

# janata

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## Modi's Trump Card

**Kuldip Nayar**

Every statement or a visit by a foreign dignitary has to be related to our attitude on Pakistan. Even if there is no mention of Islamabad, we stretch the observation to the point where it is meant to be so. American Presidents have so far been hedging an open criticism of Pakistan because the US has been supplying arms to Islamabad. But for the first time, America has dropped ifs and buts to pull up Pakistan for abetting terrorism and giving shelter to the militants.

President Donald Trump in a joint statement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following their first meeting at the White House, made terrorism the cornerstone of mutual cooperation between the two countries. The statement went beyond the usual American position while criticizing Pakistan it echoed Indian concerns regarding the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative.

President Trump, recalling his election campaign, said that he had pledged true friendship with India. "I pledged that if elected, India would have a true friend in the White House. And that is now

exactly what you have, a true friend...I am thrilled to salute you, Prime Minister Modi, and the Indian people for all that you are accomplishing together. Your accomplishments have been vast," said Trump. The President also described Prime Minister Modi and himself as "world leaders in social media" and that it has enabled them to directly hear from their citizens."

In the past, India had friendly presidents in John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton and Barrack Obama. But they did very little to help New Delhi in its strategic and development requirements. They were obsessed with the thought that they should not in any way rub Pakistan on the wrong side. New Delhi never wanted them to do anything which would mean a tilt towards it.

But President Trump has departed from the past American policy. The resolve of the two countries to strengthen anti-terror cooperation has come as a big diplomatic win for New Delhi and a big blow for Islamabad which was trying to portray the Hizbul militants as "freedom fighters."

In his individual remark, President Trump said: “The security partnership between the US and India is incredibly important. Both our nations have been struck by the evils of terrorism and we are both determined to destroy terrorist organizations and the radical ideology that drives them. We will destroy radical Islamic terrorism.”

The two leaders seem to have forged a lasting friendship that President Trump himself took Modi on a guided tour of the White House besides accepting the Indian Prime Minister’s invitation to send his daughter, Ivanka, to India for a meeting. All these augur well. On his part Modi, with President Trump standing beside him, declared that America was India’s primary partner for “its social and economic transformation.”

China is the first one to react. It has chided India for going to the American camp. And, as usual, America has boosted Pakistan to stay with Beijing. Islamabad has understandably stayed quiet. Although President Trump has hinted that the supply of arms to Pakistan might stop, the latter has not uttered a word. Probably, it is waiting for the outcome of the meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. That should take place sooner than later.

The Congress party has made no comment which would be construed as criticism of the Modi-Trump meeting. The American President’s criticism of Pakistan is to the liking of the party but it cautiously awaits overall reaction in the country. The Congress, like other parties,

is busy with the Presidential election in India. However, the personal equation between Trump and Modi would not be to the liking of Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

In the US State Department, the Congress does not have that kind of a priority which it had earlier. In forthcoming Presidential election in India, Modi looks like having an upper hand. Therefore, all American policies are being shaped presuming that the BJP would once again win the general election in 2019. The support that Modi has in the country at present indicates that the opposition is no match for him. Were all non-BJP parties to come together and fight the next election, they might emerge as a formidable group.

The effort which Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is making gives some hope. Otherwise, the performance of the opposition would be dismal. The demonetization that the Modi government introduced had some adverse effect on the people initially but it is slowly fading away. However, the GST, which is coming into force from the first of July, could sting the government badly. With a lot of opposition in parliament and a prolonged debate and discussion, the bill was finally passed.

It looks as if someone must have briefed President Trump on these points. Otherwise, he would not have tilted towards the BJP as he did openly after his first meeting with Modi. The Prime Minister continued to woo the Indian Diaspora and the CEOs from Apple, Amazon and Walmart to invest largely in the country. They are more inclined than ever

before to do business with India. Probably, the State Department, too, encouraged them taking the cue from President Trump.

On his first meeting with the US President, Modi has played the Trump card cleverly. With his party BJP already well entrenched in India and spreading its wings in the rest of states, what Modi required was some foreign support. None could have been better than America’s, particularly at a time when China has openly sided with Pakistan and trumped up some incidents in the northeast to allege that India had occupied some of the disputed territory.

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# A Policy to Eliminate Toiletless People

**Sandeep Pandey**

When Narendra Modi initiated his Clean India campaign nobody would have thought that it can become deadly one day. The symbol being used for this campaign is Mahatma Gandhi's spectacles, a man who stood for non-violence resolutely. A number of things were not imagined which would happen after Narendra Modi's ascension to power - new reasons would be discovered to harass some people, some of which could become fatal. For example, people would be beaten up on the suspicion of having consumed beef and could be even killed, if a Muslim boy chose to marry a Hindu girl, in the name of Love Jihad, he or they may have to scurry for cover, if police suspected a man accompanying a woman of harassing her then Anti-Romeo squads were ready to jump upon him, Kashmiri students studying in other states of India could be beaten up at the slightest provocation after being labeled anti-national, etc. More serious intractable problems like famers' suicides, malnourishment of children, human trafficking of girls and women from Nepal and Bangladesh through India, people including children begging on major street crossings of national and state capitals, daily corruption at government offices, schools and hospitals were not touched. For politics of nationalism latter issues did not have to potential for communal mobilization as the former.

The manner in which Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) activist Zafar Khan was lynched to death in Pratapgarh, Rajasthan

makes us wonder the kind of society we want to create? On the morning of 17 June, 2017 employees of Nagar Parishad of Pratapgarh were taking photographs of women belonging to Mehtab Khan slum defecating in open with the objective of shaming them as a government policy. Zafar Khan who was also a resident of this slum decided to protest. The accompanying Commissioner Ashok Jain instigated his dalit sanitation employees to beat Zafar to death. The resurgent India has found a new reason to lynch people.

Do the women who defecate in open enjoy doing so? When they don't have toilets at home where are they supposed to go to relieve themselves. If people don't have toilets who is supposed to build it for them? If anybody was to be punished for open defecation of women in Mehtab Shah slum it should have been the government officials whose responsibility it was to create the toilets. If the land on which the slum was built was government land and possibly personal toilets could not have been built on it then the government should have got a Sulabh toilet built there.

If we compare India's situation with her neighbours then it would become clear that governments in India have not given priority to construction of toilets. In India mere 34% population had access to improved sanitation in 2010 compared to 92% in Sri Lanka, 64% in China, 56% in Bangladesh, 48% in Pakistan and 44% in Bhutan. In

India the caste system further prevents the dalits from using available toilets. For example, a number of dalit domestic workers who do different chores like cleaning, cooking or baby sitting in mostly upper caste middle class or upper middle class households do not have permission to use the toilets inside these homes. They have to find some bush, tree or wall outside to relieve themselves.

It is the government officials who are responsible for the death of Zafar Khan. The Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindhia, who termed it as an unfortunate incident, should have resigned taking moral responsibility.

The Commissioner Ashok Jain follows a religion which lays special emphasis on non-violence. Jains are known to take care so that no micro-organism gets killed because of them. The Jain monks tie a piece of cloth around their mouth and nose for this reason. Jains don't eat onion and garlic to keep their passions under check. Yet Ashok Jain didn't seem to have any qualms as he got Zafar Khan murdered.

Narendra Modi's cleanliness drive has completed three years. Citizens were charged a new cess. Large amount was spent. But the ground reality doesn't seem to have changed. The cows are eating as much plastic on roads as they were doing before and amount of untreated sewage that flows into

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# PM Modi in USA

**D. K. Giri**

The India-US relations draw heavy media and intellectual attention; especially when Indian Prime Ministers visit US or the Presidents of United States come to India. As usual, Modi's visit to USA generated much excitement, expectation and a good deal of anxiety too, given the unpredictable nature of Donald Trump, the US President. The media, experts, commentators jumped into pontificating on the visit, the process and the outcome; proffered a lot of advice to Modi on what he should expect and extract from the US President.

The reactions by some experts to the timing of the visit, the pre-visit bilateral scenario, especially Trump's comments on India on climate negotiations etc. were not charitable, nor optimistic. Modi, was invited late after two heads of states from Asia had already been to US, namely China and Japan. They feel that India does not figure in US priorities as much as China and Japan do. Second, Trump ran India and China down for their selfish approach to climate security negotiations. Third, US would not dilute its trade relations with China, nor would it upset its strategic alliance with Pakistan, in view of the unfinished business in Afghanistan etc. Fourth, US currently is following an inward-looking, isolationist approach to world politics, including in South Asia. So US world engagement will be reduced. India, on the other hand, is looking for and is in need of some greater engagement for the sake of its security as well as new economic

growth. So, there is a dichotomous bilateralism between India and USA. To expect any robust and substantive talk is unrealistic.

All these analyses and inferences are largely speculative, as nothing is permanent in politics, national or international. Trump is known for blowing hot and cold, is capable of changing his mind quite frequently. He was revving and ranting about China, its unfair competition in business, its expansionist tendencies etc. but he met the Chinese premier in perfect bonhomie and declared the relation with China as normal. People talk about influences on Trump, from his son-in-law, and other family members. But, surely, despite Trump's idiosyncrasies, there is a foreign-policy establishment in US - which would maintain the sobriety and continuity of their approaches to different countries and world issues. Trump is moving and shaking things as never before in US, but as, he settles down a bit more, he will shape up, or ship out, as they say. At any rate, what were the items on Modi's agenda with USA, or Trump, and what is he coming back with?

Trade and terrorism were the predominant issues in discussion although they covered other areas like energy, environment, and economy at global level. On terrorism, Trump said, "both our nations have been struck by the evils of terrorism, and we are both determined to destroy terrorist organisations and the radical ideology that drives them. We will destroy radical Islamic terrorism".

Modi said, "Fighting terrorism, and doing away with safe shelters, sanctuaries, and safe havens will be an important part of our cooperation". Both of them together said that Pakistan should not allow its soil to be used for terrorist activities. Perhaps, what is a big take-away for India from this visit is the US decision to designate Hizbul Mujahidden leader Syed Salahuddin as a global terrorist.

On trade, which was worrying commentators, it does not look so ominous. Trump wants 'fair and reciprocal' trade ties. He wants barriers to US exports removed, so that USA makes up the trade deficit of about 31 billion USD with India, although it is peanuts compared to 374 billion USD deficits USA has with China. Both the leaders were hopeful that the major tax reforms carried out in their respective countries would "unlock immense economic opportunities".

The talks covered areas like clean energy, such as clean coal, and scientific and technical collaboration across the sectors. The president of India-US Business Association had made, in a newspaper article, a comprehensive list of five areas to be covered during the talks. US-India defence partnership; reinvigorating US-India agricultural dialogue; creating energy trade and technology initiative; building cooperation in health and security; and building a forward looking trade agenda.

What is the net result for India

from this visit? The foreign policy experts and media have different interpretations of the intent and outcome of the summit meeting between Modi and Trump. Some say, on defence and terrorism, India did well to gain positive outcome, but on trade and climate change issues the results were not in India's favour. Let us list the gains from the meeting before we critique India's US policy, which ought to be done in the national interest of India. On matters of cross-border terrorism, it was a big gain. Since India and Pakistan bilateral relations are not normalising, what is worse, are being influenced by other countries, namely China and US, it was important that US took an unequivocal position on Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism. Secondly, US support for UN Convention on International Terrorism, which Obama Administration was reluctant to do, will be good for US as well as India. The treaty proposed since 1996 has not been signed for want of consensus. This treaty, once signed, will criminalise all forms of international terrorism and deny terrorists' access to funds, arms and safe havens. This will also make the listing of terrorists easier and helpful. Secondly, the US supported India's membership of Nuclear Supplier Group, which China has been opposing. China has stated again, as Modi was in USA, that it will block India's entry into NSG. Thirdly, USA supports India's membership of Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. Wassenaar Arrangement, signed by 41 countries, seeks to control the exports of conventional Arms and dual—use goods and technologies. It is a multilateral export control regime signed in Wassenaar, the Netherlands that is why it is so named. This

arrangement is meant to prevent the misuse of exports in building military capabilities for aggression and destabilisation. Likewise, the Australia Group consisting of 42 member states including all the 28 members of European Union was created in 1985 to prevent the exports that have the potential to be used for chemical and biological weapons. This was started with the initiative of Australia, after Iraq used chemical weapons in 1984. That is why it is called Australia Group. Fourthly, India joined the Global Entry Programme, also known as 'international expedited traveller initiative'. This would facilitate speedier entry of Indians into USA. Global entry Programme allows expedited clearance at the US customs and border controls. The concession India may have to make is in terms of greater opening for US exports to India. At the same time, India needs to expand its exports to USA. The logical corollary to increase in exports is a vibrant domestic economy.

The consulting editor of *Indian Express*, Pratap Bhanu Mehta had suggested that India should 'enlarge the frame' in negotiation with USA. What he was arguing is, India is a big democracy priding itself on its multiculturalism, an accommodative society despite minor distortions. While US is backsliding on democracy and multiculturalism under Trump, India could be the exemplar country to the world as a multicultural pluralist democracy; use this as a negotiating point with United States. What a puerile argument! India has been a democracy of some kind for 70 years. How has it helped India internationally? It draws sympathy, but not respect, nor solid support. Many experts, mainly the supporters

and sympathisers of the Congress party would still argue that Nehru had laudable foreign policy principles. They maintain that Nehru's *panchsheel* and non-alignment were signal contributions to India's international image and role. There was not much change of Nehru's approach until India went through the LPG-liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation. "Continuity and change" was the maxim of India's foreign policy. However, after the cold war, the non-alignment had a natural death. India's ally and friend Soviet Union disintegrated. India was left with no friends as it continued to profess its non-aligned character. Some commentators like Sashi Tharoor would say "Nehru's policies were moralistic running commentary" on international politics. Tharoor incurred heavy backlash for saying so from the Congress party. But he was also endorsing what Lord Bhiku Parikh said in a talk on 'India's place in the world'. Lord Parikh was debunking Nehruvian foreign policy as he said "Nehru's policies gave India a sense of misplaced self-righteousness". He added, "Nehru developed Indian foreign policy as though he was speaking for the whole of Asia, homogenising the entire continent and ignoring internal conflicts". From such a perspective, which critiques Nehruvian idealistic and utopian approach to world affairs, one should evaluate our relations with USA.

Two things should inform and guide India's foreign policy including its approach to USA. One, India should not aspire to play the role of world leader with so much poverty and backwardness. The foreign policy of a country is a function of

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# In the Name of Public Interest

**J. L. Jawahar**

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as the name indicates is an insurance company, and the premier organ for insurance in India. As insurance company it has to be more careful about how it uses its assets so that any liability will be met without any difficulty. They naturally chose safe lines of investment. In addition, if the investments also bring in some revenue it is still better. As a prudent management they chose ITC as a safe and remunerative investment. In every respect ITC is a sound company.

But in the month of April, 2017 the LIC was drawn to the Bombay High Court with an allegation that the investments made in ITC are against public interest. In the report it is not stated if the petition mentioned any Act which forbids such investments. Rightly, LIC stated in their affidavit, in reply, that their investments are in line with the policy of government and also in the best interests of the organization and public welfare. In such a situation there appears no ground for the Hon'ble Court to entertain the petition prima facie. But they have not only entertained the petition but have gone to the extent of trying to make the Securities and Exchange Board of India a party to the petition. In their affidavit in reply, SEBI is reported to have excused themselves from interfering in the litigation. They pointed out the petitioners "neither prayed for any relief against them nor involved in share ownership". It fell on an organization like SEBI to tell the court that they are "neither a necessary nor a proper party" to

the proceedings. That is an obvious statement and gives no scope to involve them in it. It is not clear on what grounds the Hon'ble Court felt it necessary to involve the SEBI.

Actually there has been no breach of any law in the investments made by the LIC. It is not a matter to be decided by the courts of law, not even by the government. It is exclusively for the LIC to determine where to invest as long as they do not break any law. The petition should have been rejected by the court. They could have advised them to approach their members of parliament or assembly or government directly. Instead, they felt it necessary to try the case and also tried to expand the area of litigation by involving unrelated organisations into the fray. It is entertained as a "Public Interest Litigation". What is the public interest involved in it? There are many industries that are not conducive for public health. These matters were discussed many times and settled.

The petitioners, a surgeon in the Tata Memorial Hospital and a Managing Trustee of Tata Trusts, are also not laymen not to understand that it is a matter of policy to be decided by the government and not a matter of law to be decided by the courts. They could have gone to the members of parliament or legislative assembly demanding that a policy shall be devised to prevent investments in tobacco industry as they are detrimental to public health and pass some Act for the purpose. It is obvious that policies are not dictated by courts and are legitimately decided by legislatures and executive

government. Or can the courts dictate policies? Is there no distinction between legal and administrative matters? Is there no separation between the areas of judiciary and executive government and legislatures?

It is not the High Court alone. Even the Hon'ble Supreme Court is in that habit. Somebody approaches with a petition that Yoga must be made compulsory in all schools and direct the government to do so. The Court issues notices to all concerned. That is in the name of public interest. It is an excuse to take any matter for consideration. Courts go to constitute benches with two or three judges to try these cases. (More important cases involving legal issues can wait for decades) There is no place or need for legislatures in our representative democracy. That place is usurped by the courts. The courts can determine what the government should do and should not do. Because of indiscriminate entertainment of petitions in the name of public interest, people have come to believe that courts are the savior in all situations. The mechanism prescribed in the constitution is ignored and undermined. It shows lack of respect for the constitution which is also being encouraged by the judiciary. Naturally it relieves the elected representatives of any responsibility to the constituents and they feel free to enjoy the status and perquisites without any commensurate responsibility. They do not grudge the development and want to perpetuate it.

Alas! That is our democracy.

# BJP is Mythicising its Anti-Emergency Role

D. L. Sheth

*Professor DL Sheth is Honorary Senior Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. On the 40th anniversary of the Emergency, he spoke on the principal characters of the anti-Emergency movement, the Bharatiya Janata Party's attempts at appropriating it, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's role and whether the Modi government displays authoritarian tendencies. Excerpts:*

*Even before Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency, wasn't tremendous pressure already building up in the political system?*

Yes, the origin of this pressure can be traced to the split of the Congress party in 1969. For the first time, there was a divide along ideological lines, between the old Congress, the old regime, and the new Congress represented by Indira Gandhi, who was taking pro-people initiatives (such as the nationalisation of banks, mines and abolition of the privy purse). It would be tempting to see the divide as one between the Right and the Left in the Congress, but it was really more new than Left.

This destabilised the political system. Till then, the country's politics was of the noblesse oblige kind. The split redefined the polity. Mrs Gandhi got support beyond expectations. Her popularity threatened the political parties no end; they thought they were at a dead-end.

Did the political parties experience an existential threat because of her policies?

Right after the split, Gandhi evolved a new language of politics. The parties could not adjust or respond to it. Secondly, her policies opened up the politics. The old style of politics was defined by trusteeship, by patron-client relationship. There

was new energy in the party system and civil society. Mrs Gandhi took advantage of this to win the 1971 election and emerged as the national leader. Then she won the Bangladesh war. She was now the supreme leader of Indian politics, thereby pushing all other parties into a crisis.

On the other hand, you had civil society groups led by Jayaprakash Narayan, or JP, among the few from the pre-Independence period who was still around, who had socialist credentials, and was Gandhi-esque, in the sense that he was for the country, not for posts. He was telling the people that the country had stagnated because of corruption. In fact, JP said Mrs Gandhi was the fountain of corruption.

There were other sources of dissatisfaction — for instance, price rise and unemployment. Gandhi was cynically for political power. Yet her policies infused her with a charismatic appeal for the poor. By contrast, the lower to upper middle class were more in the civil society movements of JP. All this was leading to a confrontation.

The civil society also had a party structure, which included the socialists, basically leaders of groups

who were to later constitute the Janata Party, the Akalis and other regional entities. They felt Mrs Gandhi's charismatic appeal threatened their revival, even survival.

The Left prospered with Mrs Gandhi. For the first time, you had an ideological division in the political culture — Mrs Gandhi and the Left together were pitted against the rest, who were stereotyped Right, conservative, pro-Capitalists, but who were seen by people as nationalists, opposed to corruption, and engaged in popular movements in Gujarat and Bihar. JP was the leader of these movements. His very presence enabled these movements to acquire a national appeal.

Then came the Allahabad High Court judgement?

Yes, the Allahabad High Court judgement [June 12, 1975] declared Mrs Gandhi's election from Rae Bareilly null and void on the grounds that she had misused the official machinery for her campaign. She went in appeal to the Supreme Court, which granted conditional stay on the judgement — she was barred from voting in the Lok Sabha until the final judgement but could remain as Prime Minister.

The judgement was a catalyst?

Yes. Raj Narain was one whom Mrs Gandhi had defeated in Rae Bareilly and who had petitioned the court. He's portrayed as a clownish figure. But if there was one person who, after JP, had a role in upstaging her, it was Raj Narain. He persisted with the case, never gave up. The judgement was a blow to her. She couldn't take it because of her belief in the divine theory of family rule. Feeling insulted, she went on to impose the Emergency.

*JP was both the guiding figure and the symbol of the anti-Emergency movement. But who were the other principal actors?*

The entire youth of the country, people whom we can loosely label as socialists — the JP-ites, the Lohia-ites, men like Ashok Mehta. The spread and life of these dispersed characters called socialists was clearly underestimated. Though attacked by both the Congress and the Left, they were engaged in popular movements and had also fared well electorally — for instance, in 1967. JP's call for Total Revolution brought all these socialists on one platform.

What about the role of the BJP?

There was no BJP then.

Yes, they were then known as Jan Sangh.

They were also stagnating, were painted in a corner, despite the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's famed network. The RSS-Jan Sangh was then typically symbolised by 40-something,

bespectacled knicker-wallahs, five or six of whom would assemble in neighbourhood parks. They suddenly came alive because of JP. He was a lifeline for them. It was by participating in the JP movement that the RSS-Jan Sangh came into mainstream politics.

If you think how the Emergency was countered and resisted at several points, you won't find many BJP characters. You will find the socialists and others, but not the BJP. They were on the margins of politics. Really, you wouldn't call their leader, Balraj Madhok, mainstream, would you?

What about AB Vajpayee, LK Advani?

They were all creatures of the JP movement. It was the RSS's considered judgement to seize the opportunity provided by JP's anti-Emergency movement for coming into the mainstream and working out their agenda through democratic politics. Since it was a cadre-based organisation, it could actually issue diktats such as: "so many people have to go for the jail-bharo andolan ['fill the prisons' movement]." If you look at the number of people who were jailed during the Emergency, they must be the highest. They had the cadres — and their families were looked after by the organisation.

Are you implying that they didn't face the brunt of what is called the Emergency crackdown or oppression?

Yes, they didn't face the brunt of the Emergency. Once a person was in the jail, he didn't face much problem there. It wasn't as if they were being tortured.

So who were the people who faced the brunt of the Emergency?

Socialists and civil society activists, people who were dissenters. The power of oppression was decentralised — those who were tortured at police stations were the ones organising everyday protests. In comparison, spending two-three months or years in jail wasn't that bad. Somebody should write on their life there!

Who were the people organising the everyday protest?

The young, the socialists, the liberals, and the NGOs. Even here at this institute [CSDS], for instance, people got together and opposed the Emergency. We feared a crackdown, but didn't face it. But the group comprising the socialists and liberals were suppressed, and there were instances of disappearances. In fact, the real oppression was outside the jail. Though not quantifiable, the principal headache for the regime was the everyday protest. My perception is based on the many visits I made to friends in the jail.

It's very important to understand the culture of resistance to know how the Emergency was opposed. It involved having an item inserted in newspapers, or distributing pamphlets clandestinely, or writing graffiti on walls, or networking with groups in other parts of the country resisting the Emergency. It was like getting kicks as if you were underground.

*Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is credited for having organised an anti-Emergency meeting in Delhi University. How significant would that have been?*



It would have been significant for those days. People were scared then.

*Weren't such meetings being held countrywide? You said even the CSDS organised a meeting.*

Yes, such meetings were being held all around. I don't know how much I can tell you about this place. But Rajni Kothari [CSDS founder and eminent political scientist], for instance, was about to be arrested. Mrs Gandhi's then principal secretary, PN Dhar, called Kothari and said, "Move out in 24 hours or you will be arrested." Kothari didn't want to leave, but he was in such poor health that we had to push him out.

Are you saying Jaitley's anti-Emergency endeavour wasn't so unique?

Unique? Not at all. Whether you went to Bombay or Madras or wherever, there were spontaneous protests. For the first time you felt that democratic culture had been imbibed in India's public life. You didn't have supporters of the Emergency other than those who were in the Communist Party of India. That finished the CPI, but the Communist Party of India (Marxist) survived.

Wasn't that because the CPI(M) opposed the Emergency?

I wouldn't say they opposed the Emergency. But yes, they didn't support it. They were unhappy about it.

Would you say the role of Akalis was more significant than the BJP's?

Looks like so. I wouldn't like to compare the two, but the Akalis' role

in opposing the Emergency was significant and glorious.

What about then RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras apologising to Indira Gandhi?

Yes, Deoras did write such a letter. The RSS was ambivalent about Mrs Gandhi. They considered her a nationalist, a hero who defeated Pakistan and created Bangladesh. Vajpayee called her Durga. They were ambivalent about Mrs. Gandhi—because they saw her winning a war for the Hindus for the first time!

Individual cases apart, the RSS was not offended by the Emergency, not in the way socialists and liberals were. The RSS's decision to oppose the Emergency was based on a mature, political judgement about their future.

Why do you say it was a mature judgement?

The Sangh's decision to oppose the Emergency gave it ample political space in the mainstream and accorded credibility to the Jan Sangh (later BJP). From a long-term perspective, JP made a mistake by forming the Janata Party. History would have been different had he decided to lead a coalition of parties.

Do you mean the Janata Party sanctified the RSS-BJP?

Yes. When the Jan Sangh became BJP, they kept the Janata in its name. So from being the Jan Sangh, they became the Bharatiya Janata Party. In the process, they got the *janata* [people] so to speak. This was the gain they hadn't had in 100 years. On the positive side, it enabled the BJP to give space to Hinduists who would have been

even more fundamentalist otherwise. Had Indira Gandhi given a more nationalist face to the Emergency, it is hard to tell whether the RSS would have opposed the Emergency.

*Considering the role of socialists, would you agree the BJP is trying to appropriate the memory of the anti-Emergency movement for itself?*

They are trying to. But it doesn't wash with me.

But the way the BJP leaders talk about their role in opposing the Emergency, it appears today that they were the sole opponents of it.

This is because of the dispersal of socialists. You feel ashamed of Lohia-ites like Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Sharad Yadav — though for him [Sharad Yadav] I still have respect. You wonder what lessons they learnt from the Emergency. They have become casteists. They squandered the opportunity to build a party organisation. It's such a pity that others don't create parallel memories about the anti-Emergency movement, memories that are more democratic, liberal and cultural.

*By contrast, the BJP used the anti-Emergency movement to build itself.*

In every organisation's history there is something which it wants to celebrate and mythicise. Before the Emergency, what did the RSS-Jan Sangh/BJP have? The murder of Gandhi. During the Independence movement when the non-communal nationalism was emerging, what was their record? There was nothing in their contribution to the

Independence movement which could have given them legitimacy. This is why I say the anti-Emergency movement was a lifeline for them. This is the only thing they have to celebrate, and also because behind its celebration they can hide their past.

It's a pity that the memory of the anti-Emergency movement means more to the BJP today than it does to the fragments of the Janata Party.

Do you think the majoritarian philosophy of the RSS-BJP could lead to authoritarianism?

There is a problem of context here. Since the mid-1980s, Nehruvian secularism has been turned by Congress into what I call permissive communalism, which means you are permitted to be communal on certain issues — symbolised by the opening of the gates of the Babri Masjid and closing the gates for Shah Bano. The BJP has taken advantage of it to push their project — how to bring about a congruence between electoral majority and cultural, rather religious, majority. The Emergency provided them the chance to work out this congruence. They didn't succeed until 2014. The jury is now out.

What's your verdict on the BJP's project?

My general feeling is that Modi knows politics and power. For the first time, the Hindutva ideology is not that of [Vinayak Damodar] Sarvarkar (who coined the term 'Hindutva') or [Madhav Sadashiv] Golwalkar [the second chief of the RSS]. It is Modi-like Hindutva, which, to define it, means *Hindu ka bolbaalaa rahega* (Hindus will be in prominence).

Could that lead to authoritarianism?

No, I have great faith in Indian democracy. After the 2014 election, I met a whole range of people who thought they would be put in jail as soon as Modi became Prime Minister. They lack faith in the Indian people. He is the elected Prime Minister — you can oppose him, you can contest his ideology, you don't have to accept him. After the big win in the 1971 election and the Bangladesh war, Indira Gandhi took just two-three years to lose her popularity.

Let me put it this way — they will try to be authoritarian, but they won't succeed.

So can't authoritarianism come in a way different from what we experienced during the Emergency?

I may see authoritarianism coming from the Marxist Left, but not from the Hindu Right. There are just too many countervailing forces among the demographic Hindus. We shouldn't read something, that is, authoritarianism, into our political culture which doesn't have that — but which might become a self-fulfilling prophecy as a result. This government will have a majoritarian thrust — the challenge is to fight it without encouraging a brand of minorityism.

So you are very sure the Emergency will never be imposed and authoritarianism will not raise its head in the future?

But it need not always be about imposing the Emergency. It could also be about on how to tighten the screw — and on whom. For example, it is being done in the Ministry of

Human Resources. My problem with this regime is what they are doing to the Non Governmental Organisations — the NGOs — or the film institute in Pune. This is some kind of McCarthyism, which too had popular support. It is a witch-hunt of those who disagree with the regime. You also have the problem of not recognising the rights of minorities.

In other words, what you are saying is that majoritarianism, unlike authoritarianism, still subscribes to rules.

Yes, absolutely. But it needs to be fought. That is why we should expand the public discourse from secular-communal to liberal-illiberal.

—Ajaz Ashraf, *Scroll.in*

(Continued from Page 3)

river Ganga in Varanasi remains the same as before. The Clean India campaign is a failure. People got photographed with brooms in which no member of Valmiki community was seen who actually do the cleaning job daily or enter our sewers. The credit for whatever cleanliness we see around us goes to the Valmiki community.

Probably more money was spent in publicizing rather than actual cleaning in the Clean India campaign.

The policy of Narendra Modi has created a new category of discrimination in India. It mostly overlaps the rich-poor or caste-outcaste divide - the toileted and the toilet-less. By eliminating the toilet-less people India can claim to have increased the percentage of population with access to sanitation.

## Controlling the Past

Sankara Narayanan

The Sangh has appropriated the image of being anti-Emergency crusaders in the absence of counter narratives from other pivotal players.

Every anniversary of the Emergency brings the memories of the darker side of the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi and the heroic struggle launched by the opposition parties and freedom lovers under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan to overthrow that dictatorship. Recently gone 42nd anniversary was no different.

RSS-BJP leaders as usual recounted the tales of resistance they mounted against the dictatorship of Indira Gandhi. But what they will not talk about, or counter, are the accusations Dr Subramanian Swamy made against their leaders during the late 1990s, in early 2000 and on very many occasions in the past, till he joined BJP against their leaders.

On June 13, 2000, a fortnight before the 25th anniversary of the Emergency, Swamy claimed that the then RSS chief Balasahab Deoras and former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee betrayed the anti-Emergency movement by tendering apologies to Indira Gandhi in writing. Swamy wrote in his article titled “Unlearnt lessons of the Emergency” published in ‘The Hindu’: “It is on the record in the *Maharashtra Assembly proceedings* that *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 even bother to reply any of his letters.*”

“In fact for most of the 20-month Emergency, Vajpayee was out on parole after having given a written assurance that he would not participate in any programmes against the Government,” Swamy wrote.

