on the villages are now beginning to understand and support Narmada. The struggle will intensify in the days to come, declared the eminent citizens and activists unitedly, with the people.

People decided to take the satyagraha to its next phase of intensity and expose all the false claims of the Government, the denial of rehabilitation, ownership rights, illegal submergence and installation of gates, corporatization of dam-benefits and the political arrogance of the Centre and States.

machine than being the fourth pillar of democracy supposed to project truth and reality.

Narendra Dabholkar, veteran activist who fought vigorously against superstitions was brutally murdered in 2013. Artists of Kabir Kala Manch were put behind bars because their songs were considered seditious! In 2015, comrade Govind Pansare who ferociously blew away communal iconization of Shivaji, was assassinated in the daylight. Teesta Setalwad and Sanjeev Bhatt are continuously being framed and cornered by the state machinery. The same city of Pune where the innocent Mohsin Sheikh was lynched for wearing markers of his faith, also witnessed disruptions during the screening of documentary filmmaker Anand Patwardhan's iconic film, 'Ram ke Nam'. While the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle faced a ban at IIT Madras; Tamil writer Murugan had to declare the

(Continued on Page 10)

Call for Justice

An Appeal to the Government of India, the United Nations and its allies to review the Narmada mega-dam project and adhere to binding human rights norms

We, the undersigned recipients of the Right Livelihood Award, (also known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize”) stand united in our opposition to the unlawful submergence of 244 villages and one township by flooding caused by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. We firmly uphold the inviolable human rights and environmental justice for thousands of families in the Narmada Valley.

For over two decades, we have been observing with immense concern the developments around the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), which has disastrous implications for the sustenance of indigenous communities in the Narmada Valley and that of other riverine populations, which have, for centuries, built flourishing lives and livelihoods around the Narmada River.

We have also expressed serious concern over the colossal harm caused, and to be caused, by the SSP and other dam projects on the rich, yet fragile, ecosystem of the Valley, in particular, submergence of the most fertile agricultural land, dense forest, and tree cover, and the destruction of cultural monuments and archaeology of this oldest of civilizations in the world.

We have watched and welcomed the withdrawal of the World Bank from the Project in 1993, owing to a comprehensive review and a realization that mitigation of environmental losses and rehabilitation, on the scale

required, is next to impossible. That assessment has come true, warning the world, including us, about the great human tragedy set to unfold in the Narmada.

We have also witnessed the people’s resistance to the progressive raising of the height of SSP, without adhering to the binding commitments under Indian and international law to safeguard and rehabilitate the affected farmers, fish workers, and potters from unlawful submergence, displacement, and pauperization. The resultant rehabilitation of about 10,000 families has been welcome, but the scale of the still pending R&R of more than 40,000 families is massive, as cultivable farm land, house sites, civic amenities, fishing rights, livelihood sources, and so on, are yet to be ensured. We are therefore appalled that while the glaring backlog of rehabilitation of thousands of families remains unattended, the Indian government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has always championed the Dam height increase and never the cause of the displaced, has taken a decision to increase the height of SSP by 17 meters up to its final height of 138.68 meters, posing grave threat to the lives and livelihoods of all these families.

We are also deeply concerned that the dilution of R&R norms and cash payments in the past decade has not worked out in the interest of a majority of oustees, the indigenous, and the non-literate. Rather, an ensuing saga of corruption has been unearthed. The

in-depth investigation by a Judicial Commission is revealing; it serves as a reminder of the ‘go-slow’ tactic of the government, which is simply awaiting the Commission’s findings.

We hold that the decision to raise the height of SSP and displace thousands of families, without lawful rehabilitation and recognition of their land and livelihood ownership and livelihood rights under the recently enacted Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 is not only a serious violation of the law of the land and the judgments of the Supreme Court of India, but also a transgression of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Indigenous and Tribal People’s Convention, 1989, of ILO.

We are also deeply disturbed by reports that the canal-work in Gujarat is lagging far behind, indicating that there is no urgency in reservoir filling. However, the decision to prioritize allocation of dam water and beneficiary land to national and international corporations is a deviation of the Award, project-commitments, as well as public interest.

We, therefore, call upon the Government of India to immediately halt the ongoing construction of the Project, and not to put up gates on the Sardar Sarovar Dam, since the urgency for a review of the

actual status of rehabilitation and environmental compliance seems more necessary at this stage. Such a review must involve all the concerned government agencies, the UNHRC, representatives of the people's movement in the Valley raising the cause of displaced over the past three decades, member of the civil society, experts, and independent social and human rights bodies.

We, being aware of the rising water levels, and that hundreds of people are ready to face the waters, appeal to the conscience of the concerned citizens and organizations to immediately recognize the grave violations and ensure that the Constitution of

India, and national and international law, is not transgressed.

We urge the United Nations, and in particular the UNHCR, International Labour Organization, and various UN human rights bodies to facilitate a comprehensive review of the Project, especially the social and environmental impacts and compliance, at the earliest, in the human interest. We urge these agencies to send their Special Rapporteurs on Housing Rights, Human Rights, Internal Displacement, Rights of Indigenous Communities and UNWOMEN to visit the affected areas of Sardar Sarovar Project in three western states of India, i.e. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat

immediately to assess the situation.

We warn the Indian authorities concerned that the world has not taken its eyes off the Narmada Valley; we are aware of the 30 years of people's struggle in Sardar Sarovar areas by indigenous people, plain-area farmers, landless, and others, and have been receiving alarming reports of grave human rights violations and internal displacement perpetrated by the State. We shall continue to raise our voices at various global fora and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by international law and binding on both the Indian Government and the United Nations.

Signed on this the 12th day of August 2015

We are,

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, Founder, SEKEM, Egypt; Swami Agnivesh, India; Uri Avnery, Founder, Gush Shalom, Israel; Dr. Maude Barlow, National Chairperson, Council of Canadians, Canada; Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, South Korea; Dr. Tony Clarke, Executive Director, Polaris Institute, Canada; Prof. Dr. Anwar Fazal, Director, Right Livelihood College, Malaysia; Basil Fernando, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong; Dr. Fernando Funes-Aguilar, Grupo de Agricultura Orgánica, Cuba; Ina May Gaskin, USA; Dr. Hans Herren, Founder of Biovision Foundation, Switzerland; Bianca Jagger, Founder and Chair, Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, Nicaragua/UK; Asma Jahangir, Pakistan; Augusto Junca, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST), Brazil; Bishop Erwin Kräutler, Brazil; Dr. Katarina Kruhonja, Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights-Osijek, Croatia; Ladakh Ecological Development Group, India; Birsal Lemke, Turkey; Hunter Lovins, Natural Capitalism Solutions, USA; Prof. Dr. h.c. (mult.) Manfred Max-Neef, Director, Economics Institute, Universidad Austral de Chile, Chile; Bill McKibben, Founder of 350.org, USA; Prof. Dr. Raúl A. Montenegro, President, Fundación para la defensa del ambiente, Argentina; Helen Mack Chang, Fundación Myrna Mack, Guatemala; Frances Moore Lappé, Co-Founder, Small Planet Institute, USA; Jacqueline Moudeina, Chad; Evaristo Nugkuag Ikanan, Instituto para el Buen Vivir, Peru; Juan Pablo Orrego, President, Ecosistemas, Chile; Physicians for Human Rights, Israel; Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative, Japan; Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan; Dr. Vandana Shiva, Navdanya, India; Suciwati, widow of Munir, Indonesia; Dr. Hanumappa Sudarshan, Karuna Trust & VGKK, India; Survival, International; Shrikrishna Upadhyay, Executive Chairman, Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal, Nepal; Janos Vargha and Judit Vásárhelyi, Hungary; Dr. Paul F. Walker, Director, Environmental Security and Sustainability, Green Cross International, USA; Alyn Ware, Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, New Zealand/Switzerland; Chico Whitaker Ferreira, Brazil; Alla Yaroshinskaya, Russia; Angie Zelter, Trident Ploughshares, United Kingdom

Nagasaki Peace Declaration

At 11:02am, on the 9th August 1945, a single atomic bomb instantly reduced Nagasaki to a ruin.

A vast amount of radiation passed through people's bodies, and the city was struck by heat rays and a blast that defy imagination. 74,000 of the city's population of 240,000 people were killed. A further 75,000 individuals sustained injuries. It was said that vegetation would not grow for at least 70 years. However, today, 70 years on, this hill in Urakami, which was once a ruin, is now enveloped in greenery. Nevertheless, those hibakusha, atomic bomb survivors, whose bodies were eaten away by radiation, and who continue to suffer from the aftereffects, can never forget that day.

The atomic bomb was born of war, and was used in war. The conviction that nuclear weapons must not exist, and that we must never go to war again, was deeply and powerfully engraved upon the hearts of the hibakusha, who know firsthand the fearsome destructive force of atomic bombs. The peaceful ideology of the Constitution of Japan was born from these painful and harsh experiences, and from reflection upon the war. Since the war, our country has walked the path of a peaceful nation. For the sake of Nagasaki, and for the sake of all of Japan, we must never change the peaceful principle that we renounce war.

Most of our population is now made up of the post-war generation. The memories of war are fast fading from our society. We must not forget the atomic bomb experiences of those in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Neither should we forget the air raids which destroyed Tokyo and many other cities, the Battle of Okinawa, nor the many people of Asia who suffered because of this tragic war. Now, 70 years on, it is vital that we continue to pass on those memories.

I ask that those of you who experienced the atomic bomb and the war in Japan and across the globe speak of your experiences, and not allow those memories to fade.

To the young generation, I ask that you do not push wartime experiences aside saying that they are stories of the past. Understand that the wartime generation tell you their stories because what they speak of could, in the future, happen to you as well. Therefore, please inherit their wish for peace. Please imagine what you would do in such circumstances, and ask yourself "What can I do for the sake of peace?" You, the young generation, have the power to transcend national borders and create new relationships.

The greatest power to realize a world without war and without nuclear weapons lies inside each and every one of us. Listen to stories of the war, sign petitions for nuclear abolition, and visit atomic bomb exhibitions. Together, these individual actions can create a much larger power. In Nagasaki, the younger generation, which includes second and third generation hibakusha, are inheriting the wish for peace and are taking action. Our individual strengths are the greatest power in realizing a world without war and without nuclear weapons. The power of civil society is the power to move governments, and to

move the world.

In May of this year, the "Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)" ended without the adoption of a Final Document. However, the efforts of those countries which are attempting to ban nuclear weapons made possible a draft Final Document which incorporated steps towards nuclear disarmament.

I ask the following of the heads of the NPT member states. Please do not let this Review Conference have been a waste. Please continue your efforts to debate a legal framework, such as a "Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC)", at every opportunity, including at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Many countries at the Review Conference were in agreement that it is important to visit the atomic-bombed cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Once again, I make a call from Nagasaki.

I address President Obama, heads of state, including the heads of the nuclear weapon states, and all the people of the world. Please come to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and see for yourself exactly what happened under those mushroom clouds 70 years ago. Please understand and accept the message of the hibakusha, who are still doing their best to pass on their experiences, not simply as "victims", but as "members of the human race".

I appeal to the Government of Japan. Please explore national

security measures which do not rely on nuclear deterrence. The establishment of a “Northeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ)”, as advocated by researchers in America, Japan, Korea, China, and many other countries, would make this possible. Fix your sights on the future, and please consider a conversion from a “nuclear umbrella” to a “non-nuclear umbrella”.

This summer, Nagasaki held the “International Youth Peace Forum”, where young people from 128 different countries and regions considered and discussed peace.

In November, Nagasaki will host the “Pugwash International Conference” for the first time. At this Conference, which was inspired by Albert Einstein, who understood the terror of nuclear weapons, scientists

from all over the world will gather, discuss the problem of nuclear weapons, and convey a message of peace from Nagasaki to the world.

“Peace from Nagasaki”. We shall continue to sow the seeds of peace as we treasure these words.

Furthermore, 4 years on from the Great East Japan Earthquake, Nagasaki continues to support the people of Fukushima who are suffering due to the accident at the nuclear power plant.

The Diet is currently deliberating a bill which will determine how our country guarantees its security. There is widespread unease and concern that the oath which was engraved onto our hearts 70 years ago and the peaceful ideology of the Constitution of Japan are now wavering. I urge the Government

–**Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki**

and the Diet to listen to these voices of unease and concern, concentrate their wisdom, and conduct careful and sincere deliberations.

This year, the average age of the hibakusha has now passed 80. I strongly request that the overnment of Japan fulfill its responsibility of providing substantial care that conforms to the actual needs of the hibakusha, and increase the extent of the area acknowledged as being exposed to the atomic bomb while those who were there are still alive.

We, the people of Nagasaki, offer our most heartfelt condolences to those who lost their lives to the atomic bomb. We hereby declare that together with the citizens of Hiroshima, we shall continue to use all our strength to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, and the realization of peace.

August 9, 2015

(Continued from Page 10)

‘writer’ in him ‘dead’ under fascist pressures. Without any evidence an intellectual and teacher like G. N. Saibaba was incarcerated in Nagpur jail in precarious health conditions. FTII students struggling for their democratic rights were arrested at midnight and every force is used to try and crush their movement. Debaranjan Sarangi, a filmmaker and human rights activist from Odisha was framed with false charges. And on the other side killers associated with the Ranveer Sena and Bajrang Dal - who boasted of massacres on camera - were let go scot-free and let out on bail respectively. What do all these country-wide incidences suggest?

It appears that there has been a torrent of such incidences as

mentioned above. Many times we don’t even get the information of prevalence of such repressions in different corners in India. It is possible to bring them in light only by building strong and united resistance against these dark times. This is precisely the reason why Cinema of Resistance does not look at incidence of muting ‘Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai..’ at Kirori Mal as an isolated incidence, rather it is observed as a dangerously fascist tendency that strangles the democratic spirit. Strong, committed resistance even by putting our lives at stake is the only possible mechanism to impede this trend. All progressive and democratic spirited citizens, artists, and intellectuals in this country have joined hands in this campaign by protest-screening of Nakul Singh

Sawhney’s film ‘Muzaffarnagar Baaqi Hai...’ on August 25th, 2015, to expose fascist forces.

–**Pragnya Joshi**

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- इकॉनॉमिक डेव्हलपमेंट फोरम तर्फे ग्लोबल अचिव्हर्स पुरस्कार फॉर बिझनेस लिडरशिप (२०१२)
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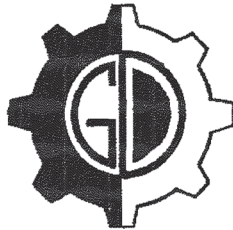
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Rajindar Sachar

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Sandeep Pandey

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Aurangzeb of Aurangzeb
Gopal Gandhi

Safe Cities and
Gender Budgeting
Vibhuti Patel

As the aliens
(are likely to) see us
Bharat Dogra

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Shadow of 1965 war

Kuldip Nayar

Democracies celebrate Magna Carta, not war victory. Such actions only encourage Bonaparteism and, in no way, strengthen the people's say. I was dismayed to see a full-page advertisement in newspapers to commemorate the victory in the 1965 war against Pakistan. The advertisement said: "The Indo-Pak War of 1965, which began on 05 August and ended on 23 September, is one of the biggest tank battles since World War-II. Pakistan launched troops inside Kashmir under Operation Gibraltar in early August 1965. Further operations were stalled when Indian Army captured the strategic Haji Pir Pass on 28 August, 1965. Pakistan then launched operation Grand Slam in Akhnoor sector, but India opened the Western front to counter the same. Pakistan's 1 Armoured Division was badly mauled in the Battle of Asal Uttar with nearly 100 tanks destroyed. Other major battles were fought at Poonch, Phillora, Barki and Dograi."

True, India had an upper hand but it was at best 55 per cent against 45 per cent. Lahore was the yardstick. We could not take it and had to bypass it. General J.N. Chaudhuri, who was

the Chief of Army Staff at that time, told me subsequently in an interview that he had never planned to occupy Lahore. It would have unnecessarily pinned down a large number of troops and we would have suffered heavy casualties. Pakistan, he said, would have defended the city with all its resources and fought us in every house, every street.

This may well be a valid explanation. Yet, the general impression is that India failed to take Lahore. A small contingent which reached the Ravi Bridge, bypassing Lahore, was severely crushed. General Chaudhuri's defence was that the march to the Ravi Bridge was neither authorized, nor did it figure in his scheme of things. This must be true. But the thinking of an average person is different. He believed that India lacked strength to occupy Lahore.

General Chaudhuri said that their main purpose was to destroy Pakistan's armour, particularly the Patton tank which America had given them. The Ichhogil Canal in the area came in handy. Indian troops breached it to let the water spread. The tanks got stuck in the water.

The question which remains unanswered is: Who was responsible for the 1965 war? General Mohammad Ayub Khan, who was then Pakistan's Marshal Law Administrator, and Commander-in-Chief told me that it was 'Bhutto's war'. Bhutto sent infiltrators into Kashmir, without taking him into confidence. In fact, General Ayub's son, Gohar Ayub, apart from confirming about what his father had said, went public with part of the information.

Gohar used to live in a palatial house in the suburbs of Islamabad. This was where he hosted a lunch for me. Mushahid Husain, then the editor of Muslim, had arranged it. I remember the day distinctly because I heard about the assassination of Indira Gandhi at Gohar's house. He spoke about her only for a while and that too cursorily.

In fact, Gohar was keen to tell me something which was not complimentary to our armed forces. His story was that our armour had chinks. I was sure it had. But I was taken aback when he said that a copy of topmost secret papers from India's military headquarters would be "with us before they reached Nehru's table".

Those days you could walk through South Block corridors from one end to the other in New Delhi. Security requirements had not yet blocked passage. Nor had gates been built within gates. How could a paper conceivably reach Pakistan intelligence agencies before a messenger covered a few yards to deliver it at Nehru's office?

At that time Gohar did not give the example of an Indian brigadier parting with the 1965 war plan for a sum of Rs 20,000. However, he did remark that his father was

"contemptuous of Indian officers selling their country for a few thousand rupees". I did not join issue with him because it was the first time I was hearing of any such thing. But I told Gohar about a remark his father had made against the Kashmiris when I met him in Islamabad in 1972. I had gone there to interview Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was briefly the president after Pakistan's debacle at Dhaka.

Ayub said Bhutto had assured him that the Kashmiris would rise in revolt once they knew the Pakistan army was in their midst. Ayub referred to the infiltrators as 'Bhutto's mujahideen'. According to Ayub, he told Bhutto that if he knew anything about Kashmiris, they would never raise the gun.

Gohar was wrong in saying that the reports on Kashmir reaching his
(Continued on Page 4)

Media's Mischief

Morning papers on 26th August last had flashed headlines saying that "Number of Hindus declined" The impact, intentional in case of some papers while un-intentional in others', was to add fuel to anti-Muslim sentiment that is being whipped by the Sangh Parivar. It is a favourite theme of those brigades to frighten the Hindus that they would, very soon, be outnumbered by the Muslims.

The figures given in that news item were as follows: As per the headcount 2011, number of Hindus was 96.63 crores (79.8 per cent) while that of the Muslims was 17.22 crores (14.2 per cent). Decennial growth rate for the country as a whole was 17.7 per cent. However, it was 16.8 per cent for the Hindus and 24.6 per cent for the Muslims. In fact growth rate for both the communities had declined, though that for the Muslims it was less than that for the Hindus.

Some would like to say that it is good that the rate of growth for both the communities is decreasing while others would like to emphasise that the decline in Muslim rate is very

slow while Hindus it is fast.

A candid person would like to point out that the area of the land of the country would remain the same as also quantity and supply of other natural resources. So the wise path for all Indians is to control population growth so that all children would be better fed, clothed and educated. If more Hindus are taking recourse to population control, the Muslims would not be far behind. It is heartening to note that many Muslim women are opting for family planning. It is obvious that educated men and women take to family planning

So, those who wish that rate of growth of population amongst the Muslims slows down soon should try to spread education in that community. In fact, that was the main recommendation of the Sachar Committee.

Our media would do well to help extension of educational facilities amongst the Muslims as also amongst the tribals whose rate of population growth needs to be discouraged considerably.

- Pannalal Surana

Most undemocratic act

Rajindar Sachar

Haryana Chief Minister Khattar has come out with most undemocratic and unconstitutional legislation - changes in Haryana Panchayat Act – providing that the candidates keen on contesting the forthcoming gram panchayat, panchayat samiti and zila parishad elections in Haryana will now have to produce their Class X certificates while women and SCs will need a Class VIII certificate to be eligible to contest.

In an unashamed defence of this most undemocratic step the government is putting forth the inane explanation that this decision was taken with a view to “improve quality of leadership and governance” at the grassroots level, and “this amendment would make elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions more accountable”. The Chief Minister is so sold out on this wisdom of his undemocratic step that he wants do it through ordinance route, thus avoiding the normal legislative step of full discussion in the assembly. Such a step would be illegal, considering that there is ample time to summon Legislative Assembly and also there is no such grave urgency warranting the ordinance route – the whole exercise would be null and void. No wonder the opposition has turned the action of Khattar as Tughlaki – stated in the ordinary language meaning arbitrary.

This so-called concern for educational qualification at Panchayat level ill befits Khattar’s loyalty and respect for the judgment and wisdom of his leader Modi, the Prime Minister, who does not feel embarrassed at all, rather he is aggressive in supporting his choice of appointing a Minister

of Human Resource Development and Education for India whose academic qualification is Higher Secondary School Certificate and similarly appointment to the reputed university like Rajasthan University of a teacher, who does not have a doctorate in academics (uptill now almost mandatory) minimum of qualification for Vice Chancellor’s post and also lacks the experience of having held the position of Principal for at least a year. Why does Khattar expect a certified educational qualification of Matriculate for being a Sarpanch who has the merit of people’s confidence in him/her?

This compulsory qualification of educational qualification at Panchayat level is obviously a ploy to disenfranchise mostly the poor and the deprived i.e. overwhelming population of Haryana. And this in the face of the fact that our election law up to parliamentary elections has no literacy qualification – a casual search will show many legislators with absence of this qualification which Khattar wants to impose at a Panchayat level.

In India this question of providing literacy as a qualification for membership of the State legislatures and Parliament was hotly debated in the Constituent Assembly when stalwarts like the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was strongly in favour of providing some minimum qualification for legislators. But Prime Minister Pt. Nehru, who caustically described such a move as totally undemocratic, rejected it. No one has since ever dared to put forward this undemocratic step in election law. It is only small local satraps like that in the feudal state of Rajasthan do that.

But to take up this step in Haryana, which in terms of economy and agricultural production is the envy of the nation is insulting to the dignity of the people of State.

As far back as 2002, the Supreme Court clearly laid down “True democracy cannot exist unless all citizens have a right to participate in the affairs of the polity of the country”. Again in 2003 the Supreme Court castigated the elite propaganda of preference for educated legislators thus; “To say that well-educated persons such as those having graduate and postgraduate qualifications will be able to serve the people better and conduct themselves in a better way inside and outside the House is nothing but overlooking the stark realities. The experience and events in public life and the legislatures have demonstrated that the dividing line between the well educated and less educated from the point of view of his/her caliber and culture is rather thin. Much depends on the character of the individual, the sense of devotion to duty and the sense of concern to the welfare of the people. These characteristics are not the monopoly of well-educated persons.”

Is it not inequitable and discriminatory that the State itself having failed to carry out its mandate of Article 21A of Constitution to provide education should, instead of being ashamed, penalize 50 per cent of voters from casting their vote and fight election which is a guaranteed right under Article 19 of the Constitution. There is no equity in denying eligibility for panchayat election if he or she is not educated upto Matric or 8th Class.

The exclusion of those who did not have an opportunity of formal education, being the victims of State callousness, could not have been denied participation in democratic institutions on the ground that they being poor could not afford education on their own and do not have educational qualifications – this would be arbitrary, irrational and unreasonable. It is fallacy to assume that the financial and administrative tasks of local government require formal education. As the disqualification prescribed by the Ordinance deprives a large section of the society to participate in the

democratic institution of Panchayati Raj, and runs counter to the objectives of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, it may be declared as unconstitutional by the Court of law.

This law will run counter to the purpose and intent of Article 243 – Part IX of the Constitution, a radical step which makes Panchayats at the village level the real foundation for our democratic government because this law will deny 50 per cent of the population of the village from self-governance - a basic foundation for Gandhi slogan of “Gram Panchayat Raj” and the equally revolutionary

call for real democracy in the slogan of Dr. Lohia, the socialist leader, of “four pillar state”, of village, District, State and Centre.

This undemocratic step taken by Haryana points to the inherent philosophy of R.S.S., the fountain head of BJP leadership that the governance should be in the hands of elitist caste, rather than with the masses, the real masters in a democracy. We must not overlook or ignore this devious thinking in our political life.

(Continued from Page 2)

father were ‘doctored’. His father has himself told me that Bhutto never took him into confidence on the scale of infiltration. (Ironically, that’s exactly what Nawaz Sharif, in exile at Jeddah, told me about Pakistan’s misadventure at Kargil). Pakistan’s attack in ‘65 began with hundreds of infiltrators—mujahids (liberators), as Bhutto, then Pakistan’s foreign minister, hailed them—stealing into Kashmir.

The report of the intrusion first appeared in the Indian press on August 9, 1965, along with

Ayub’s assurance to Kewal Singh, while accepting his credentials as India’s high commissioner at Rawalpindi, that Pakistan would reciprocate every move from India for better cooperation. He argued that infiltration into Kashmir was not the same thing as infiltration into India. The ‘uprising’ that Pakistan expected to foment failed because local Kashmiris did not help the infiltrators. And when I interviewed Bhutto, he did not deny Ayub’s allegation that the 1965 war was his doing. However, he said that he has “learnt a lesson and would not

repeat it.”

If at all New Delhi was keen to talk about the 1965 war victory, however limited, it should have dwelt more into the benefits of being a democratic state instead of violence and weapons. India’s advantage is that sovereignty remains with the people. In Pakistan, the interest of the armed forces comes first. New Delhi cannot export democracy, but it should help Pakistan get back the rule where the people have the final say.