The two weren’t the only luminaries who apologised to Indira. Swamy cited a book by Akali leader Surjit Singh Barnala which provides a “vivid description of other erstwhile Jan Sangh worthies who chose to walk out of prison on promise of good behaviour”.

Stories about RSS chief Deoras apologising to Indira have always been in circulation. Coomi Kapoor, Swamy’s sister-in-law writes in her book, ‘The Emergency: A personal history’: “Ironically, 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.”

Kapoor’s narrative illustrates that Deoras wasn’t the only RSS luminary who buckled under pressure. “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,” she wrote.*

Swamy’s indictment of the RSS, in contrast to Kapoor’s, wasn’t confined to individuals. It extended to the organisation as such. Swamy wrote that RSS leader Madhavrao Muley was the one who advised him to go abroad. Swami wrote, “A tearful Muley told me in early November 1976, 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 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.”

In an article published by ‘Outlook’ magazine in March 1998, Swamy is quoted as 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.**” An article published by ‘The Economic Times’ 25 November 2012 quoted Swamy as 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.”

Different accounts make it clear that Vajpayee was neither a doughty opponent of the Emergency as he has been made out to be, nor was the RSS steadfast in opposing

Emergency. The role of the RSS in the resistance against the Emergency wasn't bigger than that of socialists, without whom the movement to reclaim democratic and civil rights would not have floundered.

The Sangh's narrative of the anti-Emergency movement has gone unchallenged for a variety of reasons. One, the collapse of the Janata Party and the dispersal of socialists have prevented the creation of Emergency memories parallel to that of the Sangh. Two, several Janata Party's offshoots over the last 25 years have aligned with the Congress, which means criticism of the Emergency would be criticism of the Congress.

Three, the anti-Emergency movement provided the Sangh with a means to mainstream itself. Till then, it had been a marginal force, having contributed little to the Independence movement and known more for its role in the killing of Gandhi. The JP movement sanctified the Sangh. This has prompted it, with help from friends, to spin myths about its own role in the anti-Emergency movement.

Four, the party in power is relatively better placed than others to scribble its name on the milestones of the past. This truism was on display on the 42nd anniversary of the Emergency, as it was on the 25th as well — the BJP was in power then too.

**As BJP leaders celebrated their role in resisting the Emergency, it was yet another attempt at scrubbing from the public memory what is inconvenient to them and writing history in black-and-white, as is their habit.**

## Avoid Irreversible Ecological Loss

Our country is threatened with many kinds of ecological threats. While it is important to try to reduce all these threats and risks, the most urgent of these challenges is to try to reduce those risks which are of an irreversible nature ie those risks and threats which once unleashed either cannot be reversed or else reversing these will be so difficult as to be almost impossible in practical terms.

One clear example of irreversible damage relates to the impact of GM (genetically modified) crops. This aspect of irreversible damage is very important to understand in India as we have a very strong and powerful lobby for GM crops in India today with enormous resources at its disposal and its reach extending to the topmost levels of decision making.

As Prof. Susan Bardocz has noted, "GM is the first irreversible technology in human history. When a GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) is released it is out of our control; we have no means to call it back ... Since GMOs are self-replicating, releasing them might have dire consequences for human and animal health and for the environment and change evolution."

This statement must be seen together with numerous other statements of reputed scientists and groups of scientists which have drawn attention to numerous serious hazards, risks and adverse impacts of GM crops.

Next we would like to give the example of river-linking projects. While the risks and harmful impacts in these cases may not be completely

irreversible, the chances of reversing are so less once the projects have been completed that the damage caused by these projects is also likely to be almost irreversible. This statement should also be seen together with the several warnings which eminent experts including those who have held important positions in the government have been giving about the high risks and adverse impacts of various river-link projects.

It is very unfortunate and a matter of deep concern that such technologies and projects with the potential of inflicting very serious and irreversible damage are being pushed and promoted at the highest levels in India. All those who are concerned about the future welfare of our people and the welfare of next generations should oppose those technologies and projects which can cause serious and irreversible damage.

—Bharat Dogra

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## Over 40,000 families in Narmada Valley

**To,  
Shree Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister, Republic of India**

**Subject: Appeal for Intervention and protection of the right to life and livelihoods of over 40,000 families in Narmada Valley facing submergence due to Sardar Sarovar Dam**

Respected Modi ji,

Water is life, and the people of India from ages have welcomed the arrival of monsoon. In the past few days, the arrival of the monsoon has become a threat to life and livelihood of a large number of our people. I have received information about the impending plight of the people residing in the Narmada Valley that is unfolding as the monsoon arrives. A few days back, many concerned citizens had gathered in the national capital to express strong disappointment about the inhumane act of closing of the gates of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, which appears to be inconsistent with the order of the Supreme Court of India dated 08 February 2017 in the Special Leave Petition No. 7663/2016. Closing the gates of the dam will drown more than 40,000 families living in the Narmada Valley who are not rehabilitated yet.

I write to you on behalf of these people of the Narmada Valley, artisans, farmers, labourers, fish-workers, and many others who are staring at submergence of their land and livelihood due to closing of the gates of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, at its full reservoir level of 138.68 meters. For these people without rehabilitation, basic amenities like drinking water and electricity are not available. Some sites have black soil, which makes it very difficult to

construct houses. House plots are at a lower level than the road, so during the rainy season waterlogging causes diseases.

The said Supreme Court order clearly states that Resettlement and Rehabilitation of the Project Affected Families to be complete in all respects before any forcible displacement of these villages is directed. Closing of the gates is de facto a method of forcible eviction and thus, not only a barbaric act but also a disrespect of the court order. More than 40000 families, with their residential houses, livestock, hospitals, schools, shops and all other civic amenities, are still living in these villages. The resettlement and rehabilitation sites are not even close to completion. The tenders to carry out the necessary work at these sites were issued last month by the government. Given this condition, the government is now proposing to erect tin-sheds to accommodate lakhs of people. Intimidation tactics—e.g. putting up posters in the villages asking people to leave, sending officials with messages to the people that the police will use force to throw them out, making them sign ambiguous and incomplete affidavits that state their agreement to vacate—are inhuman acts of brutality by the government.

Thousands of trees are going to be submerged without carrying out compensatory afforestation as directed by the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 and the Rules and Guidelines there under. In a country whose soul is so deeply embedded in religion and whose identity is formed by its culture, drowning of thousands of temples and mosques and hundreds of archaeological sites without taking necessary steps to shift them is unacceptable not only to the people facing involuntary displacement but the whole country.

The Narmada Control Authority (NCA) reportedly claimed zero balance in funds for rehabilitation work in 2015, but very recently the information gathered through RTI Act by the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the gazette notification clearly show that this was incorrect.

Our country has a thriving democracy and as the head of a democratically elected government, you can still opt for a people based path for economic development. I appeal to you to extend your kind help to the people facing submergence and ensure justice. Your urgent intervention seeking a status report from the NCA, which has been the justification for the closure, may be useful in finding where the truth lies.

There are people from Scheduled Tribes, thus enabling PESA Act, but no consideration has been given to tribal rights and to the resolutions of the Gram Sabhas.

You have come to power with a massive people's mandate. I request you to intervene and ensure the following to stop the injustice and to safeguard the constitutional rights of the people of Narmada Valley:

1. Direct the Madhya Pradesh Govt. to do a comprehensive re-survey of project affected people and give priority to rehabilitation first by following orders of the Supreme Court so that no family is evicted without rehabilitation.

2. Direct the Madhya Pradesh Govt. to take advice from every Gram Sabha following section 4 of PESA Act to seek their consent and advice on appropriate ways of making rehabilitation sites and providing amenities essential to them.

3. Order the Madhya Pradesh Govt. and authorities to provide the benefits to farmers as per the Supreme Court orders and ensure alternative livelihoods, rights of fish workers on the reservoir, rights of artisans to land on the banks of the river, rights to boatmen for free access to the river, new plots to shopkeepers or sufficient compensation by bringing adequate change in policies.

4. Direct authorities to provide lists of work done till today, number and details of applications received by various authorities, such as NCA, NVDA, GRA and others concerned so that remaining work can be planned in a more comprehensive and amicable manner.

5. Direct the Madhya Pradesh Govt. to constitute a committee to assess the impact on environment, river and forests by submergence and also the impact in downstream flow of the river. Last year, the sea intruded into the River up to 30 km, adversely impacting the agriculture and industry, and the communities living in those regions.

All this is essential to ensure the faith of people in non-violent, democratic and constitutional governance and struggle for their rights. I, on behalf of the people of Narmada valley, now appeal to you for immediate attention and intervention to save the people threatened by submergence.

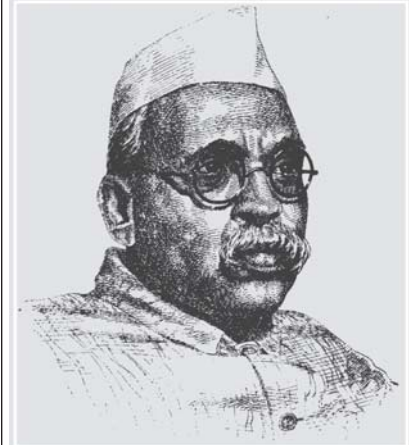
With best regards,

Jayanta Bandyopadhyay

*(Continued from Page 5)*

its national strength and attributes. And the national strength is measured by the growth and development of a country. India is still a developing country with large pockets of poverty and vast swathes of the country outside the pale of modernity or prosperity. Second, no country has been or will be independent or non-aligned in an interdependent world. Moreover, a country has to surrender part of its sovereignty in order to secure larger gains in economy, security and scientific and technical knowledge, etc. Look at the countries of European Union. So, from day one, the policy of non-alignment was a non-starter in view of India's national interest. The apologists put it to the prevailing world order. But that is a rationalisation of Nehru's actions which did not help India's cause of developing a country after decolonisation. So, moving closer to USA on respectable terms is a necessity for India, especially when the China-Pakistan axis with moral support from Russia is encircling India. The call to action is making India's economy strong, not just GDP but per capita growth and development which will give it the leverage it needs with its friends as well as enemies.

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# Fast Against Lynching

**Dr. Prem Singh**

I observed a 7-day fast at Jantar Mantar in Delhi from June 25, 2017 to protest against the lynching of our own citizens in their own country by mobs. On the first day, Bandana Pandey (General Secretary, Socialist Yuvajan Sabha) was with me in the fast.

During the fast several friends including Medha Patkar, Janata Dal(U) general secretary Arun Kumar Shrivastav, Dr. Rajkumar Jain, Charan Singh Rajput, Ramesh Chand Sharma, Mahesh, Sadat Anwar and Akram and many others visited the venue.

Listening to poems, opinions, discussions and even heated arguments at the venue of the fast was a unique experience. It was as if diverse public voices, different shades of academia, soul-searching poets and social philosophers had all come together to speak about the crisis afflicting the country. It was a very reassuring experience in itself. Yesterday, Bhai Mithilesh Shrivastav read his poem. Himkar, Yogesh and Neeraj read stirring poems by senior and many new poets. Abhishek Shrivastav did not read his own poems but he made significant suggestions on how to plan solid and consistent work to put a stop to mob lynching. Amalesh Raju came to the fast venue and supported the cause. So also poet-journalist Vimal Kumar.

Senior colleagues Ramchandra Rahi and Anil Nauriya continually discussed for a long time the situation and problems in the country and in the world.

On the last day, July 1, many people

from social-political-educational-religious organizations came to the venue; farmers-workers-students unions too came to attend; many people came of their own. But they all expressed solidarity with the cause. The presence of the youth continued to remain encouraging; they came in large numbers on the seventh day also. Many youths from the nearby cities of Delhi came over after reading the news on social media.

Renu Gambhir, Prof. Gopeshwar Singh and Manju Mohan offered fruit juice to end the fast with the hope that the society will take strong action at every level to prevent mobocracy, which defies the constitutional order and human civilization.

Lohia was not in favour of fasting. Due to his participation in the freedom movement, he had a long experience and the courage to go to jail. Many of us do not have that. But it seems that there are not too many options left. If people survive from the mob, it is possible that a part of the life might be spent in jail. If mobocracy continues to grow like this then chances are that political workers will also be targeted, just as some writers and intellectuals have been targeted. And governments will stand far apart. Just like they are doing now.

The present government is working day and night to transfer the public-social-national resources of the country into the hands of domestic and foreign corporate houses and multinationals. As soon as this government came into power, it allowed 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the

Defense sector. During the rule of previous government, the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, was slightly amended in the interest of the land-owner farmers. When the present government came to power, it brought the Ordinance on that new Act. It is privatizing the 'Navaratna' units of the public sector. It is selling railway stations. To keep the attention of people away from this heinous national crime, it has engaged them in mutual differences and violence.

Supporters of neo-liberal policies, whether they are political leaders or civil society activists, cannot stop mob-lynching. Communalism has been the effective tool of capitalist occupation from the beginning. It was due to this that the country was divided. Now the country is again being divided. Therefore, the desire and efforts of the neo-liberal supporters in this direction are naturally doomed to be half-hearted and inadequate.

The experience of the fast has inspired us to work further towards preventing mobocracy. Many colleagues have resolved to work together. The efforts will continue. We have to assure the minorities, especially the youth, that everyone has equal rights in India. They need not give in to fear, and should not to be misguided.

I request village panchayats, municipalities, laborers, farmers, students, social-religious organizations and individual citizens to contemplate upon this serious issue and make efforts that incidents of mob-lynching are stopped immediately.

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## Courageous Civil Servants

**Kuldip Nayar**

Government officers after retirement take to sanyas, but some courageous ones have spoken against the intolerant society that India is becoming. In their open letter they say, “It appears there is a growing religious intolerance that is aimed primarily at Muslims.”

Apparently, there has been no discussion or mention about the sentiments of this letter. The BJP which sets the tone of society probably did not want any discussion and let the matter die as it has. Yet, the fact remains that the Muslims do not get their due. They are 17 crores or 12 per cent out of India’s total population of 1.2 billion. As Justice Rajinder Sachar’s report has pointed out, the treatment meted out to them was worse than what the Dalits go through.

The report is a decade old but none of its recommendations has ever been implemented, not even under the Congress. What it means is that a soft kind of Hindutva had spread into the country even before the BJP came to power. One expected the Congress party to take up the point made by Justice Sachar. I understand that he even went to the Prime

Minister (Manmohan Singh) at the time to complain that if the government was not serious about implementing its recommendations, why did it waste his time and the time of other members of the Commission?

Manmohan Singh at the time expressed his helplessness. He reportedly told Justice Sachar the bureaucracy seemed to have come in the way and what was promised to the Muslims remained only on paper. The report had hardly any adherent when the BJP came to power. The Muslims, once in a while, do recall the report to underline their grievances, but the media has shown no interest.

Even otherwise the media has come to tilt towards Hindutva. The voice of pluralism is hardly audible. Things have come to such a pass that those who talk about pluralism are looked down upon and considered pro-Muslim for some personal gain. The BJP philosophy has come to prevail. The Congress Party which draws its connection with those who struggled for independence and its ethos of one country for all without distinction of caste or creed is not credible any more.

The dynasty rules the party and does not give space to anybody else. Even the Working Committee of the party, which used to be in the news, does not exist. One has never heard of the AICC, or the party president's elections. In an effort to let her son, Rahul, be an arbiter, Congress President Sonia Gandhi has seen to it that there would be no dissenting voice.

Senior members of the party openly express their disappointment that new and fresh voices are not entertained by Mrs Gandhi because she is keeping the seat warm exclusively for Rahul. He is so much the apple of her eye that even daughter Priyanka—she goes down better with the masses—has been pushed into the background.

Priyanka's most powerful selling point is that she resembles her grandmother, Indira Gandhi. Never mind that Indira had many negative points. For example, the excesses committed during the Emergency when one lakh people were detained without trial. The Shah Commission, which held open sittings to bring out how the common man was maltreated, said in its report that the Emergency was imposed because Indira wanted to save her seat after Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha disqualified her for six years. Instead of honouring the judgment she changed the whole system of governance. Subsequently, she allowed her younger son, Sanjay, to effectively rule the country with the support of his red necks.

Back in those days there were also a handful of serving and retired civil servants who dared to defy authoritative governance and suffered the punishment meted out

to them for having shown courage during the Emergency. Indira was very particular that those who challenged her were sidelined.

The government of Narendra Modi is not about promoting one man and his idiosyncrasies. It is more about ideology, the Hindutva. That makes it much more ominous. One person can always be removed but ideas are harder to dislodge. That is the difference between totalitarianism and democracy. In the first, it is one person who tries to change the people. In the other, it is the people who change top rulers.

Unfortunately, today it is Hindutva versus pluralism. Despotism of one person has been replaced by the despotism of ideology. This can be seen in the way a 15-year-old Muslim, Junaid, was stabbed to death on his way back from a shopping spree to celebrate Eid. Those responsible for his killing first abused him on account of his religion.

What is tragic is that those who struggled for independent India do not count and the ones who were never near the frontlines are ruling the country. Where were the Hindutva voices when Nehru, Gandhi and Maluana Azad were caned by the people in solar hats?

There are some liberal voices who recall the independence movement and Mahatma Gandhi who led it, but the ruling party's emphasis is on their philosophy which was looked down upon in a pluralistic country for which the nation was fighting.

It is tragic to see that the civil servants themselves are wearing the badge of Hindutva. In UP, where the BJP has come to power, Chief

Minister Adiyath Yogi has transferred 26 top secretaries to the government to make way for the people he considers nearer to his party's philosophy. This is different from the centre where the Prime Minister has reportedly seen to it that those secretaries who fail to do their jobs are given due warning. Modi is considered by the civil service to be a ruler who means business.

So far there is very little evidence that Modi can rise above ideology. He still has two more years to go in his five-year tenure. Maybe, he would now take some hard decisions to put the country before the party.

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# Visa Tangle too Disrupts Software Business

**Mrinal K. Biswas**

Whether information technology industry is set for a course of boom to blur is the current angst for India. The spectre of restrictive H1B visa policy by the US and the creeping disruption technology are the twin threats that put a great strain on India's \$150 billion IT industry.

Whether there will be a sigh of relief because of bold predictions by the software association of 1.3-1.5 lakh new jobs in 2017-18 period, along with 10-11 per cent domestic revenue growth backed up by 7.6 per cent rise in exports last year is under the country's keen watch at present. According to National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nassocom) chairman R Chandrashekhar, this industry faces continued headwinds from the US market.

The Indians mistakenly hoped that Trump-Modi meet last June-end would untangle US threats of putting a stop of a free run of Indians in the US software and services sector. The subject was not there on the discussion table of the two leaders because Prime Minister Modi was aware of US President Roland Trump's sensitivities on foreign workers flooding the US job market, particularly in the IT industry.

The Indians working or will be working in the US under optional practical training (OPT) falling within science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) category have come under the Trump administration's critical review, to the consternation of India's ever

expanding middle class who wish to move to the land of opportunity with their knowledge-based education. There is a fear that the new administration will be heavy-handed and cut down present strength of STEM workers and severely limit new admissions with strings attached. At present, US issues 85,000 H1B visas each year—65,000 to foreign workers and 20,000 foreigners just graduated from US universities. In 2015, some 64 per cent of this H1B visas were issued mostly to Indian IT technocrats who are employed at greatly reduced pay by American standard .

The US administration and law-makers worried at lack of jobs for eminently employable Americans in the STEM sector because of availability of cheap immigrant workers seem determined to clamp down on foreign workers for whom Donald Trump stands steadfast. At present, visa-holding knowledge workers earn \$60,000 annually against the normal pay of \$130,000 for an American in that field. Trump appears to insist that the eligible aliens must be offered a shade higher than the normal pay to show that it is worth paying because there is not enough qualified Americans to take jobs in that sector.

Similarly LI visas, which US State department issues to high-skilled foreign workers for transfers to the US after they work in American companies abroad for some period. It is found that in 2011, some 25,898 of the 44,820 LI visas issued went to the Indians. These two types of

visas are issued for a maximum period for seven years for executives and managers and five years for others. Business process outsourcing (BPO) is another mechanism, under US close watch, through which American companies outsource large volume of work at less cost to Indian companies like Infosys, TCS.

It is still an open question how the US administration will act after reviews of the current issue are placed on the table of Trump. It is almost certain that the present leeward of the Indian IT industry in particular will cease to exist in the new order of things. In that event the Indian IT industry may go downhill, because our IT sector is sustained chiefly by its marketability in the US and Western Europe, the latter also showing signs xenophobic tendencies. Our globally acknowledged software expertise is the mainstay of our services sector which command 55 per cent share of the national economy (agriculture holds 18 per cent, industry 27 per cent). A diminution of this strength will affect hard India's thriving middle class.

It is not that gloomy, says Nasscom. Infosys claims that revenue growth in constant prices last year (2016) was 8.3 per cent, which was the fastest in the industry, despite various headwinds. But increasing automation is giving pain nevertheless. The onset of disruption technology is playing havoc and has severely disturbed the survival instinct of the existing software business in India and abroad.

A disruption technology is one that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry or a ground-breaking product that creates a completely new industry. Harvard Business School Professor Clayton M Christensen has coined the term disruptive technology in his book *The Innovator's Technology* in which he shows sustaining technology relies on incremental improvements to an already established technology while disruptive technology lacks refinements, often has performance problems but it appeals and invites. Through disruptive technology laptops are replacing desktops, PCs displace typewriters, personal computing disrupts television industry as well as great number of other activities, E-mails largely make letter-writing obsolete, cell phones disrupt telecom industry which in turn are yielding grounds to smart phones, social networking upsets phones, emails, instant messaging and event planning. Cloud computing, 3D printing and more such innovative measures have revolutionized the software industry and the revolution has just begun.

Indian IT is inadequately equipped to cope with the oncoming disruptive technology which is basically innovative in nature. There will be some of the most innovative and evolutionary disruptions we will see with more connection, more automation and with more significant impact in business and investments. Finance will be automated, big data will get even bigger, the internet of everything begins, mobility will continue to dominate and the like. Indian engineering institutes are turning out large number of IT technocrats but with little knowledge of disruption technology. It is feared that some 80 per cent of them will be unfit in the new scheme of things.

Some 65 per cent of the existing IT technocrats are unable to acquaint themselves with it and are bound to lose jobs. They are at best *cybercoolies* and expendable. Indeed, Infosys has "released" more than 11,000 jobs last year because of automation. The little known HIS Research projected that India is set to lose 6.4 lakh low-skilled

positions by 2021 because of intensified automation and disruption.

It is not only visa problem for the budding IT technocrats the disruption technology is the bane for new and existing technocrats as well. The software business as a whole is at a crossroads.

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## GST or Great Harrassment ?

These days BJP bigwigs are pitching their voices to claim great patriotism by repeating the hackneyed slogan; *One Nation, One Tax*. If that is now exhibited as an article of faith, one fails to understand why the party was opposing the same thing tooth and nail just three years before. Early ruling dispensation under the Congress had introduced the bill of GST. And the BJP, then forced to occupy opposition benches, was calling it a most vicious piece of legislation. It is difficult to fathom what brought about change of heart in the saffron camp.

Well, there is a saying in Hindi: *Der se aiye, durust aiye* - Better late than never. However, one wonders why the superb legal brain behind the bill made it so complicated. In the first place, the claim of being "One Tax" falters on two counts. There are as many as seven rates of taxes. Why so? It could very well have been reduced to, say, 10 % and 20%. And a diarchy-like system is introduced. One category to be monopolized by the Centre is over 15 million and the other below 15 million to be administered by the States.

Most obnoxious is the proposed levy of 5 % on cloth. Like food, cloth is also a primary need of the

common people. One is reminded of the wicked step of old colonial rulers who had put tax on salt.

The law as of today has conferred draconian powers on the Tax Administrator. It is a patent feature of the bureaucratic machinery that it indulges into harassing tactics even if many checks and balances are provided in the law. Here, the law itself has bestowed tremendous powers on bureaucracy, euphemistically called as Anti-profiteering Authority. Are learned lawyers in the drafting section so naive? Do they not know that the ingenuity of the business world knows no limit while designing the lanes to bypass the law?

The law provides that the registered dealers will have to file quarterly returns and also annual returns. Why? Can not the clerks in the GST office do simple addition of four figures?

It is very atrocious on the part of the Government to have given effect to the new law without having a trial run for a small area and short period.

Well, the traders should be prepared for worst kind of harassment. And the consumers for great turmoil.

—Pannalal Surana

# Government Negligent Towards Right to Education

**Sandeep Pandey**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act came into being in 2009 and became effective from 1 April 2010. However, Government's attitude towards its implementation is at best lackadaisical.

It is the duty of government and local authority to ensure that children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any ground. But in the 2016-17 academic session 105 children were denied admission by City Montessori School, Navyug Radiance, City International, St. Mary Intermediate College and Virendra Swaroop Public School in spite of an order by the District Magistrate under section 12(1)(c) of the Act. 14 of these children who were supposed to be admitted to CMS went to the High Court but even the High Court didn't give a clear-cut direction for admission. Would the administration, government and court have been so lax if these children belonged to the elite?

The local authority is responsible under the Act to maintain records of children up to the age of fourteen years residing within its jurisdiction and ensure and monitor their admission, attendance and completion of the elementary education. They are supposed to provide infrastructure including school building, teaching staff and learning material, facility for training of teachers and ensure good quality elementary education. But

Municipal Corporation is blissfully unaware of its role under the RTE Act in Lucknow. The situation is likely to be the same in other places.

Government and local authority have been tasked with establishing schools in the neighbourhood where there are none, within three years from the implementation of the Act. But there are a number of residential areas like Sector P, Basic Services for Urban Poor Housing, near Jogger's Park, Dubagga in Lucknow where there are no schools. How are the children supposed to receive education?

The local authority has also been assigned the duty of ensuring admission of children of migrant families to government schools. Vijaya Ramachandran, social activist and daughter of former President R. Venkataraman has been working for the cause of education of children of construction workers and brick kilns in Kanpur for over four decades now. Her request to the government and administration to get children of these workers enrolled in government schools is being completely ignored.

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while launching his 'Study Well, Grow Immensely' campaign has distributed books, uniform, shoes, socks and school bags to children and said that he doesn't want a single child to be out of school but didn't elaborate on how he wishes to achieve this. The only good thing he said was he would like

to restore the positive image of government schools.

In Lucknow recently a fast was organised to get Justice Sudhir Agarwal's judgment implemented which directs the children of all those receiving salaries from government to study in government schools. The government chose to ignore the fast. The fast was withdrawn on the 7th day on 3rd July, 2017 accepting juice from a child who begs and mother of another child whose admission was ordered by the DM in Navyug Radiance school but the school didn't admit this child. This was a slap in the face of government and administration. Will Yogi tell us how he proposes to get these 105 children admitted to schools which are openly violating the RTE Act? During the current academic year also CMS has gone to the court challenging 40 admission orders stating that these children do not fulfill the norms prescribed under RTE Act. How can it be that Jagdish Gandhi, the manager of CMS, finds fault with every admission that is being approved in his school by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari, the district level education officer? Either the BSA is incompetent or Jagdish Gandhi is playing truant. Does the administration or government have the will power to take action against powerful private schools? Jagdish Gandhi is certainly denying the right of education to some children.

It is good that the government wants to restore the prestige of its schools. But that is not going to happen by merely distributing

material items required to attend schools including books and dress or by tree plantation campaign which has been linked with the enrollment drive this year in U.P. till 31 July. It will happen only when the children of government officers, employees, people's representatives and judges will study in government schools. The quality of government schools will change dramatically overnight if this happens which will directly benefit the poor as their children will also receive good education then. Additionally, it will create an option for middle class who are forced to spend exorbitant sums on the education of their children.

There is also a demand that like the Act implemented from this academic year in Gujarat which places an annual limit of Rs. 15,000 for primary schools and Rs. 25,000 for middle and higher middle schools and Rs. 27,000 for higher middle with Science as fees for private schools a similar law should be brought in U.P. The fees limits for U.P., which is a poorer state compared to Gujarat, has been proposed as Rs. 6,000 and Rs. 10,000, annually, respectively for primary and middle-higher middle sections.

Lately the Uttarakhand High Court has been very proactive in giving strict rulings related to state of government schools there. It has ruled that until all government schools have basic facilities like benches, tables, chalk, duster, separate toilets for girls and boys, computers, science laboratories, fans for summer and heaters for winter, good quality mid-day meals, library, water purifiers, two set of dresses for children the government would not be allowed to buy luxury items like expensive cars, air conditioners and furniture. The court has come down heavily on the

higher level officials including Principal Secretary of education department saying that if they don't arrange abovementioned things for schools their salaries would be stopped from January, 2018.

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## Farm Movements Should Give More Attention to Reducing Costs

Recently the demand for better and more remunerative farm prices has been rightly raised by several farm movements. While this is certainly needed, at the same time the other very important aspect of reducing costs should not be ignored.

In recent decades the costs of our farmers have increased greatly. Firstly, the government gave full support to those policies and technologies which involved increasing use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, diesel, expensive seeds sold by big companies in place of farmers' own seeds as well as various farm machinery. Secondly, once farmers had been lured or rather trapped into this technology, then prices of several inputs and implements were increased arbitrarily.

Next came the growing control of big companies over seeds with some multinational companies and their subsidiaries or partners playing a dominant role. The ground for this was prepared by efforts to somehow extend patents or intellectual property rights to seeds and farming. Then the final stage is being reached by trying to spread the technology of GM crops which is highly concentrated in the hands of a few giant multinational companies at the global level. This can potentially increase the costs and debts of farmers very steeply after a certain

Similarly, Madras High Court in a recent judgment has disallowed starting a English section saying that teachers have no interest in teaching in government schools as their own children don't study in them.

stage and at the same time the risks of farmers will also increase greatly as the GM technology is inherently a very hazardous and risky technology.

There is another reason why costs of farmers may increase further in future. These expensive technologies which are being foisted on farmers are also ruinous in ecological terms with very adverse impacts on natural fertility of soil, on water levels and quality as well as on several pollinators and earthworms. Once ecology is devastated any sustainable improvement in farming and its productivity is just not possible. Hence over a period of time the costs and difficulties of farmers are likely to increase further.

Hence it is important to emphasize that the solutions to the problems should be found along lines which are ecologically protective and in addition are also able to keep the costs of farmers at low levels. These aspects are very important but have somehow not received the due attention even from movements of farmers. Therefore it is important to re-emphasize the importance of these aspects.

The writer is a freelance journalist who has been involved with several social movements and initiatives.

—Bharat Dogra

# Secularism and the State : Categorising the Nehru Model

Anil Nauriya

## I. The “Nehru models”

The Historical Nehru Model and the Posthumous Nehru Model

In most circles where opinion-making on behalf of minorities takes place, one of the reasons for appreciation of Jawaharlal Nehru’s approach towards the minorities generally is his statement that majority communalism, that is, sectarianism, is more dangerous than minority communalism. He said that “the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group.” (*The Tribune*, November 30, 1933) This statement must, however, be understood along with his insight expressed on the same occasion that majority and minority communalisms feed off each other. (*Idem*). His approach is not therefore a blank cheque to minority communities to nurture and nurse their own respective communalisms as some of his majoritarian detractors allege.

One consequence of the focus on this aspect of Nehru’s approach has been that other features of the Nehruvian secular state have not received as much analysis as these deserved. It was hardly ever noticed therefore that there are in fact at least two models that contend for recognition as the Nehru model.

The notion of the secular state that was implemented after independence emerged from the Congress-led freedom struggle. Nehru invariably emphasised the connection between

the establishment of a secular state and the “whole growth of our national movement”. (*The Statesman*, Delhi, July 8, 1951). It is intrinsic to the Gandhi-Nehru framework. It is a model of equality and equal citizenship.

A secular state was thus established which went beyond the usual European notion of a denominational state whose secularism consisted merely in the separation from the very church to which that state was a simultaneously committed. We understood, and rightly understood, a secular state to be a non-denominational state and a state that was religiously neutral as specified in the Karachi Resolution of 1931. Gandhi in speaking of a secular state had also defined it in clear terms in what would now be depicted as a Nehruvian manner, that is in terms of separation of state from denominational religion (May 6, 1933; Jan 27, 1935; Jan 20, 1942; September 1946; August 16, 1947; August 17, 1947; August 22, 1947; November 15, 1947; November 28, 1947; all cited in my article Gandhi on Secular law and State in *The Hindu*, October 22, 2003<sup>1</sup>)

Similarly, when it came to society, as distinct from state, both Gandhi and Nehru emphasised the concept of equal respect and protection of all religions, thus reconciling the concept of a religiously neutral state with a concept of equal respect for the humanist values that may be located in each religion. For Nehru “A secular state means a state in which the State protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense

of others and does not itself adopt any religion as State religion.” (*The Statesman*, July 7, 1951)

And then there is a *constructed* Nehru model or a quasi-Nehruvian model which is actually a posthumous Nehru model constructed largely after the split in the Congress in 1969. This model resembled but was somewhat different from the actual Nehruvian model. It could not last for more than 6 or 7 years and ended dramatically with the firing at Turkman Gate, Delhi during the tenure of the emergency regime in 1976.<sup>2</sup>

Let me to begin with speak about the first Nehru model.

## II. Has the Nehru model failed?

It would be fallacious to say so.

It will be my contention that the actual Nehru model in fact succeeded. It contained and managed a very serious situation that had developed after the partition of India. It built a state based on equal rights for the citizen and a consensus behind such a state. It provided for regional expressions of linguistic aspirations as well.

The problem was essentially not here but with what emerged as a posthumous Nehru model. There was I would say a cut-off point in 1969. After 1969 what might be called a gloss on secularism came to be projected upon the New Congress. The post-1969 left-of-centre circle around the then Prime

Minister, was well-intentioned in wishing to initiate a break from the old guard in the Indian National Congress which it believed was holding up further economic reform. In the process the 1969 split in the Congress which this group helped bring about also, however, cut the Congress off from its roots.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the quasi-Nehru model became more contentious in public discourse when it began to be presented as cut off from the country's struggle for freedom and as a sort of immaculate conception. More than the model itself it is this projection that not only became problematic but actually helped the forces of majority communalism in particular to present the Nehruvian vision as an artificial imposition upon Indian society rather than as a natural culmination from its social character and political struggle.

As I have said, the quasi-Nehruvian, or posthumous Nehruvian, model was different essentially in the historical provenance that it sought to project. It sought to delink Nehru from the mainstream national struggle, pluck him out of the Gandhi-Nehru framework and to establish an isolated posthumous quasi-Nehru-model whose definition could be subsumed under what currently passed for academically acceptable progressive ideas. This happened in the context of the Indira Gandhi—CPI alliance post-1969. The alliance itself was unexceptionable; the problem arose in the unhistorical attempt to extrapolate it backwards and seek to diminish or exclude the Congress's own struggles, as it were, from its own history.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps because the post-1969 model did not have a strong

foundation in historical fact and was an unhistorical attempt to extrapolate backward the post-1969 alliance between Indira Gandhi's Congress and the CPI, it was easily toppled first by a callow youth and his organised hoodlums, and then after 1980 by a succession of Non-Resident Indian lobbies.

The posthumous Nehruvian model could hegemonise the state but could not take society with it. This quasi-Nehruvian model lacked Nehru's democratic temper.

It disregarded society though claiming to speak in the name of the people

In the end in the 1990s, remnants of this model, far from defending themselves against the onslaught from Hindutva could not defend even the gains from the Gandhi-Nehru framework.

### **III. Why did this projection become problematic?**

The answer to this is a complex one.

To some extent an essential and necessary accompaniment had been absent even in the years of the actual Nehru model but this feature came more prominently to the fore after the 1969 events.

K R Narayanan (1920-2005), who would serve as the President of India between 1997 and 2002, saw the point perspicaciously as early as in 1970. In a paper presented at a seminar on Nehru and Nation-building (December 21-23, 1970) at the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, K R Narayanan observed "In his passion for legislative revolution Nehru and the Indian National

Congress did not, after independence, place sufficient emphasis on the aspect of a social reform movement in the country." (K R Narayanan, *Nehru and His Vision*, DC Books, Kottayam, 1999, p. 34)

This defect or shortcoming came to the fore especially after 1969 because the split in the Congress and the lines on which it occurred had the effect of cutting the Congress off from the constructive work movements, that is the very civil society organisations which were its roots and which had provided it sustenance.

It is necessary to dwell on this point a little further. In the 1930s the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan made a tour of Bengal. On coming back he spoke at the Bombay session of the AICC in 1934. And the point that he made was to underline the link between the constructive work programmes of the Congress and its political programmes. He said he noticed in the course of his tour that people were willing to come forward and listen to the Congress wherever the constructive work programme had reached. For example, he noticed, that where the khadi (handspun and handwoven cloth) programme had reached and had been able to help generate some income, people would flock to the Congress meetings to hear their message.

The vital link that the Frontier Gandhi observed in 1934 was over time lost sight of in independent India and especially in the post-1969 phase of Congress and Indian politics. The flaw which K R Narayanan noticed in 1970 was over-reliance, or rather near-exclusive reliance, on state action, legislation and state policies.



The prevailing logic appeared to be: Now that we are in power we do not need to build up civil society institutions for social reform and action because we have the state to do this for us.

The wages of this neglect were not immediately obvious because, for one thing, the Congress was historically associated with a network of ground level constructive work institutions on whose support it could implicitly rely in the first 22 years after independence. The 1969 split in the Congress gave a rude shock to this arrangement. The implications were not immediately obvious in the short-term. This was for other reasons, primarily the short-term electoral victories that the *posthumous* Nehru model secured in the General Elections of 1971 and the nation-wide elections to the state assemblies which followed in 1972. In the General Elections of 1971 it was the freshness of Indira Gandhi's faction, which had emerged from the Congress split of 1969, that swayed the electorate. In the state assembly elections in the following year there was the added factor of victory in the Bangladesh War.

Yet the overall impact of the 1969 split in the Congress did not take long to make itself felt and it was soon obvious that the Congress, or what remained of it, was on a declining curve.

Meanwhile, the Hindutva organisations on the other hand had been working ceaselessly in society and the rise of these organisations was, in this scenario, like a time bomb waiting to explode.

A more recent recognition especially in the wake of the findings of the Sachar committee has been

that neither the Nehru model nor the posthumous Nehru model, nor indeed the models of development in force in other opposition-ruled states in their action on the ground placed adequate *special* emphasis on policies to ensure the welfare and human development of the minority communities. (This was although Nehru himself recognised as early as in 1951 that such special emphasis would be required especially in the case of Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others: See *The Statesman*, Delhi, July 8, 1951) And that more specific steps are required for their education and development.<sup>5</sup>

#### IV. What Now?

The short-coming or defect to which K R Narayanan drew attention in 1970 remains. Until this is remedied the outlook would remain grim. Even if the present ruling dispensation returns to power and confines its focus to re-adjustment of state policies it is unlikely to remedy the flaw that KR Narayanan underlined.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, whatever combination of political parties comes to power in the near future, it is unlikely to be able to provide the durable alternative that is required if it merely follows a statist approach. A long-term alternative can come about only with the emergence of a secular party which has the backing of grassroots civil society organisations with roots in the community life of the Indian people.

Merely taking control of the state will not suffice.

[Lecture delivered at the Dr K R Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies & Centre for Zakir Husain Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia on March 3, 2009. The endnotes are subsequent additions.]

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.academia.edu/19387056/Gandhi\\_on\\_Secular\\_law\\_and\\_State](https://www.academia.edu/19387056/Gandhi_on_Secular_law_and_State)

<sup>2</sup> This event in 1976 marks the end of the heyday of the posthumous Nehru model in a political sense. The Constitutional structure with respect to secularism did not change and, in fact, an express reference to the secular character of the Republic was inserted in the preamble to the Constitution by an amendment made later in the year.

<sup>3</sup> For a development of this point see my article "1969 in Retrospect", *The Hindu*, 17 March 2000 :

<http://www.thehindu.com/2000/03/17/stories/05172523.htm>

<sup>4</sup> That is, for example, the extensive pre-freedom struggles conducted by the Congress and such peasant organizations as were non-antagonistically associated with it, the various Congress-associated institutions' constructive work programmes, and their strivings for the social rights of the underprivileged and for a linguistically accommodative and non-sectarian understanding of nationalism inclusive of the minorities.

<sup>5</sup> Whether this should be achieved through programmes directed at minorities specifically or through programmes aimed at the underprivileged irrespective of religion, caste and creed is a matter for consideration. In my opinion, a mix of the two approaches would be more likely to succeed than the one or the other.

<sup>6</sup> The expression 'present ruling dispensation' refers to the Congress-led coalition in power in India in 2009 when this lecture was delivered.

# Modi Brings Israel Out from Closet

D. K. Giri

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel, first ever by an Indian Prime Minister is an historic event, for both the countries. Modi was given the top-most reception with the 'highest protocol team' led by the Israel's Prime Minister himself. Such honour is extended only to the pope and the American President. Also, Modi will be staying in the same luxury suite at the King David hotel that US President Donald Trump stayed in during his visit. So, apparently, the Israelis consider Modi's visit very significant, taking place in "changing paradigm and changed architect" of international politics, as suggested by Mark Sofer, an important official in Israeli establishment and a former Israeli ambassador to India. On Indian part, Modi is also doing few things first time during this visit. He is not going to Palestine as Indian leaders have done in the past. India is treating Israel-Palestine relation as a de-hyphenated one. India also seems to treat this visit, important in as much as it wants to bring its friend Israel out from the closet to be the closest ally. Foreign policy commentators are remarking that, "we should know who our friends are in international politics and Modi is doing just that". This is Modi's second visit to Israel - he has been there before in 2006 as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Modi is impressed with the military and economic achievements of Israel, and he is not shy of acknowledging it when others were, due to vote-bank politics, says another ex-diplomat and commentator. Yet others would urge India to get closer to Israel given the uncertainty of

relations with unpredictable US president Trump; the hope and strategy is that Israel will back up our relation with the US, and make up the gaps in it. Obviously, India-Israel relations are quite close at the moment and under BJP, they are likely to be closer as BJP is not dependent on the vote-bank that influenced the relation in the past. India's policy towards Israel suffered from a mismatch between national interests and international principles India would have liked to adhere to. This has been the burden of "Nehruvian foreign policy". Nehru's idealism took precedence over pragmatism that is India's national interest. This is evident from several lapses in India's foreign policy in the past including towards Israel. India voted against the UN resolution on creation of Israel on 29 November 1947. Israel was created on 14 May 1948. After two years, in September 1950, India recognised, but did not give Israel the diplomatic contact. It took 42 years for India to have the diplomatic tie with Israel. In 1992, Prime Minister Narashimha Rao allowed the Israel diplomatic mission to start operating in India. By then, things had changed so much, that India found it easy to do so. The cold war had ended, the Soviet Union, India's close ally had disintegrated; India had suffered the worst foreign currency shortage, had gone to World Bank for loan, and United States for defence support. It is believed that US put some pressure on India for diplomatic ties with Israel. India was wary of the reactions of Arab countries in dealing with Israel, but

by 1992, many Arab countries had recognised Israel. India knew that the Oslo peace accord was to be signed between Israel and Palestine, which was done in 1993. In fact, the story in the India's foreign policy circle is that an Indian diplomat asked PM Narasimha Rao, in exasperation, "Shall we wait for every Arab country to recognise Israel before we set up diplomatic ties?" The Prime Minister saw the point and relented:

Prime Minister Nehru was guided by anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and third world solidarity. He was averse to any close tie with the colonial west, and Israel was veering to the west. History has it that Nehru spurned the request made to India by Israel through Albert Einstein to support formation of Israel in the United Nations. In addition to his abhorrence to western colonialism, he had domestic political compulsions. Having taken the Kashmir issue to UN, Nehru needed the support of the Arab countries. The subsequent Congress leadership had an additional compulsion, the vote-bank that supported Palestine. At the same time, Nehru sought Israel military support when China invaded India in 1962. The Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion refused initially as Nehru wanted no Israel flag on the arms supplies, but when Nehru agreed to have them under Israel flag, the arms and ammunitions were sent from Israel. Again in 1971 war with Pakistan, India asked for support from Israel. Then Israel Prime Minister Golda Meir promptly

diverted the arms to India that were being shipped to Iran. When India did the nuclear tests in 1998, major countries including USA and Japan imposed sanctions, but Israel did not join them. It continued to do business with India. Next year in 1999, in Kargil War, Israel again rushed military equipments India urgently needed, and following the war, Israel helped improve India's military intelligence and surveillance critical to anti-terrorist operations. Another milestone in the bi-lateral relations was the visit of Ariel Sharon in 2003, the first by the Israel head of state, when the Delhi statement of friendship and co-operation was signed. Since then, there have been many high-level visits from both countries including the Indian President in 2015 and the Israeli president Reuver Rivlin this year. The current India-Israel bilateralism is based on two main pillars; the defence, and agriculture although there are other trade subjects. Some, journalists are in fact saying that, in partnership with Israel, India has the chance of fulfilling its age-old slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan".

On defence, India is the biggest market for Israeli arms, and for India, Israel is the third largest supplier after US and Russia. Israel sold Phalcon aircrafts to India whereas it withdrew its sale of the same aircrafts to China, as US opposed to it. US have considerable say in Israel military sales as many Israel defence technologies are developed with US funds. The defence cooperation between India and Israel has grown from buyer-seller relationship to joint-production and research. The co-production is expected to help both the countries sell to other third world countries. Joint military exercise by the Israel and Indian armed forces would provide further strategic depth

to the relationship. India-Israel defence cooperation continues to grow stronger, although many projects are shrouded in secrecy. India is one of 39 countries Israel has signed a "secret cooperative agreements" to prevent information leaks from joint-security projects. Israel intends to buy arms from India too. The Israel defence sources say "while we sell one weapon to India, we want to buy another from them". This augurs well for India as it will benefit from two-way transactions.

In agriculture, the co-operation started seriously with the signing of the Agreement on Agricultural Cooperation in 2006. The Agreement unfolded into Indo-Israel Agriculture Project. Its main goals are: increasing crop diversity, increasing crop productivity, and increasing resource efficiency. Through this project, Israel provides best practices, technical know-how, training and orientation to Indian farmers. Moreover, the project has set up 26 Centres for Excellence in agriculture, out of which 15 are operational. These centres showcase advanced Israeli technologies: horticulture mechanisation, projected cultivation, orchard and canopy management, nursery management, micro-irrigation and post-harvest management. The project is in third phase now as Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan for 2015-18. Israel has one of the best agriculture technologies in the world, and their deployment in India has led to 5 to 10 fold increase in crop-yields with 65 per cent reduction in water use, and considerable decrease in the use of pesticides and fertilisers, according to a report on the project in 2015,

Another area Israel wants to

deepen co-operation with India is the space technology, in an attempt to reduce their over-dependence on USA. Israel and India have had space cooperation since 2008, when the Israeli commercial radar imaging satellite TecSAR was launched by ISRO. Next year, Israel gave India a radar imaging satellite which India named as RISAT-2. This satellite aims to provide India with greater earth observation power for surveillance and defence. There are talks about closer cooperation in cyber security.

In this visit, there will be three MoUs in agriculture and water, space cooperation and on launching of CEO forum. There is also a plan to set up an Indian cultural centre in Jerusalem. The media speculates that, Modi and Netanyehu will take the relationship into new heights. What are those new heights, however, is not clear. Both the Prime Ministers pay tribute to India-Israel 'deep connections' and 'natural partnership' and their ability to complement each other. True, both the countries are plural, democratic, have similar security concerns, at least in regard to terrorism. Israel had come out strongly and openly in favour of India on terrorism, and has named Pakistan, for its terrorist acts in India.

Experts in India support a closer tie between India and Israel. But, from Israel point of view, there is an elephant in the room. That is Iran. India wants to have normal ties with Iran and is planning to have gas pipeline from it. Israel is wary of Iran's antipathy for the Jewish state. Iran is also secretly building its nuclear capability. When push comes to shove, India has to make a choice. The choice is between petroleum and renewable or nuclear

energy. Accordingly, it can identify or discard allies. The second thorn in the flesh is the so-called 'Islamic Terrorism'. If India moves closer to Israel it may incur the animosity from terrorist organisation not only from Pakistan, but from other Islamic countries too. How far this theory is plausible, is a matter of solid evidence on the origin of terrorism. So far, it is all coming through or from Pakistan.

Modi has some liking for Israeli technology and ability to defend

itself against collective hostility. It has stood its ground of alone in the Arab world. It was expected that, under Modi, India would have a sudden pro-Israel shift. It seemed so initially but Modi stepped back a bit and tried the usual balancing act with Arab countries. The Palestine President was invited to New Delhi and Modi visited other Arab countries too before going to Israel.

Prime Minister Modi is hard to predict. He is fond of springing

surprises. Although bilateralism is a process not a one-off affair, he may give a strong push to the relations to make it a durable friendship between the two countries. The international circumstances will demand him to do so. Only that both countries have large minority population, and they must maintain their pluralist culture, they must treat their minorities fairly in their respective countries, failing which, they will lose the legitimacy of a new friendship, will be seen as comrades-in-arm in anti-Islam campaign.

## Western Railway Employees Union

Grant Road Station Building (E), MUMBAI – 400 007.

**WREU**, the oldest trade unions in the country, earlier known as BB&CI Railway Employees' Union, is in the services of Railway men since 1920. WREU, a free, independent and democratic trade union, is a founder member of AIRF and HMS.

**WREU** fought for upliftment of railway men and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 94 yea.rs. WREU/AIRF is instrumental in creation of PNM, grievance solving machinery in 1951, payment of PLB to Railway men since 1979, implementation of series of Cadre Restructuring in Group 'C' and 'D' categories in Indian Railways, implementation of recommendations of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> CPCs with modifications and RELHS Scheme for Railway men.

**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 lighting 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 railway men and the general public.

# Satyagraha as a Peaceful Method of Conflict Resolution

Vibhuti Patel

The quest for peace is an eternal pursuit for human fulfillment. Peace or absence of antagonistic, violent, or destabilising conflict is essential for existence to become life, for survival to become human. Human beings can become human and humane only in conditions of peace. Creativity, spirituality, individual and collective achievements attain grandeur and glory only when there is peace. Qualities of compassion, forgiveness, love, sharing and universal solidarity become cherished and sought after virtuous attributes only when a community, society or nation is at peace-within and without. War on the other hand, internal or external, civil or military, declared or undeclared valorises bravery-the capacity to kill or be killed-the destruction of human life and accomplishments; it mocks compassion and conscience; it belittles refusal to erect artificial walls that divide human beings in the name of one identity or the other; it glorifies the destructive principle and devalues the principles of creation and life. The warmongers are invariably persons with few qualms of conscience, ever ready to eliminate and exterminate human life, emotions, thought, ideas, and achievements.

Mahatma Gandhi developed an integrated approach and perspective to the concept of life itself on the basis of his experiences and experiments. His ideas, which came to be known as his philosophy, were a part of his relentless search for truth. [Iyer. 1973, p. 270]. The concept of *Satyagraha* is related to

the social, political, cultural, economic and psychological conditions, which influenced the life and personality of Gandhi. He adopted the non-violent approach to resist all the forces that exerted pressure on him physically and psychologically.

He believed that the supreme law that governs all living things and the universe is nothing but love and non-violence. It was Gandhi's firm belief that the basis of all religions of the world was the law of love. The very purpose of non-violent resistance and upholding the principles of truth was none other than asserting the freedom of oneself over his mind and body.

Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* is an integrated concept and includes truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity or *Brahmacharya*, poverty or non-possession, bread labour, fearlessness, control of the palate [*Asvada*], tolerance, Swadeshi and removal of untouchability.

## Scope of Satyagraha

According to Gandhi, *Satyagraha* can be adopted by anybody. Gandhi said that *Satyagraha* was like a banyan tree, which had innumerable branches. *Truth-Satya* and non-violence-*Ahimsa* together made its parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out. [Iyer. 1973, p. 265]

*Satyagraha* has also been

considered as a weapon of soul force to resist any kind of oppression. While Gandhi regarded *Satyagraha* as a way of life, during the freedom struggle of India, *Satyagraha* was used as a weapon to resist the authority of the state and to achieve various things for the general welfare of the people.

Gandhi and his chief lieutenant Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had conducted the *Satyagrahas* at Champaran and Bardoli not only to achieve material gains for the people, but also to resist the unjust authority of the then British regime. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, which was started with the breaking of the *Salt Law* at Dandi, and the Quit India Movements were classic examples when Gandhi and his colleagues used *Satyagraha* as a weapon of the soul force.

*Satyagraha* as a means of resistance and conflict resolution has different forms. Hunger strike [fasting], *Hartal* [striking work], *hijrat* [immigration] etc. are some of the forms suggested. The principles, conditions and qualifications of *Satyagraha* are relevant to all these forms.

## Relevance in the Twenty-First Century

Is *Satyagraha* relevant to the present-day society or the Twenty-First Century? The answer is not a simple *yes* or *no*.

When we try to decide whether it is relevant to the present day society,

the fundamental thing we have to consider is the nature of the present-day individual.

Gandhi was well aware of the increasing influence of materialistic considerations on the modern society and individual. According to Gandhi, the main objective of *Satyagraha* was to eradicate the evil or to reform the opponent. In the present socio-economic political system, there is a dire necessity to wean the individual away from the influence of wealth, luxuries and power.

In all the educational institutions, right from the lowest level to the level of university, it would be worthwhile to teach the young people the concept of *Satyagraha* and the principles of truth and non-violence, as the basic factors contributing to the peace, harmony and the welfare of the society.

In all the industrial establishments and other places of mass employment also, *Satyagraha* would be a viable alternative to other methods for the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. And in all walks of life, wherever there is scope for conflict and disharmony, the practice of the principles of truth and non-violence in the smallest way possible, would definitely make a great contribution in bringing about peace and harmony.

*Satyagraha* as an ideal and as a great weapon of conflict resolution will always serve as a great inspiration to the people of all generations to come, both in India and elsewhere. It may not be possible for ordinary human beings to practice *Brahmacharya*, poverty and simple living in the age of scientific and technological development, but the usefulness of truth and non-violence will always

be relevant wherever the goal is prosperity, welfare and development, because without truth and non-violence, there cannot be peace and without peace there cannot be development.

### Three Pillars of Satyagraha

The Gandhian quest for peace rests on the foundation of non-violence. For conflict resolution Mahatma Gandhi used method of *Satyagraha* [insistence on truth or *Zeal for Truth*] that has three pillars:

1. *Sat*-which implies openness, honesty, and fairness:

- Each person's opinions and beliefs represent part of the truth;
- In order to see more of the truth we must share our truths cooperatively;
- This implies a desire to communicate and a determination to do so, which in turn requires developing and refining relevant skills of communication; and
- Commitment to seeing as much of the truth as possible means that we cannot afford to categorize others or ourselves.

2. *Ahimsa*-refusal to inflict injury on others:

- *Ahimsa* is dictated by our commitment to communication and to sharing of our pieces of the truth. Violence shuts off channels of communication;
- The concept of *Ahimsa* appears in most major religions, which suggests that while most people may not practice it, it is respected as an ideal;

- *Ahimsa* is an expression of our concern that our own and other's humanity be manifested and respected; and

- We must learn to genuinely love our opponents in order to practice *Ahimsa*.

3. *Tapasya*-willingness for self-sacrifice:

- A *Satyagrahi* [one who practices *Satyagraha*] must be willing to shoulder any sacrifice which is occasioned by the struggle which they have initiated, rather than pushing such sacrifice or suffering onto their opponent, lest the opponent become alienated and access to their portion of the truth become lost; and
- The *Satyagrahi* must always provide a face-saving *way out* for the opponents. The goal is to discover a wider vista of truth and justice, not to achieve victory over the opponent.

Conflict resolution discourse of modern problem solving and win-win [as opposed to power-based and zero sum] approaches leading to integrative conflict resolution [as opposed to mere compromise and distributive outcomes] strongly echoes Gandhi's own writings and the analyses of some Gandhi scholars. The Twenty-First Century radical thinkers of environment, human rights and women's movements advocate conflict resolution techniques as potentially being about more than the solution of immediate problems that see a broader personal and societal transformation as the ultimate goal.

Gandhian *Satyagraha* should be

squarely located within conflict resolution discourse. In this principle of non-violence Gandhi introduced technique of resistance to evil and untruth. His *Satyagraha* is inspired by boundless love and compassion. It is opposed to sin, not sinner, the evil, not evildoer. For him truth was God. Truth is not yours or mine. It is neither Western nor Eastern.

### Process of Satyagraha

The success of a *Satyagraha* campaign to resolve any conflict rests on three basic assumptions. They are:

- That there can always be found some elements of common interest to all the contending parties;
- That the parties are or at least might be amenable to an appeal to the heart and mind; and
- That those in a position to commence Satyagraha are also in a position to carry it through to the end. If these prerequisites are fulfilled, the scene is set for the process aimed at the required conversion to be initiated. This can involve several steps, reasoning with the opponent, then persuasion through self suffering wherein the *Satyagrahi* [Seeker of Truth] attempts to dramatize the issues at stake and to get through to the opponent's unprejudiced judgment so that he/she may willingly come again onto a level where he/she may be persuaded through natural argument. This is the process of moral appeal through self-suffering in lieu of coercion. Gandhi while he summarizes this process says, "I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against

*a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance".* [Gandhi, M. K. 1925, October 8. *Young India*]

Hence if the attempts at conversion through these measures fail, the tools of non-cooperation or civil disobedience may be brought into play.

Given this presentation of moral equivalent of *War or Satyagraha* as a background paper, it is now left open to examine and test the efficacy of *Satyagraha* by referring to certain recurring points of debate or controversy:

The role of the individual especially the charismatic personality in *Satyagraha*; Pacifism and *Satyagraha*; *Satyagraha* as a way of life and as a process or weapon of conflict resolution; and *Satyagraha* against incorrigible violence.

In the Twenty-First Century, Gandhian concept of *forgiveness* seems to be central to the theoretical

development of the emerging field of conflict resolution. Forgiveness has been a topic of increasing interest both academically and to practitioners. There seems to be a healing and liberating quality to forgiveness that helps both individuals and societies move away from revenge and toward reconciliation. In a word, forgiveness offers hope. In a time of tense conflicts based on caste, class, ethnicity, race, gender, religion and territory forgiveness may have extraordinary value as a daily ethic, as well as a practical process.

After demolition of *World Trade Centre* youth of America have formed an organization, named as *we want peace no war* and want to start a new dialogue, to replace hatred by propagating friendship among the nations and different communities. The United Nations has declared this decade as the *Decade of Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World*. In this context, Gandhian thoughts on conflict transformation are gaining increasing global popularity.

**(To be concluded)**

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## Communal Riots in West Bengal

The Socialist Party strongly condemns the Trinamool Congress government and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for failing to stop communal violence in Basirhat and Baduria areas of 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. The party also condemns the radical Muslims directly involved in communal violence and demands legal action against them. The party believes that RSS is endangering the security of the country by creating an atmosphere of 'Hindu insecurity' in East Border areas for the political

purposes, especially in West Bengal. The RSS should refrain from such disruptive activities.

The Socialist Party pays tributes to communal riots victim Kartik Chandra Ghosh, resident of Basirhat, and expresses sympathy for the affected people.

The West Bengal unit of the Socialist Party will prepare a report on the prevailing communal tension by visiting the affected areas.

—Dr. Abhijit Vaidya

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## Pilgrim's Progress

**Kuldip Nayar**

When terrorists attack from the front, it means that they are not afraid of consequences. The story of counterattack to kill seven pilgrims, returning from the Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir, is somewhat similar. Lashkar-e-Toiba did not hesitate to taking on the police or the army as if the terrorists knew that the counter challenge would fall short of their resolve to harm the security forces accompanying the yatra.

Lashkar is a possibility, particularly when it has not claimed the responsibility yet. Even if they claim the responsibility, there is no certainty that they are doing so to cover up the homegrown terrorists. Even the J and K Police have pointed fingers at Lashkar. It is quite likely that Lashkar is the perpetrator. The Lashkar is being battered so much in most countries in West Asia that it wants to resell itself. If it can frighten India, there is every possibility of nations in West Asia coming under its spell of fear.

The nation is justified in expressing its horror because the yatris were on the pilgrimage of faith

which they cherish. It had nothing to do with politics. Unfortunately the whole episode, as the days pass by, is being politicized. The BJP is to blame. It has not bothered that the party has a share in the state government and some of the blame would come to it.

This is not the first time that attacks on yatris have taken place. In August 2000, the terrorists had opened fire on over 95 people, leading to a death toll of 89. The series of attacks, which began on the night of 1 August, were believed to be planned. The following year, too, terrorists opposed to the local outfit Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire declaration, had attacked a pilgrim base camp at Pahalgam. A total of 32 people were killed in the base camp strike at Pahalgam, of which 21 were Amarnath *yatris*.

Similarly, a militant hurled two grenades at a camp and later opened fire near the Amarnath shrine on the night of 20 July 2001, killing nearly 13 people, including three women *yatris* and two police officers. The attack took place around 1:25 am near Sheshnag, one

of the highest stops on the way to the Amarnath cave.

What is baffling is the fact that nearly 15,000 security personnel and policemen were deployed to offer protection to the Amarnath pilgrims in 2002. Yet, a terrorist attack could not be averted as eight people were killed and 30 were injured. The attack took place before dawn on the Nunwan camp on the way to the Amarnath shrine, according to reports.

Coming back to the attack on the yatris in Jammu, Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi has hit out at the government over the attack, terming it a grave and unacceptable security lapse and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accept responsibility. "This is a grave and unacceptable security lapse. The PM needs to accept responsibility and never allow it to happen again... India will never be intimidated by these terrorist cowards," he said in tweets.

The bus, which was fired upon by terrorists in Kashmir, was not registered with the Amarnath Shrine Board and plying without any security cover long after the evening deadline fixed for the vehicles carrying Amarnath yatris, said Congress chief spokesperson Randeep S Surjewala.

Pakistan may be involved, but that is only a suspicion so far. The government must lay before the country the evidence of Islamabad's involvement. But we must cleanse our own house. The establishment is involved in training Hindu terrorists and as Hilary Clinton has said that "if you nourish snakes in your courtyard, they are bound to

bite you one day." Indigenous terrorists are now a reality and they do strike here and there. The attack on the Samjhota Express is said to be the handiwork of homegrown terrorists.

The biggest casualty of the Amarnath Yatra is the Kashmiriyat, a secular belief propelled by the sufis. This faith asserted itself when Maharaja Hari Singh quit the government and left it to the popular leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. There was no communal feeling at that time. Fundamentalists and the propaganda by Pakistan have destroyed what was so beautiful. But why should we throw in the towel? For 70 years we have been upholding India's ethos, secularism and democracy.