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Illegal stone crushing in mirzapur

Sandeep Pandey

In Mirzapur District of U.P., neighbouring Varanasi and merely 40 km from BHU, illegal stone crushing, cutting and pokland machines have been operating on a massive scale and quite blatantly. Blasting occurs daily in the hills to loosen the stones, which is illegal. A couple of local residents Surendra Singh and Parasnath Yadav used the Right to Information Act, 2005 to ask the District Magistrate whether any permission was granted to the crushing, cutting and pokland machines and blasting. They also asked for guidelines set for carrying out these activities by the U.P. Pollution Control Board. A reply dated 15 December 2014 gives a list of 68 seized units of crushing and cutting plants by officials. A list of 17 crushing plant units and 11 cutting plant units found operating according to norms is also given. A total of 108 units of crushing and cutting plants have been established in the district. A reply dated 4 March, 2015 clearly says that no NOC has been given to anybody for carrying out explosions in the hills but the licences of two people who were authorized for carrying out blasting, Brikeshwar Pratap Singh and Saumitra Maurya, expired on 24 June, 2012 and 11 February, 2014 respectively. Another reply dated 19 June, 2015 says that crushing and pokland machines have no permission. All these replies indicate that majority of the stone crushing and cutting machines and all pokland machines operating and all explosions taking place daily are illegal. It is simply amazing how illegal activities are going on on such

a humungous scale and there is no authority willing to take any action against these.

The U.P. Pollution Control Board norms require the crushing machines to be located at least 1 km away from a human habitation, 400 m distance between two crushing machines, 50 m distance from the boundary wall of campus, 500 m from highway and 300 m from other roads, 3 km from national parks, sanctuaries and orchards, 500 m from river flood zone area, all roads inside the unit to be tarred, 33 per cent land to be planted with trees, water sprinkling on ground and minimum 1 hectare land for the plant. The owner will have to make arrangements to control the dust and noise pollution on his own.

Enthused by the abovementioned replies from the office of DM and Mining officer, on 26 July, 2015 about a thousand residents of Dhuria, Madachak, Jigna, Hussainpur, Bagahiya, Dakhi, Anandipur, Paigambarpur, Kanchanpur, Baradih and Bindpurwa villages in the Ahraura regoin came out on street and took out a march and stopped all the illegal activities by arriving at the site and asking the companies or contractors to shut down their activities. All illegal activities were temporarily suspended for some days and the owners fled. However, owner of a crushing plant Amarnath Singh lodged a complaint against the people who had forced the closure of stone units and a FIR was promptly registered on 27 July, 2015 against Parasnath Yadav and ten others by

name and hundreds of unknown people at the Ahraura Police station under sections 147, 323, 504, 506, 427, 336 of IPC and 7 Criminal Law (amendment) Act, 1932. This was a retaliatory measure by the owners of the stone units.

The FIR has acted as a motivating factor for people for further mobilization. Hundreds of people in tractor trolleys arrived at the Chunar tehsil and asked the SDM to take back the FIR on 12 August, 2015. They also demand that the administration permanently stop all the illegal stone crushing, cutting, pokland machines and explosion activities which are a threat to environment, employment, health, pregnant human and animal mothers, trees, crops, soil, education of children, housing structures and life itself. Among health related problems T.B., respiratory, heart and mental illnesses are common. The production of fruit trees and food grains has been seriously affected. Beacuse of the illegal nature of activities the government is also losing revenue. Gram Pradhans of villages Dhuria, Jigna, Kanchanpur, Madapur Dakhi and Baradih have endorsed the people's action.

The FIR was to cow down the people's movement. Slowly the units which were shut down by people are beginning to start again as the administration clearly doesn't want to act against the illegal units.

Some people raise the question that shutting down these activities will take away employment from

Land ordinance withdrawal

people. The solution proposed by people at the forefront of movement to stop the illegal activities is to form workers' cooperatives and given the contract to break stone manually, as used to happen before the arrival of machines. About one and half lakh labourers were unemployed after the mechanization of entire operation.

The above example forces us to think about what kind of technology is desirable? The massive scale of exploitation of natural resources at an extraordinarily fast pace like mentioned above is going on to feed the juggernaut of 'development.' But this is causing immense damage to the human life and environment. How much are we willing to compromise? What is more important for us? A replica of the western model of development which makes life comfortable for a few at the expense of vast majority or a development which is more suited to our needs, is more inclusive, ensures employment to all and causes least damage to environment? While greed is what determines the choice of former, wisdom is the basis for choosing latter. Mahatma Gandhi has very succinctly brought out this debate in his classical piece of writing 'Hind Swaraj.'

Mahatma Gandhi opposed mechanisation to the extent that it became a threat to the employment of people. He has been misrepresented as opposing all machines. He used to spin regularly. The spinning wheel is a compact mechanical device. The drawing of thread from cotton using a spinning wheel has been one among the greatest inventions of humankind which put clothes on human body. Gandhi was in favour of using machines which would give employment to people.

The announcement by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his *mannke baat* that NDA government won't re-promulgate the land ordinance symbolises the victory of people's movements. Since the time government promulgated land ordinance in the last week of December 2014, farmers and peasants, forests dwellers, adivasis and numerous others have showed their steadfast opposition to the ordinance and demanded no less than repeal of the ordinance. NAPM in its submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee not only demanded the withdrawal of the ordinance but also asked for addition of many other provisions to the 2013 Act, which will protect land rights and also address the woes and sufferings of the millions who have been displaced in the country in the name of development and national interest, post-independence.

On the face of it, Bihar Elections are being said as the reason for this political decision; however, it is the massive opposition to the corporate designs of the Modi government by the people of this country, which has forced the government to reverse its decision. Political parties in opposition have played a crucial role inside the Parliament but ultimately it is the strength of the people's movements and farmers organisations on the ground which has forced the government to take back the ordinance.

Now that it is clearly proved that this government will go to any lengths in order to please its corporate masters, it remains the

primary onus of people's movements to ensure a constant vigilance on attempts of endangering the rights and livelihoods of millions of India's agricultural workers and farmers. What remains to be seen is proper implementation of LARR 2013 at the state-level and not encourage them to bypass the Central Act and frame their own legislations as done by the State of Gujarat and Odisha. The Central government needs to ensure that the LARR 2013 is uniformly applied to states and the rights of the people are protected.

Even as we wait for the government to come up with the notification on application of 2013 Act to 13 central Acts, we also look forward to the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, which debated and discussed the submissions made by different stakeholders, majority of which rejected the proposals of the government.

We are aware of the dangers posed by this government and are prepared to fight their nefarious designs to promote corporate loot of the natural resources. From the banks of Narmada we have called for National Bhu AdhikaarjanVikasYatra across the country and we will mobilise the masses to stand up for their rights as Narmada Bachao Andolan have done for last thirty years. We will not only let any forcible acquisition happen but also we will protest any attempt to forcibly displace people in the name of public interest, which is most often private interest now, in rural or urban areas.

—MedhaPatkar, Prafulla Samantara , Lingraj Azad and others

Why we should oppose the Aurangzebing of Aurangzeb

Gopal Gandhi

Aurangzeb was a despot.

He not only imprisoned his ailing father, the Fifth Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, but had all three of his brothers—the heir-apparent Dara Shukoh, Shah Shuja and Murad, murdered. ‘Murdered’ is to put it mildly. Both confident and insecure, Aurangzeb then went on to ensure his hegemony as the Sixth Emperor by having Dara’s son Sulaiman, imprisoned and poisoned in a slow and tortuous procedure that made the future Crown Prince mad before death claimed him.

He also set an example to all dissenters by having the free-thinking mystic Sarmad beheaded at the Jama Masjid, Delhi, for blasphemy, the Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur executed for objecting to conversions and the leader of the Maratha Confederacy, Sambhaji, caught and killed for just being what he was.

Apart from what he did to those he felt were a threat to him, Aurangzeb presided over a Hindustan where Hindus and Sikhs were not just second class citizens but a scared and persecuted people.

Contemporary historians have tried to see Aurangzeb in a more nuanced light than those who documented his tyrannical rule in sharp terms. His later years, they say, were sublimated by a measure of self-pity and even remorse. And he remained personally austere. For his own personal expenses he is said to have sewn caps and calligraphed copies of the Quran.

Contrasting sharply from his father’s architectural marvel, the Taj Mahal, Aurangzeb’s own open-air grave is an austere affair, in a courtyard of the shrine of a sufi saint, in Khuldabad, near Aurangabad where he died. But no historian can explain away Aurangzeb’s sadistic 49 years’ rule.

That the British Raj wanted to feel and be seen as a successor of the Mughals as a royal genre, is clear. The Viceroy’s House, now Rashtrapati Bhavan, facing the Purana Qila, was intended to be a new Fort, grander even, than the Red Fort. That city-planners should have named roads in Lutyens’ New Delhi after the Mughal Emperors is no matter of surprise. With Babur, Humayun, Akbar and Shah Jahan (Jehangir having been skipped in absent-mindedness) Aurangzeb got a road to him as well, a long and leafy road that connected other such roads and led to many important houses, official and privately-owned including Number 10 that Mohammed Ali Jinnah owned.

Many have felt – and suggested – that Aurangzeb’s unfortunate but hugely inspirational brother, the heir-apparent Dara Shukoh, should have a road named after him in New Delhi. The syncretic prince who had the Upanishads translated into Persian and wrote the *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (“The Confluence of the Two Seas”) on the subject of mystical and pluralistic affinities between Sufi and Vedantic speculation, fits seamlessly into the plural ethos of the Constitution of India. To have a

road or public building named after him would be as natural in the capital of the Republic of India as naming roads after the Mughal Emperors was natural in Lutyens’ time.

But not even the most ardent of Dara scholars and enthusiasts, whose number rises all the time, ever thought of suggesting that Aurangzeb Road be re-named, much less that it be re-named Dara Shukoh Road. That would be a most un-Dara thing to suggest, apart from being puerile history and childish civic planning.

A proposal to re-name Aurangzeb Road into something, anything, else could have come from Jana Sangh or BJP controlled local bodies in New Delhi in past years. It could have come from the Vajpayee-led NDA government. It is a tribute to the maturity and balance of those administrations that they did not waste their time and complicate road users’ comfort levels by doing any such thing. In fact, it is inconceivable that Atal Bihari Vajpayee would have permitted any such idea to proceed an inch.

The news that Aurangzeb Road is to be re-named now, is both a surprise and no surprise. Surprise because mature people are not expected to act immaturely. No surprise because mature people can act like they have never read history. Decaying dynasties used to see upstarts and putatives issue fresh coins with new insignia, unveil new heraldry, over-write their hollow names and styles on ancient rock,

to smudge out the old, using the grand old surfaces to carry a new firman, a new edict. The shallower the claimant, the coarser the metal of the coin, the cruder the new scrawl over the old.

Re-naming roads is about the most immature and least convincing sign of authority. It is invariably the accoutrement of new power. For the first time since India became a Republic, an elected dispensation is being showcased by its smiling pickthank supporters as a Badshah Salamat, no less, a modern Company Bahadur, that is inaugurating not a new government but a new chapter, an era, an epoch.

A new font is being carved, if not a new script, for our nationhood. Dissenters must be on notice,

historians on alert. Political scientists on a sabbatical, philosophers on furlough. The age of analysis is over, the age of adherence is come. To question is treason, to accept is wisdom.

Aurangzeb is to be seen as a ghoul not because he was a ghoul but because he was a ghoul on 'that side'. That cannot, of course, be said too loud. Let us behead him post mortem now, the argument goes, and no one can fault us for he was such a be-header was he not, a murderer of the good and the great who were from...not too loudly...our side. And, really, there has to be a God above. Surely, a God with a sense of Breaking News. Just when we would have liked to do a de-capitation of that road-name, He comes, Praise be to Him, in the shape of a Tribute

that we must pay to one from the other side, no doubt, but one who did and said all the right things. And the felicity! We don't even have to paint the first letter in the name.

What a cleverness hides in that calculation !

The Muslims cannot object. How can they? If they do they would be both un-faithful and un-patriotic. The Hindus will never object. And after a while all will be using A P J Abdul Kalam Marg as if the road has always been named after that honest son of Rameshwaram. How utterly clever!

But is it really?

As one who despises everything that Aurangzeb did to his family and to his populace, I add my voice to that of those who oppose the Aurangzebing of Aurangzeb not because Aurangzeb was repugnant but because Aurangzebiyat is repugnant. He is not in fact being executed in this act; he is being brought to life again. Through the hidden but deep sympathies – completely misguided – that this will give rise to among Muslims in India for that bigot. Through the deep antipathies – completely uncalled for – that this will occasion for India in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Through fear of a new Aurangzebean censorship that could turn to paint away or overpaint all signs and symbols of free expression that displeases Alamgiri.

The re-naming of Aurangzeb Road has little to do with the veenaplaying, vegetarian visionary A P J Abdul Kalam. It has everything to do with rites of purification, of shuddhi. This rite will be performed, if the new Divan-e-Khas so wishes, whenever and wherever it wishes,

(Continued on Page 15)

Citizens For Democracy, 'CFD' in short, is shocked that the New Delhi Municipal council, NDMC in short, has decided to rename the 'Aurangzeb Road' in New Delhi as the 'Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road'. The said decision is totally illegal, unjustified, arbitrary and against our constitutional ethos. It appears to be guided by not reason and law but by narrow communal consideration.

It is well known that a section in BJP has long been agitating to change the name of Aurangzeb Road to some other names but each time this proposal has failed. For example in October 2014 BJP had requested NDMC to rename the name of 'Aurangzeb Road' to 'Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh Road' but it was not allowed. On 17th December, 2014 Shri Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Minister

of State for Home Affairs, made a statement on behalf of the Home Ministry that Aurangzeb Road could not be renamed since the policy is not to rename any road named after a historical figure. Thus as per guidelines of the government, the name of the 'Aurangzeb Road' cannot be changed. The memory of Dr.Abdul Kalam could have been better served by building a scientific or educational institute under his name.

We therefore demand that NDMC should immediately withdraw that decision and not take any step for implementing the said decision.

A notice in this respect has already been sent to the concerned authorities on behalf of the Citizens For Democracy.

Kuldip Nayar
President, C.F.D.

Rajindar Sachar

N.D.Pancholi
Secretary, C.F.D.

Safe cities and gender budgeting

Vibhuti Patel

Urbanisation often goes hand in hand with a rise in urban violence and crime that manifests in terms of street harassment of women and girls, stalking, sexual violence, blackmailing and extortion rackets. Children and women are seen as soft spots who can be victimized by predators. One such incident in the city is enough and the feeling of insecurity is spread like wild fire. It not only frightens girls and women, it controls every act they consider doing then onwards.

Town planners, policy makers and budget experts need to do gender budgeting incorporating facets such as women-friendly civic infrastructure - water, sanitation, health care, safe transport, public toilets, helplines, skill development for crisis management and safety at work place. While making budgets for social defense services, consideration must be given to safety of girls and women in schools and colleges in terms of prevention of child sexual abuse through public education and counselling facilities, separate toilets for girls and boys in schools, legal literacy on Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2012 and Prevention of Sexual Harassment Workplace Act, 2013, special cells in the police department to take action against display of pornographic images, SMS messages, cybercrimes that victimize young girls at public places, in public transport - buses, local trains, rickshaws and taxis. Installation of panic buttons for customers in rickshaws and taxis need to be made mandatory in

all cities. Women vendors and child workers, women employees working in the night shifts are highly exposed to unwanted sexual advances and petty harassment. Hence, budgetary allocation for referral centres/information desks should be provided in markets and public places. This will also reduce trafficking of children and women separated from their family members and sleeping at night at railway stations, bus stations and footpaths.

Conflicts in the city make women unsafe. Hostility between rival groups is played on bodies of women and girls in the form of rape, sexual harassment, provocation for physical assaults. Insular existence harms community spirit. Fear psychosis about safety of girls also increases incidences of child marriages. More budget allocation is needed for efficient running of Police Helplines -103, 1091- with the help of professional counsellors. To run one-stop crisis centres within public hospitals for women survivors of violence, there needs to make financial provision for salaries for doctors, counselling, emergency shelter and legal aid. Along with financial allocation, transparent guidelines for post trauma care, counseling, rehabilitation, compensation need to be provided so that funds can be used judiciously.

Infrastructure and safety

From the point of view of macroeconomic policy, gender friendly infrastructure plays pivotal role in creating gender friendly cities. City planners need to make

budgetary provision for safe housing and night shelter for homeless women, half way homes for elderly women, information desk for women and children at railway stations/buses.

Road widening for four-wheelers and heavy vehicles have taken toll of pavements. Many women who have to walk on the streets get harassed by men in moving two-wheelers, three-wheelers, four-wheelers and trucks. Proper foot paths for pedestrians, vendors and hawkers whose presence ensures safety must be given as much importance as construction of bridges and flyovers. Budgetary allocation for installation of CCTV cameras must be made at all public places, highways and streets in the business hubs. Proper street lighting in the peripheral areas of the city is vital for safety of citizens, especially women, children and senior citizens. Regular safety audit by citizen's forum is important to identify unsafe areas. Safe, clean and free toilets for women at railway stations, bus stops, markets, public places are urgently required in the cities. Budgetary allocation for gender sensitization workshops for police personnel is important to change the mindset of 'victim-blaming' among them.

Feeling safe is to feel protected. It is a feeling of well-being which can envelop a family, a community, a neighbourhood and a city. Its composition is hard to decipher, but it is an all-encompassing feeling of calm which is often as invisible as clean unpolluted air and, inversely, when fear and anxiety take its

place, that feeling is as palpable as though it was a physical reality. Safe cities ensure more freedom, less confinement and enhance women's opportunities to travel to attain education-job-career.

With this perspective in mind, Urban Local Self Government Bodies (ULSGBs) have to work for gender budgeting. Striving for 'Gender friendly' cities have become a strategic objective of the urban planners, policy makers and practitioners. Citizens' fora, community based organizers and NGOs are publicly debating the issues concerning revenue generation and public expenditure of the urban bodies with gender lens. Right to information has proved to be an important tool in the hands of civil society for transparency in public expenditure.

Municipal budgets

In municipality, the Accounts Superintendent tables statement for income and expenditure in December. Also he/she gives estimates of income and expenditure for the financial year end and seeks responses from Municipal commissioner, president of Municipality, and standing committee. Portion for committed fund can't be changed by councillors at the time of final approval. Revision of property tax takes place once in four years. We need to integrate safety of women as a major concern in flagship centrally sponsored schemes such as JNNURM, PMSSY, NUHM are supposed to have 30 per cent of funds as Women's Component.

For the past 15 years, gender economists and women's groups are making efforts to answer the following questions:

- How to enable women to direct

economy through designing and constructing fiscal policy?

- How to link economic governance to political governance?
- How to enable EWRs to participate in the budget-making efforts?

They have used methods of Participatory Appraisal and Focus Group Discussion to identify gender concerns.

Macro-economic policies

Trend analysis of allocation to social sector in the pre(before 1991)- and post(after 1991)-structural Adjustment Programme phase has revealed that poor women have suffered the most due to drastic budgetary cuts in Public Distribution System (PDS) and public health, safe public transport and child care facilities, food security, drinking water and sanitation. There is no gender mainstreaming with respect to safety of women in the budgets of ULSGBs.

Gender sensitive budget demands re-prioritisation of financial allocations by municipal bodies in favour of

- Working women's hostels, crèches, cheap eating facilities, public toilets
- Women friendly and safe public transport - local trains, Metro, buses
- Housing - subsidized for single/ deserted/ divorced/ widowed women
- Nutrition - strengthening PDS, mid-day meals
- Health - abolition of user fees for BPL population, one stop crisis centre in public hospital for women/girls survivors of violence linked with shelter homes
- Skill training centres for women and tailor made courses
- Safe drinking water in the

community centres

- Waste management - technological upgradation - Occupational health and safety of recycling workers/ rag pickers
- Proper electrification in the communities
- Multipurpose Community centres, half way homes for elderly and mentally disturbed women

Revenue generation

Several state governments have sent GRs regarding allocation of 5 per cent of total revenues for women and children. This should be increased to 10 per cent. Kerala has done this. Moreover, ULSGBs can raise revenues by heavy taxes on tobacco, alcohol, private vehicles and entertainment industry. Portion of fine collected for causing damage to environment (introduction of Green Tax), high speed driving, wrong parking and breaking rules can be used for welfare of women and children.

Surcharge, earmarked charge for specific purpose such as Education Cess - 2 per cent of salary, income tax for disaster management has raised revenues for urban ULSGBs. In Maharashtra, transport cess at the time of Bangladesh war in 1971 was later on diverted to EGS kitty.

Meetings with the stake holders

ULSGBs should organize discussion on needs identified by Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) with GOs, NGOs and SHGs. They should be made aware of socio-economic profile of the Municipality. The ward officers should ensure scrutiny of needs and perceived problems by impartial experts who can also suggest methods to fulfil needs (labour, land, services). Financial aspects of

programmes and projects should be discussed in a transparent manner.

Civil society groups must be allowed to give their opinions on suitable budgetary allocations and generation of revenues from local sources. They can verify/cross check collected data and results of the surveys/interactive workshops and prepare a vision document. Sub-committees can work out details of different budget heads and it must have all stake groups of the ward. Presentation of reports of these sub-committees should be made through EWRs to the municipal authorities. Currently women's groups are lobbying for reprioritization of allocation to reflect women's interests. e.g. financial allocation for implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Pre-conception and pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation) Act, utilisation of funds earmarked for Swadhar scheme for women in difficult circumstances and working women's hostels in urban centres.

Women's groups are discussing micro economics involved in dealing with problems faced by women at ward levels such as drinking water, health centers, garbage-disposal and are moving beyond grievance redressal. Women's groups such as Anandi (Ahmedabad), Alochana (Pune), Stree Mukti Sangathana (Mumbai), National alliance of women's Organisations (Bhubaneshwar), Sagamma Srinivas Foundation (Bangalore), Action India (Delhi) are organizing workshops for awareness about technicalities of budget, building knowledge about programmes, schemes, projects under different departments, gathering procedural information about critical issues/

felt needs, skills of proposal writing. Stack groups in support of EWRs are Self Help Groups, gender sensitive administrators, corporators/councilors, individuals within political parties, NGOs and Women in the communities. They make efforts to seek allocation under appropriate budget heads to identify streams of revenue, available revenue and the required expenditure.

Some unresolved issues

- Decision-makers in the ULSCBs need to address the following issues demanding urgent attention:
- How to bridge the gap between notional allocation and actual allocation?
- Accounting, auditing and record keeping of gender disaggregated data and allocation
- How to achieve physical and performance/achievement targets?
- Implementation of maternity benefits, Tribal Sub Plan, Scheduled Caste Plan for the urban poor
- Major departments claiming indivisibilities of allocation of resources
- Notional allocation projected as real allocation
- Absence of uniform guidelines and procedures

Process of gender budgeting demands special programmes targeting women based on enumeration of differential impact of expenditures across all sectors and services-gender disaggregated impact on literacy, school drop outs, mortality, morbidity, malnutrition, illnesses, safety and security. Hence, they need to ensure the review of equal opportunity policies and opportunities in the public sector-

jobs, school education, wages, health care, skills, technical training, and computer education.

Allocation and expenses of resources for women in Panchayat Budgets:

- National Institute of Public Finance and Policy has recommended the following classification of financial allocation on schemes and programmes for gender audit as well as gender budgeting.
- Women specific schemes where 100 per cent of the allocation is required to be spent on women targeted by Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Pro-women schemes where at least 30 per cent of allocation and benefits flow to women, e.g. all anti-poverty programmes.
- Gender Neutral Schemes meant for community as a whole (Employment generation programmes, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)
- Residual schemes for disaster management

All India Institute of Local Self Government gives details of all schemes under these four categories through its publications, workshops and training programmes. Moreover, it also teaches the elected representatives the efficient ways of programme implementation through budgeting from below.

Enhance budgetary Protective and welfare services

These are the schemes directly benefiting women for crisis management of situations arising out of economic and socio-cultural subordination and dehumanisation of women such as shelter homes, short stay homes and rehabilitation schemes for women survivors of

violence, pensions for widows and destitute women, help lines.

Increase in budgetary allocation for Social Services Expenditure for capacity building, reduction of domestic drudgery and better quality of life for girls and women primary, secondary and higher education and vocational training for school/college dropout girls, overall health needs of girls and women from womb to tomb, Crèche, Working women's hostels, Housing, Nutrition, Water supply, Sanitation-toilets, drainage, fuel, waste management and safe public transport.

Quantum leap in budgetary allocation for Economic Services to provide economic opportunities to women

- SHGs-credit, loans to self-employed women
- Training programmes-Vocational training in Sunrise sectors. E.g. Biotechnology, IT, etc.
- Physical infrastructure-transport, energy
- Urban housing-10 % reserved flats/tenements for single women
- Marketing facilities for women entrepreneurs & self-employed women- 10% of shops reserved for businesswomen, women vendors/traders in municipal markets, women's *haats /bazars*
- Public Toilets for women without user fees
- Safe and efficient transport for working women and women vendors

Budgetary allocation for Regulatory Services to put in place institutional structures and mechanisms:

- State Commission for Women/ Municipal Commission for Women
- Women Development Cell in

municipal bodies

- Budgetary allocation and space for ward-wise WDC for prevention of sexual harassment of women in the organised and unorganised sectors
- Women's cell at the police stations, local self-government bodies' offices, municipal hospital and schools
- Awareness generation programmes on women's legal rights and gender sensitization of government employees, officers, law and order machinery and citizens
- Implementation of Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic (Regulation) Act (2002), Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2005), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012), Prevention of Sexual Harassment of women at Workplaces Act (2013)

Need of an Hour

State governments must devolve substantive powers, funds, functions and functionaries upon urban LSG bodies. The central government should strive for simplifications of programme guidelines by central ministries and departments regarding women specific schemes- Swadhar, working women's hostels, maternity benefits for BPL, etc. Moreover, centrally sponsored Schemes must be recast to empower municipal bodies. PRIs must get untied funds to formulate plans according to their needs and priorities. Structures and mechanisms for RTI Act must be put in place to sort out problems concerning utilisation of funds allocated for area development. To avoid urban unrest and guarantee socio-economic justice, at least 100 days of employment at minimum wages must be provided under EGS in all urban centres.

Financial Matters and PRIs

Elected representatives, ward officials and NGOs working in the area should act as facilitators in preparation of the plan for area development and social justice. The UN system has supported allocation of resources for women in PRIs, right from the beginning. "The evidence on gender and decentralisation in India thus suggests that while women have played a positive role in addressing, or attempting to address, a range of practical gender needs, their impact on strategic gender needs is not remarkable." Hence, EWRs deserve to be empowered to address the strategic gender needs.

There is a need for provisions in the composite programmes under education, health and skill development to target them specifically at girls/women as the principal beneficiaries and disaggregated within the total allocation. It may also be necessary to place restrictions on their re-appropriation for other purposes.