We have added the word secularism in the preamble of our constitution. Ironically, Indira Gandhi did this when she, as Prime Minister, had imposed the Emergency. She detained one lakh people without trials and imposed censorship on the press. And she openly said that the press did not resist the restrictions she introduced. L.K. Advani was quite correct in chiding the press after the Emergency: "You were asked to bend but you began to crawl."

Were the Kashmiriyat to assert itself, the basic values like the free press would come to be respected. The Kashmiri Muslims have themselves to decide their faith in togetherness which is being replaced by fundamentalism. I was recently in Srinagar and found to my horror that the youth, which has taken to the gun, want to convert the Valley into a sovereign,

Islamic country.

Leaders like Yashin Malik and Shabbir Shah have become irrelevant. Syed Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz have a following but that was because they talked about Pakistan and Islam at the same time. They even support the stone-pelters saying that the stones were being hurled in the name of Islam. It is a dangerous trend to emerge.

New Delhi will have to think hard and come up with a solution which is acceptable to the people in the Valley and the ruling party at the centre. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has accepted the responsibility of arranging the yatra without any mishaps. The BJP should consult with other political parties and take necessary steps which have the consensus behind them.

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# Implications of Ramnath Kovind's Presidency

Prem Singh

In the upcoming presidential election, the BJP candidate Ramnath Kovind's election to the post of the President of India is fait accompli. The debate around the presidential election is restricted to BJP playing the caste-card. The Congress fielding Meira Kumar against BJP's caste-card, merely changes the discourse as to whose candidate is the better or more authentic 'Dalit'. One point raised is that Ramnath Kovind is a dedicated swyamsevak of the RSS. This opposition is moot. Which BJP leader is, or can possibly be, not a dedicated swyamsevak?

The real reason behind BJP/RSS fielding Ramnath Kovind is often lost in the debates on the issue. In this write-up, it is our intention to throw some light on that real reason.

RSS has decided to appropriate Ambedkar as part of a well thought out strategy. It may be remembered that till the time of 'liberal' Atal Behari Vajpayee, not just 'palli' topis, but formal green 'safas' were worn by BJP leaders to appease Muslim voters. Even though they were later threatened and told that BJP could get the numbers irrespective of their votes. Hardliner Advani too thought this was the right way, and placed flowers on Jinnah's grave when he visited Pakistan. RSS showed him the door as soon as he got back home. He's still living the exile, as it were.

Thereafter the RSS resumed its work under the leadership of

Narendra Modi. Narendra Modi accomplished in the Gujrat laboratory what Vajpayee had feared he would, when the BJP decided to make him Chief Minister. The fertile land on which first Godhra, and then the entire Gujarat pogrom was played out, had already been prepared by the decade-long neoliberal policies. Narendra Modi, based on the state power, was successful in eliminating all evidences against him and his government, and whoever were declared guilty and punished by the court, are now being released.

If the BJP of Bhagwat-Modi-Shah does not want the Muslim vote to win elections, it is clear that it needs to make up the deficit by ensuring the support of another big community. This can only be the Dalit community. In the short tenure of the Bhagwat-Modi-Shah, the RSS/BJP have had remarkable success in this direction; it does not matter that intra-community caste-divisions and rivalries for power exist within the Dalit community too. Rather it has captured the sentiments of other backward castes, as well as the tribals. With time it will achieve greater success. With this, there will be a permanent solution for winning elections, and also, it will facilitate manipulation and distortion of the Constitution.

After the victory of 2019, when the existing concept of secularism in the Constitution is replaced by the RSS's concept of the 'Hindu Rashtra', a Dalit President will be

waiting in Rashtrapati Bhavan to sign it. Advani, perhaps, couldn't have done this. The Modi-Shah duo refrained from brazenly installing Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, to carry this out right away, due to some apprehensions. This task has been postponed for now.

If a Dalit does this, it can be said that a Dalit from Modi's 'New India' is carrying forward Baba Saheb's work, which the Congress had delayed or stalled for the past 70 years! This is how RSS-BJP will rectify Baba Saheb's 'wrong' decision of abandoning Hinduism. Along with this, those speaking against Hinduism in their assertion of Dalit identity, will also be taught a lesson. As it is, RSS-BJP is not going to find it tough to deal with Dalit and Other Backward Castes 'intellectuals', because just as Hindu nationalism thrives in the womb of neo-liberalism, most Dalit and OBC intellectuals too try to establish their power/space within the neo-liberal framework.

As this scheme gains momentum, the RSS will gun for its long-awaited agenda of dispossessing the Muslims, already dispossessed of democracy, of the country itself. A rehearsal of this may be seen in the events in Muzaffar Nagar four years back.

The governor of Tripura recently tweeted that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, founder of Jan Sangh, had suggested that Hindu-Muslim

*(Continued on Page 5)*

# Hazards of Mobile Phones and Towers

**Bharat Dogra**

More and more evidence has been piling up about the health hazards associated with excessive and careless use of mobile phones as well as with the towers installed for mobile phone communication. The debate on many sided threats from electro-magnetic pollution is likely to hot up with the passage of time and we should not lose any further time in becoming more careful about avoiding as much as possible or minimizing the threat of serious health hazards.

While hearing a case on this issue last year a bench of Chief Justice T. S. Thakur and Justices R. Banumathi and U.U. Lalit asked the parties to file scientific and research data on this issue. The Court also took note of a recent book by Justice J. L. Gupta, a former chief justice of a high court, in which he has written that he had developed a cancerous tumour due to excessive use of mobile phone.

According to a study in 2016, in a year forty to fifty thousand people are diagnosed to be affected by brain tumour in India out of which about 20 per cent are children. The study showed a significant increase in the number of children affected by brain tumour. *The Asian Age* while reporting this study on July 10 2017 said, "Doctors said that this could be attributed to long-term mobile use." In particular this report quoted Dr. P. K. Sethi, Professor and consultant of the neurology department at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital as saying, "There is a lot of literature that establishes a link

between mobile radiation and brain tumour. Mobile phones emit radiation from their antennas and kids are at high risk as they possess soft tissues near ear."

The debate over electromagnetic pollution and more particularly the hazards of cellphone radiation has been escalating in many countries, but the overwhelming tendency has been to try to silence the critics by saying that the research conducted so far has not provided any serious reasons for concern.

Is this true? What really do the existing research results reveal?

The most comprehensive review of the existing research in this field has been authored by Dr. Devra Davis in her recent book 'Disconnect - The Truth About Cell Phone Radiation.' Dr. Davis is an award winning scientist, writer and President of the Environmental Health Trust. After reviewing mounds of research papers, Dr. Davis has concluded "...If you consider all of the studies that have been published, most of them have not followed people for a decade. But if you examine only those studies that have analysed people for a decade or longer you find one thing: Every single one of them shows that long-term heavy use of cell phones has increased the risk of brain tumours."

Another important conclusion drawn by Dr. Davis (who as a fond grandmother is specially concerned about children) is that children face

the most threat from the increasing hazard of electromagnetic pollution. She writes "... Children's skulls and bone marrow are thinner and much more absorptive than those of adults - a fact that explains why children's heads can absorb double or more the radio frequency energy of adults' heads.....All are agreed - children's brains and skulls absorb at least twice as much radio frequency radiation as those of adults. Bone marrow can take in ten times more radiation in children than in adults, according to reports from Swiss scientists in 2010".

This view is supported by a lot of other evidence. In 2001, a Commission of the Royal College of Physicians, chaired by Sir William Stewart, issued this report:

"If there are currently unrecognized adverse health effects from the use mobile phones, children may be more vulnerable because of their developing nervous system, the greater absorption of energy in the tissues of the head, and a longer lifetime of exposure. In line with our precautionary approach, at this time, we believe that the widespread use of mobile phones by children for nonessential calls should be discouraged. We also recommend that the mobile phone industry should refrain from promoting the use of mobile phones by children."

In this context, the evidence provided by a team of scientists based in Lund, Sweden is also often cited. They note that, of course, the

intensified use of cell phones by children is unlikely to induce any obvious, dramatic, or immediate impacts on health. "It may, however, in the long run, result in reduced brain reserve capacity that might be unveiled by other later neuronal disease or even the wear and tear of aging. We cannot exclude that after some decades of (often) daily use, a whole generation of users may suffer negative effects maybe already in their middle age."

One important view that has emerged in research by several scientists is that heavy exposure to electromagnetic pollution may result in breaking 'the blood-brain barrier', particularly in the case of children exposing them to serious hazards. Dr. Devra Davis has carefully summarised these serious concerns, "When it is healthy, the brain of rats and humans is full of fat and is well insulated to keep out anything that is watery. Careful analysis of the brains of the cell-phone exposed rats shows that after just a week of regular two-hour daily exposure they release albumin- a critical material that should not be found escaping from the brain. As a result, these rats remain vulnerable to taking in other agents in the blood that normally would never enter their brain....Once the blood-brain barrier is breached, then anything circulating into our bodies at the time, alcohol, drugs, toxic chemicals, cigarette smoke, diesel exhaust, will more readily enter the brain from the blood."

On the other hand, industry sources have steadfastly maintained that an overwhelming majority of studies conducted so far have not

confirmed any serious hazards associated with the use of cell phones. It is true that many respected authorities have taken this view. That there are two sides to the controversy is accepted even by Dr. Devra Davis. As she puts it, "Neither the danger nor the safety of cell phones is yet certain. How we manage that uncertainty could avert a global public health catastrophe."

What she and some other researchers are saying is - It's true that hazards are not fully confirmed, but the available evidence is enough to call for many precautions.

This is also the view taken by two other authorities on this issue. Dr. Elisabeth Cardis and Dr. Siegal Sadetzki who wrote in a publication of the British Medical Association, "Simple and low-cost measures, such as the use of text messages, hands-free kits, and/ or the loudspeaker mode of phone could substantially reduce exposure to the brain from mobile phones. Therefore, until definitive scientific answers are available, the adoption of such precautions, particularly among young people, is advisable." This appears to be an eminently reasonable approach.

It is important to carefully examine all the existing evidence on this critical issue, particularly keeping in view the fact that children are being exposed all the time to more cell phone radiation and cell phone tower radiation not just for communication but also for entertainment and education. Children are exposed to very heavy radiation at a very tender age. In Delhi, cell phone towers are being installed even in parks where

children come to play. Several researches have indicated that all this can lead to a public health catastrophe. The full implication of this may be revealed in about two decades or so. To prevent this catastrophe, we have to take preventive and precautionary action now before it is too late.

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

strife could only be resolved through civil war. A civil war for a Muslim-free India may seem far-fetched right now; but within Asia, there's one happening in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq and Syria for many years now. Lakhs of people are being killed. From drones to the mother bomb attacks, lakhs of children's lives are completely destroyed. A generation fed on the footage of the worst civil wars in human history is coming into its own.

The way educated, well off cultured Hindus are falling easy victims to Islamophobia, it doesn't seem like they have learnt any lessons from the tragedy of Partition. Emotional claims about family and children will not hold against civil war. Hasn't Modi left his family, and even his wife, for the 'Hindu Rashtra'? As the noose of neo-imperialism tightens, the hate-mongering against Muslims and Christians will also rise. Other minority religious communities will also get caught in this hate mania. The failure to become either modern or world citizens, will be compensated by BJP-RSS by installing 'Hindu president', 'Hindu prime minister', 'Hindu government', 'Hindu development', 'Hindu technology', 'Hindu knowledge' and so on, in the 'Hindu Rashtra'.

## We Just Banned Nuclear Weapons!

History was made at the United Nations on 7th July when the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by an overwhelming 122-1 vote by UN Member States determined to provide a legal basis for the elimination of the world's worst weapons of mass destruction.

The ban treaty, negotiated by more than 140 states under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, prohibits development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and provides flexible pathways for nuclear-armed and nuclear-dependent states to comply with the prohibitions once they decide to join.

Conference president Elayne Whyte, in submitting the final text for the vote, said we were here “to give life to a new treaty that...seeks to bring together the world around the dream of each and every person to see a world free of nuclear weapons.”

The treaty will open for signature on September 20 at the UN, and will enter into force once 50 states have ratified it.

“This is a landmark achievement that establishes the illegality of nuclear weapons once and for all,” said IPPNW Co-President Tilman Ruff. “The Treaty is rooted firmly in the humanitarian principle that the consequences of nuclear weapons use are unacceptable under any circumstances and that any use of nuclear weapons would be contrary

to the rules of international humanitarian law.”

“The nine nuclear-armed states, which refused to participate in these negotiations, are now faced with a stark choice,” said IPPNW program director John Loretz. “They can comply with the norms that have been clearly and unambiguously established by the Treaty and eliminate their nuclear weapons, as they should have done decades ago, or they will be stigmatized as outlaw states.

“The states that base their security on the nuclear weapons possessed by other states can either withdraw from extended nuclear deterrence arrangements and cease all military planning and preparation for the use of nuclear weapons, or face similar global condemnation.”

As the founder and lead medical partner in ICAN—the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—IPPNW was an active civil society participant in the negotiations for the Treaty, working to ensure that the final document would fully reflect the scientific evidence about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

“The treaty recognizes the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that concern the security of all humanity, posing grave implications for human survival, the environment, food security, and the health of future generations, said Dr. Ruff. “It also recognizes that these consequences cannot be adequately addressed, and must be prevented.”

“We are very pleased that the treaty recognizes the victims of nuclear weapons,” Dr. Ruff noted. The preamble refers explicitly to the Hibakusha—the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—and to indigenous peoples who have suffered from the effects of nuclear testing. It also acknowledges the disproportionate health impacts of nuclear weapons on women and girls.

“By establishing a clear and comprehensive set of prohibitions, a number of important positive obligations, including obligations to assist victims and help remediate affected environments, and procedures for elimination that can lead to universal membership over time, the treaty provides a powerful legal, moral, and political tool going forward,” Dr. Ruff stated.

“Today, with this historic treaty, the world has changed. The shared interests of humanity underpin this achievement. A nuclear weapons ban can be a game-changer towards fulfilling the urgent global health imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons.”

Help us seize the moment!

–IPPNW

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# In the Name of Cow: Lynching and More Lynching

**Ram Puniyani**

The lynching of Junaid (June 2017) in the outskirts of Delhi, in a train, did come as a saturation point in the conscience of large sections of society. To express their anguish people came to streets in great number in a largely spontaneous protest, 'Not in My name'. While many critics criticized and undermined this expression of pain and anguish of the sections of society, it did catch the attention of the national and international media. The result was that our Prime Minister who has been keeping *maun* (silence) on the issue came forward to say that 'violence in the name of cow is not acceptable'; and that Mahatma Gandhi would not have approved it. This bland statement was hardly of any effect as just few hours after this; two more Muslims were done to death in Jharkahnd.

The earlier such statement from him was after the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq. (October 2015) At that time also nearly two weeks after the lynching he opened his mouth on the issue. That statement was also bland and hardly had any effect on the *Gautankwad* (terrorism related to cow protection) as lynching's continued. So either Mr. Modi is ineffectual in controlling his cabal, the Hindu nationalists involved in such violence, or that they also know that Prime Minister is making such statements for saying's sake, and that they can continue their business irrespective.

Mr. Amit Shah, BJP President, defending the present regime said that the lynching was taking place in

earlier regime in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were more in number. This is a total lie. According to the data collected by IndiaSpend, based on the content analysis of media reporting, "Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centered on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017) and comprised 86% of 28 Indians killed in 63 incidents. As many of 97 per cent of these attacks were reported after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came to power in May 2014, and about half the cow-related violence - 32 of 63 cases - were from states governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when the attacks were reported, revealed our analysis of violence recorded until June 25, 2017." How easily Mr. Shah wants to distort the facts to defend present government!

As such the overall dissatisfaction, deflected anger also leads to lynching, as seen in the tragic case of the lynching of Ayub Pundit in Kashmir. The insanity which comes up in the mob is most condemnable. In case of lynchings in the name of cow, the factors involved are multiple. With the rise of Hindu nationalist politics many a dalits were earlier killed in Gohana for example when they were skinning the dead cow. Adding on to this agenda of polarizing society on the issue of cow, last few years as Modi Sarkar has come to power there are overt statements for Gau Raksha (Cow Protection). While the laws of cow slaughter ban had already been there, with BJP ascendance the laws have been given

rigid twist and along with demonization of those eating beef. In Gujarat the first laboratory of Hindu rashtra, even the consumption of non-vegetarian food has been looked down upon. Now all over the country 'holiness of Mother Cow' is being propagated and imposed on the society with state patronage.

In the context of Akhlaq's lynching Mr. Mahesh Sharma, union culture minister stated that the murder was an accident. He was also the one to go and put tricolor on the body of the accused of the murder, when the accused died in the prison due to some illness. Another BJP leader Mr. Sangeet Som had threatened that if those who have been arrested for Akhlaq's murder are punished, a befitting reply will be given.

What are the major observations on these cases of lynchings? Eating beef, slaughtering cow and transporting cow had been the major pretexts for violence. The victims of this constructed anger are mostly Muslims, while dalits have also been flogged and tortured. Muslims are presented as beef eaters, cruel, not respecting Hindu sentiments about cow, apart from other biases which have been already spread against them. The social scene has been so constructed that due to these biases and regular instigations, the popular adage, 'innocents until proved guilty' has been made to stand on its head to mean 'Guilty unless proved innocents' for Muslims. The 'silent social sanction' for killings and upholding the act is couched as

'defense of Hindu religion' and now Hindu symbol of cow rules the roost. The benign animal is the pretext for ghastly violence. To jack up their agenda there are false claims by BJP spokesperson that Gandhi wanted a ban of cow slaughter ban. He opposed the idea on the ground that there are many who consume beef, and that country belongs to all.

Lynchings are not just law and order problem. These are part of, or rather byproduct of Hindu nationalist propaganda against

Muslims. The propaganda pertains to the Holiness of Cow and Muslims violating that. It is not a coincidence that such brutal acts have become part of social phenomenon, after Modi came to power. Gradually the intensity has been stepped up. Beginning from Modi's own statements about Pink revolution, of greatness of Rana Pratap as he gave his life for protection of cows, to demonization of Muslims in the name of cow makes clear as to what is the underlying social psychology, which leads to

these acts. The claims of 'good governance' bite the dust in the light of these atrocities,

Ayub Pundit's lynching is equally painful one. There is also a need to understand the social psychology operational there and urgent need to combat that. Country wide the insecurity of religious minorities smashes the claims of 'Acche Din', as the polarizing agenda is taking huge leaps in the name of Cow and leading to lynching's' on regular interval.

## Near Death of The Indian Postal System

**Niranjan Haldar**

The slow death of the Indian Postal System began when the Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee negotiated with the IMF for a large loan in 1981-82, with the undertaking that the Govt. of India would reduce its number of employees. The Indian Government did not retrench any employee, but when an employee retired, the government abolished the post so that even a temporary staff could not be employed in that post. New posts can be created only after the provision is made in the Central Budget.

The name of the Department was that of Post and Telegraph. The Telegraph employee had to perform other jobs. The Post & Telegraph Dept. in Kolkata [ then Calcutta] discontinued with the Telegram service in all post offices except one in South Calcutta [although there was no dearth of customers], at Lake Market and at the Central Telegraph Office [CTO] near the State

Secretariat, before the Telegraph Dept was abolished, only the CTO remained operative in Kolkata. The number of telegrams received on the last day of the Telegraph Dept, though the number of offices were very small, was staggering.

The Government justified the abolition of the Telegraph Dept. on the pretext that the customers could communicate through phones and e-mails. One cannot send any message to a newspaper in Stockholm, or the Human Rights Commission in Geneva unless the e-mail address of the receiver is known... But for Telegram- no such number is required.. Next, the Money Order system was curtailed by using computers, in most of the post offices where Money Order was accepted, either there was no person to operate the computers, or the computers turned to be defective.. Where the Money Order System remained operative, the Money Order Form had no space to write

down the purpose of sending the money... If there's less Money Order- the needs for delivering those by the Postmen would also be less.

To reduce the number of postmen to deliver letters, books, journals etc- the supply of stamps and postage to the post offices either discontinued for weeks & months, or became very irregular. The Government encouraged usage of the Courier Service that would bring Service Tax to the Government, or the Speed Post, which brings Service tax for the Government more than the price of an envelope.

The Post Office had an excellent system of encouraging Small Savings. Agents of the Postal System, used to collect Postal Savings, by visiting the houses of the small savers. Initially they used to get 2% from the amount they deposited, from the Post Offices. The Finance Ministry reduced the discount to 1%, and



then to 0%. As a result there was no agent to bring in new business, and Ponzi schemes flourished in the country, and many depositors were cheated.

Old People and Pensioners used to deposit their Savings to receive the interest on a monthly basis. When the people were harassed and perplexed during the demonetisation, of Rs 500.00, and RS 1000.00 Bank Notes, the Post Offices were debarred from opening new Savings, or MIS accounts. Instead, a counter in a Post office became a counter of Post Office Bank that would operate like a bank but opening of an account in in Post Office Bank is more difficult than opening an account in an ordinary Bank.

Apart from the lack of Postmen in the Post Offices, the lack of sorters have created more problems. As there was no sorter reportedly at the General Post Office, letters were sent from the GPO, to another Post Office, for sorting.

Noida is a flourishing urban area in the Capital region- but it's Post Office 201-301 has no sorter and less number of post men. As a result, packets of Newsletter sent to Mr Vinod Jain in H-901 Elite Homez, Sector-77, Noida 201-301, did not reach his house for the last five months.

To discourage people to drop letters and journals in letter-boxes, the Postal Department is replacing

large letter-boxes by smaller letter-boxes, where no journal can be dropped. IRHA Newsletter is published from the postal area of PIN 700 107.

The less number of postmen has very badly affected the delivery-system ... the 700107 Post Office in South Kolkata delivers letters, journals etc once a week, or once in a fortnight.. The local TMC MP [South Kolkata], though not blind, does not respond to any demand, though he is a party to pass the Central Budget.

The MPS get Rs 5 Crores every year under MPLAD schemes, but they do not bother about the impending death of the Indian Postal System.

A lynching is much more than just a murder. A murder may occur in private. A lynching is a public spectacle; it demands an audience.

The lynching of Pehlu Khan, a 55-year-old dairy farmer, in the western Indian state of Rajasthan at the beginning of this month attracted a live audience of dozens and a virtual one in the millions. Mr. Khan, a Muslim, stood accused of smuggling cows, which are sacred to Hindus. A whole nation watched the scene on its smartphones and televisions: Mr. Khan, a lone hunted figure in white, lurches and stumbles along the edge of a dusty highway. He is pursued by "cow vigilantes," young men in striped T-shirts and jeans, armed with belts and sticks. Eventually they gain on Mr. Khan, who falls to the ground, clutching his stomach. A crowd with cameras and smartphones circles. In screen within screen, we see Mr. Khan brutally beaten by the vigilantes in broad view of everybody. He died three days later, the sixth fatality since 2015 of a Muslim man subjected to vigilante justice of this kind.

A lynching, unlike, say, a terrorist attack, does not depend on maximizing the loss of life. What matters — whether in the American South a century ago or in India today — are not numbers, but the public, almost orgiastic character of the violence. The crowd surrounding Mr. Khan was baying for him to be doused in gas and set alight. A lynching is a majority's way of telling a minority population that the law cannot protect it. That is why in the American South so many African-American men were dragged from jails or hanged outside courthouses — unmistakable symbolism of the law's paralysis.

In Mr. Khan's case, the law was not merely paralyzed; it actively served the killers. In the first hours after Mr. Khan was attacked, 11 people were rounded up and arrested for cow smuggling — but not one for murder. Three people were arrested for Mr. Khan's lynching, but only days later, after he died. But the effect of the arrests was minimized by the role played by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

—Aatish Taseer, *New York Times*

# Satyagraha as a Peaceful Method of Conflict Resolution -II

Vibhuti Patel

## Pioneering Contribution

Today, as the word *Satyagraha* is used randomly to mean any protest action, the Director of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Savita Singh [2007] tries to trace its evolution; honing it in his South African laboratory and turning it into an effective weapon of non-violence against colonialism. Arguing that *Satyagraha* is a force that has come to stay, Singh also dwells on how Gandhi's legacy has been carried forward by the likes of Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi. A commemorative volume, the narrative draws heavily from some of the major works on the subject, and- needless to say-Gandhi's own writings. Doubling up as an account of the freedom struggle, the narrative gets wonderful pictorial support; not just in the form of photographs but copies of dated newspaper clippings, *Satyagraha* leaflets issued by Gandhi, his letters to Tolstoy and Gokhale among others, and government correspondence relating to him. The Annual Report [2004-05] captures *Salt Satyagraha*: seventy-five years and makes an extremely inspiring reading as it has relevance in the contemporary context. The Annual Report [2005-06] provides an overview of *Satyagraha* [Hundred Years, September 11, 1906 -September 11, 2006] and shows its relevance in the current context of environmental degradation, pollution, war mongering, violence against women and importance of SHGs. The Annual Report, 2006-07, *Kranti to*

*Gandhi: Rajya to Swarajya* talks of conservation and restoration, girl child and world peace. The Annual Report, 2007-08, *Hind Swarajya: 1909-2009* is dedicated to centenary year of *Hind Swarajya* which became a rallying point for all peace lovers when on 2-10-09 [138<sup>th</sup> birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi] became historical milestone in humanity's quest for global non-violence when the United Nations declared Mahatma Gandhi birth day as An International Day of *Non-Violence*.

## Women and Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi attached great importance to the status and role of women in society. He advised women to refuse to be the slaves of their own whims and fancies and the slaves of men. He attached the highest importance to women's honour. If a Woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of *Himsa* or *Ahimsa*. Her primary duty is self-protection. Mahatma Gandhi's ideas and activities contributed a lot to generate unprecedented awakening among Indian women. They came out of their homes and participated actively in the freedom movement and the constructive programme of Gandhi as equal partners of their men folk. Gandhi took the idea of *Satyagraha* from Kasturba, his wife.

He was deeply influenced by Annie Besant [a radical feminist and a Theosophist], Sarojini Naidu [a trusted co-worker], Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya [a fiery

Satyagrahi], Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Pushpaben Mehta. Geraldine Forbes examines the model that Sarojini Naidu developed in her speech as President of the Indian National Congress, a model with India as the *house*, the Indian people as members of the joint family and the Indian woman as the *Mother*. Naidu, Gandhi and many other advocates of women's and national liberation agreed wholeheartedly that women and India would advance together to the extent this new familial model for India was adopted by the women and men of India.

Gandhi believed women could do much to transform India on all levels. He believed that equal rights for women and men were necessary but not sufficient to create a more just social order. What good does it do to us to have equal rights if we are divided within ourselves and unable to attend true unity with others?

In a letter written to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on October 20, 1936, Gandhi writes, "*If you women only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full sense of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But, man has delighted in enslaving you, and you have proved willing slaves till the slave and holders have become one in the crime on degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make women realize her dignity. I was once slaveholder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus*

*opened my eyes to my mission."*

The *Satyagraha* method of Mahatma Gandhi has been adopted by New Women's Rights Movement of the Twentieth and Twenty-First century, particularly with the purpose of promoting peace, communal-harmony, sustainable development and environmental safety.

In 1983 the women's movement in India in its currently known phase, was just beginning to mobilize itself. Kamladevi was witness to and part of valiant efforts by women to "...not only push forward their own progress but act as levers to help other oppressed sections, while facing fierce hostility... there were no grants to feed such activities; no awards, titles, national recognition, no press publicity instead a lot of abuse." She defines women's actions of that time to be for equal rights, which could not be described as feminist. "Women's problems were never sought to be treated on a sex basis but as social maladies of a common society, men and alike. What are indeed significant are the danger signals she saw at this time. Habit, complacency and consequent lack of vigilance, which fast undermined women and eventually deprived them of whatever gain they have been able to secure over the years. There are numerous subtle ways of ignoring women and abridging their rights. She lamented that woman had docilely accepted the situation of *helper* and that their work in political parties was only to mobilize support for the party and not to assert their personalities or strength as political entities. Kamladevi concerns for the gains achieved during the freedom movement were well founded if we view the almost regressive situation

in rural and urban society with increasing violence against women, and the decreasing number of women in the population ratio. Modern technology, consumerism and lack of effective instruments have allowed, women no real progress even while allowing greater mobility and visibility to women from the middle and elite classes. Visibility alone is not empowerment in the real sense.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that *Satyagraha* was the most powerful weapon in a non-violent struggle. *Satyagraha* involves defiance. It involves the willful, peaceful, breaking of laws that are unjust. It means picketing, protesting, squatting, obstructing, challenging and publicly resisting wrongs. Since women were the most nonviolent and ardent lovers of peace, it could be sharpened and extended as a weapon in women's struggles for justice and equality. To him the ultimate *ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* was when women, in vast numbers, rose up to put an end to the destructive aspects of male dominance in society. Had the momentum of freedom struggle not been slowed down, such mobilization could have attracted many more women into public life. Political activity geared towards the transformation of society into the holistic, integrated entity as Gandhi had visualized has not yet crystallized. *Satyagraha* is now just a word, a mere symbol, that serves no purpose for the academic or the elite, or even the middle class feminist whose dialectic emerges from a theoretical background far removed from Gandhi's poor women who act because they have no use for words to explain themselves. Among those women who today have made *Satyagraha* a

mode of struggle for a better world are the *meira peibi* of Manipur who stand in clusters on the roadside outside their village with flaming torches to protest against men who indulge in drugs and alcohol, which are jointly ruining the youth of northeastern India. These women also raise their voices against the excesses of the security forces and form a protective shield around their villages against them. They do not quote Gandhi or term their struggle as *Satyagraha* but their steadfast, powerful and peaceful picketing has all the elements of struggle in the manner, Gandhi himself would have wished.

The anti-liquor movement of Andhra Pradesh built up gradually in the minds of poor and illiterate women who for long years suffered the ill effects of alcohol consumption by their men folk. For families steeped in poverty, for women who were subject to domestic violence related to alcohol, for wives who had nothing material to lose by rebelling because they had nothing to lose, they fulfilled Gandhi's wish of deciding no longer to be slaves of the situation. "*No one can be exploited without his or her willing participation*", said Gandhi. Gandhi said that women "strengthen my belief in *Swadeshi* and *Satyagraha*.... if I could inspire in men devotion as pure as I find in the women, within a year, India would be raised to a height impossible to imagine. As for *Swarajya* it was the easiest thing in the world." Gandhi expected them to do battle from their homes, while still fulfilling their traditional roles. The superior qualities of women and the intrinsic difference between man and woman were something Gandhi kept highlighting. Since he believed that women could bring about

Swarajya better, women were the very embodiment non-violence, for him they were greater soldiers and beneficiaries of his Swarajya campaigns. The three famed spearheads of these campaigns were the manufacture of salt, boycott of foreign cloth and shunning of liquor which he said, "were specially meant for the villages and the women would benefit especially." In 1930 Mithuben Petit reported to Gandhi that habitual drunkards were enthusiastically breaking earthen jars containing toddy and that thousands of persons in Surat who were given to drinking had started having resolutions passed by their castes prohibiting drinking.

Somewhere along the way, however, the issues close to Gandhi's heart have been largely left by the wayside by women who became part of the power structure as well as by the emancipated women's groups. Organizations involved in trade union work, social reform and development issues have in part or in whole addressed the issue of prohibition, but neither has women as a group in parliament nor through institutional structures raised this demand loudly and effectively. Prohibition is not accepted when it is presented as a moral issue alone and therefore the argument has to include developmental priorities, revenue collection, and budgetary allocations to social welfare, health and other sectors which rural women are unable to do.