Conclusion

Budgets garner resources through the taxation policies and allocate resources to different sections of the economy. Budget is an important tool in the hands of state for affirmative action for improvement of gender relations through reduction of gender gap in the development process. It can help to reduce economic inequalities, between men and women as well as between the rich and the poor. Hence, the budgetary policies need to keep into considerations the gender dynamics operating in the economy and in the civil society. There is a need to highlight participatory approaches to pro-poor

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Patel demand for reservation is an eruption against growth that has not been inclusive or accommodative

Ghanshyam Shah

The vast and unprecedented mobilisation of young, middle-class Patels, or Patidars, as seen at the Kranti Rally on August 25, is a symptom of the unrest simmering in a globalised Gujarat. The government's repeated projection of Gujarat as a state where "all is well" has been undermined by the scale and strength of this protest, which took the government, political parties and the media by surprise. Among all the castes in Gujarat, the unity of the Patidars — which often publicly manifests as caste patriotism — is taken as a given in the public discourse. This perception has been reinforced by the half-million strong demonstration organised on Tuesday, where Patidars from all parts of the state came together to shout slogans like "Jai Sardar" and "Jai Patidar". They demand that the government either extend OBC reservations to Patidars or abolish the caste-based reservation system altogether. It should be noted here that the Patidars were the first community in India to launch anti-reservation movements against the Dalits and Adivasis, and later against Gujarat's OBCs, in 1981 and 1985. Later, community leaders, under the guidance of the RSS and VHP, shrewdly diverted the agitation, so it morphed into one against Muslims. Non-resident Gujaratis who live abroad have also extended moral and material support, much as they did to the Sangh Parivar's Hindutva agenda.

The upsurge comprises the well-off and dominant Leuva and Kadva Patidars. They constitute around 12

per cent of the state's population and are the single-largest community among rich and middle-class peasants. Since the last quarter of the 19th century, well-off Patidars have been investing their agricultural surpluses in business, industry and also in skill development. High rates of migration in the community, first to Africa and later to the UK and the US, have added to their prosperity. Indeed, in that sense they are a model community others have tried to emulate. There is an almost universal aspiration among Patidars to go to the US for economic purposes. Those who cannot settle abroad look to get white-collar jobs or become industrialists.

However, in urban areas, except for a few well-established professionals and entrepreneurs, the majority are white- or blue-collar employees, or self-employed or casual, skilled labourers in textile or diamond factories. The diamond industry has been a mainstay of the community — eight in 10 diamonds in the world are said to be cut and polished in Surat and in other towns and villages in Gujarat. But for the last several months, the industry has been in deep crisis. Several units have closed down, and a large number of diamond workers have been retrenched, which has contributed to the current unrest in the Patidar community.

Similarly, though advances in irrigation have meant that agricultural growth in Gujarat over the last decade has been high at around 8 per cent per annum, this

growth has not been inclusive. Small and marginal farmers have been left behind, and the head of every third Patidar household is a small and marginal farmer, and/or a landless labourer. He grapples with the constant tension of high aspirations and wretched living conditions. Poor farmers don't have enough resources to invest in farming and incur debt. Hardik Patel, the leader of the agitation, highlighted cases of farmer suicide. The government has been guilty of ignoring the phenomenon. The poor have desperately tried to get non-farm employment in nearby urban areas and dream of joining the urban middle class. But urban growth, though impressive, has been unable to absorb and accommodate these rising aspirations. It is true that economic growth, largely in the manufacturing sector, is higher than in many other states. But the quality of available employment does not meet the expectations of young people. The growth in employment comes largely from the informal sector, where there is no social security. Wages in Gujarat are lower than in most other states. Even in the formal sector, more often than not, employment is casual or contractual. Insecurity haunts most young employees. In such a situation, government employment is perceived by frustrated young Patidars as the only secure and dignified position available. In fact, the number of these government positions is also shrinking, though paradoxically many sanctioned posts remain vacant for years. But these young people want simply to claim

something that they perceive others, lower in caste status, are entitled to.

As the aliens (are likely to) see us

Bharat Dogra

The aspirational young want admission in professional courses, particularly in medicine or information technology, at well-reputed institutions, so they can acquire status and wealth. The grouse of the angry and agitated Patidar youth is that he is deprived of that opportunity, because these “others” with less marks are admitted to these institutions because of quotas. His grievance is that he has to pay high fees to attend private colleges because government offices are closed to him. The number of government-aided institutions has also stagnated over time, while the number of self-financed colleges has increased. Seats in government colleges increased 31 per cent from 2001 to 2015, while in self-financed colleges, the proportion of seats increased over 600 per cent during the same period. Fees in the latter are six to seven times those in the former, at an average of Rs 6,000 for a government college and around Rs 4 lakh for a private college. It is beyond the reach of most middle-class families, unless one incurs debt. So the Patidar envies those who get admission on reserved seats.

Moreover, Patidars have harboured ambitions of migrating to the US for years. Their relatives settled there and improved their social status, and they wish to imitate that advancement. But the opportunities for that, too, are sinking, which adds fuel to the fire. Then, in the last year, the Narendra Modi government’s promise of “achhe din” and jobs does not seem to have been fulfilled, further exacerbating their anger.

-The Indian Express

In the recent hit film PK, one reason why the audience found the alien from another planet played by Aamir Khan so interesting was the questions he raised about several incongruities and absurdities of our everyday life. These are now so much interwoven into our daily life that we take these for granted, but stand aside to reflect for a while, and these are actually revealed to be not just absurd but often even harmful.

PK, the alien, however was only commenting on the day-to-day life he saw around him on earth. Supposing some aliens from outer space also come to study the most crucial political, economic and environmental issues of our planet, then they are likely to confront us with much more serious distortions regarding the way in which the present day world is structured - distortions which are extremely threatening and yet we have learnt to accept them as a given fact of our life.

The aliens are first likely to express their greatest surprise at the weapons of mass destruction (particularly nuclear weapons) stored in several parts of the world. The aliens are likely to say, “We just can’t understand why you are so keen to manufacture and store something which can destroy your entire planet.”

When the study team of aliens looks up all the facts on climate change, it is likely to comment, “We just cannot comprehend how the leaders of earth can endanger the life-systems of their planet to such an extent, and then behave as

though they have no responsibility for this? Why are the steps needed to check climate change not being taken? Why have greenhouse gas emissions continued to increase after their dangers have become evident. We just cannot understand how such dangerous things are allowed to happen on your planet? Do you have no concern for the life of your children and grand children?”

These aliens are likely to be quite upset by all the air and water pollution, “When your air pollution is so harmful, why don’t you take timely steps to check this? What have you done to your rivers and oceans? Of course you know how critical are these for life-systems yet you care so little to protect them? We just can’t understand why you continue to spend billions on weapons and atom bombs, yet do so little to save life giving systems of land, rivers and oceans?”

The scholars from another planet are likely to shake their heads in disbelief and exclaim, “We just cannot see any sense in this. At some places a few thousand people are called a nation. In other places over a billion people or ten thousand times that number are called a nation. What is your criteria for defining a nation? Is there any criteria at all? Yet you fight such bloody wars over a few kilometres of borders? Then at the United Nations you give one vote to a nation with a few thousand people and also one vote to a country which may have ten thousand times more people. Also at the United Nations you give veto rights to those countries which make the most destructive weapons and

invade others with no concern for international law. How does your system work? Is there a system at all?"

The aliens are likely to become quite anguished when they see hungry people, people sweltering in heat waves and shivering in cold waves under the open sky, people dying due to denial of basic medicines and health care. "Hey, what kind of people are you? You go on building atom bombs but cannot give food to the hungry. You are building such towering skyscrapers but don't provide shelters to millions of homeless. Half of your population is obese due to overeating, half is hungry and malnourished. You spend billions on liquor and smoking, but cannot provide milk to hungry children? What kind of a world have you created on this beautiful planet?"

The alien researchers are likely to remain dumb with shock for some time before they can say, "Can't believe this, can't believe this at all. This data on rapes, abuse of children, domestic violence? What kind of world have you created? You call this civilization?"

Their anger may shoot up further when they say "You say you are the most evolved species on this earth, man, but what have you done to all other animals, birds, fish and insects? Your own books say that the extinction rate of species is now hundred times more than it was before you human beings appeared on earth. Do you think that the earth exists only for you? Why have you killed billions of other animals and birds in the most cruel way?"

Then the aliens may reflect for some time before saying, "How can we expect you to be kind to other forms of life when you can be

so cruel to fellow human beings? Where are the original people of America and Australia. Were not over 90 per cent of them killed for greed and conquest? Why do you believe so much in conquest and domination? Why killing of other people is celebrated as bravery? Why do you always try to dominate others? Why do you discriminate so much among your own fellow human beings on the basis of colour, caste or religion? Why are you so often unjust to your own women folk?"

Then coming close to some concerns of PK, the aliens may say "You guys are divided so much on the basis of religion, while religion should show the path of working together for the welfare of others. This is spirituality - helping others with compassion - but in your case we daily see people being killed and injustice being done in the name of religion. How can this lead to spiritual progress?"

It is difficult to imagine what kind of reply the leadership of our world will provide to the study team from another planet, but one can imagine that it will be extremely difficult for the world leadership to provide any satisfactory answers. One can also imagine that the world's leaders will be most uncomfortable when faced with this barrage of comments and questions from the alien visitors.

But at least we ordinary people should face this question honestly – isn't there a lot of truth in these comments and questions? Even without any aliens questioning us, shouldn't we all worry about these basic issues? How can we go on squabbling over the most petty things while ignoring the basic issues? All this talk about PK like aliens may be completely imaginary, but the issues and questions are real.

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to posit a new code of citizenship, in which all identities are fluxed into a mantra of monochronism, like the kalma Aurangzeb's ulema demanded Sarmad should repeat and on the mystic's refusal, had his head chopped off. The mantra is 'Comply, Conform, Carry On'. We cannot be too vigilant.

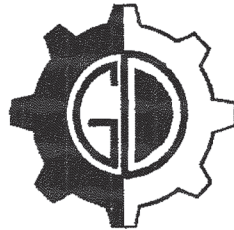
- The Wire

(Continued from Page 3)

budgeting, bottom up budget, child budget, SC budget, ST budget, green budgeting, budgeting for differently abled people, local and global implications of pro-poor and pro-women budgeting, alternative macro scenarios emerging out of alternative budgets and inter-linkages between gender-sensitive budgeting and women's empowerment. Serious examining of budgets calls for greater transparency at the level of international economics to local processes of empowerment. There is a need to provide training and capacity building workshops for decision-makers in the government structures, municipal bodies, parliamentarians and audio-visual.

Gender Commitments concerning safety of women and girls must be translated into Budgetary Commitment. By using our Right to Information, transparency / accountability for revenue generation & public expenditure can be ensured. For Reprioritisation in public spending we must prepare our 'bottom up budgets' and lobby for its realisation in collaboration with the elected representatives. Gender economists must lift the veil of statistical invisibility of the unpaid 'care economy' managed by poor women and highlight its equality and efficiency dimension and transform macro-policies so that they become women friendly.

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Talk of peace, not war

S. Viswam

What is the nature of the compulsion that forces top army officers of India and Pakistan to indulge in periodic verbal exchanges threatening each other with waging war and worse? Relations between India and Pakistan have again touched a low thanks to the bad atmosphere created by the unending exchange of fire along the borders. The blame game is on, each country blaming the other for provocation. This is only to be expected. But politicians playing the blame game and the military brass doing it are two different things. Last week the Indian and Pakistani army chiefs had a go at each other, one saying he is ready for war - small or big - and the other saying that a war will be unbearable for India. Since both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons in their respective arsenals, any talk of an India-Pakistan war is frightening and conjures up ghastly visions of bloodshed and mayhem.

In the context of the silver jubilee celebrations of the 1965 war between the neighbours, the Indian army chief made a comment on the nature of wars that could be fought by the two countries in future. He said that rather than prolonged fighting, future wars could be short and swift. In response,

the Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif has said that Pakistan was fully capable of defeating all sorts of external aggression but added somewhat menacingly that if India waged a war against Pakistan, India will have to pay a unbearable cost for aggression. Implicit in the warning is the threat of deploying nuclear weapons against India. Since both sides have alluded to Kashmir, observers see in the rhetoric of the two statements, a hidden attempt by Pakistan to internationalize the Kashmir issue by making the Big Powers try to focus on Kashmir for averting a nuclear confrontation. The Pakistani general said that Kashmir is an unfinished business on the agenda of partition. Indian spokesmen have said that the only unfinished business is for India to secure back the parts of Kashmir which are under Pakistani occupation. Both the positions have been articulated often enough in the past and have not contributed meaningfully to the bilateral exchanges. The point to be made is that Pakistan is in illegal occupation of Indian territory and has to vacate the illegal occupation. That point has also been made often enough and from all forums including the United Nations.

Saffronising the institutions

Kuldip Nayar

It needs to be said that in view of India and Pakistan being nuclear powers, extreme caution is called for in advocating positions which are hostile in tone if not content or in content if not tone lest such statements provoke bitterness and conflict. Since no war between any two nuclear nations is winnable, and the only outcome can be loss of lives and massive destruction, the ultimate aim of bilateral relations has to be the achievement of durable peace, no provocation should be attempted by either side. Someone has said, wisely, that the distance between brinkmanship and major crisis is very short. Brinkmanship is a game both sides can play but it is a game that can go out of control easily.

It is a pity that the occasion of the celebrations of the 1965 war anniversary provided the platform for articulation of rhetoric aimed at each other. Unfortunately, the bilateral atmosphere was already rather strained because of infiltrations across the border and firing by security forces on either side. It is to the disadvantage of both that the occasion was not made use of for promoting peace.

It is a sobering thought that despite provocative rhetoric contributed by generals and politicians to the bilateral debate, the common man in the two countries has not shown any hostility to each other. On the contrary, the friendliest feelings for each other is a common attribute of exchanges at the popular levels. This needs to be built up through sustained people-to-people contacts encouraged by the respective governments. As the popular saying goes it is always better to jaw, jaw than war, war. Between India and Pakistan, the only slogan that has any meaning is: Give peace a chance, and banish war for all times.

Understandably, there is a sense of horror over the Bhartiya Janata Party government's decision to 'modernise' the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum at Tin Murti in New Delhi. The BJP spokesman has explained that the present museum tells only the Nehru side of national struggle for independence, not the entire story.

Ironically, the persons to put forward the demand are those who did not contribute even a bit to the national movement. Their role, if any, helped the British rulers.

What the BJP has in mind is to saffronise the institution. The party made a similar attempt when Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was at the helm of affairs. But he firmly resisted every move to reinterpret the history. He recognised the role Nehru had played to win freedom and gave full credit to him. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is of a different kettle of fish. He openly seeks guidance from the Rashtriya Syamsewak Sangh, which runs down the national struggle because it was never part of it.

Re-doing Nehru museum under the Modi rule means the induction of outdated ideas into history. Nehru moulded the nation after independence and gave it a scientific temperament. Nehru's biggest contribution was the concept of secularism. At the time of partition when Pakistan chose to be an Islamic state, he kept India secular. Probably,

this is what the BJP does not like and wants to change the very character of the museum. Why does not BJP have a separate museum where it can present the history in the way it wants to do?

Not long ago, I was at Pune and found to my dismay that the Agha Khan Palace, where the British rulers would detain the icons of our freedom struggle, like Mahatama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, has been converted into an environment park. I have no grudge against parks. But the places, consecrated by the nation's blood, should have been preserved in their original shape so that the coming generations would see them as they were. Decoration, however honest in intent, extinguishes the original spirit.

In contrast, the Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar has been preserved as it was. It retains the air of martyrdom and still maintains the centrality of the well. When one sees it, one can imagine how the people must have jumped into it to escape the relentless firing by the British-led soldiers. Why they were punished was because of the 'humiliation' of one British woman who she heard the hissing sound while passing through a bazaar. Protesters at the Jalianwala Bagh were only parading against the British rule. Theirs was a struggle for independence. Sadly, after killing hundreds of people, the remark made by one British soldier

was that they wished they had more ammunition.

Indeed, places like the Jalianwala Bagh are the real temples. They remind us the pain and pangs of our national struggle and of those who sacrificed all in the fight against the British. The places are in no way less important than the scriptures which we revere and cherish.

Unfortunately, the places of worship - temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras - are becoming more in number and vulgar in decoration. Followers mistakenly have come to believe that the use of marble or gold makes the place more endearing to worshipers.

Unfortunately, the buildings which did not contribute even a bit to the freedom struggle have come to occupy positions of importance. Still worse are the efforts to substitute the ethos of pluralism with the ideology of parochialism. It is unthinkable how any party or person can demand a memorial for Nathuram Godse, the man who killed Mahatma Gandhi.

The Bhartiya Janata Party, an outfit to spread the Hindutva feelings, should understand and appreciate the emotion which was misleading the Muslims at that time. Even if it is assumed that the Muslims knowingly marshaled behind the demand for Pakistan, how are the Indian Muslims to blame for what happened 70 years ago?

When we are not blaming the generation, which was supporting the British, why should we pick on the Muslims whose forefathers helped create Pakistan? An average Hindu has not forgiven the Muslims for the vivisection of India. At the

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Minorities: integral part of India

Rajindar Sachar

A nauseating attack by BJP-R.S.S. loyalists has been set in motion about the speech by Vice President, Hamid Ansari (at the function of golden jubilee celebrations of the All India Majlis-e-Mushawarat). I was myself present there. The speech only posed various issues and important policy matters both internally for Muslims themselves and the obligations by the State, which are discussed every day in the press and public meetings all over the country.

The communal critics have in this matter shown their bankruptcy of knowledge of Indian constitution which gives primacy to the protection of rights of minorities, and also of the State's obligations under law.

The 9-judge Bench of Supreme Court highlighted profound policy statements as follows:

“The purpose of law in plural societies is not the progressive assimilation of the minorities in the majoritarian milieu. This would not solve the problem; but would vainly seek to dissolve it... The purpose of the law must be not to extinguish the groups which make the society but to devise political, social and legal means of preventing them from falling apart and so destroying the plural society of which they are members.”

Thus inclusive development in India and for that matter in any country alone is the path to prosperity. It is an undeniable truth and needs to be irrevocably accepted by all in India, namely that minorities, Muslims and Christians

are not outsiders. They are an integral part of India. Let me quote what Swami Vivekanand, one of the greatest spiritual personality of India, has to say of the intimate connection between the spirit of Islam and Hinduism thus, “He also told Hindus not to talk of the superiority of one religion over another. Even toleration of other faiths was not right; it smacked of blasphemy. 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, Muslims, Christians as equal stakeholders.

In this connection it is heartening to find confirmation of these principles of equal development of majority and minority as laid down by U. N. Human Right Council, Forum on Minority issued on December 14th, 15th, 2010 as follows:

“The Council emphasizes; “Consequently, the right of minorities to participate effectively in economic life must be fully taken into account by governments seeking to promote equality at every level. From implementing non-discrimination in employment and enforcing protection laws in the private sector to developing national economic development and international development assistance schemes Governments can consider both targeted and inclusive approaches to addressing the economic and social exclusion of minorities. Targeted

approaches aim at programme or project outcomes specifically at minorities, whereas inclusive approaches integrate minorities in a wider focus population for programme or project outcomes. If existing policies are not benefiting minorities equally or gaps in inequality are growing, targeted approaches should be considered. Decisions on policy choices should be made with the full and effective participation of all minority groups, should be transparent, and where possible, should be supported by disaggregated data demonstrating existing inequalities. Governments should gather and regularly publicize disaggregated data to measure and monitor the effective participation of minorities in economic life. Improved data collection should be made a priority for the areas of employment and labour rights, poverty rates, access to social security, access to credit and other financial services, education and training, and property and land tenure rights.”

In the report of working group on Minorities formed by U.N. Sub Commission on Protection of Minorities, it was the unanimous view that the assimilative approach was not one promoted by the United Nations, and that formal recognition of minorities is the first crucial step towards their effective participation in society. This means not only participation in governance, but also involvement in the economy. Also accepted was the need for multi-lingual education and respect for cultural identity of minorities and the need to ensure fair representation of minorities within the law enforcement system and the workplace. The basic task

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Linking grassroots work to policy initiatives

Bharat Dogra

In the case of many voluntary organisations the focus is generally on how efficient and honest use they make of the funds at their disposal to help the weaker sections, improve environment and take up other priority tasks. However in any region government funds are generally much higher than what an individual NGO, even a heavily funded NGO can spend. Therefore an even greater impact can be made if voluntary groups function in such a way as to ensure honest and proper use of government funds. If this vigilance is exercised, particularly in the context of the funds meant mainly for the benefit of the weaker sections, then this can help to increase significantly the economic benefits reaching the weaker sections.

This contribution will be enhanced further if the process of exercising this vigilance and ensuring better use of public funds is such as to empower the people, particularly the weaker sections, in significant ways, so that the checking of misuse of funds is later followed by people’s closer participation and involvement in development issues.

One organisation which has made a remarkable contribution to struggles for the better use of public funds is the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS – an organisation for empowerment of workers and peasants). The MKSS works actively in six tehsils of Central Rajasthan (Bhim, Devgarh and Kumbhalgarh tehsils of Rajsamand district, Raipur

tehsil in Pali district, Mandal tehsil in Bhilwara district, Jwaja tehsil in Ajmer district). This is a roughly 150 km long and 80 km wide area with a population of roughly half a million. The MKSS has worked in this area for over two decades. Its main office functions from one or two huts or rooms in Devdungri village located at a distance of about 10 km from the town of Bhim.

The MKSS works mainly among the rural poor sections of this region, and its membership is also mainly drawn from these sections. However, the impact of MKSS work reaches much beyond this region, in some contexts it has a clearly state-wide impact (in most parts of Rajasthan) while some aspects of its work also has clear national impact in terms of legislation as well as inspiring similar efforts in distant parts of India. Some of its pioneering work in grassroots democratic initiatives has been widely discussed as a role model at international level.

In recent national initiatives on a wide range of crucial development and democracy issues, ranging from right to information to rural employment guarantee scheme to social audits, the contribution of the MKSS has been widely appreciated. In the case of the entire RTI (right to information) campaign in India, while many persons and organisations made an important contribution, but if we have to single out one organisation which made the most invaluable contribution at grassroots, legislation and policy

stage, then this credit goes to the MKSS (and its sister organisations). The same can be said about social audits.

A remarkable aspect of MKSS struggles has been their ability to link up quickly to wider efforts which have state-level and national-level impacts. Some of its local struggles are planned carefully keeping in mind policy changes which are clearly needed and whose benefits can reach a large number of vulnerable people. Its minimum wage struggles were linked to state-level policy changes that benefited the entire state. The demand for right to information clearly raised in its struggles quickly reached all over the state and then travelled to distant parts of the country as well. The way in which a small group of activists travelled from one part of Rajasthan to another disseminating the message of right to information was an amazing example of how a small number of people with very few resources can have a wide impact with their dedication and convincing message.

It has surprised many people that the MKSS has been able to achieve so much without obtaining any institutional funds from outside sources. The MKSS has very modest funds to support just a handful of full-time activists (on legal minimum wage basis).

The enactment of national legislations on right to information and employment guarantee (year 2005) in India has been widely welcomed. In fact, both these laws have attracted a lot of interest outside India as well in the context of the wider debates on transparency and poverty alleviation. India's reputation as a vibrant, even if

troubled, democracy has been strengthened by the enactment of these laws.

Apart from the widely debated content of these laws, what deserves attention is the campaign carried out by several grassroots organisations for enactment of national legislation on these two important issues. Although a number of grassroots organisations as well as special fora created for these campaigns no doubt contributed to the enactment of this legislation, the contribution of MKSS is particularly interesting and significant for two reasons.

Firstly, while the MKSS works on a regular basis in a relatively small area of Rajasthan, it has developed an amazing ability to link some of its local struggles with national-level campaigns. Secondly, it was able to sustain these campaigns for several years at a low budget. As the MKSS does not accept any institutional funds, it works necessarily on very low budgets and so its achievement is all the more significant.

In its initial years the MKSS struggled against rampant corruption in drought relief works (which play a very important role in the sustenance of people in the villages of Central Rajasthan where the MKSS works). The need to check this corruption led to the need for checking the records relating to these relief works (or other public works). This in turn led to the demand for right to information.

Those initial days were quite difficult. The movement faced not only oppression but even ridicule. A small group of activists travelled from one part of Rajasthan to another and dharnas were organised in all districts of Rajasthan. The prolonged

dharnas in the heat and dust of Rajasthan tested the patience of everyone. Yet there was plenty of song and dance, wit and humour in the campaign.

A source of strength for the activists of this incipient movement was the response their 'yatras' got in villages. It was amazing for many that peasants and workers, many of them illiterate, recognised the importance of the movement and extended their support.

Dharnas for right to information attracted a very wide diversity of people and groups. They mostly approached this right from the perspective of their own work. This further convinced MKSS activists of the wide relevance of this law.

Later when national level alliances were built it was this grassroots experience of MKSS activists which provided the basis for their leading role in the wider effort for laws relating to right to information.

The demand for employment guarantee also grew largely from the thinking within MKSS to find an effective solution for the increasingly desperate economic condition of villagers suffering from recurrent droughts in the main area of their work. As the MKSS took out its first yatras in villages to take this issue to people, they found ready and enthusiastic support. As Shankar, a senior activist of MKSS says, "In this case no explaining was needed. People intrinsically accepted the importance of this law."

Once again MKSS was able to link up with a larger national campaign for rural employment guarantee legislation very efficiently and made a very important contribution to this national campaign.

An important aspect of MKSS campaign strategy is to call upon all democratic forces to make their contribution. Hence MKSS has developed good relationships, with many lawyers, academics, officials, legislators, and journalists. While

emphasising grassroots struggles of the rural poor, the MKSS hasn't ignored the urban middle class as a source of support.

Nikhil De, leading activist of the MKSS, says, "The enactment

of national level laws on right to information and rural employment guarantee was like a dream coming true". Most members and supporters of MKSS would readily agree with him.

(Continued from Page 3)

time of tension with Pakistan, many Hindus still suspect the Muslims.

Even otherwise, the Hindus maintain distance from the Muslims. Social contacts between the two communities are more or less absent. And both live in the world of their own. It was different in my generation. We visited one another's house and ate together without feeling that we were doing anything extraordinary.

Today things have changed. A Muslim woman professor told me that one day a few Hindu girls stood up in the classroom and asked her why she was in India when she should have gone to Pakistan. None in the classroom objected to the girls' remarks. I cannot blame the educational system, but I do blame the teachers who had created such an atmosphere where the girls could ask such questions.