The salt Satyagraha and boycott of foreign cloth emphasizes the indigenous, but the feminist movement has not associated itself with the Swadeshi movement except for the Gandhian elements within the

various groupings. The wearing of Khadi and handloom among the younger activists is more as the badge of a progressive liberal rather than as a commitment to the foods of indigenous manufacture. These are no longer taken up as issues of struggle although many women are part of the wider movement against the neo-colonial pressures of the new world trade regime, which destroy both sovereignty and national resources.

Many institutions and organizations representing women's rights have a high visibility in the cosmopolitan arena and have effectively expressed their concerns. Not only has that, their members decisively moved far ahead of Gandhi's vision of fearless women. Alert, active and bold, they engage in constant discussion and introspection for genuine equality.

### Critical Evaluation

Rai [2000] makes an attempt to study Gandhian *Satyagraha* in a philosophical way by analyzing the basic principles of *Satyagraha* with a critical viewpoint. It contents the basic philosophical ideas persisting in Gandhi throughout his life. The book has detailed and elaborates explanation of all the basic thought and practices of *Satyagraha*, and what are the inherent contradictions. In concluding chapter the author has pluck up courage to find out how far *Satyagraha* and its principles are relevant now a days and what its negative implications are. This book is not only for the students of Gandhian thought or philosophy but also for general people as well to know Gandhian *Satyagraha* in its totality in context to modern times.

*Satyagraha* operates at a level deeper than nationality, politics, military power, book education or socio-economic ideology. It is a process working in the very elemental human nature of mankind as a biological species. As *Satyagraha* becomes more widely employed, it will, partly by virtue of this capacity as a mirror, help in the development of human self-consciousness and confidence in one's own capacities.

Verma and Bakshi [2005] analyze a very crucial period of modern India under the British Rule because after end of First World War followed by famine, unemployment and magnified sufferings of Indian people and new motivations and impulses, which influenced the character of freedom, struggle. Mahatma Gandhi made it clear that he had no admiration for British Parliamentary system and also declared in a special session of Indian National Congress held in Calcutta [now Kolkata] that *Swarajya* can be attained in one year provided adequate response from masses to the Congress. Occurrence of such events in quick succession widened the scope of the fight for freedom. *Non-cooperation Movement*, non-violent *Satyagraha*, participation of women, appointment of the *Simon Commission* and movement against him, emergence of Lala Lajpat Rai followed by Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries and their martyrdom shook the roots of the British Rule and they started sensing that their days were numbered.

Krishna [2008] deconstructs the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa that was gradually entering a new era, the era of non-racial democracy. Though ethnicity

will continue to cast its shadow on politics, as religion and castes do in India even after six decades of secular democracy. The Gandhian *Satyagraha* can be an effective tool to challenge the unjust order.

Shukla [2008] states that the first *Satyagraha* Revolutions inspired by Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Independence Movement occurred in Kheda of Gujarat and Champaran of Bihar between the years of 1917 and 1918. Gandhi established an *Ashram* in Champaran, organizing scores of his veteran supporters and fresh volunteers from the region. He organized a detailed study and survey of the villages, accounting the atrocities and terrible episodes of suffering, including the general state of degenerate living. Building on the confidence of villagers, he began leading the cleanup of villages, building of schools and hospitals and encouraging the village leadership to undo *Purdah*, untouchability and the suppression of women.

### War, Peace and Satyagraha

Peace is threatened generally by three kinds of national or international conflicts. The first and most destructive is the arms race, carrying with it the possibility of nuclear confrontation; the second is that of conventional wars between the states for territory, resources, honour, or ideological supremacy; the third is a consequence of totalitarian or authoritarian rule resulting in oppression and denial of equality, freedom, and justice to the whole population of a state or to distinguishable groups within it.

For the first time in the modern world, we have witnessed that

President Barack Hussein Obama managed to convince the house to reduce the defense budget and allocate more resources to the public health. Currently, at 200 geographical locations conflict situations are prevalent. Peace movements are gaining momentum throughout the world. Goal 8 of The MDGs also demands from the nation state mutual cooperation and global peace.

The wars of national liberation in Latin America and Africa are instances of the third type. The second and third kinds of threats can become intertwined, as evidenced in such wars as the one between Ethiopia and Somalia in the late 1970s [in which Somalia put forward claims to the Ogaden region based on traditional movements of the tribes within its own jurisdiction], or the disputes between India and Pakistan over the territory of Kashmir. The war between Iran and Iraq is at once an ideological conflict [where the Shiah fundamentalist Islam of Iran has set itself against the more secularist, traditional Sunni Islam of the Arabs] and a dispute over boundaries separating the two states. The conflict between Arab states and Israel is similarly multilayered. It is about territory, the rights of the Palestinians for a homeland, and Israel's right to exist as a state.

There is very little possibility that in the foreseeable future any state will replace arms with non-violent means to deter aggression. Indeed, all governments believe that nonviolence is irrelevant to the problem of defense, and that therefore armed force must be the ultimate arbiter in human affairs. Against this unqualified faith in the

efficacy of force, one must point out that wars do not always obtain their desired ends, nor does oppression ensure true and enduring control over peoples and nations. Indeed, Adolph Hitler did not obtain his objective through force, nor did various imperial nations such as Great Britain and France gain their ends by employing force in their colonies. The wars of national independence have time and again proven the impotency of superior force when matched against massive grassroots violent and non-violent resistance. Thus, there is no reason to believe that force and violence will invariably intimidate others and achieve the ends desired of them. By the same token, non-violence is not applicable in every situation of potential conflict, although Gandhi and his supporters claimed that it was.

Let us take the case of ultimate violence first.

Ever since the advent of nuclear weapons, the world has lived in terror of annihilation. The means of destruction are so lethal that they have rendered largely irrelevant the objectives for which a war could be waged.

There is no real purpose in waging a war if the conflict spells certain mutual destruction within a few minutes and if very little of either adversary's national substance would be left to dominate the other.

Horsburg, however, argues that although *Satyagraha* is no substitute for deterrence, the spread of nuclear weapons to a large number of states will create a situation in which non-violent means of resolving conflict will become increasingly

relevant. He admits that disagreement and hostilities will persist, "*There are bound to be many cases in which negotiations will end in a deadlock*". However, he claimed, "*it does not seem wildly speculative to predict that in these circumstances an increasing interest will come to be taken in the possibilities of non-violent action.*"

He defends his position, "*If it is said that those optimistic speculations are absurd, I must insist that they are soundly based on the logic of deterrence. If the risks that deterrent policies involve must continue to increase, the use of armed force in the international sphere must become progressively more dangerous and hence it must eventually become too hazardous to use in the most extreme national emergencies.*"

Unfortunately, the logic of deterrence does not quite work in the way Horsburg describes. Nuclear states often engage in conventional wars and by a tacit agreement refrain from using their most lethal weapons. For instance, in the conflict over the Falkland Islands between England and Argentina, England certainly had the capacity to wage a nuclear war. Similarly, in the 1979 conflict between China and Vietnam, China had an independent nuclear capacity and Vietnam was under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. Indeed, one might point out that the rough parity in nuclear weapons has aggravated the competition for the Third World between the USA and the USSR.

### **Satyagraha and Nuclear Disarmament**

If *Satyagraha* is impractical in a situation of nuclear war, does it have

any relevance in negotiations for nuclear disarmament? In other words, can it act as a preventive? Can the Gandhian principles of steps and stages, sympathetic understanding for one's adversary, formulation of minimal demands consistent with truth, refusal to threaten or intimidate the enemy, and open diplomacy be meaningfully applied to fashion a strategy for gradual nuclear disarmament?

In principle, the Gandhian framework can be an important guide for negotiations on disarmament. Indeed, even conventional diplomacy recognizes the need for confidence building measures and reciprocity. Nor can negotiations be successful unless both sides are convinced of the sincerity of their opponents.

However, today such settlements are seldom arrived at by open diplomacy or via adherence to the idea that mutual demands should be consistent with truth. More often than not, open diplomacy is used to score points with critics at home, to pressure the adversary, or worse still, to camouflage reluctance to negotiate. The usual practice in arms negotiations is to demand the maximum, in the hope that the final agreement will ensure more than what is required for defense.

It is difficult to imagine a situation in which a nuclear power would unilaterally disarm without an effective substitute strategically equivalent to armed strength. Although some scholars have postulated the adoption of non-violence and gradual phasing out of dependence on arms, it is clear that a nation would have to undergo fundamental structural changes in its

society and politics to accept the Gandhian view of human nature and forego the sense of security offered by weapons.

There are, however, elements in *Satyagraha* that have an important bearing on the question of how to engage constructively in bargaining for disarmament. Let us look at some of the causes of the arms race between superpowers. According to several scholars, the arms race is a result of certain attitudes common to both the USA and the USSR. Each country has dehumanized the other, discounting the fears and concerns of the other's population and characterizing the other's leaders as warmongers. This attitude was evident in Dulles's characterization of the Soviet Union as the *diabolical enemy*, as it is in the Reagan administration's view of the USSR as the '*evil empire*'. And yet, scholars and practitioners of international diplomacy have pointed out that the situation leading to war or peace is one of mutual dependencies. For instance, analyzing the US-Soviet Relationships, Henry Kissinger contended that "*both sides had to be aware of this dependency if mutually damaging wars and costly arms were to be avoided.*" The *SALT-I* was based on a successful identification of such dependencies.

The theory of power and politics implicit in Gandhian thought rejects this separation and stresses instead a fundamental continuity between two seemingly opposite entities.

The Gandhian strategy of action requires that the protagonist attribute an irreducible minimum humanity to the enemy; to do otherwise is to

betray one's own humanity. The significance of this premise for reconciliation of conflict and for the process of negotiations can hardly be over-stressed.

There is one more possibility of applying the Gandhian technique to the problem of disarmament. This is in mobilizing mass movement against the arms race and building grassroots support for negotiations. The methodology of mass mobilization in this situation, however, would be no different from that of other issues. Critics might argue, and with justification, that peaceful protest would not solve the basic strategic dilemma and might in fact threaten national security by forcing democratic societies to negotiate away their advantages. Against this argument, one may point out that acquisition of arms beyond a certain point is useless, and a peace movement can raise awareness among the masses as well as generate pressures on governments to devote more money to social advancement rather than to defense. Satyagraha and Non-Nuclear Defense.

This brings us to our question under consideration. Can massive non-violent resistance be an adequate means of non-nuclear defense? Several scholars have examined the nonviolent method of defense and concluded that at least theoretically; it is a plausible alternative, although widespread ignorance and prejudice against its methodology have often prevented its being considered seriously.

Military power today does not have the real capacity to defend in

conflict the people and society relying upon it. Often it only threatens mutual annihilation. He goes on to say that although non-violent civilian defense will not stop the aggressor at the borders, military aggression does not give the invader political control of the country. He suggests that in civilian defense, the population as a whole can resist military aggression, making it impossible for the enemy to establish and maintain political control. Enemy control can be prevented by massive and selective refusal to cooperate.

For instance, police would refuse to locate and arrest patriotic opponents of the invader. Teachers would refuse to introduce this propaganda into the schools, as happened in Norway under the Nazis. Workers and managers would use strikes, delays, and obstructionism to impede exploitation of the country... Politicians, civil servants, and judges, by ignoring or defying the enemy's illegal orders, would keep the normal machinery of government and courts out of his control...as happened in the German resistance to the Kapp Putseh in 1920... Newspapers could refuse to submit to censorship.... as it happened in the Russian 1905 revolution and several Nazi-occupied countries.

Gandhi's Solution to External Invasion Would be to Convert the Conflict from One at the Borders to One Against Occupation within the Country

A struggle against occupation, rather than defense at the borders, will shift the conflict to the turf where *Satyagraha* has a decided

advantage and where the enemy must depend on popular cooperation. However, there are cases where *Satyagraha* will not be feasible. For instance, the enemy may be interested merely in inflicting military humiliation and may withdraw promptly after armed intervention. In some situations, the national population may be too small in numbers to mount effective non-violent resistance. In other situations, the invader may be interested merely in extracting raw materials, and may not require cooperation of the civilian population to do so. In most other instances, however, the Gandhian theory of power will become operational and give civilian defense a powerful means to foil the ambitions of an aggressor.

(To be concluded)

## Disgraceful

"Disgrace abounding" 'ignoramus and constitutionally impermissible' is the instant reaction to the totally unacceptable suggestion of Central Board of Film Certification Regional office to words like 'Cow', 'Gujrat' and 'Hindutva' from the interview of noble laureate Amritya Sen.

This action has made laughing stock of India's claimed open society. It should be immediately scrapped. Modi's stooges in Censor Board should not be allowed to mock at the fundamental rights of free speech.

—Rajindar Sachar



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## Indo-China Border Dispute

Prem Singh

The aggressive Kashmir policy of the Modi government has led to the present conflict with China. China is trying to create a siege around India. The Chinese policy experts are creating an impression, through China's media, that the Chinese army can enter Azad Kashmir and confront India just as India has entered Bhutan and challenged China. The Chinese media has been publishing articles and photos from the museum of the Indo-China war of 1962. If Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have said to the Union Home Minister that China is interfering in Kashmir and the Darjeeling hills, then it should not be taken lightly.

Unfortunately, the government is engaged in spreading communal hatred in the country rather than paying attention to serious issues like the security of the country's borders. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's campaigners and the media inspired by them are creating hatred against the people of Kashmir as if they are not Indian citizens and an integral part of India. They have linked the agitation of boycotting Chinese

goods to the Kashmir problem. It has long been clear that China supports Pakistan and opposes the UN ban on international terrorists like Maulana Masood Azhar. But for the first time, RSS campaigners and the media have started a campaign in the country by linking China to the Kashmir issue. The level of their hatred is such that they are not tolerant even about the show of goodwill expressed by Mehbooba Mufti and Rajnath Singh on 'Kashmiriyat'. The RSS and the media perceive it as a false show and refuse to see the condemnation of killings of pilgrims of Amarnath Yatra by separatists and human rights groups of Kashmir as an expression of Kashmiri sentiment. Meanwhile, the Chief of Army, General Vipin Rawat, by saying that they are tackling the challenge on two and half war fronts, has made it clear that he is treating Kashmir as 'half-war front'. Opening several war fronts at one time is neither strategically nor practically beneficial for any country.

India's socialist thinkers and leaders have long been aware of China's ambitions as an expansionist

country. On getting an opportunity, China is most likely to take a chance at trying to surround and weaken India. This is the reason why Dr. Rammanohar Lohia had delineated a Himalayan Policy and discussed the establishment of friendly relations with the North-Eastern states including Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Kashmir by strengthening democratic movements in them. Lohia believed that this would secure India's borders.

But the Modi Government, rooted in RSS ideology based on narrow communal considerations, follows a 'Hindu Policy' instead of Himalayan Policy. This is the reason why relatively 'peaceful' Kashmir during the UPA government has exploded under the NDA government. The BJP's rage against Mamata government in Darjeeling is also singeing Sikkim. Nepal has, in the recent years, leaned extraordinarily towards China. This is despite the extraordinary relief measures given during earthquake and Prime Minister Modi's visit to Pashupatinath. China is marking certain places in Arunachal Pradesh. Bhutan and China are negotiating with each other without actually having diplomatic relations, irrespective of a month-long tension with Indian army in Doklam.

Dr. Lohia clearly stated, "I do not have to make any long historical debate about Tibet. I think Tibet should be free. She has been free. There was a time in history that Tibet has ruled China." Dr. Lohia also wanted to prove that at one point of time the King of Ladakh had gifted Kailash Manasarovar to Tibet, but he kept the adjoining Mansar village within his regime and used to charge tax. In this situation, the treaty of

1890 between the British and China, about which Prime Minister Nehru himself was not very keen, must therefore be rejected by India. In addition to this, there is the need to strengthen the claims of India over places like Kailash Mansarovar.

India should also claim 90,000 sq. km. of land which China has occupied. A resolution should be passed Once again in the Parliament in this matter and the government, taking the opposition in confidence, should show that India is united on Doklam issue. India as a sovereign country is open to dialogue in order to resolve the border dispute with China, but is not willing to accept China's expansionist ambitions.

It should not be forgotten that the dispute of Doklam Plateau, located on the border triangle of Bhutan and Sikkim, is different from the Daulat Beg Oldi (2014) and the Chumar (2013) controversies. At that time the Chinese army was ready to negotiate and the matter was quickly settled. But this time China has made the condition that the talks will happen only if Indian forces withdraw from Doklam. India should take a firm stand on this issue keeping its security and national dignity in view. China has started closing upon India by strategically entering countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh; and declaring 'One Belt One Road' scheme as a mantra of development in the region.

India must not forget that present-day China is not China of Deng Xiaoping. It is the aggressive China of Mao Tse-tung's times, one that has survived the crisis posed by the disintegration of communist countries like Soviet Union and internal rebellious upsurges like Tiananmen Square. The ruling class

of China, like India, is acting on the policy of aggressive nationalism rather than a practical foreign policy. But the difference is that in China's nationalism, there are no narrow social and religious divisions, the kind that the RSS and its outfits are creating in India. India can stand firm and united against China only if the RSS/BJP stop such campaigns to spread fanaticism-based hatred in the country.

The matter is not just about boycotting the Chinese goods. This hypocritical economic stamina is not of any use if you are purchasing Sardar Patel's statue from China. If the boycott idea is really serious, then the goods of all the multinational companies should be boycotted. This will happen only when the policies of liberalization and globalization are boycotted, against which there was a tremendous demonstration in Hamburg. This is the only option to protect the resources of this country from the loot of multinational companies and corporate houses. The hard-working masses of the country will be able to stand up firmly against any foreign power only after such measures are taken for the country's integrity.

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# Modi Government and the Nation's Food Security

Neeraj Jain

The Modi Government claims that poverty has considerably declined in the country. According to the *Economic Survey 2015–16*, the incidence of poverty in the country has declined from 37.2 per cent in 2004–05 to 21.9 per cent in 2011–12 for the country as a whole. While the rural poverty ratio declined from 41.8 per cent in 2004–05 to 25.7 per cent in 2011–12, the urban poverty ratio declined from 25.7 per cent in 2004–05 to 13.7 per cent in 2011–12.<sup>1</sup>

But there is something wrong with these figures; they are in complete contrast to the picture of poverty presented by other economic indicators:

- It is well-known that the country is facing a huge agrarian crisis. Due to this, more than 3 lakh farmers have committed suicide in the country over the past two decades. And yet the *Economic Survey* claims that not only has poverty in the country declined, there has been a sharper decline in the number of rural poor! How is that possible?
- The country is facing a huge unemployment crisis. During the very years when the *Economic Survey* claims that poverty in the country declined, employment growth in the country virtually collapsed: annual employment growth in the country fell from 2.66% during 1999–2000 to 2004–05, to only 0.88% during the five-year period 2004–05 to 2009–10.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, most of these jobs being created are informal sector jobs. This implies that these workers do not even get the legal minimum wages (which are barely subsistence wages), let alone other facilities to ensure a dignified existence including health, education, housing, sanitation, and safe work conditions. Thus, during the ten-year period 1999–2000 to 2009–10, an estimated 130 million people entered the job market. However, during these 10 years, the economy created a total of only 63.5 million additional jobs, of which only 14.4 million jobs were formal sector jobs.<sup>3</sup> Implying that only 11% of the youth who entered the job market during this decade got decent jobs, with some job security and facilities; the rest got jobs in the unorganised construction sector (which are dangerous and mainly migrant jobs), or were selling peanuts and vegetables by the roadside, or were employed in horribly low-paid jobs in eateries, or were rolling papads and bidis in their homes, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

What explains this extreme mismatch between the government's figures showing a sharp decline in poverty, and the above statistics that show a worsening rural situation and collapse of employment generation? For this, we need to go into a bit of history about the evolution of India's poverty line.

India's Planning Commission had been seeking to define the poverty line since the 1960s. Finally, in the early 1970s, it accepted the recommendation of a group of experts and defined the poverty line as that particular level of total spending per capita on all goods and services whose food spending part satisfied the nutrition level of 2,400 calories of energy intake per day in rural India, and 2,100 calories per day in urban areas. The rural norm was soon after scaled down to 2,200 calories.<sup>5</sup> The Planning Commission applied this definition only once, to National Sample Survey (NSS) data of 1973–74, which yielded rural/urban poverty lines of Rs 49 and 56 per day. But after that, the Commission changed the definition in practice, and adjusted the 1973–74 poverty line for inflation using a price index, regardless of whether the lines so obtained still allowed nutritional standards to be met. Subsequent expert committees have continued with this mistaken method. This has produced the absurdity of Rs 22.4 and 28.7 as the rural/urban daily poverty lines in 2009–10, at which only 1,870 calories could be accessed in rural areas and 1,720 calories in urban areas. The rural/urban poverty line for 2011–12 stood at Rs 26/32 per day.<sup>6</sup>

These are absurdly low figures. The Planning Commission's figures become even more atrocious when it is kept in mind that they do not refer to food costs alone. These paltry sums are supposed to cover not only food but all non-food

essentials, including clothing and footwear, fuel for cooking and lighting, transport, education, medical costs and rent!<sup>7</sup> Even a school child knows that basic necessities, even just adequate food, cannot be obtained, nor working health be maintained, by spending so little. Amazingly, however, 30 crore Indians subsist below these levels. Clearly, India's poverty line does not measure poverty anymore, it measures destitution.

### Estimating actual poverty

Using the same NSS data (of 2004–05 and 2009–10) from which the Planning Commission derived this very low poverty line, and basing herself on the original 1973–74 poverty line definition, wherein all people unable to access 2,200/2,100 calories per day in rural/urban areas are considered poor, the noted economist Utsa Patnaik has estimated the number of people in India living below the poverty line. Her estimates show that:<sup>8</sup>

- In 2004–05, the percentage of people in rural India unable to access 2,200 calories was 69.5%; this percentage has gone up to an appalling 75.5% in 2009–10!
- 64.5% of the urban population was unable to reach 2,100 calories energy intake in 2004–05; this too has gone up to 73% in 2009–10!

### Other poverty estimates

To most people fed on a daily diet of media propaganda that India is rapidly growing and is an emerging superpower, these figures would appear to be an exaggeration. But

these distressing figures are borne out by other surveys too:<sup>9</sup>

- The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) was established in 2004 under Prof. Arjun Sengupta, to advise on issues related to the country's unorganised workforce. In its study, NCEUS set an overall minimum of Rs 20 per day per person in 2004–05 as its cut-off for defining the “poor and vulnerable”, and calculated that 77% of Indians fell below this cut-off. This figure is in fact more than Utsa Patnaik's estimates for poverty in 2004–05.
- The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (2011) data relating to rural households are now available. They show that for nearly 75% of rural households, the income of the highest earning member is less than Rs 5,000 per month; and for 92%, it is less than Rs 10,000 a month; for more than half of rural households, the main source of income is manual casual labour—the most insecure, deprived and sweated type of employment.

With three-fourth of the population spending 12–15 hours a day to somehow earn the bare minimum needed to barely stay alive, hunger levels in the country are obviously going to be very high. India may be one of the world's fastest growing economies, but its hunger levels are amongst the worst in the world. The Global Hunger Index (GHI), a multidimensional statistical tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally and by country and

region, ranked India at a very low 97 out of 118 countries for which the GHI was calculated in 2016. The GHI is calculated by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).<sup>10</sup>

Unless one has gone chronically and repeatedly hungry to bed, it is hard to imagine what that can do to one's body and mind. But even we keep aside such (what some may call) “sentimentalism”, malnutrition also has enormous economic costs. How can hundreds of millions of Indians become productive members of society unless they are given the conditions needed to develop their inherent capacities, and obviously, the most basic of these is food?

But the Modi Government is unconcerned. Using manipulated statistics that show poverty in the country as falling sharply, it is reducing the government expenditure on the most important programme in the country to tackle the poverty and malnutrition crisis facing the country—the food subsidy programme, wherein the government provides essential food and non-food items to India's poor at subsidised rates through the public distribution system (PDS). Worse, it is now moving towards dismantling the public distribution system itself!

But this attack on the nation's food security began much earlier, in the 1990s. Modi–Jaitley are only ruthlessly pursuing it.

### Globalisation and the attack on PDS

The roots of this assault on food subsidies go back to 1991. The Indian economy was entrapped in a foreign exchange crisis. India's

creditors, the developed countries (the triad of the United States, the West European countries and Japan) forced the Indian Government to take a 'Structural Adjustment Loan' from the World Bank-IMF to tide over the crisis. The loan package was a strict quid-pro-quo. In return for the loan, the Indian Government agreed to implement a series of market reforms. Since then, all governments that have come to power at the Centre have dutifully implemented these conditionalities. One of these was that the government must reduce its spending on food subsidy.<sup>11</sup>

Before the beginning of globalisation, the PDS in India was a universal scheme which could be accessed by all the households in the country. Its aim was two-fold—make available foodgrains at 'fair (that is, affordable) prices' to all households across the country, and, secondly, keep a check on the speculative tendencies in the market.

As a part of the WB-dictated globalisation reforms, the Government of India was now required to reduce its food subsidy. Obviously, a theoretical justification was needed, around which a propaganda campaign could be waged to convince the people that this cut in food subsidies was going to benefit the poor as well as the country. This was soon found. The government's economists and bureaucrats came up with the argument that the majority of the food subsidy is being siphoned off by the middle classes, and so the benefits are not really reaching the poor. They proposed that the ration system should identify the 'really needy', and only they should be provided subsidised foodgrains. The government then began

manipulating the definition of 'really needy', that is, the poor, to reduce its food subsidy bill.

Basing itself on this logic, in 1997, the government replaced the Universal Public Distribution System by the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The TDPS limited recipients of publicly distributed foodgrains to three strictly delineated beneficiary pools: Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY, the poorest of the poor), Below Poverty Line (BPL), and Above Poverty Line (APL). Families were admitted into one of the three pools based on annual household income as well as land holding and ownership of consumer durables, and accordingly given AAY/BPL/APL ration cards. They were provided monthly rations of rice and wheat at subsidised prices, with prices and quantities graduating across the three pools.

On the one hand, the government now gradually hiked the prices of foodgrains for APL households, bringing them closer to market prices, so that these households stopped buying grain from the public distribution shops—more popularly called the ration shops. And on the other, a majority of the poor were also pushed out of the PDS by the simple stratagem of denying them BPL cards! This is admitted by NSS surveys, which show that 70.5% of rural households either possess no card or an APL card—when three-quarters of the rural households do not earn enough to eat two full meals a day!<sup>12</sup>

With a vast majority of the poor not buying foodgrains from the PDS, foodgrain stocks with the government of India soared. In July 2013, foodgrain stocks with the state-owned Food Corporation of

India (FCI) were more than 70 million tons, which is more than double the buffer stock and strategic reserve norm of 32 million tons.<sup>13</sup>

(to be concluded)

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(Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> *Economic Survey, 2015-16*, Volume II, p. 210, <http://indiabudget.nic.in>.
- <sup>2</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "Poverty Trends in India 2004-05 to 2009-10: Updating Poverty Estimates and Comparing Official Figures", *Economic & Political Weekly*, October 5, 2013, <http://www.epw.in>.
- <sup>3</sup> For this, see our booklet, Neeraj Jain, *Spectre of Fascism, Lokayat and Janata Trust* publication, Pune/Mumbai, 2016, p. 43, available on Lokayat website, <http://www.lokayat.org.in>.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-47.
- <sup>5</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "Number Games: India's Declining Poverty Figures Based on Flawed Estimation Method; Accurate Figures Show 75 Percent in Poverty", *World Poverty*, August 25, 2012, <http://academicsstand.org>
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- <sup>7</sup> Utsa Patnaik, "Poverty Trends in India 2004-05 to 2009-10: Updating Poverty Estimates and Comparing Official Figures", *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- <sup>8</sup> Utsa Patnaik, *ibid.*; Utsa Patnaik, "Number Games: India's Declining Poverty Figures Based on Flawed Estimation Method; Accurate Figures Show 75 Percent in Poverty", *op. cit.*
- <sup>9</sup> "Constructing Theoretical Justifications to Suppress People's Social Claims", *Aspects of India's Economy*, No. 62, January 2016, <http://www.rupe-india.org>.
- <sup>10</sup> Rhythma Kaul, "India Hunger Levels Ranked as "Serious" in 2016: Global Hunger Index", October 11, 2016, <http://www.hindustantimes.com>.
- <sup>11</sup> There are several articles available on the internet outlining these

(Continued on Page 9)

## An individualist President

**Kuldip Nayar**

It is not difficult to assess the regime of Pranab Mukherjee who retires from the office of President after completing tenure of five years. He was a wrong choice and should not have adorned the Gaddi at the first instance.

Pranab Mukherjee, man Friday of Sanjay Gandhi, an extra-constitutional authority who ruled the country during the Emergency. It was a dictatorial rule by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who had suspended even the fundamental rights. Pranab Mukherjee was then the Commerce Minister, who granted or stopped licences at the bidding of Sanjay Gandhi. A regime does not acquire validity because no mishap took place during the period. The vary rule was an insult to the democratic nation. Pranab Mukherjee who had violated the constitution by occupying the position and cannot but be condemned for the days he ruled.

When Sonia Gandhi elevated Mukherjee to the office, she was criticised. But hers was a gift to a loyal person who even said that the day was the night. He should himself assess the achievements and find out whether he came up to the expectation he had aroused.

I have gone over the period when he was at Rashtrapati Bhawan and I find, to my horror, that it was a rule which had a negative impact. If he had been a sensitive person he would have felt the wrongs done during the 17 months of Emergency. If nothing

else he could have at least regretted the imposition of the Emergency when one lakh people were detained without trial, the press was 'disciplined' and the civil servants lost the distinction between right and wrong. BJP leader L. K. Advani was correct to chide the press: You were asked to bend but you began to crawl. Sonia Gandhi appointed him because he had served the dynasty faithfully. People rightly defeated him and Indira Gandhi when the elections were held. Not only she was defeated in the polls held after the relaxation of Emergency but the Congress party was ousted locks, stock and barrel. Thus people took the revenge.

Pranab Mukherjee's appointment was a slap on the face of nation. Never have people supported a dictator nor have they honoured any person who has violated the ethos of independence: democracy and secularism. In this case, even the constitution was flouted. I expect that after some years, Pranab Mukherjee would himself recall the period when he was the President. And he would feel that he could have done better. He should be able to spot out at least one instance when he upheld democracy and pluralism. This would have been fair to the people, who ousted the British to have their own rule through the ballot box.

I am sure that if and when Pranab Mukherjee writes his memoirs, he would be frank enough to list his failings. Seldom have people felt so

let down as they did during Pranab Mukherjee's Presidency.

Had there been a Lok Pal (Ombudsman) he would have pointed out where Pranab Mukherjee had failed. Alas, there is no such institution. The Bhartiya Janata Party, which talks about values at the drop of hat, should assemble an institution, that is above politics, to say what is right and what is wrong, moral or immoral.

Pranab Mukherjee, even though late, should say from Rashtrapati Bhawan that he and his Congress party were repentant for the Emergency they had imposed. This is a taint on the face of the nation and needs to be wiped out. That he has left the office does not matter. What is important is that the democratic nation should get back its ethos debated in the constitutional assembly and in incorporated in the constitution.