True, the partition on the basis of religion has told upon India's ethos of secularism and lessened the importance of Muslims in the affairs of India. But this feeling goes against the letter and spirit of our constitution. We are not a Hindu rashtra but a secular, democratic republic as preamble of our Constitution says.

The BJP does not seem to realize that it does not have any Muslim icon in its ranks. I hope that things would change for the better. But how

can they when the party wants to establish a Hindu rashtra and keeps the Muslim community at distance? Sadly, the party is trying to change the very ethos of our country. Even in the midst of our national struggle, we were conscious that the Pakistan sought to be constituted would be an Islamic state. Still, we declared that India, after the British left, would be a secular state and we adhered to that undertaking.

(Continued from Page 4)

is to reconcile the pluralism which then exists in that State, and the need to respect the identity of the various groups, with the overall concerns of non-discrimination, equality, national security, territorial integrity, and political independence.

The above declaration is a forthright rebuke to all those mischievous quarters who propagate that government actions at highlighting the condition of minorities is any way divisive.

Thus the same vision was emphasized by our founding fathers/ mothers of Indian Constitution. In the Fundamental Right Chapter in Part III of our Constitution specifically provides vide Articles 25 to 30 the various rights and privileges for the minorities such as:

Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

1. Freedom to manage religious affairs.
2. Freedom as to payment of taxes

for promotion of any particular religion.

3. Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.
4. Protection of interests of minorities.
5. Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

This was so done because it is universally established that the faith and the confidence of the minorities in the impartial and even functioning of the State is the acid test of being a civilized State. This is accepted wisdom, and was expressed succinctly by Lord Acton as follows: "A state which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself; a state which labours to neutralize, to absorb or to expel them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government" - we need only substitute minorities for races in the above quotation to apply the test in India.

It is possible that Modi with RSS breathing down his neck may be powerless to take action against R.S.S. imposed BJP General Secretary Kailash Vijjayawargiya. But he should in all propriety and decorum publicly condemn and disassociate himself from this communal low level and false allegation by general secretary of the party whose government he heads. There again is Raj Dharama, which he was so strongly reminded by the then Prime Minister Vajpayee in the year 2002.

Challenges before Muslims

M. Hamid Ansari

The Muslims of India constitute a community of 180 million, amounting to a little over 14 percent of the population of the country. They are, after Indonesia, the second largest national grouping of followers of Islam in the world. Their contribution to the civilisation and culture of Islam is in no need of commentary. They were an integral part of the freedom struggle against the British rule. They are dispersed all over the country, are not homogenous in linguistic and socio-economic terms and reflect in good measure the diversities that characterise the people of India as a whole.

The Independence of India in August 1947, and the events preceding and following it, cast a shadow of physical and psychological insecurity on Indian Muslims. They were made to carry, unfairly, the burden of political events and compromises that resulted in the Partition. The process of recovery from that trauma has been gradual and uneven, and at times painful. They have hesitatingly sought to tend to their wounds, face the challenges and seek to develop response patterns. Success has been achieved in some measure; much more, however, needs to be done.

In the past decade, work has also been done to delineate the contours of the problem. The Sachar Committee Report of 2006 did this officially. It laid to rest the political untruth in some quarters

about the Muslim condition and demonstrated that on most socio-economic indicators, they were on the margins of structures of political, economic and social relevance and their average condition was comparable to or even worse than the country's acknowledged historically most backward communities, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It specified the development deficits of the majority of Muslims in regard to education, livelihood and access to public services and the employment market across the states.

In the same vein, Expert Group reports were prepared in 2008 on the need to develop a Diversity Index and establish an Equal Opportunity Commission.

Taken together, these and other studies bring forth sufficient evidence to substantiate the view that "inequality traps prevent the marginalised and work in favour of the dominant groups in society".

More recently the Kundu Report of September 2014, commissioned to evaluate the implementation of decisions taken pursuant to Sachar recommendations, has concluded that though "a start has been made, yet serious bottlenecks remain." It makes specific recommendations to remedy these. It asserts that "development for the Muslim minority must be built on a bed-rock of a sense of security."¹

It is evident from this compendium of official reports that the principal problems confronting India's Muslims relate to:

identity and security;

education and empowerment;

equitable share in the largesse of the state; and

fair share in decision making.

Each of these is a right of the citizen. The shortcomings in regard to each have been analysed threadbare. The challenge before us today is to develop strategies and methodologies to address them.

The default by the State or its agents in terms of deprivation, exclusion and discrimination (including failure to provide security) is to be corrected by the State; this needs to be done at the earliest and appropriate instruments developed for it. Political sagacity, the imperative of social peace, and public opinion play an important role in it. Experience shows that the corrective has to be both at the policy and the implementation levels; the latter, in particular, necessitates mechanisms to ensure active cooperation of the State governments.

The official objective of *sab ka sath sab ke vikas* is commendable; a pre-requisite for this is affirmative action (where necessary) to ensure a

common starting point and an ability in all to walk at the required pace. This ability has to be developed through individual, social and governmental initiatives that fructify on the ground. Programmes have been made in abundance; the need of the hour is their implementation.

The foregoing pertains principally to governmental action or lack thereof. Equally relevant is the autonomous effort by the community itself in regard to its identified shortcomings. What has it done to redress the backwardness and poverty arising out of socio-economic and educational under-development? How adequate is the response in relation to the challenge?

A century back the lament was emotive:

Firqa-bandi hai kahein aur kahein zaatain hain

Kya zamaane main panaph-ne ki yahi baatain hain?

Today, we have to admit that both 'firqa bandi' and 'zaat' identity is a ground reality. The imagery of Mahmood and Ayaz standing shoulder to shoulder in the same line is confined to the mosque; so are the injunctions on punctuality, cleanliness and discipline. Each of these is violated beyond the confines of the congregational prayer. Corrective strategies therefore have to be sought on category-differentiation admissible in Indian state practice and hitherto denied to Muslims (scheduled caste status) or inadequately admitted (segments of OBC status). Available data makes it clear that a high percentage of Muslims falls into these two broad categories.

It is evident that significant sections of the community remain trapped in a vicious circle and in a culturally defensive posture that hinders self advancement. Tradition is made sacrosanct but the rationale of tradition is all but forgotten. Jadediyat or modernity has become a tainted expression. Such a mindset constrains critical thinking necessary both for the affirmation of faith and for the wellbeing of the community. The instrumentality of adaptation to change - Ijtihad - is frowned upon or glossed over. Forgotten is its purpose, defined by the late Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi as 'the ability to cope with the ever-changing pattern of life's requirements'. Equally relevant is Imam Al-Ghazali's delineation of the ambit of Maslaha - protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage and property. Both provide ample theoretical space for focused thinking on social change without impinging on the fundamentals of faith.

It is here that the role of Mushawarat becomes critical. As a grouping of leading and most respected minds of the community, it should go beyond looking at questions of identity and dignity in a defensive mode and explore how both can be furthered in a changing India and a changing world. It should widen its ambit to hitherto unexplored or inadequately explored requirements of all segments of the community particularly women, youth, and non-elite sections who together constitute the overwhelming majority.

This effort has to be made in the context of Indian conditions and the uniqueness of its three dimensions: plural, secular and democratic. Some years back a close observer had posed the problem:

"To deny discrimination and pretend all is well is to fly in the face of facts. But agitation against discrimination can arouse the very emotions that foster discrimination. The solution of the Muslim problem lies in a resolution of this dilemma by devising a form and content of agitation which heals old wounds and inflicts no new ones. This resolution can be achieved by regarding discrimination as what it is; a problem of Indian democracy to be resolved within the framework of national integration."²

This would necessitate sustained and candid interaction with fellow citizens without a syndrome of superiority or inferiority and can be fruitful only in the actual implementation of the principles of justice, equality and fraternity inscribed in the Preamble of the Constitution and the totality of Fundamental Rights. The failure to communicate with the wider community in sufficient measure has tended to freeze the boundaries of diversities that characterise Indian society. Efforts may be made to isolate the community; such an approach should be resisted.

The Indian experience of a large Muslim minority living in secular polity, however imperfect, could even be a model for others to emulate.

One last word. The world of Islam extends beyond the borders of India and Muslims here, as in other lands, can benefit from the best that may be available in the realm of thought and practice. Some years back I had occasion to read the Algerian-French philosopher Mohammed Arkoun and was impressed by his view that our times compel us to rethink modernity so that, as he put it, 'critical thought,

anchored in modernity but criticising modernity itself and contributing to its enrichment through recourse to the Islamic example⁷ could open up a new era in social movements.³

Would future generations forgive us for failing to explore these options?

“Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves with their own souls.”⁴

And so the task before Mushawarat in the foreseeable future should remain a threefold one: to sustain the struggle for the actualisation in full measure of legal and constitutional rights, to do so without being isolated from the wider community, and to endeavour at the same time to adapt thinking and practices to a fast changing world.

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Ill-conceived and ill-fated Kanhar dam project

Sandeep Pandey

A fact finding team on behalf of People’s Union for Civil Liberties headed by Swami Gyan Swarup Sanand, formerly known as Professor G.D. Agrawal, Head of Civil Engineering Department at IIT Kanpur and Member-Secretary of Central Pollution Control Board, visited the Kanhar dam site in Sonbhadra district of U.P. on 19 August, 2015 to find out the state of construction and damage caused to it due to recent heavy rains.

The cofferdam constructed to allow the construction of 311.75 m spillway has been breached by the heavy rains in the rainy season of 2015. A large portion of the cofferdam has been washed away. So far only 1 m foundation of the spillway, the central concrete portion of the dam, had been laid. It has been filled by silt and stones brought by the fury of the flood due to the giving in of cofferdam and will have to be cleaned before construction can be started again. Considering that the final dam height is going to be 39.9 m or 52.9 m depending on what use the dam is put to, the project is in preliminary stages. In terms of money, according to Executive Engineer Vijay K. Srivastava of the Irrigation Department of U.P. government, Rs. 300-400 crores might have been spent on the project so far.

The estimate of cost of construction of the project updated in 2010 is Rs. 2252.29 crores. Hence only about 15 per cent of the total estimated cost has been spent so far. It is unclear why the NGT judgement dated 7 May, 2015, giving a go ahead to the construction of this much delayed dam, says ‘Huge amounts have been spent on this project.’ While this statement may be true in absolute terms it is certainly not true in relative terms.

The project is proceeding on an environmental clearance dated 14 April, 1980. There is no document showing forest clearance except for a 27 February, 1982 letter in which permission has been granted by the Governor of U.P. for transfer of 2422.593 acres or 980.4 ha of forest land to the irrigation department. The authorities think that since environmental clearance was obtained before the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 came into being, the project doesn’t require any Environmental Clearance under the notifications of 1994 and/or 2006 issued under the Act and since the forest clearance was obtained before the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 came into being the project doesn’t require prior concurrence of the central government for diverting forest land for some other purpose.

However, when the modified project with increased spillway was approved on 16 September, 2010 by Central Water Commission it has been considered under the category ‘new major’ project. Since the project is in preliminary stage it should require fresh Environmental and Forest Clearances.

Out of 980.4 ha of forest land acquired compensatory afforestation has claimed to have been done on 666 ha by DFO, Renukoot but there is no report on survival rate. Moreover, the DFO has not presented any plans for compensatory afforestation on the remaining land, 314 ha. This shows the lackadaisical nature of commitment of forest department. With this example alone one can imagine how much environmental concerns will be honoured when the project is being pushed ahead

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without proper environmental and forest clearances.

Moreover, the rehabilitation of displaced people must be carried out under 'The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.' People are not happy with the rehabilitation. The list prepared by administration for consideration for compensation is faulty. 11 villages in UP, 4 in Chhattisgarh and 4 in Jharkhand have been identified which would be submerged by the construction of dam. A rehabilitation package of Rs. 7, 11,000 is being offered in UP. A 150 sq. m. residential plot is also being given to original families in the villages. However, if 1980 lists are going to be used for getting rehabilitation done then one can imagine that many people will be left out. The administration in Sonebhadra is reportedly getting a survey performed after an agitation which turned violent to identify actual families presently living in villages which will be displaced. But it shows that the rehabilitation and resettlement is being done in a hurried manner with the objective of getting people out of the way somehow.

One must also remember that the submergence area is a tribal dominant area. Under 'The Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996' the Panchayats in Scheduled Areas have the power and authority to function as institutions of self-government and can prevent alienation of land in Scheduled Areas and can take appropriate action to restore any unlawfully alienated land of a Scheduled Tribe. The UP government and Sonebhadra administration has chosen to be ignorant about the provisions of this Act.

Hence proceeding with this ill-fated project will be unwise. The above-mentioned laws of the land

must be applied otherwise it may be best to abandon the project which will save substantial amount of public funds from being wasted on this ill-conceived project which is being pushed through only for apparently political reasons. No doubt, vested

interests are also involved as happens in any big and small project in our country. Big profits are to be made and commissions are to be collected in the name of development for the sake of people.

Industry faces scan on push to 'dark ages'

Sections of academicians, human rights activists and lawyers on September 5 at Delhi accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of allowing the rise of groups that they say are intensifying a "war" against rational thinking and pushing the nation towards "fascism".

Several organisations and individuals staged a public rally and called media conferences to express outrage at the murder last week in Dharwad, Karnataka, of Kannada scholar and advocate of rationalism Malleshappa Kalburgi.

A lawyer and a historian, among those voicing their concerns, have also called on industry to introspect on its support, ahead of last year's general election, to the BJP that emerged on a plank that promised economic development.

"I would hold two groups as having contributed to bringing about this situation - the captains of Indian industry and non-resident Indians," said Anil Nauriya, a Supreme Court lawyer in New Delhi. "The captains of Indian industry associated themselves with forces that have taken India backward; in pursuit of their economic interests, they supported forces regardless of the social consequences - I would expect them to speak up now."

Non-resident Indians who had supported the BJP should also assume some responsibility now, Nauriya said at a media conference called by the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, set up in the memory of the late playwright Safdar Hashmi, who was killed while performing a street play in 1989.

"We're seeing increasing levels of intolerance and systematic attacks on

people who have spoken in defence of scientific temper or rational thinking," said Sohail Hashmi, a historian.

Some say they see parallels between attempts by Hindutva groups in India to glorify ancient Indian traditions and Aryans and rewrite history with the trends that were observed in Nazi Germany during the 1930s. "There are attempts to replace history not with history, but invent it," said historian Irfan Habib. "We should remember that those (industries) that supported Hitler in the 1930s acknowledged their mistake in 1945."

Prabhat Patnaik, professor emeritus at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, said "destruction of reason" was part of the process of pushing society towards fascism. "This (push towards fascism) runs contrary to a century of struggle and progress India has made," Patnaik said.

Several organisations, joined a protest at Jantar Mantar, condemning what some of their members say are acts of violence and "intolerance" against rational thinking.

Kalburgi's murder follows similar fatal attacks on rationalist Narendra Dabholkar in Pune in 2013 and Govind Pansare in Kolhapur in 2015. The All India Forum for the Right to Education has said police still remain clueless about each of these murders.

"These are attacks on intellectual freedom - we're being pushed back into the dark ages," said Nandita Narain, president of the Federation of the Central University Teachers' Association.

—Sahmat

UK should pay India for 200 years of its colonial rule.

In a passionate argument, Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor demanded reparation payments from the UK to India for 200 years of its colonial rule. The speech has gone viral on social media like Facebook and YouTube and has also prompted a vigorous debate. Here is the full transcript of his arguments at the Oxford Union on July 24, 2015

—Qurban Ali

Madam President and gentlemen, ladies of the house

I am standing here with eight minutes in my hands in this venerable and rather magnificent institution, I was going to assure you that I belong to the Henry VIII School of public speaking - that as Henry VIII said to his wives 'I shall not keep you long'. But now finding myself the seventh speaker out of eight in what must already seem a rather long evening to you I rather feel like Henry VIII's the last wife. I know more or less of what is expected of me but I am not sure how to do it any differently.

Perhaps what I should do is really try and pay attention to the arguments that have been advanced by the Opposition today. We had for example Sir Richard Ottaway suggesting - challenging the very idea that it could be argued that the economic situation of the colonies was actually worsened by the experience of British colonialism.

Well I stand to offer you the Indian example, Sir Richard. India's share of the world economy when Britain arrived on its shores was 23 per cent, by the time the British left it was down to below 4 per cent. Why? Simply because India had been governed for the benefit of Britain.

Britain's rise for 200 years was financed by its depredations in India. In fact Britain's industrial revolution was actually premised upon the de-industrialisation of India. The

handloom weavers for example famed across the world whose products were exported around the world, Britain came right in. There were actually these weavers making fine muslin as light as woven wear, it was said, and Britain came right in, smashed their thumbs, broke their looms, imposed tariffs and duties on their cloth and products and started, of course, taking their raw material from India and shipping back manufactured cloth flooding the world's markets with what became the products of the dark and satanic mills of the Victoria in England

That meant that the weavers in India became beggars and India went from being a world famous exporter of finished cloth into an importer when from having 27 per cent of the world trade to less than 2 per cent.

Meanwhile, colonialists like Robert Clive brought their rotten boroughs in England on the proceeds of their loot in India while taking the Hindi word loot into their dictionary as well as their habits.

And the British had the gall to call him Clive of India as if he belonged to the country, when all he really did was to ensure that much of the country belonged to him.

By the end of 19th century, the fact is that India was already Britain's biggest cash cow, the world's biggest purchaser of British goods and exports and the source for highly

paid employment for British civil servants. We literally paid for our own oppression. And as has been pointed out, the worthy British Victorian families that made their money out of the slave economy, one fifth of the elites of the wealthy class in Britain in 19th century owed their money to transporting 3 million Africans across the waters. And in fact in 1833 when slavery was abolished and what happened was a compensation of 20 million pounds was paid not as reparations to those who had lost their lives or who had suffered or been oppressed by slavery but to those who had lost their property.

I was struck by the fact that your Wi-Fi password at this Union commemorates the name of Mr Gladstone - the great liberal hero. Well, I am very sorry his family was one of those who benefited from this compensation.

Staying with India, between 15-29 million Indians died of starvation in British induced famines. The most famous example was, of course, was the great Bengal famine during the World War II when 4 million people died because Winston Churchill deliberately as a matter of written policy proceeded to divert essential supplies from civilians in Bengal to sturdy tummies and Europeans as reserve stockpiles.

He said that the starvation of anyway underfed Bengalis mattered

much less than that of sturdy Greeks - Churchill's actual quote. And when conscience stricken British officials wrote to him pointing out that people were dying because of this decision, he peevishly wrote in the margins of file, "Why hasn't Gandhi died yet?"

So, all notions that the British were trying to do their colonial enterprise out of enlightened despotism to try and bring the benefits of colonialism and civilisation to the benighted. Even I am sorry - Churchill's conduct in 1943 is simply one example of many that gave lie to this myth.

As others have said on the proposition violence and racism were the reality of the colonial experience. And no wonder that the sun never set on the British empire because even god couldn't trust the English in the dark.

Let me take the World War I as a very concrete example since the first speaker Mr. Lee suggested these couldn't be quantified. Let me quantify World War I for you. Again I am sorry from an Indian perspective as others have spoken about the countries. One-sixth of all the British forces that fought in the war were Indian - 54 000 Indians actually lost their lives in that war, 65 000 were wounded and another 4000 remained missing or in prison.

Indian taxpayers had to cough up 100 million pounds in that time's money. India supplied 17 million rounds of ammunition, 6,00,000 rifles and machine guns, 42 million garments were stitched and sent out of India and 1.3 million Indian personnel served in this war. I know all this because the commemoration of the centenary has just taken place.

But not just that, India had to supply 173,000 animals 370 million

tonnes of supplies and in the end the total value of everything that was taken out of India and India by the way was suffering from recession at that time and poverty and hunger, was in today's money 8 billion pounds. You want quantification, it's available.

World War II, it was even worse - 2.5 million Indians in uniform. I won't believe it to the point but Britain's total war debt of 3 billion pounds in 1945 money, 1.25 billion was owed to India and never actually paid.

Somebody mentioned Scotland, well the fact is that colonialism actually cemented your union with Scotland. The Scots had actually tried to send colonies out before 1707, they had all failed, I am sorry to say. But, then of course, came union and India was available and there you had a disproportionate employment of Scots, I am sorry but Mr McKinsey had to speak after me, engaged in this colonial enterprise as soldiers, as merchants, as agents, as employees and their earnings from India is what brought prosperity to Scotland, even pulled Scotland out of poverty.

Now that India is no longer there, no wonder the bonds are loosening. Now we have heard other arguments on this side and there has been a mention of railways. Well let me tell you first of all as my colleague the Jamaican High Commissioner has pointed out, the railways and roads were really built to serve British interests and not those of the local people but I might add that many countries have built railways and roads without having had to be colonized in order to do so.

They were designed to carry raw materials from the hinterland into the

ports to be shipped to Britain. And the fact is that the Indian or Jamaican or other colonial public - their needs were incidental. Transportation - there was no attempt made to match supply from demand from as transports, none what so ever.

Instead in fact the Indian railways were built with massive incentives offered by Britain to British investors, guaranteed out of Indian taxes paid by Indians with the result that you actually had one mile of Indian railway costing twice what it cost to built the same mile in Canada or Australia because there was so much money being paid in extravagant returns. Britain made all the profits, controlled the technology, supplied all the equipment and absolutely all these benefits came as British private enterprise at Indian public risk. That was the railways as an accomplishment.

We are hearing about aid, I think it was Sir Richard Ottaway mentioned British aid to India. Well let me just point out that the British aid to India is about 0.4 per cent of India's GDP. The government of India actually spends more on fertiliser subsidies which might be an appropriate metaphor for that argument.

If I may point out as well that as my fellow speakers from the proposition have pointed out there have been incidents of racial violence, of loot, of massacres, of bloodshed, of transportation and in India's case even one of our last Mughal emperors. Yes, may be today's Britains are not responsible for some of these reparations but the same speakers have pointed with pride to their foreign aid - you are not responsible for the people starving in Somalia but you give them aid surely the principle of reparation for what

is the wrongs that have done cannot be denied.

It's been pointed out that for the example, dehumanisation of Africans in the Caribbean, the massive psychological damage that has been done, the undermining of social traditions, of the property rights, of the authority structures of the societies - all in the interest of British colonialism and the fact remains that many of today's problems in these countries including the persistence and in some cases the creation of racial, of ethnic, of religious tensions were the direct result of colonialism. So there is a moral debt that needs to be paid.

Someone challenged reparations elsewhere. Well I am sorry Germany doesn't just give reparations to Israel, it also gives reparations to Poland perhaps some of the speakers here are too young to remember the dramatic picture of Charles William Brunt on his knees in the Walter Gaiter in 1970.

There are other examples, there is Italy's reparations to Libya, there is Japan's to Korea even Britain has paid reparations to the New Zealand Maoris. So it is not as if this is something that is unprecedented or unheard of that somehow opens some sort of nasty Pandora box.

No wonder professor Louis reminded us that he is from Texas. There is a wonderful expression in Texas that summarises the arguments of the opposition 'All hat and no cattle'.

Now, if I can just quickly look through the other notes that I was scribbling while they were speaking, there was a reference to democracy

(Continued on Page 15)

What did Colonialism do to India?

Ram Puniyani

A video of Shashi Tharoor speaking at Oxford on a debate related to the colonial period has been 'viral' on the social circuit for a while. In this video Tharoor makes a passionate plea to the British that they make reparations for the losses to Indian economy during the British rule. He puts the blame of India's economic decline on the British and also recounts Jalianwala Bag, Bengal famine as the major highlight of British rule which reflected the attitude of British towards this colony of theirs'. Tharoor points out that resources from India were used by British to build their economic prosperity and to fund their Industrial revolution.

However, Dr. Manmohan Singh (2005), the previous prime minister, had made a very different kind of argument. In this Dr. Singh as a guest of British Government extols the virtue of British rule and gives them the credit for rule of law, constitutional government, and free press as the contributions which India benefitted from.

So where does the truth lie? Not only the context and tone of the speeches by these two Congressmen is totally different, the content is also totally on different tracks. Dr. Singh as the guest of the British Government is soft and behaving as an ideal guest and points out the contributions of the British rule and there is some truth in that. Tharoor as an Indian citizen with memory of the past; is narrating the plunder which this country suffered due to the British rule. He is also on the dot.

These are two aspects of the same canvass. What Tharoor is saying is the primary goal of British and what Dr. Singh is stating is an incidental offshoot.

British (East India Company) did come here looking for markets for their industrial products, gradually went on defeating one after another king, ruling in different areas and brought the whole subcontinent under a single rule, which became one of the 'Jewel in the Crown' for British as the whole wealth, raw material, resources from India were pumped out to Britain. In order to achieve this goal they did go on to introduce railways, communication network-postal, telegraph-telephone and modern administrative system and modern education to create the assistants for their officers ruling here.

The lacuna in our systems were primarily because the primary goal of British was to plunder the country and as an incidental thing; as by product; the new institutions, rule of law and later some reforms against ghastly social practices also began (like abolition of Sati). Perceptions do matter while Singh and Tharoor are talking of the same phenomenon from two different angles. The third angle is the one that was articulated by British themselves. British presented their rule as part of "Civilizing mission of the East"! There is very little truth in this, but it can be said that British also did help in the process of social reforms at times.

The major point which is unseen in these perceptions is one which had dangerous consequence on the social-political scenario and that was - British planted the seeds of divisive politics. As such broadly speaking the colonial-imperialist rule sows the seeds of 'divide and rule' and in this subcontinent they did it with gay abandon. In the wake of 1857 revolt, when the British East India Company's rule was shaken, British identified existence of two major religious communities where the wedge could be driven. This is where they introduced communal historiography as a part of 'divide and rule' policy. James Mill with his 'History of British India' periodized the history on communal lines (Ancient Hindu Period, medieval Muslim period and modern British period). Supplementing this were Elliot and Dawson with 'History of India as told by her historians', which reduced the history to the eulogizing account of the courtiers of the kings. These played a major role in deepening the communal understanding of the past.

At social level we see emergence of modern classes, industrialists-workers and modern educated classes while the old classes of feudal lords and kings survive though with some reduced influence. The modern classes came forward to build up anti-colonial movement; this movement led by Gandhi with people from all regions, religions, men and women both is what built modern India on the infrastructure of industrialization-modern education. This movement tied the people together in the bond of 'Indian-ness' and had imbibed the values of the central pillars of transformations of caste and gender relations. The latter aspects most highlighted by Jotirao Phule, Bhimrao Ambedkar

and Periyar Ramasamy Niacker on one side and introduction of girls education with Savitribai Phule opening the girls school on the other. This group underlined that 'India is a nation in the making'.

On the other hand the declining sections of landlords-kings, both Hindu and Muslim, threatened by the modern changes and seeing the rise of their vassals who were escaping from their grip, shouted that their religion is in danger. They upheld the communal historiography introduced by British. Muslim elite gradually came to form Muslim League. For them the *raison d'être* of their coming together was Islam being in danger. They held that here the Muslim Nation had been there since the time Muhammad bin Kasim had won over Sindh from Hindu Dahar in eighth century and so they have to work for creation of a Muslim nation. That's how they remained aloof from the freedom movement, which was aiming at the secular democratic India.

The Hindu landlords and Kings in due course came to form Hindu Mahasabha and then RSS. For them this had been a Hindu nation from times immemorial and Muslims and Christians are the alien invaders. They also remained aloof from freedom movement and harped on building Hindu nation in contrast to the goal set by national movement, that of secular democratic India. They constructed their own history of a glorious past of the Hindu rulers and its corruption by the Muslim invaders. Gradually they came to construct the ideology that all the ills of Hindu society are due to the Muslim invaders.

While the national movement brought together the people of all the regions, religions, castes: women

and men both, the communal streams nurtured the seeds of divisiveness sown by British, and this is what led to communal violence and later the tragic partition of the country. Here also what is generally analyzed mostly is the fault of leader A or B for partition while overlooking the fact that partition was the part of continuing British policy, to have their interests preserved in the sub-continent and that's how they played their cards well enough to create a situation where partition became an inevitable calamity.

If one has to point the major problem which the British rule introduced; apart from the impact on the socio economic life of the sub continent; it is undeniably letting the feudal classes-kingdoms to continue in the face of changing scenario of industrialization-modern education. So in the sub-continent on one side we see the emergence of the values of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity as an ideology of the emerging classes, while the feudal ideology of 'caste and gender hierarchy' persists as the flag-mast of declining sections of society which came to be represented in the communal organizations, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS. These declining groups construct the ideology of 'religion based nation state' which is a unique synthesis of feudal values with the modern concept of nation state, their communal politics is a modern phenomena but derives its identity from as ancient as time as possible. As neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian Kings were 'religious nationalist' so to say; as actually they presided over on the empires based on taxation of the toiling peasants in their kingdoms. Their goals of power-wealth were written on their sleeves; sometimes they adorned

the masks of Dharmyudh, Jihad or Crusade for their ambitions of expanding power.

So during freedom movement we see those working for anti colonial movement are saying, 'India as a nation in the making' the concept which runs parallel to modernization in transport, industrialization, education and administration in particular. Muslim League said we have been a Muslim nation from eighth century and Hindu Mahasabha-RSS asserting that we are a Hindu nation from times immemorial. Muslim league derives identity from the Kings' rule while Hindu Mahasabha-RSS project the concept of nation to times when people were having pastoral pattern and later made a transition

(Continued from Page 13)

and rule of law. Let me say with the greatest possible respect, you cannot to be rich to oppress, enslave, kill, maim, torture people for 200 years and then celebrate the fact that they are democratic at the end of it.

We were denied democracy so we had to snatch it, seize it from you with the greatest of reluctance it was considered in India's case after 150 years of British rule and that too with limited franchise.

If I may just point out the arguments made by a couple of speakers. The first speaker Mr. Lee in particular conceded all the evil atrocities of the colonialism but essentially suggested that reparations won't really help, they won't help the right people, they would be use of propaganda tools, they will embolden people like Mr Mugabe. So, it's nice how in the old days, I am sorry to say that either people of the Caribbean used to

to settled agriculture. For the communalists the major transition of industrialization and modern education is of no consequence.

While the declining classes do eulogize the kings of their religions, it is interesting that none of the kings in the history set out to spread his religion, they set out to expand their empires. To make this rule grounded there of course is an exception, Emperor Ashok who did spread his religion.

Today we cannot say what might have been the course of history had India not been colonized, what patterns of industrialization-modernization would have taken place, but one thing can be hypothesized that this communal

frighten their children into behaving and sleeping by saying some Francis Drake would come up after them that was the legacy, now Mugabe will be there - the new sort of Francis Drake of our time.

The fact is very simply said, that we are not talking about reparations as a tool to empower anybody, they are a tool for you to atone, for the wrongs that have been done and I am quite prepared to accept the proposition that you can't evaluate, put a monetary sum to the kinds of horrors people have suffered. Certainly no amount of money can expedite the loss of a loved one as somebody pointed out there. You are not going to figure out the exact amount but the principle is what matters.

The fact is that to speak blithely of sacrifices on both sides as an analogy was used here - a burglar comes into your house and sacks the place but stubs his toe and you say that there was sacrifice on both sides that I

politics, abuse of religions' identity for political goals might not have been here to torment us, to kill and maim the innocents, may not have been ruling our streets and asserting for authoritarian structures right within the democratic institutions which the country has nourished from last six decades.

So while Tharoor and earlier Manmohan Singh are pointing to two supplementary aspects of British rule, we also need to delve deeper and see the result of their policies which gave rise to communal politics, the politics which is tormenting South Asia as a whole and India is witnessing the worst in the form of Hindu nationalism, Hindutva which is dominating the political ideology.

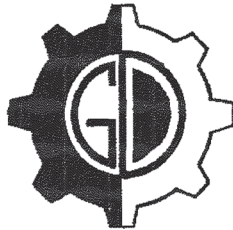
am sorry to say is not an acceptable argument. The truth is that we are not arguing specifically that vast some of money needs to be paid. The proposition before this house is the principle of owing reparations, not the fine points of how much is owed, to whom it should be paid. The question is, is there a debt, does Britain owe reparations?

As far as I am concerned, the ability to acknowledge your wrong that has been done, to simply say sorry will go a far, far, far longer way than some percentage of GDP in the form of aid.

What is required it seems to me is accepting the principle that reparations are owed. Personally, I will be quiet happy if it was one pound a year for the next 200 years after the last 200 years of Britain in India.

Thank you very much madam President.

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Adivasi's cultural identity under assault

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RSS-BJP kinship

Kuldip Nayar

If there was any iota of doubt about the links between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Prime Minister Narendra Modi dispelled it. He presented his key ministers to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and asked them to provide information on the working of their ministries. That the Prime Minister had no qualms about it was evident from the way the entire presentation was aired on news channels. He has been an ardent pracharak of the RSS before joining its political wing, the BJP.

The BJP has been evasive on the link because of its realization that the RSS does not go down well with an average Indian. It was the same question of connection which split the Janata Party. The Jana Sangh, the earlier avatar of the BJP, promised to sever its link with the RSS when it joined the Janata Party and gave an assurance to Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan that it would cut off its relations with the RSS, provided it was allowed to stay in the Janata Party. This delinking did not, however, happen and it betrayed JP's confidence.

I recall asking JP why he allowed the Jana Sangh to merge with the Janata Party when the former had not cut off its link with the RSS. In reply he said that he had been betrayed because the Jana Sangh leaders had gone back on their words. They had given him an undertaking that once the Janata Party started attending to the organizational work, after forming the government, the

Jana Sangh would have nothing to do with the RSS. "I have been personally let down," said JP.

This must be true but in the process the Jana Sangh was able to get secular credentials. The blunder committed by JP has cost the nation dear and the Jana Sangh of yesterday has emerged as the BJP of today and has been able to secure an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha.

The Congress should have gained from the situation. But its obsession with the dynasty and President Sonia Gandhi's insistence on having her son, Rahul Gandhi, as successor has dissipated the advantage. The party has lost its dependable vote-bank of Muslims. The community is now following either regional parties or even flirting with the idea of supporting Owasi, who is trying to present himself the sole representative of Muslim leaders, as those in the Muslim League used to do before partition.

The community does not want to go back to parochial politics. Yet, it may have no option except to toy with the idea since the RSS has come out openly on the field to guide the BJP, jettisoning its role of being a pure cultural organization. That the RSS has not gone through the electoral process does not bother the organization because it knows that the BJP has to depend on the RSS cadres to win elections.

Nonetheless, it is sad to see on television channels RSS chief

Bagwat making it clear who is the boss when Prime Minister Modi met him and paraded his ministerial colleagues in front of him. True, the electorate has given a majority to Modi but never did he say during his campaign that when it comes to country's governance, the RSS would be very much there.

In fact, during his campaign, Modi assured the minorities, particularly the Muslims, that whatever be the party's stance in the past the new slogan was sab ka sath, sab ka vikas. At a few meetings he went out of the way to make the Muslims believe that he would be the best custodian.

Really speaking, there is nothing discrimination in his way of working so far. However, the fact of the RSS saffronising the educational institutions and making appointments of its own men at key positions is visible. It suggests that Modi is implementing the RSS agenda slowly but relentlessly. It is evident that the Muslims have seized to count in the affairs of governance. The central cabinet itself has just one Muslim minister and he too has been assigned an unimportant portfolio. Even otherwise, the increasing impression inside and outside the government is that a soft-type of Hindutva has begun to prevail in governance.

The target of the RSS to have a Hindu Rashtra may look distant at present. But Modi still has three and a half years to go. Both he and the RSS chief, who now often meet publicly,

seem to be working according to the plan which they have devised at Nagpur, the RSS headquarters. The BJP and its students' wing Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad have no independent thinking. They just follow the script finalized at Nagpur.

This has a different manifestation. Sometimes it appears in the shape of ban on meat and sometimes the dress code and even compulsory teaching of Sanskrit in schools and specific morning prayers in assemblies. The redoing of Nehru Memorial Museum at Delhi is part of the same thinking. The RSS, which was nowhere when the movement to oust the British was fought, is now trying to occupy all the space and parade as the real champion of freedom.

One sadly feels the absence of passion of freedom struggle and the philosophy of pluralism. Even the name of the architect of modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru, is being systematically erased. For example, the postal stamps of Nehru and Indira Gandhi are being obliterated. The havoc caused in the field of education is terrible. The history is being re-written and text books are changed to downgrade the role of leaders that were instrumental in getting us the freedom. It is no surprise that the names of Frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who stood bravely against the Muslim League, are seldom mentioned.

Understandably, the RSS and its affiliated units like the BJP and the Bajrang Dal feel left out when freedom struggle is mentioned. But they do not have to minimize the freedom struggle itself because that will amount to a great disservice to tomorrow's generations. The important thing is the struggle for independence and the sacrifices made by innumerable people.

Had these children been of rich would the court have taken so long?

Sandeep Pandey

On 6 April, 2015, the Basic Shiksha Adhikari of Lucknow ordered admission of 31 children to Indira Nagar branch of City Montessori School (CMS) under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which provides for admission to disadvantaged groups consisting of SC/ST, OBC, physically challenged, HIV affected parents, etc. and weaker sections comprising of families with incomes of less than Rs. one lakh per year. 23 of the 31 children belonged to Valmiki community and 8 to Muslims, of whom 6 are from OBC category.

The school's founder manager Jagdish Gandhi filed a petition in the High Court claiming that there was no space in his school and he also raised the issue that when there were other government and private schools closer to children's homes why were the admissions ordered in CMS. The court ordered the BSA to visit the school premises and find out if there was space in the school. The BSA filed his report on 17 July, 2015 that there were enough empty rooms in the school. Then Jagdish Gandhi raised the issue that admissions under RTE Act can be ordered only in a neighbourhood school and the definition of neighbourhood according to rules framed by UP government in connection with this Act was 1 km whereas in a later government order (GO) the definition of neighbourhood was changed to be the Ward. The court ruled that since rules are above the GO the definition of neighbourhood should be taken as 1 km and further ordered the BSA

to go and measure the distance of CMS branch from children's homes. The BSA's measuring exercise established that 14 children from among 31 were living within a km of the school. Although there was a mistake in counting and the HC ordered admission of 13 children on 6 August giving a week's time to Jagdish Gandhi. Jagdish Gandhi, who had by now started taking the services of Delhi based senior lawyer and former Law Minister Shanti Bhushan, decided to go for special appeal against the order which was rejected on 10 September. The BSA meanwhile filed a contempt of Court case against Jagdish Gandhi but for some inexplicable reason the Court gave more than a month's time to Jagdish Gandhi to show cause why he is not complying with HC order.

Meanwhile the academic session is fast progressing. There is no stay on the admission of children to CMS. Why doesn't the Court first get the children admitted and then ask Jagdish Gandhi to contest the case? Would the Court have taken such a lackadaisical attitude to let the children remain unadmitted for 3-4 months since the academic session began if the children were of the rich? The parents would have gone to the Court by now. The administration-government would have been more serious in implementing the court order.

Under RTE Act schools have to admit upto 25 per cent children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections. But from Jagdish Gandhi's example it is clear that expensive

private schools don't want to admit children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. Jagdish Gandhi is violating the law and court order and the administration-government seem to be ineffective sending a message that Jagdish Gandhi is above law and court. He seems to be able to manipulate the administration, government and the court. What is his strength except for the unlimited amount of money which he is spending to his heart's content? To bring Shanti Bhushan from Delhi on every court date itself would be costing him tens of lakhs of rupees every time. Jagdish Gandhi claims to have risen from poverty. Where has he got all the money from? If it is from the fees that he collects from children then it implies that he is charging much more than he should. Otherwise if he has another source of income then it should be investigated.

The maps of most buildings belonging to CMS have been approved in violation of rules by Lucknow Development Authority. The land use has either not been changed or changed illegally. The seating arrangement is so congested that in case of a natural calamity it would be difficult for children to come out of the illegally constructed multistoreyed buildings. Similarly the Fire Department has not given NOC to most CMS buildings. The school doesn't have its own playgrounds and uses public parks for this purpose. It is surprising that school has got recognition on this basis. CMS uses public roads for parking. Jagdish Gandhi can openly violate all rules and laws because he gives concession in fees to children of IAS, IPS officers, MLAs, MPs, advocates and judges and most importantly journalists. One officer used to get concession in fees for his child when he was a tehsildar in LDA. As soon as he was transferred

to general administration Jagdish Gandhi refused to recognise him and stopped the concession in fees to his child.

Jagdish Gandhi by spending huge amount of money on international programmes has made a name for himself abroad. He has also been able to infiltrate the United Nations. But now it is time people should know his reality. There used to be another conman in Lucknow Subrata Roy who had built an empire on dubious activities. His game got over

one day and he landed in jail. Now it is Jagdish Gandhi's turn.

The government should take over CMS and implement RTE Act properly. There is no hope from Jagdish Gandhi. That the man who delivers spiritual sermons is anti-poor has become obvious now. He has put in his all to oppose the admission of poor children to his school. He should be arrested and tried for violation of national law and court's order.

Campaign for improving school education

Bharat Dogra

Improving school education needs to be one of our topmost development priorities, and this cannot be achieved without many-sided improvements in government schools. Despite various provisions of the Right to Education law, many government schools continue to lack basic facilities like drinking water, sanitation and adequate class rooms. There is a glaring shortage of teachers. These and other problems have led to poor quality of education in most government schools.

In this gloomy situation a campaign in Rajasthan to improve school education has brought some badly needed hope and enthusiasm. This campaign has been initiated by Rajasthan Patrika, a leading newspaper, in co-operation with Soochna Va Rojgar Abhiyan (SR Abhiyan in brief). About 100 social organizations are affiliated to SR Abhiyan.

Representatives of social organizations, journalists and college student volunteers have played an important role in mobilizing students and Panchayati Raj

elected representatives to get more closely involved in improvement of government schools of their area. These citizens have conducted surveys and filed RTI applications to get authentic details about the number of teachers employed, vacant posts, attendance, classrooms and various other basic facilities in schools. On the basis of this authentic information they have then filed complaints. All this has been published widely in hundreds of reports in various editions of Rajasthan Patrika. This entire work has been followed up with a dialogue with state and local education authorities.

Students as well as their parents have joined hands to lock up school gates in several schools to draw attention to long time denial of basic facilities and shortage of teachers. They have staged protest demonstrations in front of school gates till some of their demands have been met partially. Already the state government has announced some improvements and more are expected soon.

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Water Resource Planning: Large Dams and Development

Ramaswamy R Iyer

I was responsible for initiating the national water policy in 1985-87, when I was Secretary of Water Resources. I found that there was no such thing as a water policy. Concentration was on big projects. Ministry of Water Resources was dominated by engineers. Water resource planning at the time meant only civil engineering. Before the British period, water resources were a local affair, community managed. In British period with advent of modernity, ownership of natural resources passed from community to the hands of the state, management passed from the community to the technocrats, engineers, civil servants, politicians. Introduction of western engineering favoured large dams over the traditional systems like tank and canal systems of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and the step wells of Rajasthan. These went into disuse. They deteriorated and they are hardly in use now.

In fact we learned to think of these huge, technology driven, engineering dominated, top-down, non-participatorily managed projects as symbols of development. You will remember Nehru's famous phrase on large dams "temples of modern India." This was not only his view, it was a prevalent view of the time. Over the years disenchantment has set in for many reasons.

Today they have fallen into disrepute. There are many reasons for this: financial, economic, they

are viewed as guzzlers of resources subject to enormous cost and time overruns. There is a collusion between engineers, civil servants, contractors -- no one consults the people concerned. In the process even worse hardships are inflicted on people, and in the end you will find that they do not achieve the projected benefits. The main justification, that you will yield a larger social good, often turns out not to be the case at all. The justification for the cost thus disappears. This is why movements have arisen against these projects. All of you know about the Narmada Bachao Andolan which has brought the SSP to a halt. In Tehri a movement led by Sunderlal Bahuguna is opposing the hydro electric project. Both projects are facing public interest litigation in the supreme court.

Similarly in Nepal, there is a movement (not so strong) against large water projects. In Nepal the dominant view was that water is to Nepal what oil is to the middle east. There is a series of large projects - Pancheshwar, etc. In India we also want Nepal to take on these projects so that we can import power from them. But World Bank, which got its fingers burnt in SSP was even more burnt in Arun III of Nepal, and withdrew from Nepal. In Pakistan there is opposition to the Kalabagh project. In Sri Lanka we find that the much touted Mahaveli project is questioned by many people. So

this kind of atmosphere prevails at present.

I shall not enumerate all the difficulties that arise when these projects are taken -- agricultural land and forests are lost, wildlife is affected. Flora and fauna are severely affected. We have loss of biodiversity. There is violent disruption of nature and the people, often tribal people. Catchment deteriorates. Siltation is often faster than planned so that the project life gets reduced. As the waters become available, they are commandeered by the people nearer the catchment, so that even though a long canal network is planned, very little reaches the end of it.

As irrigation is practiced for 5-10 years, the land gets waterlogged and salinized. Good agricultural land goes out of use - this has happened again and again in project after project. And even the justification offered to the people in the upper catchment, which is that people in the command area will benefit - whether this is a correct kind of equation is questionable, we will come to that - but even that is lost because much of the benefit goes to the richer farmers and little is left for the poorer farmers.

So there is a whole host of environmental and social problems.

Even the people displaced, for example by the Pong dam, have

never been properly rehabilitated. In Tehri you will find that 15 years after displacement began the original displaced people are still not resettled properly and are living in conditions of misery as we found in our research.

Narmada resettlement policy for the SSP is touted as very enlightened, which it is to some extent, but you find on the ground that land is just not available for land-for-land resettlement, cluster settlement is promised, but not practically feasible. Very often some of the displaced families get scattered over different resettlement areas, sometimes in distant and unfamiliar places, and there is an uneasy relationship with host communities.

In the Rajasthan canal project we found that there was a mistaken notion of introducing irrigated agriculture into desert land. We were also asking a nomadic community to become settled agriculturists - this just does not happen. You bring in a community from elsewhere creating social tensions.

The answer to all these issues goes as follows:

First: We can study all of this. There is a notion that we can study all the effects through Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Second: having done EIA we can reckon all the costs and do a cost benefit analysis on which to base the project decision

Third: whatever adverse impacts are anticipated, whatever harms result, we will address through mitigative, compensatory and ameliorative measures.

These are the arguments through which the projects are justified.

Problems with this

It is extremely difficult to foresee all the impacts of these projects. There are many things unforeseen, as we find in project after project. Even SSP, which is claimed to be the most well studied of projects, has many things not accounted. When the dam comes up what happens to the people downstream, fisherpeople, what will they do - this is not studied.

Some of the consequences are truly irremediable. When you stop flowing water you completely change morphology. Water becomes poison. The aquatic life dies. You may say that you will grow other kinds of fish. But that does not compensate the devastation inflicted on the original habitat and population. Once you dam the river you cannot prevent the change in morphology

If you say, we will drown a forest here and create another forest elsewhere, even that does not make up for the loss of the ecological system. There is no way you can compensate for this. Quite often the new forest is created not in the same ecological zone but in another. It may well grow into a new ecological zone but the ecosystem which has been lost has been lost. There is no way you can recover it.

Whatever social measures are stipulated, have to be implemented through the government machinery. When people are dissatisfied and start agitating, the state tends to act with force, because that is what they are familiar with. Many things cannot be handled. This is why one of the reports said, perhaps

questionably, that rehabilitation is impossible. That is an extreme view but we (the committees of which I was a member) did find in the Narmada and Tehri cases that resettlement and rehabilitation was fraught with enormous difficulties, particularly where the numbers are large.

Unfortunately the whole prevailing policy framework is inclined towards large projects.

There are two syllogisms - it is a logical form of argument, in which from two premises, we draw a conclusion.

The engineering syllogism is that water availability is distributed unevenly over time and space. We don't have precipitation 365 days a year in all areas - rain comes in a few months (few weeks) in only a few places. How do you transfer water from wet to dry season and from wet zones to arid zones? The second premise is: science and technology enable to harness these waters. Another assumption is: whatever water reaches the sea is wasted.

Conclusion: stop the water and transfer it over time and space.

The economic or developmental syllogism begins with a definition of civilization which is a multiplication of demands or wants. Demands must be met. This is sacrosanct. We project a demand of x Mega watts, we need so much water for the expected population. Therefore you must meet it through supply side solutions. Supply side solutions being, creation of large projects.

With a combination of these two - you may have heard of the former minister K. L. Rao who

A legend in hydrology-ecology sector

NAPM, NBA and various associated movements, organizations and concerned citizens are deeply pained at the demise of Ramaswamy Iyer, whose decades of engagement with issues of water management, environmental and pro-people development across the country remain as an unforgettable source of light and strength to all of us.

As one of the few bureaucrats in the Water Resources Ministry, who not only handled but contributed significantly as the Secretary, his clear vision on numerous issues be it on the costs-benefits of large scale irrigation projects, the implications of river-linking, the environmental impacts of large projects, etc, with a clear scientific as well as rights-based approach was a valuable contribution.

His remarkable openness to engage with the issues raised from the ground, his profound understanding of water woes across the spectrum of legal, social and political dynamics, his significant role in the process of evolution of international treaties on water law, his pertinent analysis, hard-hitting questions in a soft-spoken manner, were few of the many strengths of Ramaswamyji.

His unique strength also lied in the fact that he never came across as “anti-establishment”, although he challenged the establishment at every stage, with his convincing analysis and feisty factual knowledge. Until his last breath, he has been writing articles, books and reviews, a treasure for one and all.

At Narmada Bachao Andolan,

we still remember how, as a key official in the Water Ministry, way back in 1993, he patiently sat through the proceedings of the 5-member Review Committee and worked as the Committee’s backbone, painstakingly trying to understand and later convince himself and other members of the costs and benefits of the SSP. The report of the 5-member group is nothing short of a classic.

We can never forget how Iyerji stayed for the entire 3-days in the Narmada valley with his family, during the mega events marking the 25 years of the struggle, interacting and expressing solidarity with the tribals and farmers in the hills and plains. As a petitioner before the Supreme Court in the Narmada petition, filed along with other eminent citizens such as Prof. Upendra Baxi, Aruna Roy, Harsh Mander, BD Sharma, he questioned the unconstitutionality of displacement by offer of meagre cash compensation to the Sardar Sarovar oustees.

Equally respected both by the State, civil society and people’s movements, a man of such erudition and with an unflinching commitment towards people’s causes is rare in today’s times. In this moment of incalculable loss to the entire progressive community in India and elsewhere, we stand in solidarity with all his near and dear ones. Today, we need more and many more people like Ramaswamyji to battle the lies in the name of development. We miss you Ramaswamyji, but vow to keep up the struggle for our rivers, natural resources and people dependent on it.

- Medha Patkar

talked of a Ganga Cauvery link. He wanted to bring water from Ganga to Cauvery, but given up because it involved so many links that the energy required would have been simply unmanageable. There was another person (Dastur), not an engineer but a pilot. He flew over the entire coast of India and from there the wisdom came to him to build a “garland canal.” You may laugh but these ideas exercise some influence over people’s minds. Even today people think in these terms. Transferring water over long distances.

When we look at water resources of India, we see that there is a lot of water in the Brahmaputra. Where is the Brahmaputra? It is in some remote place. So how do you get the water? You build a canal. At one stage in India-Bangladesh relations this became a big issue. They wanted to build a huge canal of 100,000 cusecs. I don’t know if you can imagine a 100,000 cusecs - it would be twice as large as the Cauvery. Wanted to build it from Joghigopa in Assam, across Bangladesh, and drop it into the Ganga, near Farakawa.

Of course Bangladesh objected very strongly.

No, no they are not more enlightened than we are, they were also thinking of some other project - but they were afraid of the security implications. So the mad idea was given up. But not totally given up.

I am now a member of a national commission in integrated water resource planning. One of the terms of reference of this commission is inter-basin transfers. That is, if there is not enough water in one river basin, we will bring in water from another basin which has surplus water. There

is a body called National Water Development Agency. They are exploring possibility of transferring waters from Mahanadi to Godavari, from Godavari to Krishna, Krishna to Penang and Penang to Cauvery.

Unfortunately, Orissa does not admit that there is any surplus in the Mahanadi, AP does not admit there is any surplus water in the Godavari. You will be surprised to know in the course of the Indo-Bangladesh talks, both countries did agree that Ganges was short of water. I would question that but it was a common ground between the two governments. But you will be amazed to know that the Bangladesh engineers seriously advanced the proposition that there was not enough water in the Brahmaputra! Now the Brahmaputra is one of the mightiest rivers in the world, perhaps smaller than Amazon, but not much. So if you say there is not enough water in the Brahmaputra you may have to bring in water from another planet. Maybe some ice planet which is being discovered.

Current consumption patterns make us project unmanageable demands. In order to meet those demands we promulgate these mad technology driven supply side solutions. There is no room at all for participatory management. The nature of the project is such that it rules out participatory management.

Sooner or later I think that small efforts at the local level will have to fit into some larger policy framework, or it will come into difficulties.