Heads of institutions are not generally assailed. The idea behind such thinking is that the criticism may harm the institutions, which are essential for the sustenance of democratic polity. Germane to this idea is the presidency. Therefore, the President is spared even when he or she crosses the line that the office delineates. Because of this consideration, President Pranab Mukherjee has escaped censure even when a person at an equally high office has been crucified. This does

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# Lynching to Power

Irfan Engineer

Mashal Khan, a 23 year old journalism student was seized from his dorm room by a mob that stripped and beat him, then shot him dead on 13 April 2017 in Mardan in North West Pakistan. Khan was accused of offending Islam (Rasmussen and Baloch 2017). In the month of May 2017, a mob attacked a police station demanding that Prakash Kumar, a 34 year old Hindu, arrested under blasphemy laws of Pakistan, be handed over to the mob (AFP 2017). Just over a week later, a mob attacked a mentally ill man who claimed to be a prophet at his local mosque in north-western Chitral (Pakistan). He was rescued by police. The spate of incidents followed government of Pakistan's drive against blasphemy. Unproven allegations of "insult to Islam" led to dozens of mob attacks or murders since 1990 in Pakistan.

India is trying to catch up with Pakistan with spate of mob lynching, after the BJP Government was elected to power in May 2014, different only with regards to minor details. Replace the allegation of "insult to Islam" with "cow slaughter" and you get same lawlessness and lynch mentality on this side of the border. The similarities between Pakistani – jihadi if you prefer the term – and Hindu supremacist lynch mobs are many – on both sides of the border the blood thirsty lynch mobs were encouraged by specific legislations – blasphemy laws in case of Pakistan and anti-cow slaughter laws in case of India.

The lynch mobs on both sides of the border target their respective minorities with the state law and order machinery laid back and taking little action against the members of lynch mob. They target the economically poor, politically weak and socially marginalized within the minorities. Not the elite within the minorities. The lynch mobs do not target owners of the beef packaging and exporting industry and large slaughter houses. Slaughter of large number of cows and progeny would come to a near halt if fear of God was put in the owners of beef exporting industry.

Instead of taking strict punitive action under law against the members of lynch mob, the machinery mandated to uphold law and order investigate the allegations made by the mob against their victims. Booking the victims of the lynch mob is meant as a measure to appease the blood thirsty mob. The Pakistani police registered offence against Prakash Kumar. In case of Mashal Khan, Abdul Wali Khan University launched an inquiry whether Khan insulted Islam. In the case of Dadri lynching, the police sent sample of meat to laboratory for testing whether it was beef.

In both countries, the lynch mobs enjoy patronage of politicians from the ruling party and dominant religio-political organisation – Hindu supremacist in India and Islamic fundamentalist organisations in Pakistan. In both the countries, law abiding citizens were horrified by the violence invoking religious

issues. Protestors in India protested in various cities and towns under NotInMyName campaign after lynching of a teenage boy, Junaid, in Haryana. Protesters gathered across Pakistan, calling for justice after lynching of Mashal Khan. Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Nawaz Sharif condemned the murder – although it took him two days. Prime Minister Modi too condemned the so called *gau rakshaks* for records more than nudging the police to act against them effectively.

Indian Constitution is democratic, whereas Pakistan is believed to be dominated by "jihadi" ideology. While there have been only about a dozen lynching in Pakistan since 1990, in India, media reported 33 incidents of mob lynching since the year 2015 beginning with Dadri. Some say there were 67 incidents since 2015. 18 persons, including one Hindu, were killed and 71 persons were injured. 7 of the 71 injured in the lynching have been Hindus and 14 dalits. Two incidents of lynching took place in Karnataka and one each in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Assam, West Bengal and Bihar. Whereas 26 lynching incidents have taken place in BJP-ruled states, including Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, UP, MP, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir.

We are made to believe by the lynch mobs in Pakistan that they are protecting Islam and the lynch mobs in India that they are protecting cows. Wrong. Neither Islam needs

protection of lynch mobs nor are the cows protected by them. In fact their actions endanger both – cow and Islam. Pakistani lynch mobs are in fact defaming Islam by their violent actions. Experts have pointed out that the peasant would not be able to bear the burden to maintain a cow beyond its lactation period and they may opt for other milch animals and the number of cows in the country may drastically go down. The animators and leaders of lynch mobs have other objectives which we would like to inquire into a little later.

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Lynching is possible in a context wherein a social group is demonized and stigmatized for years, particularly the minorities in Pakistan and India. Minorities are demonized so frequently and so widely using media and social media platforms that they are perceived as anti-nationals and loyal to the “enemy” state. Just because a few Muslim women wear veils and a few Muslim men wear skull cap and grow beard, they are stigmatized as fanatics whereas Hindus applying *tilaks* on their foreheads, women wearing *mangalsutra* or Sikhs wearing their headgear and carrying *kirpan* are not perceived as religious fanatics.

Such perceptions do not emerge from nowhere. Differences of way of life are politicised. PM Modi when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat had demonized Muslims to be breeding like rabbits in relief camps and denied any material support to hapless displaced of riots in 2002. The then PM Vajpayee had to remind the CM of Gujarat of his *raj dharma*. Maneka Gandhi, Minister for women and child

welfare without any evidence said that the profits from cow slaughter are funding terrorism in the country. The Jains and Hindus are owners of largest slaughter houses and have substantial stake in beef export market earning huge profits. Why would they fund terrorism? Sakshi Maharaj, a BJP MP said *madrasas* are training grounds of terrorists. Amit Shah, BJP President during campaign in Bihar state elections said that Pakistan would celebrate the defeat of BJP! He had earlier during the general election campaign called upon his Hindu audience to take revenge of Muzaffarnagar communal violence. These are just a few examples of demonization of Muslim and Christian minorities by Hindu supremacists for many years and now they have become conventional wisdom.

State functionaries ignore these hate crimes and remain silent. They shirk their Constitutional mandate and duty to bring those committing hate crimes to justice. This strengthens the assumption within the people that the averments may be true. People then come to believe that the law of the land and criminal justice system is not effective to tackle these criminal, unpatriotic and anti-national traitors that the minorities are.

Lynching receives silent approval of the majority in this backdrop. Mere allegation is enough to believe that a Muslim driver transporting cattle or meat in spite of all necessary permits is a “cow smuggler” or a co-conspirator in cow slaughter. Similarly, in Pakistan, mere allegation that a Hindu or a Christian has insulted Islam or Prophet is sufficient to be convinced of their guilt. This assumption of guilt gives rise to

silence of the majority. Large majority of populace of the country is converted into believing the allegations of animator of the lynch mobs without any question. Mashal was lynched in Pakistan, the other students were silent spectators as no one even asked what did Mashal Khan do or say! 16 year old Junaid Khan could be stabbed to death and thrown out of the train as all the passengers were silent spectators. Media reports suggest that even on the railway platform on which Junaid bled to death, no one came forward to speak to the police. The credentials of the animators and members of the lynch mobs do not matter. They may be bullies or extortionists or even criminals often having political ambition.

The lynch squads pretending to be *gau rakshaks* have been functioning in Gujarat since at least over a decade. There are over three scores of them in Ahmedabad alone and many more in other towns of Gujarat. The lynch squads are well networked under patronage of a politician and they cultivate informers all over the place. The squad receives information of vehicles transporting animals from one place to another and whose driver or owner is a Muslim. On receiving such information, their animator/leader assembles the members, sets up unauthorised blockades on road. After the vehicle is stopped, the first thing they do is snatch all the permits that the driver of the vehicle may show (Engineer 2014). At times they extort money and allow the vehicle to carry on and at times they start lynching, they may video graph the whole lynching, summon the police and hand them over. The video is uploaded on social media to exhibit the prowess of the lynch squad. The



police would then charge the victims of the lynch squad under anti-cow slaughter legislations and other laws. If a lynch squad is able to mount several such operations, their leader establishes himself as a local bully and has an accelerated political career in the party wherein Hindu supremacist seek opportunities. Hate crimes create silent spectators which enables lynching and which in turn is used as an instrument to deepen demonization of the minorities.

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The lynch mobs have a political objective rather than religious one they pretend to have. If the Pakistani lynch mobs wanted to serve or “save” Islam, they should be saying their prayers, observing fast, serving the orphans and the needy through charity and treading the straight path in accordance with Qur’anic guidance, as many pious Muslims do. The lynch mob masquerading as *gau rakshaks* would not ignore the stray cows and hungry suffering cows in the *gaushalas* across the country receiving grants from tax payer’s funds. The lynch mobs and their patronisers desire an accelerated political career. Having legally and politically survived lynching operations, their participants have a sense of empowerment and being above law. The lynch mobs establish their hegemony not only over the state machinery, but also over politically and socio-economically marginalized sections of the society, including minorities, dalits and other backward classes.

They enforce through coercion the will and way of life of socially hegemonic and privileged upper castes. The Pakistani lynch mobs establish their hegemony not only

over the Hindu and Christian minorities but also over Ahmediya, Shias and rationalists. Lynching is leading to Wahabisation of Islam in Pakistan and reinforcing caste based hierarchies, and traditional upper caste and Khap panchayat morality in India. The lynchers trigger off political processes that strengthen patriarchy and control over women’s body, mind and movements. They politically push for more authoritarian state enforcing cultural norms and will of the upper caste.

*(Continued from Page 5)*

conditionalities. See for example: Structural Adjustment in India, World Bank, 2012, <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org>; Montek S. Ahluwalia, Structural Adjustment and Reform in Developing Countries, April 1994, [www.planningcommission.nic.in](http://www.planningcommission.nic.in); Ashwini Deshpande and Prabirjit Sarkar, “Structural Adjustment in India – A Critical Assessment”, Economic and Political Weekly, December 9, 1995, <http://www.epw.in>; David Harvey, A Brief History of

They undermine the concept of citizenship and push the society towards mental ghettoization and acceptance of hegemony of community over the individual.

Resisting lynch mobs and speaking against them is not only in the interest of minorities directly threatened but also in the interest of society in general and democracy in particular. The majority will have to break their silence and be vocal against all forms of violence.

Neoliberalism, pp. 7–8, 29, 64–66, Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Madura Swaminathan, “Public Distribution System and Social Exclusion”, May 7, 2008, <http://www.thehindu.com>.

<sup>13</sup> “Foodgrain Stocks Fall Below 70 Mt, Exceed Reserve Norms by a Margin”, August 9, 2013, <http://www.financialexpress.com>.

*(Continued from Page 6)*

not, however, give him any licence. He should not be exploiting the prerogative as he does.

It was a Swedish radio station which broke the story first. The source was a “deep throat” whose name has not been revealed till today. He passed on the information to Chitra Subramaniam, a journalist who was then working for *The Indian Express*. The “deep throat” was an insider and felt horrified over the bribery, which was first placed at Rs. 64 crore but turned out to be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 3,000 crore.

Mukherjee had taken it for granted that the key role he had portrayed as a firefighter during the Congress party’s troubled times he could not be ignored for having

served the dynasty relentlessly. But Sonia’s determination to make her son, Rahul Gandhi, the prime minister came in the way of Mukherjee’s political ambitions. Though he was exasperated, Mukherjee soon realized the mood and announced that he would not contest the 2014 election. Sonia readily agreed to offer him the position because he had himself cleared the deck for Rahul Gandhi.

Mukherjee should have done something to explain because the Congress party he has represented has this blame pending against him. The Congress should itself think about the ways to come clean and explain to the nation why and how the scams like Bofors and Commonwealth Games had come to take place.

## G-20: win some, lose some

D. K. Giri

The leaders of G-20 countries met on 7-8 of this month in Hamburg Germany to discuss and direct the world economy. For the first time, India smartly played its part and secured a sort of diplomatic victory. It managed to insert an anti-terrorism objective for G-20 countries, much to the chagrin of China. The target was obviously Pakistan which has been fostering terrorist outfits. The final communiqué said, "Terrorism is a global scourge that must be fought and terrorist safe havens eliminated in every part of the world". Furthermore, the G20 leaders pledged joint crackdown on terrorism and its financing; vowed to destroy safe havens in every part of the world. Prime Minister Modi managed to insert this clause through his deft diplomacy with Angela Merkel the President of Germany and the host of the conclave.

India sits in the G-20 group and is making itself noticed by other big powers, so far so good. But Modi needs to look inward into our own country and its economic development. There is apparently growth in the economy, and India is said to outgrow China, but the impact of growth is not felt by a vast majority of Indians. Not long ago, the Arjun Sengupta report suggested that, nearly, 800 million people live on less than 2 dollars a day. Only recently, last December, one evening, the Prime Minister made all the 500 and 1000 rupee notes invalid in one fell swoop, in so-called demonetization. One fails to understand, without going into deep

economics of it, what are the fall outs of such a sudden and dramatic move. India is growing and is being impoverished at the same time. This is a paradox Modi is reinforcing. While he can throw the Indian demographic dividends at foreign investors, he should make these available to Indians too. Anyway, this debate needs to be engaged in, but for now, back to G-20.

G-20, by far, is the most powerful bloc, as the economic output of members constitutes 85 per cent of the world GDP. It started in 1970s as G-7, consisting of seven largest economic powers at the time – Canada, France, (West) Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Group emerged in response to the spikes in prevailing food and fuel prices. The Group's composition remained unchanged until Russia joined in 1996 when it became G-8. In the late 1990s, the financial crises affected a number of emerging economies in Latin America and Asia and threatened to spill over to G-8 countries. That is when the G-8 countries began to expand their size to include other countries. After some experimentation in including other countries, a solid structure of G-20 countries got finalized. The G-20 meetings were attended by central bank governors and finance ministers' but after the financial crisis of 2008, G-20 summits were elevated to country leaders' level. So far, twelve meetings of G-20 countries have taken place from 2008-2017, and the venues for the next three meetings have been

decided in Buenos Aires, (2018), Tokyo (2019), and Riyadh (2020). The original aim of G-20 was, 'to provide a new mechanism for informal dialogue – to promote co-operation in order to achieve stable and sustainable world economic growth that benefits all' (Canada, 1999). Since then, the objective has been broadly to manage the world economy in response to emerging issues, but many new agendas like dealing with climate change, managing globalization have been included. The significant inclusion of the issue of combating terrorism at the behest of India in the summit at Hamburg is a major development. Terrorism seldom figures in meetings where India and China are present, as the latter has sympathy and support for Pakistan which shelters terrorists targeting India.

In Hamburg, the discussion and the decisions were made under five rubrics. One, sharing the benefits of globalisation; it was underlined by the leaders that globalisation has led to excessive global imbalance that needs to be reduced. Truly, globalisation and technology have led to economic growth, but they have not benefitted all within and across the countries. Therefore, G-20 resolved to focus on sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth. The trade and investment should aim at increasing productivity, creating jobs, fighting protectionism, entering into plurilateral agreements, making WTO open, consistent and transparent and so on. It was decided to create a 'sustainable global supply chains'. In doing so, countries must

adhere to UN guiding principles on business and human rights and ILO declarations on multinational enterprises and social policies—eliminate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, ensure decent work, and reform labour markets. The final communiqué reiterated, “Well-functioning labour markets contribute to inclusive and cohesive societies, and resilient economics. Another significant development was the chalking-out of the G-20 ‘Road map for Digitisation for growth and development’ digitisation needs to be harnessed. There is digital divide in income, age, geography and gender. This divide should be done away with. G-20 members agreed to aim for a digitally connected economy and society by 2025.

The second head was ‘building resilience’. Under this objective, the tasks include: maintaining a resilient global financial system, monitoring and mending the international financial architecture, encouraging international tax co-operation and financial transparency, adopting pro-growth tax policies, and safeguarding against health crises, and strengthening the health systems. The third objective was ‘improving sustainable livelihoods’. This objective was aligned with the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development based on the 17 SDGs and 169 targets firmed up in Ethiopia in 2015. There was also reference to and reiteration of the OECD report, ‘Investing in climate and investing in growth’. Combating climate insecurity, reducing the GHG emissions, shifting to the use of renewable energies are the keys to sustainable livelihoods. ‘Building on all other treaties’ was the fourth agenda. The

treaties referred to are related to women empowerment, education, and entrepreneurship, especially of women, food security, water, rural youth, and agriculture and so on. On women empowerment, the 2014 Brisbane Agreement was invoked. It aimed at reducing gender gap in all areas by 25 per cent by 2025. On education, there was renewed emphasis on access to STEM—science, engineering, technology and mathematics, also on ‘e-skill for girls initiative’. Again on women issues, a couple of more Agreements were decided to be followed up; Wefi-women entrepreneurship financing initiative, Business women’s leaders taskforce. On rural development, the Agriculture Market Information System (AMIS) was to be used efficiently, so also the G-20 initiative on Rural Youth Employment. The Fifth agenda had a strong moral overtone that was ‘Assuming Responsibility’. The G-20 countries talked of being responsible for discrepancies, distortions and even decay in the economies and societies world over. The special focus was on Africa which is stalked by diseases, displacement, conflicts, exploitation and dictatorships, etc. The Summit resolved to build the ‘Africa partnership’. That is why Macky Sall, the president of Senegal, who is the president of new partnership of Africa’s development, was attending the summit. There were discussions on migration and refugee crises, especially the latter drew greater attention as Europe has been badly hit by heavy influx of refugees. Another major issue that became part of the global responsibility is ‘fighting corruption’. The G-20 invoked and pledged to conform to the UN Convention against corruption.

The major deficit in the Hamburg summit was the absence of unanimity on climate change. USA has withdrawn from Paris Agreement. The mantle then falls on Europe, as other countries continue to be big pollutions, like China. Australian power supply is largely coal-dominated, in Canada, oil extraction from sands leaves heavy carbon footprints. The US position in Hamburg was to “work closely with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently” to the rest of G-20 led by Germany had a different and contrasting proposal. That was, “to provide affordable, reliable, sustainable, low green house gas energy systems”. The Europeans had committed to cut GHG by 40 per cent by 2030; whether that is enough is another question. Important to recall that, in 1896, a Swedish scientist had posted a link between the surface, temperature and the concentration of in atmosphere. A century later, Angela Merkel, as the environment minister of Germany got world to agree to reduce global warming below 2<sup>0</sup> C. In Hamburg, she was hosting the G-20 summit and getting everyone on board on the issue. The most points in the climate negotiations is the climate finance. Even in Paris summit in “the climate and Energy Action plan for Growth” finance was the main concern. Before withdrawing, out of 3 billion USD committed by US it had already paid 1 billion USD to the corpus fund. Similar contributions promised by other countries are not forthcoming. The European diplomacy will be tested in mobilising other major powers besides US. Also getting US back on board will be an important task.

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# Communal Harmony Campaign

**Bharat Dogra**

The recent tragic events, particularly many incidents of mob lynching have re-emphasized the need for sustaining a campaign for promoting communal harmony and ending all forms of discrimination on a continuing basis. *India Today* magazine stated in its issue dated July 24 2017 that at least 50 incidents of mob lynching were reported in the three years from June 2014 to June 2017. What is more the trend escalated in more recent times with as many as 12 such incidents taking place in the three months from April to June 2017. The victims in all cases were Muslims or Dalits. The accused in almost all cases of killings were linked to cow vigilante groups or the so-called gau rakshaks, the leading magazine said.

While the communal forces play a leading role in such violence, one reason why they are able to involve many people is that a lot of communalism related myths are entrenched rather strongly among common people in our country. When some conscious efforts are made to remove these myths and also answer the highly distorted propaganda of communal forces, then people of different faiths are quite capable of living in harmony with each other. This can be seen in several areas where some organizations of workers or other organizations working on social reforms and justice are well-rooted among the people. In some parts people have their own rich contributions of communal harmony also, but more generally

people of most areas despite having a yearning for peace can nevertheless be susceptible to the very shrewdly prepared instigator propaganda of communal forces.

Hence there is a clear need for continuing a sustained campaign for communal harmony. I can tell from my own experience that even small efforts if sustained for several years can have a big influence. When the temple/mosque controversies were peaking, as an independent journalist and writer I took the initiative to prepare a series of posters and booklets on communal harmony. These tried to answer the false propaganda of communal forces on history related and other issues and instead presented those aspects of history (such as freedom fighters of various faiths fighting together against colonial rule) which can help to spread the message of communal harmony. Within my very small resources I could print only a few copies and so while I was very satisfied with the good work done, I was nevertheless conscious of the very small scale of the effort.

However, I soon realized how a very small beginning can open up much bigger opportunities. Some organizations came forward with offers that if I give them permission then they will like to republish these on a much bigger scale and soon I saw that these were being republished in numbers many times more than my original print order. It made me a little sad when one organization which published on a vast scale entirely omitted my name

from the posters. So what reached people on a big scale did not even have my name on it, but I told myself that this is not the time to take up such petty issues. The main thing is that the message should reach more people. This is something that I had achieved much beyond my expectations.

As some editors came to know of this effort, I was also able to write on these issues in some leading newspapers. One of the biggest newspapers in Hindi *Navbharat Times* published my series of nine articles on these issues at a time these were most needed. Then Nishant Natya Manch came forward to reprint these as a booklet. Then retired Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat published posters as a book. Thus one thing kept leading to the other and my very small effort became a big effort with the help and cooperation of others.

So lack of resources should not stop us from making a very small contribution, if sustained even this small effort may have a big impact.

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The new president of France Macron hopes to get US to reconsider its position. That will be triumph of Gallic (typical French) diplomacy. For now, India is on board with Europeans on climate change, it has climate negotiations, and Indians have headed the Global Climate Committees. Will India be called upon to play the role of a moderator in days to come?

# Satyagraha as a Peaceful Method of Conflict Resolution -III

Vibhuti Patel

The Norwegian resistance to Nazi rule, the Indian community *Satyagraha* against the Transvaal government, the Chinese boycotts of 1905, and the revolutionary change in Russia were not conducted in a liberal socio-political environment. Draconian laws were in effect, and in each case the government had the means to stamp out opposition promptly. It must be pointed out that with the exception of South African involvement; protestors resorted to *Satyagraha* without fully understanding its principles or techniques, mainly because arms were not available. Even in South Africa, Gandhi was still experimenting with *Satyagraha*, and it had not as yet attained the fullness of a strategy for conflict resolution. This was to happen much later.

In India, *Satyagraha* succeeded, not because British rule was democratic and liberal-the massacre of innocent women and men at Jallianwala Bagh pointed to the opposite-but because the British had ignored Gandhi's early calls for *Satyagraha*, thinking it to be an entirely eccentric and unworkable idea. The movement gathered force in the meantime, until it became too late to control the nationalists' fervour or the moral elan among the masses.

Indeed, even in the late 1980s there is persuasive evidence that *Satyagraha* would be an appropriate alternative for conflict as a means of change. As one looks at Central American upheavals, such as those in Nicaragua and El

Salvador, a certain similarity of underlying causes becomes apparent. There is not much dispute even among policy-makers in Washington that in each case the conflict is a result of long years of oppression, misery, and denial of freedom to the majority. However, in an oppressive environment, tightly knit violent revolutionary movements spring up, plunging the country into civil war. The masses want neither communism nor the semi-feudal oligarchies that have been the rule in Central America, and certainly they do not want civil war. In fact, when the revolutionaries succeed, as they did in Nicaragua in 1979, the results may be different only in degree from the oppression of the past. Born in violence, and threatened by great powers like the United States and its surrogates, a revolutionary government has no choice but to enforce austerity and strict rule.

However, in each case the guerilla movement could not have succeeded without mass support. Indeed, in the classic strategy enacted in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America, the guerrillas first fight for control of the countryside and slowly tighten the noose around the capital. As a final blow, the capital or major metropolis then goes on strike, and the government comes to a halt. In other words, non-cooperation and mass support could not be obtained without organization and publicity. And in every successful case these are quite effectively employed, even when clandestine operations are necessary.

*Satyagraha* is a better functional alternative to guerilla warfare in the classic strategy scenario, because here Gandhi's theory of power can be operationalized with stunning effect.

The ruling oligarchies cannot remain in power unless they deliver a large portion of the wealth of the country to external powers on whose support they depend for their own survival. In other words, such regimes represent the interests, not of the masses within, but of exploiting forces outside their country. This is the regimes strength; however, if viewed from the perspective of *Satyagraha* strategy, it is also its major weakness.

A great power like America may intervene on behalf of ruling interests on the pretext that the revolutionary movement is aided and abetted by America's enemies. Because self-reliance and non-violent persuasion are the cardinal rules in *Satyagraha*, there would be no need for arms from abroad; thus, the United States would look foolish sending an army against unarmed citizens who were simply agitating for human rights, and demanding liberty and democracy. What is more, if *Satyagraha* were to succeed and political change be brought about, the resulting government founded as it would be on peace and popular legitimacy without ill will, should be able to maintain internal as well as external peace.

Indeed, one of the most critical revolutions of recent times, the

revolution in Iran, has many lessons for us in this respect. Admittedly, Islamic fundamentalism has nothing in common with Gandhian *Satyagraha*; however, we should note several elements that this movement holds in common with other revolutions.

First the masses in Iran were imbued with moral and religious fervour; secondly, they were willing to accept enormous suffering, punishment and even death for the success of their cause; and thirdly, they bravely faced the Shah's troops, displayed enormous courage in the face of superior arms [often only meagerly armed themselves], and staged massive demonstrations, strikes, and rallies despite express warning not to do so. The Islamic Revolutionary Party that came to power was certainly not imbued with *Ahimsa*; indeed, it proceeded to eliminate all opposition. Nevertheless, it is significant that it had used non-cooperation and civil resistance to topple the Shah. It should be noted that the Shah saw only two choices before him: to plunge the country into a bloodbath or to abdicate. He chose the second, not because he was particularly compassionate and liberal, but because he saw little purpose in pursuing the path of civil war.

Gandhi would have abhorred the goals and methods of the Islamic revolution, but that is not the point here. The point is that moral determination; willingness to sacrifice, and mass resistance can succeed, even in an environment where there is no liberty to organize and no freedom to rally enthusiasts openly around a cause. The Islamic revolutionary used the mosques just as the Solidarity movement in Poland has used the Catholic

Church. 'People power' succeeded in the Philippines.

### Conclusion

Gandhi advocated *Satyagraha* not as a new religion but as a superior means for attaining social harmony and human advancement for peace. This alliance of a pragmatic quest for solutions and a deep spiritual conviction also points to the way in which future generations may be educated in the task of struggling for peace. Mahatma Gandhi's teachings of *Satyagraha* and *Ahimsa* are becoming more popular with the youth of today, said veteran Gandhians Monday as the nation marked the birth of non-violence as a means of resistance advocated by Gandhi in South Africa one hundred years ago. *"The day is a sweet reminder of a great movement that is still relevant for any civilization. I think the Twenty-First Century belongs to this ideology, and people especially youngsters must follow the path of the Mahatma to fight corruption and injustice,"* said veteran Gandhian Nirmala Deshpande. [www.theshillongtimes.com/c-12-Sept.html, 2006] The concept of *Satyagraha* or truthful passive resistance, took its birth at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg on September 11, 1906. The meeting was convened to oppose a proposed new legislation on the Indian community in South Africa.

*"The ideology that gave us independence is gaining popularity among youngsters and it's certainly a positive indication,"* Deshpande said, referring to a recent survey that found 76 percent youngsters in India consider Gandhi as their icon. Deshpande, also a Rajya Sabha

member, said that from cinematic themes to special educational courses, Gandhi's teachings were making a comeback. *"It seems the country is set for a transformation on the lines of Gandhian theories. And the centenary celebration will act as a catalyst to remind us to strengthen our commitment for a better tomorrow,"* she added. K. K. Mukhopadhyay, a Gandhian and former director of the Gandhi Bhavan in Delhi University, said, *"Gandhi's popularity is on the rise. From cinema to dedicated courses in colleges, Gandhi is covering new grounds and the response is quite encouraging."*

According to Delhi University authorities, a hundred marks examination paper termed *Understanding Gandhi* in the second year of the BA programme had fetched excellent response from students. Plans are afoot to rope in actors who have played Gandhi in films and theatre to make the course more appealing for students. Several cultural programmes and exhibitions were organized to mark the day in the national capital. The Gandhi Museum held an exhibition on *Satyagraha*, including portraits and write-ups on the life of the Mahatma in South Africa, the *Dandi March* and the *Quit India Movement*.

Minister of Tourism and Culture Ambika Soni released three books- *Satyagraha*, *Friends of Gandhi* and *Satyagraha*-on the occasion. Anil Dutta Mishra, deputy director of the Museum, said, *"We have also arranged for special lectures for the public to understand Gandhi better."* The Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti here exhibited rare photographs of Mahatma and his struggle against apartheid in

South Africa. The director of the organization said that they have planned yearlong special cultural programmes in different parts of the country to commemorate the historic event. "The year 1906 may rightly be described as a turning point in the life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It was in this year when he experienced a deep spiritual awakening within and dedicated himself to the service of humanity. We hope the centenary celebration will awaken many such souls."

### Epoch making Contribution of Gandhi

*Satyagraha* was the most effective tool that ensured political freedom of India from the British imperialism. Throughout the Twentieth Century, several world leaders and people's movements used *Satyagraha* to fight against apartheid, racism, colonization and injustices. Many thinkers and activities, in the world today, have begun to turn to the life, thoughts and methods of Mahatma Gandhi to look for solutions that can take humanity in this direction. Many countries have witnessed popular movements for freedom, equality and peace, which drew inspiration from the life and methods of Gandhi. Civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King in the US and anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa under leadership of Dr. Nelson Mandela vindicate Application of Gandhian Philosophy in Resolving/ Transforming Conflicts in the Twenty-First Century. In the Twenty-First Century, mass struggles of National Alliance of People's Movement [NAPM] led by Medha Patkar and electoral victory of Barack Hussein Obama have once again brought

Gandhian discourse on conflict transformation centre stage. Activities and thinkers of younger generation in the world are looking to the alternative path that Gandhi showed, in the belief that his message and testament are of crucial significance to the survival of humankind.

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## Hindi spread requires patience

**Kuldip Nayar**

Whenever a state language wants to spread itself to the national sphere, it naturally meets with some resistance. The limits of both are delineated. One is confined to the state while the other has the entire country for its spread.

The chauvinists in states have not understood it or at least not in the manner it should be. There is no competition. One is regional and the other is national. That Hindi is the national language was decided by the constituent assembly. The parliamentary committee—representatives from the non-Hindi speaking states participated—once again made it clear that Hindi was the national language and what has been left to the future was the switchover from English to Hindi.

What is happening now is that an effort is being made to reopen the language issue. Some are challenging the very idea of India and making territorial demands. This is unfortunate. Hindi was adopted to be India's language by the constituent assembly and there is a wrong impression spread that it was done by the majority of one.

The controversy was over the adoption of numerals, not the language.

Today, the official business and most other work are conducted in Hindi, much to the difficulty of non-Hindi speaking people. In fact, during the framing of constitution, the issue of language was one of the most debated topics and the decision to declare a national language resulted in two prominent camps. One, the North Indians who advocated Hindi as the national language and, two, the South Indians who did not want it to be imposed upon them.

While the Hindi camp tried to push Hindi due to its "numerical superiority", the Tamil camp rejected it outright and one of the Tamil leaders even went on to mock them by pointing out that if "numerical superiority" was the criteria, then the crow had to be chosen as national bird instead of the peacock. After several brainstorming debates, the Constituent assembly decided to finalize on Hindi with Devanagari script as the official language of the

Union, along with a special clause that English would continue to remain in use for all official purposes for the next 15 years.

But within few years, the committees set up to implement it began to face the ground realities. It came as a hard realization that 15 years would not be a sufficient period as the process of developing Hindi to a stage where it could be used as single national language would take more time. Even C. Rajagopalachari, who had always been in favour of Hindi as the national language and had imposed Hindi in 1937 when he had formed the Government of Madras, began to air his concerns about how Hindi was yet to develop to be acceptable as the single national language.