What we drafted in 1985 was a first pioneering attempt. I would consider it an imperfect, flawed first start. Much more needs to be done.

Unfortunately nothing has gone on after that, either to operationalize what was done, or to take it further. How would I improve it?

I would say that instead of projecting demands and seeking supply side solutions we should reverse this process. We should take supplies as given and manage the demand. Much can be done. There are examples, very striking examples of local water management and social transformation.

You might have heard of Ralegaon Siddhi of Anna Hazare, or the pani panchayats. Of Sukhomarji in Haryana. There are many such examples.

There is a group of people who are trying to increase local water availability in the National Capital Region through a variety of means, such as increasing the in-channel storage in the Najafgarh storm-water drain, reviving defunct water-bodies like the Hauzkhas, promoting rooftop collection of rainwater, etc. In Madras they are doing more rooftop collections. If you talk to engineers they will say yes yes, we need all this, but these can at best supplement the large projects. But this is an unfair statement. We know what will happen in large projects because we have tried it.

We don't know what will happen with these local solutions because we have not tried it on a larger scale. We need to replicate this in the thousands. We need to shift to local water management, demand management.

The apex board on water policy is entirely a body of engineers. There are no agriculturists, no environmentalists. Water is not a

matter of engineering. It is a much wider question.

We must involve communities right from the beginning. Not when the project has been prepared and then it is thrown to the public for opinion. That is not the right thing to do. These changes have to be implemented. I have no great hope that these changes will take place but we have to keep trying.

(Continued from Page 5)

This will be followed by a state-wide yatra for improving the government schools followed by state level conferences on this issue. All this will help to mobilize more people on this issue. It is hoped that once people are adequately motivated and enthused, they will become involved in improving schools in their locality on a long-term basis. This active involvement of local people in the betterment of schools is the ultimate objective of this campaign.

It is also hoped that this campaign will motivate like-minded people and organizations in other parts of the country to initiate similar efforts to improve government schools.

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Constituent Assembly: the bus that Socialists missed

Bapu Heddurshetti

One of the objectives of the Cabinet Mission was to seek an agreement with the leaders of major political parties of India for setting up of a Constituent Assembly for drawing up a constitution for independent India. The Cabinet Mission proposed a Constituent Assembly. In the proposed Assembly there would be 292 members representing the various provinces of the British India, 93 members representing the princely states, and one each from Chief Commissioner of Provinces of Delhi, Ajmer-Mewar, Coorg and Baluchistan. The total number of members was thus to be 389. The Legislative Assemblies of the British ruled Provinces, which had been elected on a limited franchise under the Government of India Act, 1935, were to 'elect' their representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Of the representatives from the Princely States, while some were to be nominated by the Rulers, others were to be 'elected' by the representative assemblies of those States.

The Indian National Congress agreed to participate in the framing of a constitution for free India as proposed by the Cabinet Mission. The Muslim League also agreed to do so. Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Constituent Assembly will function as a sovereign body while drafting the constitution. However, the Socialists opposed the proposal. Giving vent to their views Jayaprakash Narayan said "The proposed Constituent Assembly would neither lead to a free or democratic constitution

nor ensure unity of India. The Congress is working and acting in a very undemocratic manner. It has shown a singular disregard for all democratic norms of politics. The next AICC session, I am afraid, is going to be not more than a farce because it is going to be faced with a *fait accompli*." He said that the only alternative before the country was to prepare for a final onslaught on the British power.

On 28th July 1946, Jayaprakash Narayan addressed his third letter "To All Fighters for Freedom". In the letter he described the futility of the proposal. "Could the so-called Constituent Assembly bring us freedom? Could it, for instance, appoint a provisional Government and force the Viceroy to hand over all power to it and quit India? Could the Constituent Assembly dissolve itself and empower the free provisional Government, after the British had quit, to convene a real Constituent Assembly elected by the people on the basis of unrestricted adult suffrage?"²⁷

The Muslim League, in the meanwhile, reversed its earlier decision to join the Constituent Assembly in its Council meeting held on 27th to 29th June 1946. Jinnah questioned as to how the Constituent Assembly could be a sovereign body as claimed by Jawaharlal Nehru when it had been summoned by the Viceroy who had been in turn appointed by the British Government. However events proved both Jayaprakash

Narayan and Mohammed Ali Jinnah wrong.

However, due to organizational difficulties all party members could not be informed of the decision of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) not to participate in the Constituent Assembly. Hence many Socialists who had filed nominations could not withdraw their nominations on time and some of them were eventually elected. From among the Socialists only Sarangadhar Das who represented the States' People of Orissa and Damodar Swarup Seth were elected to the Constituent Assembly before the directive that the socialists will not contest elections to that assembly was announced. Minoo Masani was elected to represent a minority community and Hari Vishnu Kamat, who later joined the Praja Socialist Party, was elected as a candidate of the Forward bloc of Subhash Chandra Bose. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that once elected the members of the Constituent Assembly could not be permitted to resign from it. In view of the same the CSP decided not to insist that the Socialists elected to the Assembly should resign.

Elections were duly held and the Assembly met for the first time in New Delhi on 9 December 1946. However when the Muslim League insisted on a separate Constituent Assembly for Pakistan, the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten of Burma, scrapped the Cabinet Mission Plan on 3rd June 1947,

which led to the passing of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, by the British Parliament on 18th July 1947, recognizing the two nations – India and Pakistan and establishing a separate Constituent Assembly for Pakistan. As a result, the members of the Constituent Assembly elected from areas which became parts of Pakistan withdrew from the Constituent Assembly of undivided India. The membership of the Assembly was reduced to 299. Thus the Constituent Assembly became a sovereign body. Even then the Socialists continued with their campaign for dissolving the Constituent Assembly as constituted to be replaced by the one elected on the basis of an adult franchise.

The Princes ruling the various States in India had set up a Chamber of Princes to look after their interests. In the wake of the setting up of the Constituent Assembly, they constituted a 'Negotiating Committee' to negotiate about the representation of the States ruled by them in the Constituent Assembly. On 21st December 1946, the Constituent Assembly set up a committee to negotiate with the Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes about the distribution and method of choosing the 93 representatives of the Princely States in the Constituent Assembly as some States had representative assemblies and some did not have. Members of this committee were Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbai Patel, Pattabhi Seetaramayya, Shankarrao Deo, N. G. Ayyangar and three others to be chosen later. The two committees agreed that not less than 50 per cent of the total representatives of the States shall be elected by the elected members of the legislatures of the States or

where such legislatures did not exist, by other electoral colleges. This was against the spirit of the resolution of the States' People's Conference, which had said that all representatives of the States should be elected and none should be appointees of the Princes.

Opposing the decision of the two committees Jayaprakash Narayan said, "This agreement becomes all the more objectionable when it is realized that most of the so-called States legislatures are wholly unrepresentative and even their elected members in many cases are little better than hand-picked nominees of the Princes. Furthermore, in the States where no legislatures exist - and their number is far greater - it is not clear how the proposed electoral colleges will be constituted". He then urged the forthcoming conference of the States People to be held at Gwalior to firmly reject the agreement³.

However, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party reconsidered its decision to boycott the Constituent Assembly and said that some members of the party can join the Assembly if invited. Hence, Jayaprakash Narayan wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on 3rd May 1947 that if any vacancies were to be filled up in the Constituent Assembly and if it was proposed to take some Socialists in it, he would suggest the names of Acharya Narendra Deva, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rammanohar Lohia, Purushottam Tricumdas, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Asoka Mehta and Rao Patwardhan⁴. He suggested that since Achyut Patwardhan was not in India and if he returns in time he also should be included. Jawaharlal Nehru sent a copy of the letter to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was the President of the Constituent

Assembly and wrote to Jayaprakash Narayan that while he welcomes the suggestions, there was no likelihood any vacancies since everyone wanted to stick to the Constituent Assembly as it was to become the Legislative Assembly also. As a result, none of the suggested persons could become members of the Constituent Assembly.

It is interesting that while the Socialists changed their decision not to join the Constituent Assembly, and having failed to get into it, they continued their demand that the Constituent Assembly as constituted should be dissolved and a new Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise⁵ should be constituted.

Jayaprakash Narayan wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on 21st April 1948 about the Socialist attitude towards the Constituent Assembly and enclosed a note, drafted by him detailing the views of the Socialist Party and also a copy of the Draft Constitution prepared by the party. The note said: "The Constituent Assembly, as it is at present constituted, does not represent 85 per cent of the people. Even the remaining 15 per cent have not directly participated in its election. The Provincial legislative assemblies of today are based on the Government of India Act of 1935 which permitted only 15 per cent of the people to exercise their franchise and it was these assemblies which nominated (free election being out of the question) the members of the present Constituent Assembly. Democratic principle concedes the right of a free people to frame their own Constitution. Such a right is being negated by the present Constituent Assembly in practice. So I say, dissolve the Assembly and

form another on adult franchise.” The note also pointed out that, sweeping powers had been granted to the President and the Governors under the heading ‘emergency’ which may lead to dictatorship. It also pointed out that there is no reason why the minimum age for enfranchisement was kept at 21 years as it was 18 years in many other countries and as the life span of an Indian was considerably shorter.

The National Executive of the Socialist Party in its meeting held in Belgaum⁶, from 24th to 26th May 1948, passed a resolution demanding “Dissolution of the present Constituent Assembly (as distinct from the Central Assembly) and convening of a new Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise”⁷ On 30th May 1948 Jayaprakash Narayan wrote to Dr. Rajendra Prasad bringing to his notice the resolution passed by the CSP. Dr. Rajendra wrote back to Jayaprakash Narayan on 13th June 1948 that even Seth Damodar Swarup of the Socialist Party who was a member of the Constituent Assembly had not raised the issue in the Constituent Assembly so far and since the Government of India did not create the Constituent Assembly, it did not have the power to dissolve it and convene another Constituent Assembly in its place. He invited the Socialist Party to convey its constructive criticism of the Draft Constitution which had already been published. Promptly, Seth Damodar Swarup, moved a resolution in the Constituent Assembly that a new Constituent Assembly be convened on the basis of adult franchise, but was overwhelmingly defeated.⁸

Jayaprakash Narayan wrote an article in Janata of 18th July 1948 entitled ‘Dissolve the Constituent

Assembly’. Criticizing the draft Constitution published for public response, he said “The Constitution in its present form would be a bulwark of conservatism and a powerful hindrance to full democracy. The fundamental rights of the people have been so hedged in as to nearly nullify them; the executive has been armed with such sweeping special powers as to encourage dictatorship; bicameralism even in the provinces assures conservatism; the guarantees regarding compensation for property acquired makes progressive economic policy too burdensome to be undertaken; there is no assurance that one-third of the country comprised by the States will possess the same democratic institutions as the rest of the country; finally, the provisions for amending the Constitution are so difficult as to make this monstrous document well-nigh impossible”⁹.

Then drawing the attention of the readers to the non-representative character of the Constituent Assembly he said, in the said article, “of the total of 69 members from the States, 28 are the nominees of the Rulers and 41 ‘elected’ of whom none was directly elected by the people concerned and most of them were merely nominees of the Congress bosses who dominate the All India States’ People’s Conference. The present Draft Constitution seeks to speak in the name of the Indian people. Clearly the nominees of the Rulers have no right to speak in the name of the people and use the phrase ‘WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA’”. He continued, “The draft Constitution if India is to march towards full freedom and democracy. There is little chance however, that the Constituent Assembly as it is constituted today, will make any drastic change in

the Draft Constitution. Only a new Constituent Assembly freshly and directly elected by the whole people, including the people of the States, can do so. A new assembly elected on adult franchise by the entire people - of the Provinces as well as of the States - must be called to pass the final draft of India’s Constitution.¹⁰”

Even the Communists supported the idea of a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise. Earlier the Communists in India were demanding the establishment of Soviets and were not in favour of a Constituent Assembly. However, in an article by R. Palme Dutt who was the guiding spirit of the Indian Communists, and Ben Bradley¹¹ in the *The Labour Monthly* of March 1936 supported the demand for a Constituent Assembly for India elected by the people with full sovereign rights. They even said that there was no contradiction between the demand for Soviets and the demand for a Constituent Assembly.

In a letter addressed to Jayaprakash Narayan on 19th August 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru considered Socialist Party’s attitude towards the Constituent Assembly as ‘most unfortunate’¹². Mahatma Gandhi said, “I am surprised that Jayaprakash Narayan said that it would be dangerous to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly and therefore you should reject the Working Committee’s resolution. I was not prepared to hear such defeatist language from the lips of a tried fighter like Jayaprakash”¹³.

Socialists had been thinking not only about how the Constituent Assembly for drafting a Constitution for a free India should be constituted but also about how the constitution

of free India should be and had been publishing their views from time to time. On 15th October 1947, the Socialist Party published a 'Programme of the Socialist Party' for the first stage in India's evolution towards Socialism. It also detailed how India's constitution should be. It wanted the constitution to be promulgated within a few weeks and elections under the constitution held by the middle of 1948. It wanted the new Indian State to be sovereign, democratic, federal and secular republic with a single uniform citizenship. Equality in all forms was to be guaranteed to all citizens without distinction of caste, community, sex or creed and backward classes and sections of society to be assured special facilities for their economic and cultural advancement and full cultural autonomy to the minorities to be given. It further said that the citizens should be given fundamental civic and political rights enforceable by the Supreme Court. Private property and private enterprise, which could be expropriated with or without compensation, was to be guaranteed only to the extent they were consistent with the progress towards socialism. Legislatures were to be unicameral, and all elections were to be direct, secret and based on adult suffrage and there were to be multi-member constituencies with voting according to the system of cumulative votes, thus providing representation to the minorities. Executive was to be separated from the judiciary.¹⁴

On 18th December 1947, the Socialist Party drafted and published its own draft of a constitution which it said a free India should have. It had three parts: the first contained a review of the decisions of the Constituent Assembly before the

Draft Constitution prepared by the Drafting Committee was made available to the public, the second contained the constitution drafted by the Socialist Party consisting of 318 Articles and the third contained an appendix which reviewed the important changes and additions introduced by the Drafting Committee. The main burden of preparing the draft was borne by Prof. Mukut Behari Lal, Head of the Department of Political Science, Benares Hindu University.

The review, while appreciating the much good work done by the Constituent Assembly, said that many of its propositions were based on sound democratic principles and hence deserved full support. The draft had mentioned India as an 'Independent Republic'. However the Socialist Party wanted the word 'independent' to be replaced by the word 'democratic'. It said that while all republics are 'independent' they may not be 'democratic', and hence the substitution was necessary. It wanted the Constitution to clearly state that India will not be a part of the British Commonwealth and that the State should be declared to be a 'secular' state. It also wanted that, the scheduled castes children to be educated in common schools instead of separate schools to help their social assimilation; the primary education to be imparted in the mother tongue of the child; the process of social assimilation of the students of linguistic minorities to be started at the secondary school stage; 'Equality' to be real must be not only legal and political but also social.

On the clause that property can be acquired for public purpose on payment of compensation to be determined by law, Socialists said that the clause was unhappily

worded. They said 'it is likely to lead to a lot of litigation'. The review anticipated that the Judges may place a restricted interpretation on the words 'public use'. To deal with the problem of the regulation of property and its acquisition by the State, the review said, "we will have to discard the theory of natural right in property as well as Kantian conceptions that property is a projection of personality and invasion of property is interference with personality itself. We cannot confuse personality with property. Man has no natural right in property. Right in property is a claim acquired by law recognized by the community and the claim has never been recognized as absolute or irrevocable. The State must have full right to regulate, limit and expropriate private property by means of law, if common interests of the people require it."

On compensation, the review said that 'the doctrine of compensation as a condition on expropriation cannot be accepted as a gospel truth. It is impossible for the State to pay to owners in all cases market value of the property which is to be acquired or requisitioned in cases of grave emergency.' (It was the interpretation of the word 'compensation' as equivalent to 'market value' by the Supreme Court which resulted in a slug-fest between the Parliament and Judiciary in the early years of freedom!)

The review wanted the constitution to provide that 'all the intermediaries between the State and the tillers of the soil are abolished'. Referring to the Directive Principles of State Policy regarding ownership and control of material resources to be so distributed as to serve the common good and the operation of free enterprise not resulting in

concentration of ownership etc., the review said that private enterprise subject to State regulation was a controlled capitalism which may lead to finance capitalism and may instead of being controlled by the State, control it. Hence the review advocated that industries of monopolistic tendencies must be owned by the State and small scale industries should be organized on co-operative basis. It said that to avoid bureaucratization and dictatorship, Central Planning Authority should be a representative body. It wanted the workers to have a share in the management of socialized industries to avoid bureaucratization.

On the distribution of powers between the Union and the federating units, the Review said that since the Union had powers to legislate on Concurrent subjects, a time will come when the laws made by the Union will cover a vast legislative field leaving nothing for the federating units. The review reminded that the same had happened in the Indian Councils Act, 1861 and hence in 1892 the British Parliament had to empower the federating units to amend the laws made by the Union under the concurrent list. The review objected to the Draft Constitution not making provision for mobilization of sufficient resources by the federating units and hence wanted some more items of taxation to be allocated to the provinces. The review wanted the residuary powers to be vested concurrently between the Union and the Provinces, which could be exercised by them depending on whether the issue was of local or national importance. It was also critical of the failure of the Constituent Assembly to give sufficient attention to the question of coordination between the provinces inter-se and with the Union. While

the Constitution provided for the structure of not only the federation but also of the federating provinces, the review insisted, that the Constitution should provide for the structure of the Princely States also and that they should be on par with the Provinces under the Constitution and that they should not be allowed to have their own Constitutions since some Princes were autocratic and did not want to give democratic freedoms to their people

The review welcomed the acceptance of adult franchise on the completion of 21 years but advocated the lowering of the age to 18 years. It also said that the Constituent Assembly has rightly decided against communal representation through separate electorates. It said "Indeed, the minority community loses a chance of protection in the degree in which communal feelings substitute civic consciousness and the majority of the representatives become wholly independent of the votes of the minority community". On the 'first past the post' system the review said "even when elections are fought only by two parties, the strength of the parties in the legislature does not in general bear proportion to votes actually cast. In fact, the party that has polled the minority of votes may secure the majority of seats or may remain altogether unrepresented in the legislature". The review said that though proportional representation with single transferable vote would be better, it would not suit India with its illiterate votes. Hence the review advocated multiple member constituencies with cumulative voting as the most suitable system for India.

The review advocated unicameralism about bicameralism

it said: "In India, what is needed is speed and not check in the reconstruction of economic, social and cultural life of the people. The danger lies more in delay and checks than in speed".

In Judiciary, the Review said that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court should be appointed by the President with the concurrence of two-third majority of the Federal Legislature and other judges should be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice. The constitutional head of the unit was to be involved in the appointment of High Court Judges. It further said that the "judges of lower courts should be appointed by the executive authorities of the unit concerned on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission."

While agreeing with the observation of Harold Laski in his Grammar of Politics that "the whole difference between efficient and inefficient administration lies in the creative use of the officials by elected persons" the review said that the elected representatives should never be allowed to interfere individually in the operation of administration.

The review also spoke elaborately about the provisions to be made about the tribal people and aboriginals.

In the appendix added to the review after the Draft Constitution was made available for public response, the Socialist Party was critical of the emergency provisions of the constitution and in particular the provisions relating to the suspension of elections to the federal legislature during such periods. Referring to the provisions providing for declaration of emergency due

to external aggression or internal disturbances, the party said "The President's powers with regard to proclamation of emergency are also very wide, not free from dangers to the very existence of democracy. If its proposals (of the Drafting Committee) are accepted it will be possible for the federal executive to reduce to subservience the executive authorities of the units and to establish its dictatorship on the plea of threat of war or domestic violence. Hitler acquired dictatorship through constitutional means and with the consent of the legislature."

The Socialists, though decided to boycott the Constituent Assembly to begin with, later changed their mind and agreed to join it, and having failed to join, continued their attempts to influence the Constituent Assembly with their views for making the Constitution more democratic and conducive to socialism. In view of the kind of preparations they made by drafting a constitution themselves and reviewing the Draft Constitution as presented to the Constituent Assembly, the Socialists even from outside, made significant contribution for the drafting of the Indian Constitution.

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I am attempting to write a brief history of the Socialist movement in India. P. L. Lakhanpal's 'History of the Congress Socialist Party' ends with the mutation of the Congress Socialist Party as the Socialist Party and Hari Kishore Singh's 'History of Socialist Movement in India' ends at the split in the PSP in 1955. I am neither a historian nor a writer. Still I felt that even the treatment of the period from 1934 to 1955 needs elaboration and also that it was necessary to carry forward the developments in the Socialist movement in the country after 1956 at least till 1977 when the Socialist Party merged with the Janata Party. Hence this effort.

Hari Dev Sharma who has edited 'Acharya Narendra Deva's Selected Works' in four volumes and Bimal Prasad who has edited 'Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works' in ten volumes have done a very good job. I have taken the liberty of using the biographical sketches of Socialist leaders from both the books which may help in better understanding of the evolution of the movement. However I have given the biographical notes only of important leaders of the Socialist movement. The 'Collected Works of Dr Rammanohar Lohia' edited by Dr. Mastram Kapoor in 9 volumes also has been of great help.

I will be grateful to the readers of Janata if they can help me with their comments, suggestions and material for my efforts.

—Bapu Heddurshetti

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Adivasi's cultural identity under assault

Vidya Bhushan Rawat

As I boarded the Rajdhani express from New Delhi for Parasnath for my intended visit to Jharkhand the co-passenger in the side seat was a young boy from IIT Delhi who happened to belong to Jain community and was visiting to Parasnath for religious rituals that his parents were performing. During the conversation he said that he is a vegetarian but definitely respect people's right to eat non-veg food. He opined that the world was changing and that a business community cannot be confined to narrow partisan and outdated thoughts that look down upon others who have different take on the issue. World is too diverse and as a global citizen you will have to respect people's personal choices to food and drink he said during the conversation. The boy laughed when I said: doesn't he think that Jains are hypocrite as the biggest meat-beef exporters in India are Jains and Marwadis. His position was that we are in business and need to whatever is good but at the same point of time narrow attitude may be damaging for future of their business. It was a happier togetherness in the train for nearly 12 hours where I found how the Jain youngsters are changing and feel that their community needs to move beyond if it has to remain in business

Parasnath railway station looked much cleaner and better than any of its counterparts in other parts of the state. It clearly indicates that the authorities have done this to 'honor' the 'feelings' of Jains who come in large number to worship at the

Parasnath hills. Outside the station hundreds of taxis, autos offer you to take you to Parasnath for a 'darshan'.

For long, I had desired to visit this place as I have visited historical places of Jains like Sravan Belgola in Karnataka which is definitely a beautiful monument and in many other places but coming to this place made really shocking revelations. The lush green region of the Santhal adivasis is under the assault of money bags with huge concrete structures that are being built around the area of Madhuban, the town where Parasnath hills are located. It is not just huge ashrams, temples, religious universities but townships are also being built around the area ignoring completely the environmental norms as well as the feelings of the local adivasi communities. Their lands are being grabbed illegally violating all the rules and laws of the state. It needs to be seen that Madhuban or what is being termed today as Parasnath is actually an adivasi area and sale and purchase of adivasi land is illegal then how come the vast tracts of land are being provided to Jains. One can understand their religious feelings but why townships are being allowed to be built here. Now, the government of Jharkhand is coming up with a plan to develop the city as a 'religious' place under the Parasnath Action Plan to attract 'religious' tourism in the state.

As I toured around the place there are big hoardings of 'welcoming' us to famous 'Jain' religious place. The state government has put its hoarding

with warning of not to eat meat or drink or smoke in the region. The notice says, 'The state government of Jharkhand has declared this place as sacred religious place hence eating meat, drinking alcohol and smoking here is strictly prohibited and those violating the order will be penalized.'

This is a dangerous as Jharkhand is an adivasi state and Jains don't live here. They just come for worshipping while adivasis have lived in this region for centuries and their food habits are in complete contrast with that of Jains so why should Jains be imposing their beliefs on others, particularly on the Adivasis in their own lands. Are Jains trying to colonize this area through their money and muscle power? Huge religious trusts have come up with sprawling ashrams, gaushalas are being formed and township inside the ashrams so as to avoid the Land Ceiling Act. This violate the sanctity of the place and need to be seriously looked into from legal and autonomy point of view of the tribal region: Whether the Jains are not using it a religious pretext to colonise the tribal regions of Jharkhand ?

The Santhals and other adivasis of district Giridih are now feeling deeply disturbed with the continuous assault on their culture from the outsiders with active support from the state government which is facilitating this colonization process. It is not just the issue of dictating their food habits and imposing it on the adivasis, the Santhals

claim that the entire area of so-called Parasnath hills is actually Marang Buru, the traditional deity of the adivasis of the region. The hills are actually called as Marang Buru hills and have clearly been mentioned in the Gazetteer of Bihar's Hazaribagh district in 1932 much before it became part of separate Giridih district. The Marang Buru Samvata Susar Baisi has been actively fighting for their right to worship their traditional deity in the hills. Their leader Arjun Hemram says: Like Jains famous pilgrimage at Parasnath, Santhals too have their ancient deity at the Marang Buru hills and government need to promote their culture too which is the original culture of the region.

In the Gazetteer of Bihar's district Hazaribagh it is mentioned, "Parasnath is the 'Marang Buru' or hill deity of the Santals of Hazaribagh, Manbhum, Bankura and Santal Pargana and each year they assemble at the period of full moon in Baishakh from those districts and celebrate a religious hunt for three days, after which a great tribal session is held for the trial of charges against Manjhis and paraganails and of the other grave matters which affects the outcasting of the individuals. The entry of this custom in the record of rights which was prepared in 1911 and of the similar right of the Ghatwars was followed by the institution of a suit by the Swetamber Jains to have it declared that no such customs exists. That suit was dismissed by the judicial commissioner and an appeal, preferred against his order, has been rejected by the High Court. The case went up by the Privy Council and it was held that the Santals have the customary rights of hunting on the Parasnath Hills." (Ref : Page : 294-295, Bihar district Gazetteers :

Hazaribagh by P.C.Roy Choudhury, Special Officer, Gazetteer Revision Section, Revenue Department, Bihar)

The adivasis are not denying that the area is of great importance for Jains but the fact is it is not the Jains but the adivasis who are living in the region and now facing Jain's dictates about culture and changing their practices. Historical facts have already proved that adivasis have customary rights over the hills but now most of them are just ferrying the 'Jain devotees' on their shoulders to the Parasnath hills. Obviously, money makes sense for them but this also reveals that none of these 'devotees' would be able to climb up if adivasis don't cooperate with them.