I was present at the discussion by the parliamentary committee when Govind Ballabh Pant was the Home Minister. I was his information officer then. When he started the business, he found that the non-Hindi speaking members were up in arms and vehemently opposed to use of the language in official business. Slowly and gradually, Pant brought around all members to reiterate that the union language, as enunciated in the constitution, would be Hindi. He left the matter of switchover to sometime in the future.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru gave an assurance to the non-Hindi speaking people that the switchover would take place only when they would be ready for it. His successor Lal Bahadur Shastri brought a bill in parliament to that effect. Parliament gave an assurance to the country that the non-Hindi speaking

people would not be put to inconvenience or handicapped.

Parliament is very sensitive on the subject and does not want to take any action until the non-Hindi speaking members endorse it. But a recent move by BJP government to promote Hindi had opened up a can of worms and scratched old scars. Social media was abuzz with debates over linguistics. While there seemed to be a general consensus among citizens that no language must be imposed upon by anybody against their wishes, most states in the south, Tamil Nadu in particular, had vehemently opposed any such move.

With the spread of soft-Hindutava in the country, Hindi is coming in its wake. Prime Minister Narendra Modi feels at home with the language. So do the other members from the majority of Hindi-speaking states. That is the reason why a non-Hindi speaking state jealously guards its regional language and even challenges Hindi whenever the particular state feels that the rightful space of its own language has been taken by national language.

Since the country has adopted a three-language formula—English, Hindi and the regional—the Hindi-speaking states are happy because it is their regional language. Non-Hindi speaking states are also happy because they have English and fit into the dictates of the Union which is primarily conducting its business in English.

Hindi chauvinists, who showed no patience earlier, are now quiet because they find that Hindi is a compulsory subject all over the country. If not today,

but tomorrow Hindi would have been learnt by the generations to come. Even the people in south India have realised that there is no go from the national language and their children are learning Hindi. Probably, the Modi government feels that it has to be only patient.

The noting on files is already in Hindi. Those who do so have the dictates of the Union in mind and give the English translation of the noting as well. It serves everybody's purpose and hence there is no reason for the government to take any extreme measures that will be looked down upon as an imposition. It would be better if things are left as they prevail today. Hindi is already there. Only a bit of patience is needed from the chauvinists. The RSS is doing that. Modi's occasional visits to the RSS headquarters at Nagpur testify to that.

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**Notebook****Perfidious Wapsi**

What many feared and an equal number hoped against hope that it will not, has happened. Nitish Kumar walked back to the NDA after four years of his stint out of it. No wonder, the BJP is celebrating it as Ghar Wapsi. In this Wapsi he is not alone, his entire legislative party seems to be with him. The press tells us the story that what made him do it is the news (planted perhaps) that someone from the Gathbandhan met an important minister in Delhi with a plan to topple the Nitish Government. He verified from his own sources and found it correct, we are told, and it is this which precipitated the move. The choice of the verb 'precipitate' is revealing. Such a move had been worked out, perhaps with the Prime Minister, and all that was needed was to wait for an opportunity. Perhaps the unleashing of the CBI hounds on Lalu's family too was worked out in advance. And when it happened Nitish distanced himself from the minister who was under investigation, built pressure for him to resign, and, when he failed, as expected, he did the Ghar Wapsi.

They say power corrupts, the country got one more proof of this. It is not moral politics, not to protect the image of being incorruptible, but the desire to remain in power, that caused the move. If it was otherwise, he could have convened a meeting of the Mahagathbandhan legislators, offered to resign and requested them to elect a new leader. That would have been moral politics. Acharya Narendra Dev, the doyen of socialist movement who set high standards of morality, had resigned from the membership of the legislature when the socialists left the Congress.

Nitish could have followed his example. But he did not. It is shocking that not one MLA from the JD (U) has so far revolted. There are some fine socialists among them, and hence it is sad and tragic, to note that none of them has protested. On that day, in May 17, 2016, when he came to identify himself with the socialists, he had talked of Sangh mukt Bharat. This was the day on which the Congress Socialist Party was conceived in Patna in 1934, and he had committed himself to getting rid of the Sangh. The socialists cheered. He praised Medha, a symbol of peaceful non-violent resistance, the resistance of the type which the Father of the Nation would have approved, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha and this paper. And it should be added that Lalu, despite his impeccable secular character, preferred to the family's fortune more than the ideology and invited his ruin.

In those four years of lucidity to some, and lunacy to others, and now perhaps to him, he roused hope. He became a Prime Ministerial face of the opposition in the country. He picked up an item from Gandhiji's constructive programme, the prohibition, and enacted a law and became popular among women. He toured all over the country to demand total prohibition. And he celebrated the Champaran Satyagriha. And hence, despite many doubters, some thought that he would be a harbinger of a new politics.

Politics where there is no corruption, politics where morality, ideology mattered more than power, politics where tainted people, even

if innocent, would resign on their own, politics which is fare to all. This is what the Freedom Fighters preached.

All this has been betrayed. This Wednesday in the last week of July, has become a black day in the country and should be remembered as such. It is the day when he betrayed the Sangh mukt cause for a few pieces of silver (power). As it happens, it is also the day when Medha, whom he had praised, was fasting, staring at the gloomy prospect of homes of two hundred thousand Adivasis drowning in the swelling waters of the Narmada river. The news of Nitish's perfidy must have added to her gloom. Bihar, which produced Mahavir and Buddha in past, Rajendra Prasad and JP and Ganga Prasad Sinha and Karpoori Thakur recently, to name a few, is not known for producing Mir Jafars. Will this land now be known as the land of Nitish the betrayer?

People in this country are bound to realize sooner or later that the lynch mobs who kill Muslims and Dalits, could kill also those who do not agree with their views even if they are Hindus. 'They will come for me', will haunt them and they will go back to Gandhiji and the heroes of the Freedom Movement, to learn lessons at their feet and decide to work for a India free from the contrary and divisive views of Hindutva. The treachery of Nitish will not go in vain, it will not be avenged but will be washed away by the sacrifices of those who are inspired by Swami Vivekanand, Gurudev Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

Let's hope that there are some in the JD(U), who are crying in their privacy at this betrayal. Let's further hope that they will find the courage to revolt and seek shelter in some other socialist party and work to liberate their brothers from the clutches of Nitish and also

work for an anti-RSS formidable front.

A few things are clear. His career graph has ended and his popularity has nose-dived. Now whatever he does, even for the benefit of Bihar, will be credited to the BJP and he

will develop the image of a poodle of Narendra Modi. He has committed hara-kiri that was entirely unnecessary and he will repent it. He will live to see his ruin and there will be no chance left even for penance. What a hara-kiri!

—GGP

## **After 17 days of Relay Fast at 21 places in Narmada Valley, Sardar Sarovar affected with Medha Patkar go on Indefinite Fast on the Narmada River Bank**

Sardar Sarovar Project was initially pushed in the name of the drought affected in Gujarat. It is obvious; it was being pushed for the corporates and in the interest of the electoral politics. Without completing just rehabilitation of thousands of families in Madhya Pradesh the Government of Madhya Pradesh with the Centre's blessings is all ready to forcibly evict and throw the families with the children aged out in the tin sheds of 180 sq. feet which can't even accommodate their belongings, why talk of persons and cattle.

On July 24, the police force brought in for this operation carried out a mock drill in Badwani and continued with its intimidation tactics towards vacating the villages.

No doubt the political parties including Congress, JD (U), Left Front, AAP through their elected representatives and office bearers, have taken cognizance of and supported the people's struggle by raising their voice at the democratic forum of Madhya Pradesh assembly and the parliament. They have endorsed the people's demands for rights and opposed submergence as well as eviction without

rehabilitation. However the Shivraj Singh government seems to be determined to use force and violent measures. The time schedule with a plan to raise the water level by few metres every ten to twenty days is another conspiracy like a slow poisoning to kill the communities.

Against such violence, the 32 years old nonviolent movement of the people in Narmada region has to be necessarily taken to the peak. Narmada Bachao Andolan will initiate an Indefinite Mass Fast from July 27th, on the bank of the river Narmada.

As per the Madhya Pradesh Government notification (dated 25.5.2017), 18386 families of villages will have to vacate their house and the village while the lists therein have a number of flaws such as the families who have left decades ago or the others who were removed on the grounds of reduced back water level and related exclusion of theirs, are also included directed to leave by 31.7.2017.

On the other hand, many families that have been residing since generations and are to be surely affected, are left out! The reality is

that 192 villages and one township inhabit about 40,000 families which can be affected at the dam height of 138.68 metres with the highest flood.

With not a drop of water being available to Madhya Pradesh from Sardar Sarovar, it's shocking to see that the state does not hesitate to sacrifice its living communities. It has already promoted the false affidavits and shamelessly declared the project across the world as a symbol of development.

The grand reality as on today is such as the state of Gujarat, not completing the micro canal network, has diverted the canal waters to the corporates such as Coca Cola and Car industry even in the name of the drought affected. This year when the Narmada waters reached Saurashtra, what a coincidence that the heavy rains (about 22 inches in 2 to 3 days) have led to flooding of dams which were to be filled with Narmada and some even overflowed. The army had to be called and at least 5000 people had to vacate first in Gujarat before the valley. This has

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## In Search of Privacy

J. L. Jawahar

Of late, privacy has become a big issue – both for the government and the judiciary. In fact, it is the problem of the individual more than that of any institution.

The government has devised Aadhaar card as a means of assuring that the various subsidies and benefits offered to poor people reach them without mediators. Then they started to link it with every activity of all citizens, thus making it an encumbrance for all unintentionally. Some approached courts seeking redressal and tell the government to stop it. Then it has become the problem of courts. Naturally, the courts of law searched for privacy in the Constitution, the document that governs the process of judgment. But they could not find any mention of it in the constitution. A doubt has arisen whether there is anything called privacy and if it is there, what it is like.

It is not rare that our judiciary exercised rights that are not there in the constitution. That is what happens in regard to Public Interest Litigation, the venerable PIL jurisdiction. More important in that line is the constitution of collegium for selection of persons for appointment to the higher judiciary. In the case of PIL there was no controversy as everybody considers it a valve that can be opened to reduce the pressure on the people to get immediate redressal of their grievances. But in regard to collegium there has been a deep controversy as it amounted to usurping the rights of the executive

given in the constitution. In order to justify that violation of the constitution, the judiciary took the trouble to devise strange doctrines and wild interpretations of the constitution. Stress was laid on the basic structure and democratic nature of the constitution. It was stated that the democratic structure depends on the rule of law and the law is as stated by the courts. They erased the distinction between consultation and consent and exercised their right as conceived by them. It is a *fait accompli* and accepted by all reminding one of Stockholm Syndrome. It is pointed out here only to indicate that the judiciary has a right to interpret the constitution in such a way that it is not difficult to find a place for privacy in the constitution. In fact, it would be more relevant and justified in the present case.

It is not only the triad of Articles 14, 19 and 21 that imply privacy as a constitutional concept. There are also judgments wherein privacy is accepted as a right of individual that cannot be violated indiscriminately. Then the question arose whether privacy is also a fundamental right or something on par with those rights (as if we have much respect for those fundamental rights). Every right that is mentioned as fundamental in the constitution has been circumscribed (if not eroded) by some amendment to the constitution or some interpretation by the judiciary. Thus there is no force in Art. 13 wherein it is stated that all the laws “in so far as they are inconsistent with the provisions of this part” (of

fundamental rights) “shall to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.” Thus there is no advantage in accepting privacy as a fundamental right.

Then the question is how to conceive the idea of privacy and how to give it a judicial shape. It would be difficult to establish that right with a government that did not hesitate to declare that the individual has no absolute right even on his own body. It can be agreed that there are no absolute rights in a civilized society. But it cannot be denied that there are certain rights available to the citizens in a democracy and it is the responsibility of the government to safeguard the same. In nature one is born free. Shackles arise only because of the society into which we are born as we have certain social responsibilities. Wild animals do not have such restrictions as they do not have any such responsibilities. They are really free. Taking a natural concept, there is no limitation on the freedom of an individual. But limitations arise in view of his responsibilities to the society as a civilized member of it. But for those restrictions, he is supposed to be free. He can always demand that he must be allowed to live as he likes as a free individual. Apart from those restrictions, which must be legitimate and specific, whatever he does constitutes his privacy. He has a right to enjoy it without interference from any authority. “Leave me alone” he can say.

In every country citizens have certain rights that are not available

to others living in that country. It casts a responsibility on the government to keep track of its citizens so that any rights are restricted to them and not availed by others – for example, right to vote in elections or to prosecute a profession. Citizenship confers certain rights that are not available to others. To ensure that, it would be necessary to have a system to identify the citizens. Initially, Aadhaar Card is supposed to serve that purpose. But the card is issued on obtaining some more personal information than what is required for identification of citizenship. (Surprisingly, there is no restriction that Aadhaar card is issued only to citizens.) In addition, Aadhaar is now supposed to be linked to every activity of the individual. To open a bank account Aadhaar is necessary. I am advised to link my mobile phone with my Aadhaar number. Perhaps I may be asked for Aadhaar if I want to book an air ticket. Why is it required? It gives a feeling that the Big Brother is breathing over your shoulders. There is no such right to the government in a democracy. There was a furor when the National Security Agency of the USA started collecting information without any authority. Governments do not have any overriding rights to collect information about citizens clandestinely.

A question was raised that the people are giving so much of information about themselves on internet in the form of chatting and other relations. In many such cases it amounts to foolishness and it involved the concerned persons in trouble. But revealing information voluntarily cannot be an excuse for the governments to ask for revealing of such personal information without any legal authority. People

do not like surveillance even if what they do is not illegal or immoral. If the person has done anything illegal the government must be having the means to discover it and punish. But it does not justify surveillance of everybody to forestall the possibility of somebody doing something illegal.

In a democracy everyone is entitled to do anything that is not specifically forbidden. In a dictatorship people are not supposed to do anything except what is specifically approved. That is the basic difference that shall be maintained. We are in a democracy.

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*(Continued from Page 4)*

happened once every few years and raises a question regarding whether Gujarat can or cannot have decentralized water management, and avoid such a huge destruction? Madhya Pradesh too would accept that it doesn't require any more power since its own power projects, such as the Bargi Power Plant kept idle as closed. Why can't then both the states, not having any urgency take a decision to defer impoundment until the R&R is complete.

The Chief Minister, Shivraj Singh, it is clear and obvious, is not for any dialogue with us who can bring into the debate, data and documents that can prove as well as challenge. Avoiding any discussion on the inadequacies, he has had a few dialogues till only with his party and Parivar colleagues. The groups he talked to included the middlemen who have looted the poor oustees for lakhs, which established the nexus that support the corruption and why there was no action even after 7 years long enquiry by Justice Jha

Privacy has a value. It gives flavor and beauty to personal life. It makes you what you are. It is your proud possession. Invasion of it is always resented. When law compels it to reveal, it is tolerated and obeyed.

Then, what is privacy? It is everything that is not expected to be revealed under specific laws. That line has to be drawn clearly. Privacy provides the background for fundamental rights. It provides the context in which fundamental rights become relevant and meaningful. Let us hope that our judiciary will give that protection to all the citizens.

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Commission.

Today, Modi Government has totally ignored the social and environmental issues, so serious and detrimental, at the dam height of 138.68 metres, the Government of Madhya Pradesh seems to be ready to sacrifice the lives and rights of lakhs of people with police force and water floods.

The state has not only misinterpreted the order of the Apex Court dated 8.2.2017 but has also left hundreds of farmers/landholders deprived of the package granted by the Supreme Court. Instead of constructing all civic amenities at the R&R sites and create a situation conducive to shifting of the oustees to the sites, the state is focusing on erecting temporary structures, the tin sheds, spending crores of rupees where there is no permanent facility for either drinking water or water availability for building houses, the government is to make food camps with contractors to feed 20 thousand people at each, at the cost of 66

*(Continued on Page 14)*

# India-China on the Brink of War!

D. K. Giri

The stand-off that began in mid-June at the tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan seems to escalate into a full-scale war. Experts believe that a war is imminent between India and China unless the stand-off is de-escalated through talks. China demands the withdrawal of Indian troops before any talks could begin. India says troops from both sides should pull-out, the status quo ante at the tri-junction be restored, then only talks could start for the long-term solution of the border disputes. Neither side is prepared to accommodate the request of the other. Consequently, the stalemate continues, pushing both China and India to the brink of war.

In the media, speculations on war, albeit a limited one, continue to pour in. China would not back off, risk a loss of image of the biggest regional power and of an aspiring world super power. India would not pull out unilaterally lest it should be seen as a lesser power than China, unable or unwilling to defend its friends and allies. Secondly, for China, it would be giving up part of its territory for negotiation, on which it has bonafide claim. India, although, at the moment is defending Bhutan's territorial claims, has serious security risks to let China build a road through Doklam. The road will bring China close to a spot, called the 'chicken neck' that connects India to its eight North-eastern States. India, at no cost, can allow this to happen. So, how will the impasse be resolved, with a war or diplomacy, or both? The jury is still

out on these three possible scenarios.

While both New Delhi and Beijing are feverishly preparing to back-up the stand-off and hoping for a face-saving, self-satisfactory solution, let us assess the forces at work – diplomatic, military, intellectual, and PR etc., also the political-strategic steps taken by New Delhi and Beijing. It is a part of Chinese compulsive tendency to grab territories of other countries. It has recurring territorial disputes with several countries, with Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan and so on. It uses a muscular approach to get into a particular area, create facts on the ground, utters belligerent rhetoric through official media and gives a *fait accompli* to the opponent. In most cases, the militarily weaker countries buckle under the pressure and give in. It used a similar tactic with Bhutan, as it had done in the past. The Kingdom of Bhutan had some supervisory role in parts of Tibet. China pushed Bhutan out of it as it annexed Tibet into PRC. This time around, Beijing was building a road up to a military base of Bhutan called Zompleri through a plateau known as Doklam. The plateau lies at the tri-junction between China, Indian State of Sikkim and Bhutan, and is currently disputed between Beijing and Thimpu. India supports Bhutan's claim over it. Beijing contends that as per the 1890 Border Settlement Agreement between China and Imperial Britain, the plateau belongs to China. Thimpu not being a part of the Agreement, disputes the claim. India, as the closest ally of Bhutan,

and a stakeholder in the geo-politics of the area, backs up Thimpu on this. India also invokes China's position way back in 1955 and the recent agreement of 2012. In 1955, at the famous Bandung Conference, the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai had said, "with some of our neighbouring countries, we have not yet fixed our border lines and we are ready to do so. But, before such negotiations can be held, we are willing to maintain the present situation by acknowledging that these parts of our border are parts which are undetermined. We will restrain our government and people from crossing even one step across our border (and) if such things do happen we (would) admit our mistakes. As to the determination of common borders which we will be undertaking with our neighbouring countries, we shall use only peaceful means and we shall not permit any other kind of method. In no case, shall we change that."

Beijing and its foreign policy establishment have obviously forgotten such a historic statement made by their famous leader, or they conveniently ignore it to undertake their territorial expansionism. Similarly, only five years ago, in 2012, India and China agreed that all disputed border areas will be re-determined through negotiation. China has clearly violated all these commitments. China commits these violations in a calculated way. It is just that it miscalculated its move this time around. Beijing thought of clandestinely constructing the road as Bhutan would not have the gall

to resist. It did not anticipate such a strong reaction from New Delhi who, on a request from Kingdom of Bhutan, stepped in swiftly and stopped the construction work, mobilized its forces to prevent Chinese incursion. There have been such incursion by Chinese grazers, which have been ignored by Bhutanese, but a construction of a road up to Bhutanese border is unacceptable.

To be sure, it is a part of Chinese game plan to establish its hegemony in South Asia and entire Asian region, on the way to becoming the super power. It has brought other countries in the region into its 'sphere of influence' through trade, and investment, mainly in infrastructure – Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and others through its new strategy, one belt, one road (OBOR). India has refused to join OBOR, and Bhutan is the only country in the region who is completely with India, and with not even diplomatic contact with China. So, Beijing planned to upset that arrangement by walking up to Bhutanese door and bully it. Beijing did not reckon that India is emerging as a big power too on its own terms and pace, and is standing rock-solid behind Bhutan.

Many argue that a limited military confrontation to end the deadlock is possible as a diplomatic solution is not in sight. The Indian NSA, Ajit Doval is in China to participate in the BRICs security conference. But, China has pre-empted any peaceful negotiation with Doval by branding him as a 'schemer of the stand-off'. It is a continuation of their belligerent bullying tactic. However, a military conflict is unlikely for the following reasons. One, there have been

stand-offs in the past, in 1987 in Sumdorong Chu Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, which was resolved after six years through an agreement to ensure peace along the LAC. There were heavy posturing from both sides, but eventually they had to back-off and talk. Second, China's strength is mainly its economy, the second largest in the world, which it has built through trade. It has huge trade deficits in its favour with many big countries, 346 billion USD with United States and 46.6 billion USD with India. In the trade negotiation with US last week, China has been strongly snubbed by US negotiators for dumping cheap steel into their country and creating a huge trade deficit against them. China has been rattled. Likewise, they would not like to lose any part of the Indian market. Although Indians might go for cheaper Chinese goods, in case of war between the two countries, China need not underestimate the sudden surges of nationalism and mass boycott of Chinese goods. That will hit China below their belt. Beijing will not risk such a counter action. Third, China may be proving the Marxian axiomatic prognosis that the next stage of capitalism is imperialism. But, they would also heed the foreign policy dictum that pragmatism is the name of the game. Whilst China tries to encircle India by penetrating into India's neighbourhood, India is squeezing China internationally through its strategic partnerships with big powers. Beijing would have to be mindful of - United States, Japan, Israel, Chinese antagonists in South East Asia, Mongolia, countries of European Union etc. Fourth, both countries are nuclear powers. There are no winners or losers in a nuclear war, only losers. In desperation, nuclear countries can use the most

disastrous earth-destroying nuclear weapons in a war situation. China is heavily wary of a tiny country like North Korea because of latter's nuclear arsenal. So, it may not mess up with India. Fifth, the whole world will like to prevent a war between the two most populous countries in the world, two big markets.

Having said all these, one is not sure of any occurrence in world politics including in bilateral relations. Anything is possible, even a war. At any rate, India needs to recognize China as the biggest threat to its security and growth. The big power play between New Delhi and Beijing will continue for long in the Asian theatre. India needs to match up to China in economy and military strength. The only decisive edge India has over China is in diplomacy as it is a democracy and is not perceived by any as an aggressor country. So, until India is an equal power, in theory, to China it has to use its diplomatic prowess to contain and neutralize China. No doubt this is the biggest foreign policy challenge facing Modi government. Can Modi use his so-called 'charm-offensive' to meet this? Will the conservative foreign policy establishment support Modi effectively? Are Modi and Sushma Swaraj (not a right choice for the Foreign Ministry) up to it? We will watch in this column as it unfolds.

**Janata**

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# Modi Government and the Nation's Food Security - II

Neeraj Jain

## Globalisation and the Attack on PDS

The mounting foodgrain stocks on the one hand, and rising malnutrition levels and starvation deaths on the other, led to an uproar across the country. Activist groups and NGOs started mounting pressure on the government to expand the scope of the public distribution system. The Supreme Court too intervened, and passed a series of orders ensuring a multitude of food rights, such as providing 35 kg subsidised rations per family, heavily subsidised rations for poor families (the Antyodaya Anna Yojana), security to pregnant and lactating women, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The UPA Government then in power at the Centre was in a quandary. The increasingly vociferous people's movement and Supreme Court orders were becoming a huge embarrassment. But the World Bank and foreign investors were also equally firm—that the government should do nothing to increase its expenditures on the poor. A way out of the dilemma was found by the government's sorcerous bureaucrats. They conjured up a bill—the National Food Security Bill—that ostensibly aimed to provide food security to all the poor, but in effect, subverted the whole issue. It was passed by the Parliament in August 2013, and signed into law on September 12, 2013.

Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 75% of the

rural population and 50% of the urban population (on the whole, roughly 67% of the total population) will be entitled to five kilograms of grains (rice/wheat/millet) per person per month at the price of Rs 3/2/1 per kg. The Act also provides for children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years to be given an age-appropriate meal, free of charge, through the local anganwadi, and children in the age group of 6 to 14 to be given one free cooked mid-day meal every day (except on school holidays) in all government and government-aided schools. Another provision is that all pregnant women and lactating mothers would be entitled to maternity benefit of Rs 1,000 per month for six months.<sup>2</sup> Distribution is to be conducted under the PDS and other existing welfare schemes, while provisions for specially targeted groups such as mothers and children are to be funnelled through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal schemes.

The media hailed the food bill as a “historic step” to weed out hunger from the country, but the reality is that the NFSA is actually a disgrace for a country that claims to be an emerging economic superpower:

- Firstly, the Act provides the poor only starvation foodgrains. While the Indian Council for Medical Research recommends that an adult requires 14 kg of foodgrains per month and children 7 kg, the bill restricts the entitlement to only 5 kg per person per month!

- Secondly, the Act provides only for cereals, with no entitlements to other basic food necessities such as pulses and edible oil required to combat malnutrition—whose prices have soared in recent years. The Empowered Group of Ministers, set up by the Central Government to draw up the framework for the Act, was very clear about it. It proposed that the definition of food security should be “limited to the specific issue of foodgrains security (wheat and rice) and be delinked from the larger issue of nutrition security”—a stand which actually violates Article 47 of the Indian Constitution.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the Act is thus clear. People, including children, can remain hungry / malnourished / anaemic, but shouldn't die of starvation because that makes bad publicity!

- Thirdly, the Act does not provide even this limited coverage to all the poor—it expands the percentage of the population that would be provided subsidised foodgrains through the PDS to 67%, but as we have discussed above, 75% of the rural population and 73% of the urban population are unable to access the minimum recommended 2200 / 2100 calories.

- Even states like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have better food security acts.<sup>4</sup> Thus, for instance, Tamil Nadu has a universal public distribution system, wherein each and every family, whether below the poverty line or not, is entitled to 20 kg rice free of cost. The PDS in Tamil Nadu also supplies other

essentials like wheat, sugar, kerosene and tur dal at subsidised rates.<sup>5</sup>

### BJP and Food Security

While occupying the opposition benches, BJP leaders, during the debate in Parliament over the National Food Security Bill, had criticised the Bill as being very inadequate. Arun Jaitley had stated: “Are we substantially expanding the right over what existed prior to this Bill being brought in? Are we substantially increasing the outlay? The answer is ‘no’ . . .” Murli Manohar Joshi had even moved an amendment demanding that “every person . . . shall be entitled to 10 kg of food grains, two and a half kg of pulses and nine hundred grams of cooking oil per person per month.” The BJP election manifesto promised “Universal Food Security”, saying that it is integral to national security.<sup>6</sup>

However, after coming to power, the BJP has made a complete U-turn on this issue. The finance minister has gone completely silent on the question of expanding the scope of the NFSA to include other food essentials like pulses and edible oil. In a hearing before the Supreme Court on a PIL filed by Swaraj Abhiyan praying for directions to the government for providing drought relief in affected areas, when the Supreme Court suggested that the government provide 2 kg of pulses (dal) and 1 kg of edible oil per month at subsidised rates through the PDS, the government declined saying it was facing fiscal constraints!<sup>7</sup>

Arun Jaitley has also gone completely silent on the issue of providing “Universal Food Security”. Our much vocal Prime

Minister Modi, who lectures the people of the country every other day on making India great, has not spoken a word during the past three years on the terrible malnutrition and poverty levels in the country and the need to provide universal food security to the people. Jaitley’s

allocation for food subsidy has increased by only 7.29% per annum (CAGR) over the three years the BJP has been in power; and as a percentage of GDP, the food subsidy has actually fallen in the four budgets presented by Jaitley so far (Table 1).<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1: BJP Government Allocations for Food Subsidy, 2014–15 to 2017–18 (Rs crore)**

	2014–15 (A)	2015–16 (A)	2016–17 RE	2017–18 BE
Food Subsidy	117.67 1	139.41 9	134.83 5	145.33 9
GDP at Current Market Prices	12,433 ,749	13,675 ,331	15,075 ,429	16,847 ,455
Food Subsidy as %	0.95	1.02	0.89	0.86

With the government not interested in distributing sufficient foodgrains (at least 7 kg per head per month, if not more) to all the poor at subsidised rates, then what has it been doing with the mounting foodstocks with the Food Corporation of India? Exporting them, to earn foreign exchange needed to finance the luxury goods imports of the rich! India’s wheat and rice exports

have zoomed. Recently, *World Grain*, an international business magazine for grain, reported that India would most likely continue to be the biggest supplier of rice to the world’s market for the sixth consecutive year in 2017, shipping 10.7 million tonnes, compared with 10.3 million in 2016<sup>1</sup>—in a country with the largest number of malnourished people in the world.

**Table 2: India: Wheat and Rice Exports (million tons)<sup>1</sup>**

	Wheat	Rice
2012–13	6.5	10.2
2013–14	5.6	10.9
2014–15	2.92	11.95
2015–16	0.61	10.41

### ***Yet More Cuts in Food Subsidy Planned . . .***

The Modi Government is now planning yet more steep cuts in food subsidy. This is going to be done through what Modi and Jaitley have called the JAM trinity—Jan Dhan (bank accounts), Aadhaar and mobile telephony. All are becoming near universal, and the government's plan is to gradually eliminate the PDS, identify the poor through Aadhaar, and provide direct cash transfers to the poor into their Jan Dhan accounts. According to the government's Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian, who has been parachuted directly to Delhi from Washington, this will enable the government to stop leakages as well as exclude the better-off from the PDS, and the government can then invest the savings into infrastructure (that is, transfer it to the private sector through the PPP route); simultaneously, prices can be "liberated".<sup>1</sup>

This is typical 'free market jargon'—that worships the free market, and demands that market must be allowed to determine prices. But that is precisely one of the reasons why the PDS had been introduced in the country in the first place: speculators would often cause foodgrain prices to zoom, creating havoc for the poor, which ultimately forced the government to introduce the PDS. The PDS not only guaranteed foodgrains to the people at fixed and subsidised prices, it also acted as a check on speculation in foodgrain prices. In fact, some years ago, during the first term of the previous UPA Government, it had taken steps to weaken the PDS, and that had led to a sharp rise in foodgrain prices in 2008, forcing the government to backtrack.<sup>2</sup> A sharper fluctuation in prices can also be seen in the case of those crops for which there is no procurement. For example, the retail price of toor (arhar) dal across the country doubled in just a few months to reach Rs 170 to Rs 200 per kg by October

2015—while what triggered the price increase was a fall in production, the prices zoomed because of hoarding of pulses by traders.<sup>3</sup>

Once the PDS is dismantled, speculators would again be able to rule the roost. If and when wheat and rice prices zoom, the government would then have to increase its cash transfers to the poor. But it is doubtful if the government would do that, as it is seeking to reduce its food subsidy bill. It is going to spell absolute disaster for the millions of impoverished people in the country.

Such is the nationalism of Delhi's Badshahs—it is confined to making people shout slogans of "Bharat Mata ki Jai", while they themselves are slavishly implementing the dictates of our foreign governments who are seeking control over the Indian economy for the naked profiteering of their giant corporations.

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#### (Endnotes)

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(Continued on Page 15)

# Petition against GM Food Crops and GM Mustard

**Bharat Dogra**

Recently over 100 Gandhians, most of them activists involved in several justice based struggles and various constructive activities, signed a petition against the commercial release of genetically modified mustard variety DMH 11 (GM Mustard in short). In addition this petition, sent to the Prime Minister on June 14, makes a strong statement against other GM crops as well, particularly GM food crops.