Will Jharkhand government listen to the voices of Adivasis and stop imposing Jain values on them. The government must allow huge mansions in the name of ashrams and temples which the Jains have been religious building here completely changing the demography and ecology of the region. One adivasi of the area Shanishar Manjhi has written a letter to the authorities on August 26th, 2015 in which he accuses one Kalyan Niketan run by some Jain to return his 5.32 acres of land which was wrongfully grabbed and is housing CRPF there. Son of Shanishar Manjhi says that they are still paying the 'lagan' on the same land. Jharkhand government need to answer as how has the adivasi land gone to the non-adivasis and how are these huge religious structures and townships are being allowed in the Adivasi zones?

Travelling to some of the most beautiful regions in Jharkhand, I found adivasi life so simple and yet

so beautiful in the lap of nature. For years, adivasis revolted against any encroachment against their cultural autonomy and freedom. They lived life absolutely free and enjoyed their food culture. From Pakud to Dumka and Ranchi to Khoonti, one can see the beauty as well as struggle of adivasis for centuries. The rice-beer, which they produce, can beat any market product and the forest produce, which they eat, is far better. Those beautiful houses, locations are under the threat both from the greedy corporate and the religious thugs. Will the adivasis revolt again this time when the state which they fought for is imposing dietary restrictions on them in the name of 'cultural sensibilities' of Jains but what about the cultural sensibilities of the 'adivasis'? Will the Jains along with Jharkhand's government and officials also respect Adivasi's right over 'Marang Buru' and their customary right of worshipping their deity over their own land? Jharkhand might boil again if the moneybags and distortions of legalities are played to deny the adivasis their due rights to protect their land and their ancient community deity Marang Buru?

The Santhals and other adivasis in Jharkhand want answers from their 'own' government, which has imposed an alien culture on them in the name of religion. For years, the adivasis have been betrayed just because they have lived their lives on their own without knowing much about the legalities of our system and therefore losing everything yet they fought physically against the British and threw them away from their region therefore if the state of Jharkhand does not act in good faith and give the adivasis their due the situation might turn out of control.

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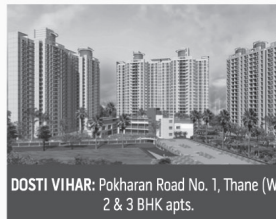
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High stakes in Bihar

S. Viswam

Reservations, sans development
Kuldip Nayar

**Some important facts
about Reservation**
P. S. Krishnan

Let's salute them
Sankara Narayanan

**Women characters
in U.R. Anantha Murthy's
Samskara : A Lohian reading**
Prem Singh

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Where elections are concerned, every state in India has some or many points of popular interest worth mentioning in any pre-poll commentary. In the case of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, no commentary would be fair and objective and complete unless it mentions the relevance caste has in any election. One would have thought that with the spread of education and the consequent retreat of illiteracy and ignorance, caste would cease to be a factor in course of time. But we have been disappointed. Caste still dominates the poll scene in the two states.

Bihar is to go to polls in another couple of months but its future is being discussed animatedly in political circles already. The state assembly has 243 seats, and the midway point determining the majority is at 122 seats. This of course is easily calculated. The alliance or party that captures more than 122 seats will rule Bihar for the next five years. But the other equally important political question, namely who will be the state's chief minister is not that easily answered. The issue is complicated, and in any case it is said that predicting electoral outcomes is a

hazardous exercise since poll results are unpredictable as a rule. There are exceptions, of course. Let us peep into the pre-poll scene for a quick look. The state's chief minister now is Nitish Kumar, leader of the Janata Dal (United), and there is widespread expectation in the state that he may be the chief minister after the polls also. Unless there is a slip between the cup and the lip.

On the day the election commission announced that Bihar will have a five-phase poll between October and November newspapers carried stories about the outcome of an opinion poll survey. That survey predicted that the alliance between Rashtriya Janata Dal and Janata Dal (United) would be the winner. Between now and October-November many such surveys are bound to be conducted and published.

According to the India TV-CVoter survey, the RJD-JD(U), which is the Lalu Prasad Yadav-Nitish Kumar combine would win seats in the range of 116 to 132. The rival alliance, namely the one in which the BJP has combined with other parties will come close with 94 to 110 seats. This would suggest that there would be a decisive verdict and Bihar will not

experience a hung-assembly kind of outcome. A decisive verdict is preferable always since it heralds political stability and a full term for the assembly. But then these are early days and the situation has yet to crystallize.

Both the alliances have high stakes in the outcome of the polls. In the case of the BJP, which is the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, it is a matter of prestige and face. Modi is currently the face of the National Democratic Alliance of which the BJP is the predominant partner. After the humiliating defeat of the BJP in Delhi, it is vital that the alliance wins Bihar and the mortification of suffering successive defeats is avoided. For Nitish also it is a question of retaining power and vindicating his challenge of taking the prime minister on.

An interesting point worth mentioning here is that the RJD-Nitish alliance has already named Nitish Kumar as its chief ministerial candidate. The BJP-led alliance, although comprising four parties big and small is reluctant to name a leader as its chief ministerial nominee. Presumably the prime minister will nominate leader in case the NDA-BJP alliance wins a majority. Meanwhile the alliance has to live with the suspense and uncertainty. Interestingly, Lalu Prasad has himself announced in Patna that Nitish Kumar will be the chief minister even if the RJD gets more seats than the JD(U). Since Lalu's RJD is more popular than the JD(U), there has been speculation that the RJD will secure more seats than its alliance partner. Lalu perhaps thought it prudent to reassure the Nitish camp. "Our priority," he said, "is to ensure
(Continued on Page 3)

Reservations, sans development

Kuldip Nayar

Leaders of different communities had so much confidence in the fairness of the country, when it won freedom, that none of them wanted reservations. The Muslim leaders rejected the then Home Minister Sardar Patel's offer of a 15 per cent quota in government jobs and educational institutions. Their argument was that reservations fostered a parochial thinking. The country had paid an enormous price in the shape of partition for the communal electorate introduced by the British.

Law Minister B. R. Ambedkar, himself a Dalit, said that his community did not want to walk with the help of crutches all their lives. After a lot of pressure, Ambedkar was persuaded to accept reservations for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for 10 years. Little did he know then that reservations would become a permanent feature because of the vote bank it provided.

It is unfortunate that the caste system, even after hundreds of years, remains an integral part of Hindu society. The Dalit ("untouchables") is still at the lowest rung of the ladder. This is an open secret that rural areas have separate habitations for the Dalits, at a distance from where the upper castes live. A debate has started in India on whether reservations needed a relook, not on the discrimination which is still practiced against the Dalits openly and unashamedly.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's suggestion has jolted the status quo so much that the BJP has distanced itself from the proposal of another look at reservations. The vested interests continue to be decisive. Many Dalits have embraced Islam to escape discrimination. But some have found, to their horror, that the tag of discrimination stays with them even in the casteless Islam once classification is acquired.

True, many pronouncements, some by the law courts, have pointed out that the "creamy layer" should at least be barred from reservations. But they are the most vocal and most influential. This explains why the RSS chief remains a lonely figure in the entire Sangh parivar.

His disappointment must have increased after Rajasthan, a BJP-run state, has given quota to the poor in the upper castes. This humanistic gesture reads well but it is against what the constitution makers had in mind. They gave reservations only to the Dalits because the Hindu society, for centuries, had denied them the basic dues. It was a sort of repentance translated into concessions.

There were poor among the upper castes even at that time. But both Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were able to persuade the Constituent Assembly that the upper caste must do the penance for the excesses committed. The state is violating the Supreme Court's directive that reservations should not exceed the

limit of 50 per cent. Unfortunately, this malady is spreading.

It is comical to see today that the Patels, a well off business community, demanding reservations. The government in Gujarat, again run by the BJP, is dealing severely with the maverick leader Hardik Patel who is agitating for reservations for an upper caste community like the Patels.

Other states are keenly watching whether both Rajasthan and Gujarat gets away with the quota because they have the same thing in mind. The Narendra Modi government should have taken the BJP-run state, particularly Rajasthan, to task because the entire federal structure faces the danger of a collapse. The Modi government has a strange kind of confidence that when the chips are down all states, with a predominant Hindu majority population, will not go to the brink.

Probably, Modi will use the whip of discipline after the assembly election in Bihar. Any kind of action at this time, when the state is only a few weeks away from polling, can boomerang and harm the BJP's fortunes.

However, time has come when all political parties should sit together to ponder over reservations on the basis of caste and creed. A constitutional position for only 10 years has become permanent. All parties support the continuation whenever such a constitutional amendment comes before parliament.

A country which has the word, secularism, in its preamble of the constitution should break the shackles of caste. Socialism requires the demolition of caste barriers.

The ruling BJP should initiate a legislation to lay down the criteria on the basis of economic status. A poor Brahmin is no less deserving than a Dalit. What about the Muslims? The Sachar Committee pointed out that their condition has been worse than that of the Dalits. With the soft-Hindutva embracing the country, the future of minorities is becoming more and more questionable.

If there was a survey, it would underline the fact that employment among the Muslims is falling. Since they cannot afford good schools, they figure less in jobs through competitive examinations. They are not even a fraction of some 18 percent of population in the country. Their backwardness should be a matter of concern. Idle hands take to desperate methods.

What is more important than anything else is to foster social relations between Hindus and Muslims. The togetherness witnessed during Diwali or Id is missing. Mixed localities have become fewer. I find Muslims taking less interest in national heroes who were inspiration to the country.

Take, for instance, the debate over Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose files. It unnecessarily became an emotional issue. For days, the entire nation was engrossed in discussing whether the files should be made public or not. The nation suddenly became oblivious to the basic issue of development. It must keep uppermost in its mind that one-third of Indians go to bed with just one meal in 24 hours.

The Modi government has ruled the country for more than one and a half years. Its promise to give livelihood to all remains as distant

as it was on the day he took oath to assume power. Except for the usual rhetoric, there is nothing on the ground to indicate that his promise of *sab ka saath, sab ka vikas* is near implementation. The nation is still waiting.

(Continued from Page 2)

that the BJP goes back empty-handed from Bihar.”

The usual pre-poll currents and cross-currents are to be seen in Bihar today as the state gets into the poll mode. The run-up has begun with the broad indication that the Nitish-Lalu alliance has the upper hand. Both alliances have spawned the expected quota of rebel candidates, but they are not large enough to make the alliance leaders lose sleep. News reports have identified five parties and leaders as being capable of splitting votes. It is of interest that the list includes apart from Pappu Yadav, Asaduddin Owaisi, Tariq Anwar, the name of Mulayam Singh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party. Between Lalu and Mulayam in Bihar, the latter is a weak player and does not count. Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeem is a Hyderabad-based party which is trying to spread its wings up north. Let us see how it performs away from the home ground.

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Some important facts about Reservation

P. S. Krishnan

In the midst of the confusion created by the largely uninformed discussion in the TV Channels and the print media, following the agitation of the Patidars or Patels of Gujarat, it is necessary to make people in the country aware of a few essential basic facts and to correct certain common errors.

Common errors, oft-repeated

- a) Reservation in this country was started by vote-hungry politicians;
- b) Reservation was, as stated by K. N. Bhat, former Additional Solicitor General of India, in his article titled "Divide and Serve" in *Asian Age* dated 4.9.2015, "invented by the divide and rule policy of the British";
- c) Reservation was started after the Constitution of India 1950;
- d) Reservation was, as asserted by Joginder Singh in his article *Pandora's Open Box of Caste-Based Reservation in Pioneer* dated 7.9.2015 with confidence matched by ignorance, provided in the Constitution only for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), and subsequently extended to "the rest", i.e., the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEdBCs)/Other Backward Classes (OBCs)/Backward Classes (BCs) (hereafter referred to as BCs), by politicians like V.P. Singh and Arjun Singh in the 1990s;
- e) The root of Reservation, as again asserted by Joginder Singh in the same article as mentioned above, is traced back only to the Mandal Commission, established in 1979;
- f) The Constitution recognizes only SCs and STs and does not

recognize BCs.

- g) The Constitution does not provide for Reservation for BCs.
- h) The Constitution provides Reservation only for 10 years as misunderstood latest by Indira Hirway ("Rethinking Reservation and Development", *The Hindu*, 31.8.2015) and by many other scholars before her and by many learned anchors and commentators on the TV channels.

None of the above is factually true.

The confusion in the minds of eminent persons is illustrated by K.N. Bhat attributing Reservation to the "divide and rule policy of the British", while Joginder Singh asserts with equal self-assurance that "the programme of divide and conquer was taught to the Britishers by the Indians".

There are also certain other basic errors pertaining to BCs such as the nature of the BC lists and the place of religious minorities vis-à-vis the BC lists.

Correct basic facts

(i) Reservation was first started in Kolhapur by the initiative of the Maharaja of Kolhapur in 1902.

Next it was introduced by the Maharaja of Mysore in his Princely State in May 1921.

The third in the line was the Madras Presidency (which included the present Tamil Nadu, the present Andhra Pradesh, the northern part of Kerala and certain parts of the present Karnataka) where it was introduced in September 1921 by the Justice Party which came to power in the Province on the plank of curbing the then existing Brahmin monopoly.

Next was the Bombay Presidency in 1931.

Next came Travancore where the Maharaja introduced Reservation in 1935, followed by the Maharaja of Cochin.

Thus, before Independence the whole of the peninsula was covered by Reservation.

This Reservation was for Backward Classes defined to include not only those who subsequently came to be known as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but also many of those who are now included in the list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

Reservation was introduced, largely by the initiatives of socially sensitive rulers of Princely States in response to local social reform movements directed against caste-based monopolies and to secure a reasonable share in governance and administration for those who had been kept out.

Elementary Constitutional literacy will inform that there are specific Articles which recognize the BCs such as Article 340(1), Article 15(4), Article 16(4) (along with SCs and STs), etc. and provide Reservation for them.

A time-limit of 10 years was prescribed by the Constitution only for Reservation of seats in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

A common error of opinion is that Reservation is at the cost of the merit. This biased opinion is disproved by experience.

The peninsular States are ahead of the States in the rest of India in all parameters of development and welfare. This is not accidental. An important contributory causatory factor is the bringing in of a larger part of the population into governance, administration and education through Reservation in response to social reform movements in the peninsular States – a process that suffered considerable delay in the rest of India.

(ii) At the national level, Reservation was introduced for the SCs through the initiative of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1943. With his wisdom, he foresaw that those in whose hands power would effectively reside in post-colonial India would be averse to providing Reservation and other measures required for the SCs and, therefore, he joined the Viceroy's Executive Council as Member (a fact that Arun Shourie's misses in his book *Worshipping False Gods*), convinced the Viceroy against counter-advice by certain other members and secured Reservation, Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS)

scheme and Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SCs, which could then be automatically extended to the STs on attainment of Independence.

Dr Ambedkar knew that the BCs too had a case and was prepared to help them. But, for certain reasons of tactical error the then BC leaders could not take his help, missed the pre-Independence bus, and consequently had to wait till 1990.

(iii) Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's initiative of 1943 ensured continuation of Reservation after Independence under the Constitution.

Three categories of reservation

- a) There are three categories of Reservation –
- b) Reservation in the posts and services of the State (including Public Sector Undertakings, Public Sector Banks, Universities and other entities which come under the rubric of "State" under Article 12 as interpreted by the Supreme Court)
- c) Reservation in admission to seats in educational institutions, and
- d) Reservation of seats in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, usually referred to as "Political Reservation".

It is only the Reservation at (c) which initially had a 10 year time-limit.

Reservation at (a) and (b) had and have no time-limit. Many scholars and anchors confuse Reservation at (c) with Reservation at (a) and (b), for which there is no time limit. It means that Reservation in the services and educational seats can and should continue as long as necessary for fulfilling the purpose for which the regime of Reservation

was established in this country well before pre-independence days continuing after Independence and under the Constitution.

Purpose of reservation

Reservation was never intended as a measure for poverty elimination or poverty alleviation.

Reservation was never intended as a measure to solve unemployment.

Reservation was intended to correct an imbalance in the structure of governance and administration and the supporting structures of education and electoral seats, that had come into existence on account of the gross imbalances and distortions created by the Indian Caste System, i.e., Caste System-with-"Untouchability" over the centuries continuing to the present day (without change in essence though with some quantitative attenuation and marginal modification).

Consequent to the imbalance and distortion created by the caste system, including denial by various means – including physical violence against Dalit children, who were waylaid on way to school, beaten up and driven back home, as recorded in the Report of the Hunter Commission 1882, there was nil or negligible presence of what are now categorized as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and in some regions even from upper caste non-Brahmins in the services of the State. The State services were thus nearly monopolized by Brahmins in some regions or by Brahmins in combination with certain non-Brahmin upper castes like Kayasthas, Karans, CKPs, Khatris, Vaishyas/Banias, Rajputs/Thakurs, Kammas and Reddys, Nairs, Nattukkottai Chettiars,

Vellalas. It is this distortion that the vast majority of the people peacefully agitated against and the Maharajas of Kolhapur, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin and the elected Indian rulers of the Justice Party in Madras responded.

The Constitution provides Reservation for only three social classes –

- a) Scheduled Castes (SCs), now popularly known as Dalits
- b) Scheduled Tribes (STs), now popularly known as Adivasis
- c) Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (not Socially and Economically Backward Classes as trotted out by many scholars and learned TV anchors and commentators) – referred to in different States as Socially and Educationally Backward Classes or as the Other Backward Classes or as the Backward Classes (BCs).

Reservation cannot be provided under the Constitution for any other social class. Apart from social classes, Reservation can be provided for categories which can be rationally classified, e.g., the women, the physically handicapped. These categories cut across the social classes. Reservation for them is characterized by the Supreme Court as “Horizontal Reservation” while the Reservation for the three social classes is characterized as “Vertical Reservation” in the Mandal case judgment.

The Constitution does not provide and does not permit Reservation for the “Poor” or the so-called spurious “Economically Backward Classes” (no such class is recognized by the Constitution. Some Governments have coined this term to make it look like a Constitutional category).

Poverty not preceded by and not consequential to social backwardness (or “Untouchability” or isolation under vulnerable conditions) is no ground for allowing Reservation as seen from a reading of the Constitution and as amply clarified by the Supreme Court’s landmark Mandal case judgment.

How have the three social classes been identified and how any change is made

(a) Scheduled Castes

SCs have been identified and specified on the basis of “Untouchability”, i.e., castes, on which has been imposed “Untouchability”, have been listed as Scheduled Castes by a series of Presidential Orders.

Any addition, deletion, modification in any of the entries in the Schedules can be made only by the Parliament by law. “SC status” is not a largesse to be handed over by any Government or leader or party to any community at will.

If any community, which is not in the existing lists of SCs, wants to be included in the Schedule of SCs, it must show that it is the victim of “Untouchability”. This factum must be established with evidence by the concerned State Government and then will be enquired into by the anthropological wing of the Registrar General of India.

Only when both of them record with evidence the factum of “Untouchability” of a community and the concerned Ministry (now the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment) is also convinced, can the matter be taken forward to the Parliament through legislation.

No State Government can declare by Executive Order or by law any community to be a Scheduled Caste.

(b) Scheduled Tribes

STs have been identified and specified on the basis of a group of characteristics which can be collectively described as isolation under vulnerable conditions.

The procedure for adding a community to the list of STs is the same as for SCs.

While an SC can be a caste or a tribe or a sub-caste or part of a caste or tribe, a Scheduled Tribe cannot be a caste. A community seeking inclusion in the Schedule of Scheduled Tribes for any State should first show that it is a tribe, and then show that it fulfills the criteria for a tribe to be included as a Scheduled Tribe.

Demands are sometimes being made and recommended by certain State Governments in certain cases for inclusion in the list of SCs and STs even when they know that the criteria are not fulfilled, and even with the full knowledge that the recommendation cannot be and will not be accepted and acted on. This is less than honest.

(c) Socially and Educationally Backward Classes

BCs have been identified on the basis of social backwardness as well as educational backwardness. It is not social backwardness or educational backwardness, but both.

The BCs include Socially and Educationally Backward Classes not only of Hindus, but also of Muslims and Christians. Eminent persons like Manish Tewari assert that the “Indian template of

affirmative action..... leaves out of its ambit religious minorities” (Manish Tewari, “Regression for Progression”, *Asian Age*, 5.9.2015). This is based on ignorance. Castes/communities of Muslims accounting for about 75 to 85 per cent of the population of Muslims of India have been included in the list of BCs, and castes and communities accounting for the bulk of the population of non-ST Christians have also been included in the list of BCs. A relatively small proportion of Sikhs have also been included in the List of BCs. Though SC converts to Buddhism were included in the list of BCs recommended by the Mandal Commission, they were not recommended for inclusion by the Expert Committee on Backward Classes of 1992 and consequently were not included by the Government of India in the Central BC because they were recognized as SCs in 1990. Jains are not included because, as everyone knows, they belong to one Socially Advanced Caste (SAC). Zorastrians or Parsis are not included because they are the one small fortunate religious community of India which is free from the caste system.

A caste or community, which is not in the existing lists of BCs, and seeks recognition as a BC and inclusion in a BC list, must establish its eligibility in three steps:

First the applicant community must establish that it is “socially backward”.

The term social backwardness is not correctly understood. It is not a factor that is measurable arithmetically or statistically. Social backwardness describes the low position of a caste in the traditional social

system of India, known as the Indian Caste System, existing over the centuries to this day.

Usually, socially backward communities are linked to a traditional occupation, which is considered to be inferior or “lowly” and sometimes even stigmatized. Dr. Ambedkar speaks of a hierarchy of occupations in the Indian system paralleling the hierarchy of castes.

If a caste is found to be socially backward, the examination proceeds to the second step.

After a caste is shown to be socially backward, in order to be recognized as a Socially and Educationally Backward Class and to be included in the list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, it should next show that it is also educationally backward. This is not a matter only of literacy and differential literacy levels. The educational level of comparison has been steadily going up. In the Central Educational Institutions Reservation case judgment (*Ashoka Kumar Thakur vs Union of India*) of 2008, the Supreme Court has observed that the appropriate level for comparison under present conditions is graduation. In other words, at the level of graduation and above, including professional education, it must be shown that a caste or community seeking recognition as BC ranks significantly lower than the Socially Advanced Castes (SACs) of the State/country.

It is virtually impossible to find a caste which genuinely is socially backward, but is also not educationally backward. In other words, a genuinely socially backward caste will also be educationally backward. If caste

is not educationally backward, its claim of social backwardness must be scrutinized very carefully as a caste not educationally backward is extremely unlikely to be socially backward. The converse is not true. Every caste that is educationally backward, is not necessarily socially backward. There are sub-castes of certain well-known Socially Advanced Castes which are relatively backward educationally. That is why the Constitution has wisely insisted that, for the purpose of the Constitution, backwardness has to be both social as well as educational.

On passing these two steps, the third step arises in the case of Reservation of appointments and posts in the services under the State.

A caste which is socially and educationally backward must also be established to be not adequately represented in the appointments and posts in the services under the State for it to be eligible for Reservation in the posts and services of the State under Article 16(4).

It is virtually impossible to find a caste which genuinely is socially and educationally backward but which is adequately represented in the appointments and posts in the services under the State. But the converse is not true. Every caste or community which is not adequately represented in the posts and services of the State is not necessarily socially and educationally backward.

Central and State lists of BCs

In the case of SCs and STs, there is a single list or Schedule of SCs for each State. That list or Schedule of SCs for each State and Schedule of STs for each State was first issued by the President of India. Thereafter,

any change in the Schedule could be and can be made only by Parliament through legislation. State Governments cannot issue Schedules or Lists of SCs or STs for the respective States or make any change including additions or deletions in the Schedules of SCs and STs as issued by the President of India with any modifications made by Parliament through legislation.

Unlike this position relating to SCs and STs, in the case of BCs there is a Central List of BCs for each State; and there is also a State List of BCs issued by each State listing the BCs of that State.

It is not correct to say that there are only State lists of BCs and there is no Central list of BCs as asserted by Zakka Jacob, the anchor of the CNN-IBN channel on 2.9.2015 with self-assurance matched only by his ignorance, in a panel discussion where other panelists except one were also ignorant of this basic fact. The two lists, the purposes of each and the procedure for inclusion in each are outlined below. It is also to be clarified that the two lists are mostly the same for most of the States. Only in the case of very few States, particularly, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, for historical reasons there are a few differences – certain castes in the State list are not included in the Central list for valid reasons. In the case of other States divergence between the State list of BCs and the Central list of BCs for each of those States is absent or marginal.

Purpose of lists

The Central List of BCs is applicable for

(Continued on Page 15)

Let's salute them

Sankara Narayanan

A report dating September 16, 2015 in The Times of India newspaper under the heading 'I embraced the child of my wife's rapist' struck me like a Tsunami. Before going into the story of the courageous hero, let me detail a few similar stories with characters of rare courage, conviction and kindness. Two are reel-based and the other two real ones.

First from the reels:

Adimagal is the title of a Malayalam movie of mid 1960s. Adimagal means a female domestic help. I still rate this movie as one of the best ever seen by me. Lead actors were Satyan, Perm Nazir, Sheela and Sharada. All the four were outstanding actors of that time and bagged several regional, national and international awards. Sharada alone bagged 4 or 5 Urvasi Awards.

The story goes like this. Satyan is an army officer. Sheela and her brother are his neighbours. Sharada works as a domestic help in Sheela's house. Prem Nazir is another domestic help in the same house; a dumb fellow. Sheela's brother loves the domestic help. Nazir also has a crush towards her. She prefers the former. The love episode ends with pregnancy.

But the brother drops her like a hot potato owning no responsibility for the pregnancy. She moves Satyan seeking justice. He is to go back to his duty after the expiry of the annual leave. Being in a hurry, he requests the dumb domestic help to take care of her for the time being. Swallowing

all the insults thrown by the villagers and his own mother, he shelters the pregnant woman in his house. She delivers a child subsequently. He takes care of the mother and child to the best of his ability.

Satyan comes home after one year. By the time, the brother realises his mistake and admits he is the father of that child. He also wants to formally marry the woman. Brother, sister and Satyan reach Nazir's hut and request the lady to come along with them. She briskly moves towards the dumb, clasps his hands for the first time and nonchalantly tells, "The one thing you did alone does not qualify you to be the father of my child. Putting up with all the insults thrown at him, this man took care of this child as his own. He is the proud father of this child. I am his woman. You may go." Satyan immediately exclaims, "Iva Sthree" (She is the real woman).

Now on an unusual and low budget Hindi movie: Tabu did the lead role. I couldn't recollect the name of the movie. Tabu, her husband and a son form a cheerful family. The son completes his studies and settles down in work. He loves a girl and the marriage is fixed with the full cooperation of the parents. A disaster in the form of a will left by an unknown man leaving all his property to the son strikes the family.

It is hotly debated who is that person. Tabu reluctantly reveals an accidental one night affair she had with a person years ago and doubts

he may be the one who left the will. Father and son get furious, abuse the mother and ask her to leave the house. On hearing the news, the girl-friend rushes to their place and squarely condemns the attitude of the father and son. She tells him that she would never marry such a low person. Holding Tabu's hands, she tells, "Common on Mummy. I am with you. Let us get out of these beasts."

Now the real incidents.

During partition time, several Hindu and Muslim women were molested by vandals. Mahatma Gandhi requested the youth to come forward to marry the unwed ones. He told them that it was the real test for one's manliness. Several youth had accepted the challenge and proved their manliness.

Bharat Ratna Sir Mokshagundam Viswesvaraya was not only a great engineer but also an outstanding human being. His wife loved his coachman and moved with him. In spite of the sad incident, the great engineer continued to support her financially. What a great generosity!

Now I am back to the main story as revealed by the Times of India. Story is real but characters are given imaginary names. Nitin and Rani got married seven years ago. Ragini, their 6 year old cute daughter, was born nine months after the marriage. Nitin was absolutely thrilled. His only grudge was that Rani spent most of her time in her mother's place in the first few years after marriage. Ragini was admitted in the school and Rani's visits to her parents considerably came down. A family blessed with plenty of peace and cheerfulness.

Rani suggested having one more child. Nitin readily agreed. One year passed but Rani was not able to conceive. They got themselves tested for fertility. The test report suggested that Nitin's sperm count was zero. She couldn't curtail her tears. He empathised with her and apologised for not being able to give her another child, she wanted the most at that point of time.

"I am sorry that you cannot become a mother again, all because of me. But you've given me such a wonderful gift in the form of our daughter, and I'll always be thankful to you for that," Nitin said to her, with a heart full of love. But what she told him after that shook him completely. "She is not your daughter. She was born because a man raped me." He was shocked beyond words. Lost all his senses and went blank for a moment.

She broke down and started to relate the horrific incident. "In my home town, a local goon wanted to marry me. But I refused. Later, when our wedding was arranged he couldn't accept the rejection. A few days before our wedding, he abducted me while I was coming back from the college. He raped me out of revenge and later threw me near the house. He told me and my parents that he had taught us a lesson."

After that she continued to reveal more: "When I missed my periods, I was already married to you and in our honeymoon period. And when you discovered my pregnancy, I could not get it aborted." She took a deep pause. I did not know what to say or what to do. After the pause, she said, "For first years of our marriage, I was attending the court sessions with my parents, to get him punished." She paused again. Well,

that explained Nitin why her long absence from the house every now and then. She retired into the room after speaking the last sentence, "I will always feel guilty about the fact that our daughter was not fathered by you. That is why I wanted to have another child with you, as the father."

Nitin had no words in his mouth, he went mute. After introspecting the situation, which had shaken him beyond imagination, he realized the torment Rani went through for all these years, facing everything all by herself. She had flashbacks of her rape coming to hound her. She couldn't hate the child she had given birth to. She had gone through much more trauma than the shock he was trying to gulp down his throat. What happened was not her fault. It was the fault of her rapist. And what was the mistake of the little one he remembers holding in his hands while her umbilical cord still dangled to her tiny body?

That day he decided to undo the wrongs done to his wife by loving 'their' daughter to death. Nitin is my 'Man Of The Year'.

Incidents of above nature happen in every street, village, town and city. Yet we act as if nothing happens. If at all exposed, we don't hesitate to crucify the women involved through cruel words like Izat Loss, Kalank, Zinda Lash, etc and ready to condemn and desert them. In the midst of such sanctimonious medieval hypocrisies, the servant couple in Adimagal, the young girl in the Hindi film, the youth who acceded to Gandhi's request, Sir Viswesvaraya and Nitin were/are bringing fresh air, fragrance and hope to the humanity. Let the tribe multiply in geometric proportions.

Women characters in U.R. Anantha Murthy's *Samskara* : A Lohian reading

Prem Singh

I sent the following article to the Indian Literature (literary journal of the Sahitya Akademi) after the demise of U.R. Anantha Murthy with the note: I read this paper in a special lecture program organised by the Sahitya Akademi at its Bangalore office in 2010. Prof. U.R. Anantha Murthy himself chaired the program. He inquired two/three times whether I had published the article. However, I did not send it to any journal for favour of publication. Now I send the article to the 'Indian Literature' as a tribute to Anantha Murthy Ji.

I was told that the decision about the selection/rejection of the article would be conveyed to me in three months. However, there was no communication from the journal's end even after one year. I wrote my query to the Editor in this regard two days ago. Fortunately the 'team' responded to my query stating that they are not using the article. I would like to submit that the 'team' should have conveyed its decision much earlier to enable me for finding other options in order to get the article published.

This is my tribute to the late writer on his first death anniversary.

Last year I got an opportunity to teach *Samskara* to the students of M.A. Hindi (final year) at Delhi University. To prepare my lecture for the class, I read the text again after a long time in Hindi translation. While reading the text, the idea entered my mind that the depiction of the women characters in the novel would bear some impact of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's thoughts considering his influence on the writer, U.R. Anantha Murthy.

It is a known fact that Anantha Murthy has been influenced and inspired by the socialist philosophy propounded by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia. In Lohia's doctrine of 'Sapt Kranti' (seven revolutions) 'narnari samata' (man-woman equality) comes first and foremost along with the question of caste. Lohia has written on this subject with utmost sincerity and compassion. He writes, 'woman is undoubtedly among the most exploited sections of humanity, together with poorest and lowliest of men. She may try to forget her

condition with love or trinkets and her charitable generosity. But ugly practices of society and certain dark recesses of the soul have both combined to turn woman into a sphere where socialism is most needed. If socialism and democracy are a battle for equality, they are cut out specially as creed of women.' (Notes and Comments, Vol. 1, P. 32) Lohia argues that Draupadi should be the model for Indian women, not Savitri. Yet, he shows a great regard for Savitri and Sita. According to Lohia, chastity (Satitava) is only one virtue of a woman, but she has several more virtues, which should not be sacrificed for the one i.e. chastity. He finds Draupadi intelligent with her presence of mind and courage to ask questions. The women's question is at the core of Lohia's socialist philosophy and political actions. It would be appropriate therefore to analyse the treatment meted-out to the women characters in this novel from a Lohian perspective.

Samskara is a theme-loaded novel juxtaposing the pulls and pushes between the esoteric and the hedonistic, the transcendental and the mundane, the scriptures and human life, and so on, in a complex manner. Thus, the novel is open to different interpretations from various aspects and angles with different perspectives. In this paper I would like to focus on the women characters depicted in the novel to ascertain their significance, if any, in the making of the novel's theme.

There are two categories of women in the novel: one, women who belong to the high caste Brahmins, two, women who belong to the 'low' castes. Bhagirathi, the invalid and sick wife of Praneshacharya, Lakshmiddevamma, a half-mad child-widow, Anasuya, the wife of Laksmanacharya, Sita Devi, the wife of Garudacharya, Lilavati, the daughter of Lakshmanacharya and Anasuya and the wife of Shripati come from the Brahmin campus. The wife of Narnappa, who was

abandoned by him and died in insane condition, is mentioned indirectly in the novel. Chandri, a prostitute and mistress of Narnappa, Belli, an untouchable girl, Chinni, friend and neighbour of Belli, Padamavati, a prostitute, are from the 'low' castes. Putta's wife, whom he talks at length to Praneshacharya, the girl, who dances on the rope in the fair of Melige and haunts Praneshacharya in his state of self-reflexivity, also belongs to the 'low' caste.

A cursory observation can demarcate these two groups: the Brahmin women are depicted as plump, disfigured, ugly, unattractive and ignorant/reluctant for sexual pleasure. They are quarrelsome and greedy about material things. The 'low' caste women, on the other hand, are beautiful with attractive figures and are readily available for sexual intercourse. They are not greedy about material belongings. Chandri, the prostitute, offers her jewelry to meet the expenses of the last rites of Narnappa. There is no mention of money or some other material gifts to Belli from Shripati. Padmavati does not bargain about for money with Putta when he takes Praneshacharya to her house.

The delineation of the erotic beauty of the low caste women has been articulated through upper caste Brahmins in the novel. Their readiness for sex with male Brahmins is again a perception of the Brahmin men in the narrative. The extreme disregard for the Brahmin women in terms of beauty or lack of it, is again expressed through Brahmin characters who are involved in sexual relationships with 'low' caste women. There is no refutation of this perception of the Brahmin males from women of either category.

The role of women in both categories apparently is confined to the worldly/mundane affairs only. That too on a very limited scale. They do not have any say in the philosophical-spiritual contemplations that take place in the novel on Brahminhood, salvation, scriptures or rites. The title *Samskara* does not apply to them, thus, they are outside the theme of the novel. However, and ironically, the last rite of Narnappa, which is the central and contentious issue in the novel, is performed by Chandri, the 'low' caste woman with the help of a Muslim. Further, there are no moments of self-reflection or self-realization in any of the women characters. At one point Chandri tends to go through a moment of 'anxious thoughts' when she broods, 'Why everything I do turns out this way? I gave the gold out of my good will, and it made nothing but trouble. And now the Acharya is in trouble, trying so hard to get the funeral rites performed right.' But the narrative reminds the reader immediately that 'Chandri was a natural in pleasure, accustomed to self-reproach.' She then remembers the sexual intercourse episode with the Acharya in the forest that night and feels 'only a sense of worthwhileness, like the fragrance of flowers hidden.' Thus, the entire narrative suggests that the Brahmin women are born to perform domestic, routine, family duties, as if they are the work force recruited to look after the house-hold without a personality of their own. Such a treatment of women characters is reductive as it presents them almost as caricatures. The 'low' caste women are depicted as dark brown, sensual and servile; born to fulfill the sexual desire of upper caste men as and when they need them.

There is little mention of sex between men characters and women from Brahmin category. Shripati's wife does not allow him sex and 'tightens and twines up her thighs' following advice of her mother. But he does not make any conversation with her on this issue. It is to be noted that the sexual intercourse is performed without a word spoken from either side. Shripati listens to the recitations of holy legends by Praneshacharya on his verandah every evening. One night, listening to the detailed description of Shakuntala, the heroine of Kalidasa, an uncontrollable sexual desire is aroused in him and he runs from the spot to take a plunge in the cold water of the river. There he finds Belli who had come to the river to fetch water and has sex with her under the full moon. No word was spoken from either side during the intercourse. One night, while returning from Shirnali in a drunken state, Shripati plans to have sex with Belli. He thinks, 'Which Brahmin girl, - cheek sunken, breast withered, mouth stinking of lentil soup, - which Brahmin girl was equal to Belli?' He describes the raw beauty of Belli in an explicit manner.

Shripati calls her by clapping outside her hut and embraces her as she comes out. She wants to stop him for that day because his neighbors Pilla and his wife have just died and their corpse were being burnt within their hut. Shripati had also seen that fire a few minutes ago. But Shripati's experience tells him that she had never talked before like this and 'had always been like ripe ears of corn bending before the falling rain.' He does not stop, fulfills his desire and goes away saying 'Belli was all right for sleeping with, she was no good for talk.'

Shripati is a frequent visitor to Belli's hut, every time he has sex with her; it is without sharing any of his activities or ideas. He dismisses her talking because, according to him, 'If she opens her mouth, she talks only ghosts and demons.' Belli keeps herself almost naked most of the time, and her nakedness haunts even Praneshacharya.

Chandri, though she appears for a short period, is a memorable character in the novel. Although she is generous and kind, the first and foremost quality, noted about her, is her physical beauty. She has been living with Narnappa in the agrahara for 20 years. But she mostly stays inside the house where Brahmins do not enter. She comes out in the open on the demise of Narnappa. Durgabhatta, with erotic feelings, calls her a 'Chitrini', as described by Vatsyayana, with long fingers and solid breasts, who would suck the male dry in sex. He finds her more beautiful even in the state of grief and fear. (8) According to Shripati, 'Chandri was utterly beautiful, beyond compare.' He compares Chandri with Menaka 'who destroyed the penance of Sage Vishvamitra.'

The sexual intercourse between Praneshacharya and Chandri takes place in a dark lonely forest in silence without speaking a word. In the episode, the Acharya just cries 'amma' and Chandri weeps. It is a unique portrayal of a sexual scene difficult to be found in other fictional works. Praneshacharya awakes at midnight and finds himself in the lap of Chandri, feeling like 'stranger to himself'. Then he comes to realize the reality and calls Chandri, who is afraid that he 'might scold her, despise her'. However, she has 'a hope in her that his touch might bear

fruit in her body. And a gratefulness that she too might have earned merit.' She thinks all this without actually saying anything.

Praneshacharya shows some firmness of mind for a moment and speaks to Chandri for the first time in the entire narrative. 'Chandri, get up. Let us go. Tomorrow morning when the Brahmins gather, we'll say this happened. You tell them yourself.' He further tells her that he had lost the authority to decide for the agrahara and won't have courage to speak about this to people so Chandri 'must speak out'. He also conveyed to her that he would perform the funeral rites of Narnappa himself. 'Having said the words, Praneshacharya felt all his fatigue drop from him.'

As usual, Chandri does not respond to his words and reaches the agrahara a little later. She goes straight to Narnappa's house. She does not want to expose Praneshacharya to the wrath of the Brahmins waiting for his decision. Then she takes a bold decision and walks for one mile in the night to call Ahmad Bari, a Muslim friend of Narnappa, and performs his funeral rite with his help. Her character touches a new sublimation in this episode. The author writes, 'Chandri wept, came back home, collected a few of her silk saris in a bag, bundled up the cash in the box and the gold ornaments the Acharya had returned, and came out. Suppressing her desire to wake up the Acharya and touch his feet, she decided to catch the morning bus to Kundapura and walked towards the motor route in the forest path with her bundle in her hands.' Her departure from the agrahara is her departure from the novel as well.

In this entire episode the beneficiary is Praneshacharya whose 'fall' makes him free from the clutches of the scriptures and allows him entry into the new, humane/demonic experiences. Chandri, the woman, becomes merely a stepping stone for him. From the beginning of the novel, it is clear that Praneshacharya never thinks of talking with Chandri while he has heated bouts of argument with Narnappa at his house. Narnappa, who offers strong arguments in debates with Praneshacharya, too, does not maintain a dialogue with Chandri. Once, when she tries to stop him from excessive drinking before Praneshacharya, he pushes her aside. Chandri, otherwise a generous and kind woman, becomes a medium for personal motivations or an object of use for both, Narnappa and Praneshacharya. Narnappa uses her for his freedom and lust and Praneshacharya for his unwinding and self-realisation.

Bhagirathi, the invalid and sick wife of Praneshacharya, is also a means for him to the goal of salvation. It is true that otherwise her life would have become miserable in the worst manner. But the service she receives is a by-product of the Acharya's natural "Goodness" – *sattvik vritti* – that makes him craven and hungry for the Lord's grace. He himself admits, 'This invalid wife is the sacrificial alter for my sacrifice.'

The character of Chandri can be discussed in some more detail. She emerges as a strong and independent woman in comparison to the Brahmin women who could not cross even the boundary of the agrahara. Chandri is an active, mobile and self-reliant character. It is her own decision that she comes

and lives with Narnappa; she takes the initiative in the intercourse with Praneshacharya by feeding him with plantains, taking her sari off, spreading it on the ground, and first lies on it hugging Praneshacharya close to her; She takes every decision on her own, including the one to reject Praneshacharya's advice of facing the Brahmins of the agrahara jointly, because she does not want Praneshacharya to accept his 'fall' before the Brahmins; she performs Narnappa's last rites with the help of a Muslim in a quick decision; then she decides to leave Narnappa's house and walks alone through forest path to catch a morning bus to Kundapura from where she came to Durvasapura.

The most important aspect of her strength is that she does not get pregnant by Narnappa even after several years of living together. It seems that she had a plan and hopes in her mind that one day she would conceive by Praneshacharya and become a mother. Her mother used to say that 'prostitutes should get pregnant by such holy man. Such a man was the Acharya, he had such looks, virtues; he glowed. But one had to be lucky to be blessed by such people.' This, of course, would be entirely a matter of hypothesis, but Chandri would have gone to the forest with the hope that she would meet the Acharya there and fulfill her desire. It could have been an unplanned moment for the Acharya; but Chandri might have had her own plans to create the moment.

But one should not confuse her strength and independence with the essence of her womanhood. The source of her strength is the traditional institute of prostitution in India. She cannot change or by-pass her lot as a prostitute. In

fact, she finds herself content and comfortable within the tradition and never raises any question about it. She knows that after the death of Narnappa, she cannot stay in Durvasapura. That is why she goes back to her native place Kundapura. The subjectivity of Praneshacharya knows no limits of expansion after the intercourse with Chandri. But Chandri does not have such a fortune. Subjectivity does not breed subjectivity!

Padamavati, a prostitute, appears to be a beautiful and serious minded woman in the novel. Her beauty attracts Narnappa, a philanderer, always in search of new women. He too has sex with Padamavati, without any dialogue, without making any conversation. He rather becomes, as Putta describes, violent with her in his drunken state. Padamavati too speaks nothing before Praneshacharya. Putta, the pimp, always speaks about, and on her behalf.

What I want to suggest is that no woman in the novel, from either category, has her own voice to prove her to be a thinking and questioning being. Lakshmidamma is the only exception who hurls curses on Garudacharya and his family for robbing her property because she was a helpless child widow. But no one pays any heed to her. She is an isolated creature in the agrahara and no one cares for her ranting.

The woman characters in Samskara appear real in the given setting of the decadent Brahminical milieu based on caste system and patriarchy as the novel is placed in some decade of the first half of the twentieth century. Narnappa says, 'Your texts and rites don't work any more. The Congress

Party is coming to power; you will have to open up the temples to all outcastes.' But it was in 1965 that the novel was published. By this time the thoughts of Lohia had made a substantial impact on society, politics, culture, literature, language and art. Otherwise too, no agrahara, howsoever remote, could have escaped the enlightening wave of the 'Navajagaran' and the freedom movement, not to speak about issues related to the question of de-colonisation or post-colonialism. There are voices of revolt within the tradition itself from where Narnappa produces several examples to ridicule the Brahmins and Brahminhood in the novel. Several other novels in other Indian languages do not conform to such static image of women, whether they be house wives or prostitutes. Even in the patriarchic setup, women play politics and generate their own ideas of liberation, may be flawed. In the absence of such a 'gender politics', Samskara has become a narrative of great promise but aborted literary protest. In a novel by a writer like Anantha Murthy, who has been influenced by Lohia, it appears strange that there is little impact of his thoughts in the delineation of women characters and they do not contribute in a substantial degree to the making and to the theme of the novel.

There is no doubt that the novel is an excellent work of literary realism with a very fine fusion of allegoric mode of narration, and it is widely accepted that literature cannot offer a magic potion to solve social evils. But as a critic having socialistic concerns, who views literature as a vehicle for social change, it is my hope that a work of art, especially if the writer is

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Review the status of displacement, submergence and rehabilitation of Sardar Sarovar oustees

Pronouncing their interim verdict in the presence of about 10,000 oustees of Sardar Sarovar Dam, based on their observations and assessment of the legal and field situation, a panel of four retired Judges of various High Courts concluded that gross violations of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award and Judgements of the Supreme Court had taken place. Speaking at the proceedings of the “Jan Adalat” organized by eminent citizens of the country, well-known Justices including P.C Jain (Rajasthan High Court) Nag Mohan Das (Karnataka High Court) and V.D. Gyani (Madhya Pradesh High Court) and N.K. Mody (Madhya Pradesh High Court) expressed grave concern at the displacement of about 2.5 lakh people due to the completion of the Dam and the mass violation of the constitutional right to life, destruction of livelihoods, as also wiping out of an entire culture and civilization.

They stated that the further dam work and installation of gates should not proceed in the present circumstances of clear evidence of multiple violations. Observing that the concerned authorities have miserably failed to comply with the provisions of the Award and the Apex court’ orders and have committed serious dereliction of legal obligations, they called for a serious review of the entire situation and a serious social-economic impact assessment. The Government and Apex Court must widen their horizons of ‘development’, in the light of the complex realities of the 30 years struggle of the Narmada valley, they said.

Reading out the operative part of their preliminary verdict, Jst. Jain exclaimed that the official claims of no additional submergence due to the current dam work is clearly unlawful and also unbelievable, since when the dam is being completed with the same original height, there is no reason why the submergence area would not increase ! Listening to testimonies of about 35 oustees they found that the Judgement of the Supreme Court dt. 18/10/200 and 15/3/2005 as well as several orders of the Grievance Redressal Authorities (GRAs), Jst Jain also said that the Government must await the Report of Jst. Jha Commission of Inquiry into Corruption in R&R before any further work is undertaken.

The four Justices urged the Social Justice Bench of the Apex Court to review its decisions and hearings in the light of the overwhelming evidence of legal violations and well as the obviously flawed “full rehabilitation” reports of the project authorities. The Jan Adalat specially acknowledged the valiant role of thousands of women warriors in the valley who have been keeping the torch of struggle aglow over the past 30 years. These observations were made after hearing the depositions of about 35 oustees from the three states of M.P., Maharashtra and Gujarat, perusal of the NWDTA, various orders of the Apex Court, GRAs, interim reports of Jst. Jha Commission, official correspondence and intensive visit to various affected villages in the tehsils of Badwani, Kukshi, Manavar and Dharampuri yesterday.

The deponents before the Tribunal today included representatives of adivasis from the hilly and plain areas, other farmers who have been entangled in the fake registries scam, received meagre cash and denied land or given land from the land bank, landless oustees, including fish workers, potters, boatmen, small traders etc. Ousteas from Maharashtra and Gujarat also expressed their grievances and pointed out to major violations. The hearing was conducted in a completely formal manner, with a People’s Court set-up on the Narmada river bank at Rajghat and each oustee/ deponent stood in the ‘dock’, as s/he deposed.

Bhagirath Dhangar spoke of the plight of hundreds of farmers, workers, small traders, shopkeepers, hawkers etc. whose lands and livelihoods are to be lost by the dam increase, with no alternative R&R in sight. He questioned if the balance is indeed ‘0’, then how is it that the government fair price shops, panchayats, voting and even government licensed wine shops are functioning here? Mahesh Patel exposed the fraud in the name of backwater levels due to which 16,000 families have been declared “out of submergence”. He said that all these unscientific claims would be blown up by Narmada herself and her fury into which 99 tributaries and 999 large drains flow. Fish worker families represented by Savabai (Pichhodi) and Madubhai (Chikalda) demanded fishing rights in the reservoir and alternative livelihood. They said that fishing and riverine rights cannot be compensated in monetary terms.

Karan Yadav from Pipri read out the message from Ramesh Patel, the MLA of Badwani, admitting that governmental reports of R&R are patently false and that 99 per cent oustees, still reside in the original villages awaiting R&R. Patel submitted a written demand to the Tribunal that the SSP gates should not be installed at this stage, without completion of R&R, as per law. Meera spoke of the absolute failure and connivance

of the elaborate machinery of monitoring and project authorities in complying with the Apex Court's orders and demanded that all the clearances granted by the authorities are unlawful and need to be set aside by the Apex Court. Adv. Umesh stated that thousands of SSP oustees are now owners of the acquired lands/houses as per 2013 LAQ Act and Government dare not dispossess them. Medha Patkar decried the massive violation of the rights of the

Gram Sabhas in the constitutionally protected scheduled adivasi areas. She spoke of the possibilities of and need for a review even at this stage to avert the inhuman pauperization of 2.5 lakh people, for the benefits of corporates. "While displacement and disaster is planned by the State, development and rehabilitation is not" she said and concluded that continuation with the dam would mean a mass atrocity on the dalits and adivasis.

—Mukesh, Hirdaram, Rahul Yadav, Leelabai

(Continued from Page 8)

Reservation of appointments and posts in the services of the State under the Central

Government and Central institutions;

Reservation in admission to seats in educational institutions of the Central Government and Centrally-aided educational institutions; and for other Central programmes/schemes/policies of Social Justice for BCs; The State list of each State is applicable for Reservation of appointments and posts in the services of the State under that State Government and institutions of that State; Reservation in admission to seats in educational institutions of that State Government and educational institutions aided by that State Government; and for other Social Justice programmes/schemes/policies of that State Government.

The first-phase Central List was issued in 1993, by listing State-wise those castes which were included in the State list of Backward Classes of each State as in 1992 (at that time there were State Lists in 14 States which accounted for about 85 per cent of the population of the

country) and also in the Mandal List for that State. This is also known as the "common list" as it was prepared by listing castes common to the State List and the Mandal List. The common-listing provided a double check. Castes or communities which were in one of the lists, but not in the other were not included in the Common List or the first-phase Central list.

This was the procedure laid down in the Government of India's

Memorandum of 13.8. 1990, on my advice, to preclude certain anomalies. This procedure was upheld by the Supreme Court in its landmark Mandal case judgment of 1992.

Thereafter, the NCBC took up applications for inclusion in the Central List of BCs, of various castes and communities which did not find place in the First-phase Central List / Common List.

(to be concluded)

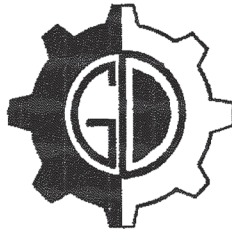
(Continued from Page 13)

influenced by the Lohian thoughts, will suggest or indicate some kind of strong socialist protest or rebellion against a given social, traditional set-up that demeans women.

As I mentioned earlier, it was a re-reading of the novel that I admired immensely, that I began to look for Lohian images of the 'new woman' who will move out of the stereotype of the Brahminical or the Dalit mould. As Lohia points out, there is nothing wrong in being Sita or Savitri, it is the obsession with the Lakshman-Rekha of one virtue or two virtues only, that limits and confines the multi-faceted capacity

of a woman. Lohia's belief, is that a woman is not defined merely by her relationship with men – be it her father, brother, husband or son. She has a life outside her domestic and sexual role. In Samskara, Chandri answers this need for emancipation to a large extent, there is no doubt about it, but this aspect of her character is not highlighted, it is more of a matter of the readers' hypothesis. If the marginalized do not speak, it does not mean that they do not have ideas or arguments, and an author who is sensitive to their plight can definitely lend a mike to help them raise their voices, howsoever feeble.

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