This petition came at a time when the controversy surrounding GM food crops is about to peak with the final decision on commercial release of GM Mustard still pending before the government. Mustard or sarson is a very important oilseed crop of India but in addition its leaves are also cooked as a much relished vegetable (sarson ka saag) and on top of it mustard has several medicinal uses including home remedies.

As no GM food crop has yet been approved in India this decision will have wide reaching impacts. There has been a lot of international interest in this issue as well as decision taken in such a leading and important developing country as India is likely to influence some other developing countries as well.

Earlier this controversy had peaked during the tenure of the UPA government in 2009-10 when Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh had called for public hearings to be held on this issue all over the country. Finally on February 9, 2010 Jairam Ramesh

announced the important decision of moratorium on Bt brinjal which was widely welcomed. This time around also there is a lot of public interest but the transparency of the earlier process is missed.

The petition by Gandhians against GM Mustard and other GM food crops has come at just the right time when people have started asking a lot of questions about GM Mustard. This petition has been signed by some of the most senior Gandhians like S. N. Subba Rao of National Youth Project and P. V. Rajagopal of Ekta Parishad.

The petitioners identify themselves as “members of the Sarvodaya movement and Gandhian networks” and say that they have serious objection to the release of GM Mustard. The petitioners say that there is sufficient evidence to show that GM crops are not safe for human health. “Apart from the bio-violence that forms the inherent basis of genetically modification technology” the petitioners note that transgenic varieties can contaminate all other crops as well and if GM varieties keep spreading then after a point there will be no GM-free agriculture.

The claim of promoters of GM Mustard that this is necessary for increasing yields is rejected in this petition which goes on to say, “Worldwide, experience shows that in the case of rapeseed which is of the same family as mustard, countries which grow non-GM rapeseed such as Germany, France,

England and Czech Republic show yields much higher, almost double, compared to the ones which grow GM-rapeseed such as Canada and USA.” Further, there are other non-seed based agronomic approaches to increasing mustard yield such as the System of Mustard Intensification. This has already given good results in several parts of India.

Regarding ecological and health risks of GM Mustard this petition says that this is likely to increase herbicide and agri-chemical use. This will have a very adverse impact on a very important pollinator like honeybee and on the production of honey. As mustard is widely used in Ayurveda GM Mustard will also have a very adverse impact on Ayurveda.

The petitioners have demanded that in view of the adverse impacts of GM Mustard in particular and GM food crops in general, the government should reject GM food crops to protect the interests of farmers, consumers, the interests of environment as well as the larger national interest. Alternatives of eco-friendly agriculture are available. As the petition puts it, “Organic non-violent agriculture or Rishi Krishi is the need of the hour if public health and long-term food security are to be saved.”

What this statement has said is in conformity on the one hand with the views expressed by several senior scientists or groups of scientists such as the Independent Science Panel and the Union of Concerned

Scientists as well as some eminent scientists of India such as Dr. Pushpa M. Bhargava.

One of the signatories and founders of Ekta Parishad P.V. Rajagopal has said that the basic principles of Mahatma Gandhi are

for decentralization and increasing self-reliance of rural communities while technologies such as GM crops are taking us in the opposite direction of making farmers excessively dependent on big corporates. Ran Singh, another signatory and one of the

coordinators of Ekta Parishad said that Mahatma Gandhi emphasized concern for the poorest and respect for all life forms, and technologies such as these which increase the expenses of poor farmers and have adverse impacts on bees and other life forms should be opposed.

## Bhilare Guruji

**Jatin Desai** Mahatma Gandhi and several other leaders were arrested after All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India resolution post mid-night of August 8, 1942. Gandhiji was released from the Aga Khan Palace Prison on May 6, 1944. He had contracted malaria and went to Panchgani for rest on the advice of his physician. His wife Kasturba and secretary Mahadev Desai had died in the Aga Khan Palace. It was in July 1944 that Nathuram Godse tried to attack Mahatma with a dagger. At that time there was no Pakistan and so no question of giving Rs 55 crore to Pakistan. Bhilare Guruji passed away on July 19, 2017 at the age of 98 in his village Bhilar in Satara district, Maharashtra, India. He was a young boy when Gandhiji was resting in Dilkhush Bungalow in Panchgani. Bhilare Guruji and other youths were looking after Gandhiji. One day a group of 18 to 20 people came from Poona (now Pune) in a bus and held a day-long demonstration against Gandhiji. When Gandhiji came to know about the protest he invited the leader of the group Nathuram Godse for a discussion. Godse refused to meet him. During the prayer meeting in the evening, Godse, dressed in a Nehru shirt, rushed towards Gandhiji with a dagger in hand. Bhilare Guruji and Manishankar Purohit, owner of Surti Lodge of Poona, overpowered the attacker. Panic resulted, but Gandhiji remained calm. He told Guruji to

release Godse and asked Godse to spend 8 days with him so that Godse could understand his point of view. But, Godse refused to accept Gandhiji's offer. There are people who raise a question about the authenticity of the incident. But, the fact is Guruji saved Mahatma. There are records which prove that the attack on Mahatma took place and the attacker was Nathuram Godse. The news of Bhilare Guruji's bravery spread immediately and he became a hero. Mahatma Gandhi's great grandson Tushar Gandhi in his book **Let's Kill Gandhi: A Chronicle Of His Last Days**, writes, "Before leaving Poona, Godse had boasted to his journalist friends that some important news concerning Gandhi would soon reach them from Panchgani. Joglekar, a reporter working for Godse's periodical *Agranee*, corroborated this fact. A. David, the then editor of the *Poona Herald*, stated under oath, while deposing before the Kapur Commission, which was set up in the sixties to investigate the conspiracy behind Gandhi's murder, that Godse had made an attempt on Gandhi's life and he had also heard of his boast to fellow journalists about the planned attack. In a small news item, the *Times of India* reported that a Poona-based editor had attempted to assault Gandhi. The police records show that there were day-long demonstrations against Gandhi at Panchgani. The records also mention

that Godse was held for trying to rush at Gandhi shouting slogans but does not state whether he was armed. Dr Sushila Nayyar, Gandhi's physician and close associate testified before the Kapur Commission that one of the protesters was found to be carrying a dagger, but could not confirm whether it was Nathuram Godse. However, the two men who overpowered Godse, Manishankar Purohit and Bhilare Guruji, testified to this attack before the Kapur Commission, and stated that they had caught and disarmed Nathuram Vinayak Godse, that day at Panchgani. Bhilare Guruji was present when Tushar Gandhi's book was released in Mumbai in 2007. A day before Bhilare Guruji passed away, I was talking to Jayant Diwan, who has interviewed and documented many freedom fighters including Bhilare Guruji around ten years ago, about Bhilare Guruji. He had narrated extensively on the Nathuram Godse's attempt on Mahatma and how they overpowered him. Again, that was not the first attempt on Gandhiji. Nathuram Godse and his gang continued their efforts to assassinate Gandhiji a few more times till they succeeded on January 30, 1948. Generations will remember Bhilare Guruji and Purohit for saving the apostle of peace in 1944. In today's world full of hatred and war, one needs persons like Bhilare Guruji to save humanity.

—Jatin Desai

## March for Science

We are delighted to note that, on 22nd April this year, more than a million people undertook a March for Science in 600 cities across the globe, demanding robust funding for science and demanding that governmental policies be guided by scientific evidence.

We are planning to complement and supplement this global effort in India as we feel it is very relevant in the current juncture. On the one hand, scientists from India have played a commendable role in the discovery of gravitational waves and of Higgs Boson, in the interplanetary mission through Mangalyaan and in reducing foreign dependence through the development of indigenous satellite launching capability. But, on the other, science in India is facing the danger of being eclipsed by a rising wave of unscientific beliefs and religious bigotry, and scientific research is suffering serious setback due to dwindling governmental support.

We note with deep concern that financial support to even premier institutions like IITs, NITs, and IISERs has been slashed. Universities are facing shortage of funds to adequately support scientific research. Research funding agencies like DST, DBT and CSIR are reportedly impacted by reduced governmental support. Scientists in government laboratories are being asked to generate a part of their salary by selling their inventions and from other sources.

While we can justly be inspired by the great achievements in science and technology in ancient India, we see that non-scientific ideas lacking in evidence are being propagated as

science by persons in high positions, fueling a confrontational chauvinism in lieu of true patriotism that we cherish. Promoting scientific bent of mind can certainly help improve the social health of our country where incidents of witch hunting, honour killing and mob lynching are reported regularly.

We feel that the situation demands the members of scientific community to stand in defence of science and scientific attitude in an open and visible manner as done by scientists and science enthusiasts worldwide. We appeal to scientists, researchers, teachers, students, as well as all concerned citizens to organize 'India March for Science' events throughout the country, particularly in the state capitals, on 9th August 2017, with the following demands:

1. Allocate at least 3% of GDP to scientific and technological research and 10% towards education
2. Stop propagation of unscientific, obscurantist ideas and religious intolerance, and develop scientific temper, human values and spirit of inquiry in conformance with Article 51A of the Constitution.
3. Ensure that the education system imparts only ideas that are supported by scientific evidence.
4. Enact policies based on evidence-based science. Appeal by

• S. Mahadevan, S G Dani, Nitya Anand, Babu Joseph, Debashis Mukherjee, M R N Murthy, Arvind Gupta, Deb Shankar Ray, K M Seethi, A P Thomas, Ajit Srivastav, D. R. Naik, Partha P Majumder, Ayesha Kidwai, Jayanta Mukherjee, Express interest to participate.

*(Continued from Page 6)*

rupees per person per day. In the place of permanent road to be constructed, it is spreading fine crushed stones on the mud roads. The plan is to force various categories of landless, artisans to doctors to the rented houses, if not the tin sheds, pushing them out and killing the living communities by drowning.

The Chief Minister, who merely expresses sympathy with the oustees, is certainly not for resolution of conflict, but for war! The Prime Minister still performing as a former Chief Minister of Gujarat, is insisting the CMs of 12 BJP ruled in the August 12th and perform an Aarti with 2000 Sadhus coming from Varanasi. Such a perverted depiction of development politics is unbearable. The judiciary too can't accept violent ways to progress nor should it accept the claims of ideal rehabilitation without full assessment. We can't let go the brutal lynching of tolling masses, the village communities, agriculture, natural ecosystem & the culturally rich region, the oldest of the civilization that is of Narmada.

It's in this context that after waging a nonviolent people's battle over 32 years, we are taking to a path of indefinite fast challenging ourselves, appealing to the sensitive citizens in our own society and expecting that a better sense will prevail amongst the ruling politicians. We will stay out on the banks of Narmada and continue to fight.

–Kamla Yadav,  
Bhagirath Dhangar, Dr. Sunilam  
Contact: 9179617513-

## Desecration in South Goa

A five member team visited the sites of desecration of religious structures and burial places across South Goa on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to understand the ground reality. The members of the fact finding team were Adv. Irfan Engineer, Director, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) and Neha Dabhade associated with CSSS, Fr. Savio Fernandes, Executive Secretary, Council for Social Justice and Peace (CSJP), Ranjan Solomon and Roselle Solomon, prominent activists working for rights of minorities associated with CSJP.

The team visited the sites of desecration at Curtorim, Chandor, Gudi-Paroda and Curchorem in South Goa. They spoke to the priests of the related Churches, members of the Christian community, people's elected representatives, politicians and people from across various faiths. Till the time of going to the press the team was unable to meet the police officials due to time constraints although appointments were fixed, however the team will meet the officials prior to the final report.

The observations on ground points to a possibility that the incidents of desecration and vandalism are a part of a pattern which is planned and executed by the same persons or organizations. All the attacks have been executed with heavy steel implements directed at the bases of the structures to cause

maximum damage. The team sensed the pain and anguish which was palpable in the shock and fear on the faces of the members of the community.

The general perception of the community pointed to certain statements at a Hindu conclave and during the visit of a National office bearer of the political party in Government as possibly encouraging such incidents.

The desecrations are carried out in a form of a campaign to strike fear, insecurity and mistrust among communities in Goa. Most of the desecrated crosses visited by the team have been targeted more than once in the past more particularly hinged around political developments in the state. The law and order machinery have failed to solve the cases and apprehend the culprits responsible for such crimes thereby emboldening the perpetrators. The helplessness and fear prevalent in the Christian community is giving rise to a feeling of being treated as second class citizens.

The following are the primary findings after the interactions:

The atmosphere in Goa is vitiated and communalized to cause polarization through relentless anti minority narrative. Christians and Muslims are especially targets of demonization through false propaganda. Muslims are portrayed as terrorists and loyal to Pakistan

while Christians are portrayed as being agents of Portugal and anti-nationals and seeking to convert members of other religious communities through fraud/inducement.

The fact finding team recommends that strict action in accordance with law be taken against individuals/organizations indulging in hate campaigns against minorities in Goa and those responsible for desecration and vandalism. To ensure transparency it would be appropriate to order a judicial commission to investigate the desecrations in a time bound manner. The team also urged the civil society organizations to continue their struggle for justice to the citizens of Goa.

Incidentally, at the time of going to the press, it has been reported that one Mr. Francis Pereira has admitted to have single handedly desecrated and vandalized one hundred and forty odd religious symbols since the last five years. The team strongly feels that the arrest appears as a familiar script to similar crimes across the country to pacify the civil society and the affected communities and divert attention from the actual perpetrators. The extensive damage caused as witnessed by the fact finding team could not have been possibly inflicted by a single person, more over who is 50 years old. The fact finding team demands an impartial investigation into the crimes. —CSSS

*(Continued from Page 11)*

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*In ever loving memory of*



**Dr. K S Joseph**

## **An Educationist and Freedom Fighter**

*“Eat well, play well , study well ..... Make the most of what you have”*

*–Dr. K S Joseph*

Born in a remote village in Kerala in the year 1929, Dr. K. S. Joseph breathed his last on 28th July, 2016 at Mulund , Mumbai.

A Doctorate in English and Political Science, he had his early education in the States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

During his school days he was an active participant in the Freedom Struggle. His brother was arrested during the Quit India Movement, but since he was still a 13 year old boy, he was carried on the shoulders by the British Inspector.

He had good command over not only Indian languages like Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi but also mastered English , French and Latin.

With a vision to spread education to the needy , he started schools in and around Hyderabad – Sardana – Roorkee – Kazipet.

He visited America for a livelihood in 1972 but not being much contented again felt the urge to return to the Mother land and serve the people. In the year 1976 he returned to India - Mumbai and started the JJ Academy at Mulund (West).

Today the JJ Academy caters to the needs of thousands of students of the area.

## Revisiting August Revolution

*Janata* had a special issue on the Quit India movement when the country ushered in its silver jubilee, and again in 1991, on the occasion of its golden jubilee. The weekly had a special reason to bring out these issues. The four heroes of that movement JP, Dr. Lohia, Aruna Asaf Ali and Achyut Patwardhan and their colleagues had conceived of the weekly and launched it and one of them was its first editor and another took over from her a while later, and the rest were very much there in its pages from day one. When these issues were published the generation which participated in the movement or was its enthusiastic witness was there, and when the appeal went out for articles, there was an enthusiastic response. The memory of the movement was fresh, its heroics had become the folklore, and many narrated at the drop of the hat as to how they had kept at their homes underground leaders. The issues captured all of this. On both occasions, as it happens, there were daylong seminars in which the participants were socialists and Forty- two Augusters. There were also some who had left the Socialist Party and had gone over to the Congress or some other party. However, none of them had forgotten their exploits of those days, the spirit of those times, and they all spoke feelingly about these and committed themselves to pursue the unfinished tasks of the August revolution.

At the time of the silver jubilee, there was a public meeting in the evening and Achyut Patwardhan and Vasant Dada Patil spoke to a large gathering. The

atmosphere was electric, and all those who attended the meeting relived those days of heroism and sacrifice. Both the seminars and the public meeting brought out the highlights of the resolution that was passed at the AICC meeting held at Gowalia Tank Maidan (now August Kranti Maidan) on August 8 in 1942. The resolution, after narrating the then context, said that only a free India can contribute meaningfully to the war efforts, and asked the British to leave. It also said that the power should go to the workers in the fields and factories. And, further said explicitly that the freedom has to be for all and not just for the Congress.

Socialists and Forty-two Augusters in Mumbai for decades have been walking silently from Chowpatty after laying wreathes at the feet of the statues of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Vithalbai Patel to the Gowalia Tank Maidan to pay their homage to the martyrs. And the leaders, who spoke after paying homage, bemoaned year after year the fact that the promise of the August revolution had remained unrealized. Surprisingly, however, no one from the audience asked, why the task remained unfinished and if it had remained unfinished: were they themselves and their leaders not responsible? However, there was a feeling of guilt for not doing enough in this behalf and the feeling is still there. It is not unhealthy.

As the country is entering its platinum jubilee of the August struggle, to the customary unfinished tasks, a

new task has got added. As said earlier, the August Resolution had promised freedom for all, not just for the Congress. This said everything. The freedom was not only for those who fought for freedom, but also for those who did not and even those who opposed the movement and for people of all faiths, creeds and races. It was also for all the colonies. A very comprehensive idea of freedom was there in the resolution. It was a polychromatic idea. But now the polychromatic idea of freedom is being changed to a monochromatic one. Some of our countrymen, now in power but who had not participated in the freedom movement, are exhorting us to forget the oft repeated idea of unity in diversity and are hell bent on popularizing the idea that unity excludes diversity. This is an attack on the very soul of India. This has to be fought - the way the country fought during the freedom movement. And yes, the fight has to be peaceful. It has to be more Gandhian than what it was during the Quit India movement days when Socialists and radical Congressmen had given themselves a doctrine of limited violence and justified and practiced some violence. The new dispensation that has been ushered in on May 2014, does not unleash police, let's say, still. It neutralizes it and makes it a passive witness, but unleashes lynch mobs. Our own citizens kill our own citizens after demonizing them as the other. This is a tragic situation and needs changing. To change these people, wired painstakingly to kill the 'other', we need an instrument that is Gandhian. They have to be changed, reclaimed. And this can happen, not by imitating them, but by summoning a superior moral force. Can we, who still believe in the freedom movement's idea of India, summon that force? We will have to, if this India which has survived all these centuries, has to survive.

This issue of *Janata* on the Quit India movement is more a collection of documents than a commentary. It aims at capturing those days of Quit India, when the nation, including its leaders, had a lot to worry. The war was on and the end did not appear near. The imperialist character of the war one fine morning ceased to be that for a section, though small, of our society, when Russia was attacked. Japan was at the door. The Indian National Army was growing in numbers and influence, but there was some speculation in the country that whether it will enter India on its own to free the country from the British or enter along with the Japanese army. The war efforts had depleted our resources and there was chaos. The country was sympathetic to democracy and was against Fascism. But Gandhiji and Congress told us that only a

free India can intervene on behalf of democracy and the nation accepted it. This issue wants the past to speak to the present, inform it, and inspire it to take on the new crisis engulfing us since 2014. Socialists have a task cut out for them. They have to play a role similar to the one during the freedom movement, the Quit India struggle and the JP movement and, along with other forces that claim their heritage to the freedom movement or swear by the constitution, work hard to save the soul of the country. Socialists and activists who are raising the people's issues and those who sympathize with them will have to go to the masses, listen to them, record painstakingly their grievances and adopt them as their own, and help them fight. Janata, it hopes will be there to record all this.

-GGP

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## Maulana Azad's Opening Address

at A.I.C.C. meeting at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on August 8, 1942

Opening the proceedings, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad referred to the Allahabad Session of the A.I.C.C. and said that the decision taken then was impelled by necessity. They might forget everything but they could not forget the decision taken then. On the failure of the Cripps mission the only course open to them was to take the decision reached at Allahabad, namely, that for the effective defence of the country against foreign aggression the only course was to have the reigns of Government in India's hands. When a nation was denied such authority, it could not effectively resist foreign aggression.

The menace of aggression to India was ever increasing and the danger which only a distant one a few months ago was fast approaching them. In the face of such danger, it would be a calamity to allow the people to grow sullen and down-hearted. The Congress wanted to see that every Indian youth took part in resisting aggression. If the people of India were indifferent and sullen, the responsibility was not that of the Congress but that of the British Government. All appeals during the last three years to set up a national government in India had been rejected by the British Government.

If events had been allowed by the British to take a different shape, Indians would have been whole heartedly engaged in the war. The British attitude was one of not allowing Indians an opportunity to put their heart into the war in the service of humanity.

In the circumstances, said Maulana Azad, there were two alternatives before the country. The first was to wait for the events that might happen. The second was to act and save the country from the threatened invasion.

In order to instil enthusiasm into the people, they must be made to feel that in participating in the war they would be defending their own hearths and homes. One could not expect them to fight with sincerity unless they were sure that they were fighting for the protection of their own freedom.

The Congress, Maulana Azad emphasized, had already declared that its sympathies were with the democracies

but there was no other way of saving India than by bringing about a political change in the country.

With the imminence of the danger from Japan, it was no longer so much a question of India's freedom but of India's protection. The fundamental test of the Congress demand, if it was granted, was whether it would hamper the effective prosecution of the war with all the responsibility which on him as Congress President, he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the freedom would mean a new life in their war effort and the change would not endanger the cause of the United Nations. It must necessarily help the cause and the purpose of the war. It had to be remembered that what they wanted was that the reigns of Government should be in Indian hands. They did not demand the withdrawal of such forces also from the country. But they did not realise that such a demand was not practicable.

They wanted the successful termination of the war in favour of Democracies.

If conditions were different, they would not have hesitated to demand the complete withdrawal of the British from India even if it meant exposing the country to the dangers of anarchy and civil war. The demand which was being put forward for a political change in the country was not of such a nature as to upset civil administration and law and order. They wanted a change which would help the prosecution of the war and not bring about chaos. If fair play and justice prevailed, the British Government and their allies would not find the demand such as would bring about chaos and disorder in the country.

It was sheer travesty to interpret the Congress demand in the manner interpreted by Sir Stafford Cripps.

The Congress President explained that the 'Quit India' demand did not mean the physical removal of all the Britishers from India. It only meant the transfer of political power to Indian hands. After the demand had been originally made by Mahatma Gandhi, both Pt. Nehru and himself had gone to Wardha to discuss the matter with Mahatma Gandhi who made it clear to them that it

only meant the transfer of power.

Continuing Maulana Azad said that events had reached such a pass that there was no time either for threats or for promises. They must face facts reasonably and act instantly. The Congress did not want promises nor did they want to make promises. The need of the hour was action and action right now on the part of the Congress as well as the British Government. Let the British Government sign India's independence simultaneously. "We will sign our agreement to the United Nations to fight along with them against all aggressors." He could

say with all the emphasis at his command or speaking with the responsibility attached to the Congress Presidentship that they would be prepared to sign such an agreement. But were the intentions of the British Government honest? Were they willing to grant the independence of India?" Concluding Mr. Azad said the zero hour was fast approaching. They were making a final appeal to the British and to the United Nations and it was the duty of the latter to accept it if their eyes were not blind and their ears were not deaf.

—*The Hindustan Times*, 8 August 1942

## Western Railway Employees Union

Grant Road Station Building (E), MUMBAI – 400 007.

**WREU**, the oldest trade unions in the country, earlier known as BB&CI Railway Employees' Union, is in the services of Railway men since 1920. WREU, a free, independent and democratic trade union, is a founder member of AIRF and HMS.

**WREU** fought for upliftment of railway men 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 Railway men since 1979, implementation of series of Cadre Restructuring in Group 'C' and 'D' categories in Indian Railways, implementation of recommendations of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> CPCs with modifications and RELHS Scheme for Railway men.

**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 lighting 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 railway men and the general public.

**(R.C. Sharma)**  
President

**(J.R. Bhosale)**  
General Secretary

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## Mahatma Gandhi's Speech

at A.I.C.C. meeting at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on August 7, 1942

Before you discuss the resolution, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920 or whether there has been any change in me. You are right in asking that question. I may tell you that I am the same man today that I was in 1920. The only difference is that I am much stronger in certain things now than I was in 1920. I may explain it by pointing out that a man goes about heavily clothed in winter but the same man may be found without such clothing in summer. This outward change does not make any difference in the man. There are people who may say that I say one thing today and another thing tomorrow. But I must tell you that there is no change in me. I stick to the principle of non-violence as I did before. If you are tired of it then you need not come with me. It is not necessary or incumbent upon you to pass this resolution. If you want swaraj and independence and if you feel that what I place before you is a good thing and a right thing then only accept it. It is only that way you can give me complete support. If you do not do that I am afraid you will have to rue for what you do. There is not much harm if a man does a wrong thing and repents but in the present case you will be putting the country also in danger. If you do not believe fully in what I say then I will request you not to accept it but leave it. But if you accept it and do not understand me properly then there is bound to be friction among us although it may be of a friendly nature.

Another point I want to impress upon you is your responsibility. The members of the All-India Congress Committee are like members of Parliament representing the whole of India. The Congress from its very inception has not been of any particular group or any particular colour or caste or of any particular province. It has claimed ever since its birth to represent the whole nation and on your behalf I have made the claim that you represent not only the registered members of the Congress but the entire nation.

*Referring to the Princes, Mahatma Gandhi stated that they were the creation of British power.*

Their number may be six hundred or more. They were created by the ruling power as you know to create

differences between Indian India and British India. It may be true that there are differences in the conditions obtaining in British and Indian India but according to the people of the Indian States there is no difference as such. The Congress claims to represent them as well. The policy which the Congress has adopted towards States was drawn up at my instance. There has been some change but the basis remains the same. Whatever the Princes may say, their people will acclaim that we have been asking for the very thing that they want. If we carry on this struggle in the way I want it, the Princes will get more through it than they can ever expect [from the British power]. I have met some Princes and they stated their helplessness by saying that we are more free than they are because they can be removed by the paramount power.

I will remind you that you should accept the resolution only if you approve of it from the heart because if you do not you may expose yourself to danger.

We had the opportunity of running the Government at least in seven provinces. We did put in good work which was praised even by the British Government. Your work does not finish with the attainment of freedom. There is no place for dictators in our scheme of things. Our object is to achieve independence and whoever can take up the reins may do so. It may be, you decide to place it in the hands of Parsis. You should not say why the Parsis should be entrusted with power. Maybe that power may be given to those whose names had never been heard of in the Congress. It will be for the people to decide. You should not feel that the majority of those who fought for it were Hindus and the number of Muslims and Parsis in the fight was small. Once they got freedom, they should change their whole mentality. If there is the slightest communal taint in your minds, keep off the struggle.

There are people who have hatred in their hearts for the British. I have heard people saying that they were disgusted with them. Common people's mind does not differentiate between British Government and British people. To them both are the same. They are the people who do not mind the advent of the Japanese. To them perhaps it would mean change of masters. But it is a dangerous thing. You must remove it from your mind. This is a crucial hour. If we keep quiet and do not play our part it would not be right on our part. If it is only

Britain and the United States who fight this war and if our part, is only to give monetary help, whether given willingly or taken from us unwillingly, it is not a very happy proposition. But we can show our real grit and valour only when it becomes our own fight. Then even a child will be brave. We shall get our freedom by fighting. It cannot fall from the skies. I know fully well that the Britishers will have to give us freedom when we have made sufficient sacrifices and proved our strength. We must remove any hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was. The reason for this is that at this moment they are in distress. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes. As I am not in the position in which they are, I can point out their mistakes. I know they are on the brink of a ditch and about to fall into it. Therefore, even if they want to cut off my hands, my friendship demands that I should try to pull them out of that ditch.

This is my claim, at which many people may laugh, but all the same I say this is true. At a time when I am about to launch the biggest fight in my life there can be no hatred for the British in my heart. The thought that because they are in difficulties I should give them a push is totally absent from my mind. It never has been there. Maybe that in a moment of anger they might do things which might provoke you. Nevertheless you should not resort to violence and put non-violence to shame. When such a thing happens you may take it that you will not find me alive, wherever I may be. My blood will be on your head. If you don't understand this it will be better if you reject this resolution. It will rebound to your credit. How can I blame you for things which you may not be able to grasp. There is one principle in the fight which you must adopt. Never believe-as I have never believed -that the British are going to fail. I do not consider them to be a nation of cowards. I know before they accept defeat every soul in Britain will be sacrificed. They may be defeated and they may leave you just as they left the people of Burma, Malaya and other places with the idea of recapturing the lost ground when they can. That may be their military strategy. But supposing they leave us what happens to us? In that case Japan will come here. The coming in of Japan will mean the end of China and perhaps of Russia, too. In these matters Pandit Nehru is my guru (teacher). I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's defeat nor of China's. If that happens I would hate myself.

You know I like to go at a rapid speed. But it may be I am not going as rapidly as you want me to. Sardar

Patel is reported to have said that the campaign maybe over in a week. I do not want to be in a hurry. If it ends in a week it will be a miracle and if this happens it would mean melting the British heart. Maybe wisdom will dawn on the British and they will understand that it will be wrong for them to put in jail the very people who want to fight for them. Maybe that a change may come in Mr. Jinnah's mind after all. He will think that those who are fighting are the sons of the soil and if he sits quiet of what use would Pakistan be for him.

Non-violence is a matchless weapon which can help everyone. I know we have not done much by way of non-violence and therefore, if such a change comes about I will take it as the result of our labours during the last twenty-two years and that God has helped us to achieve it. When I raised the slogan 'Quit India' the people in India who were then feeling despondent felt I had placed before them a new thing. If you want real freedom you will have to come together and such coming together will create true democracy-democracy the like of which has not been so far witnessed nor have there been any attempts made for such type of true democracy. I have read a good deal about the French revolution. Carlyle's works I read while in jail. I have great admiration for the French people. Pandit Jawaharlal has told me all about the Russian revolution. But I hold that though theirs was a fight for the people it was not a fight for real democracy which I envisaged. My democracy means every man is his own master. I have read sufficient history and I did not see such an experiment on so large a scale for the establishment of democracy by non-violence. Once you understand these things you will forget the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. The resolution that is placed before you says we do not want to remain frogs in a well. We are aiming at a world federation in which India would be a leading unit. It can come only through non-violence. Disarmament is only possible if you use the matchless weapon of non-violence. There are people who may call me a visionary but I tell you I am a real bania and my business is to obtain swaraj. Speaking to you as a practical bania, I say, if you are prepared to pay the full price [of nonviolent conduct], pass this resolution, otherwise, do not pass it. If you do not accept this resolution I won't be sorry for it, on the contrary I would dance with joy because you would then relieve me of the tremendous responsibility which you are now going to place on me. I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed, but so far as you are concerned I want you to accept it as policy. As disciplined soldiers you must accept it in toto and stick to it when you join the struggle.

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Balkumb, Thane [W]

## Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech

at A.I.C.C. meeting at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on August 8, 1942

The conception of the resolution is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international background. The arguments for the resolution have already been sufficiently put before the public. I am sure the bona fides of the resolution have been fully understood by all friends. The resolution is in no sense a challenge to anyone. If the British Government accept the proposal it would change the positions both internal and international, for the better from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. I am convinced that whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.I.C.C. knows that Mahatma Gandhi has agreed that the British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India may continue. This has been agreed to in order not to allow the Japanese to come in.

I am surprised how intelligent people in England and America could have misunderstood the Congress stand unless, of course, they deliberately chose to misunderstand it. I have regretfully come to the conclusion that to some extent other governments are also following the British line of thought towards India. Today, the British Government is opposed to the Indian national movement for freedom. I am convinced that the British Government can never really think in terms of advancing the cause of the freedom of India unless, of course, the entire character of the present British Government is changed. I am not personally concerned with such a change, but I stand for dissociating myself with that government and that country. It is not for me to advise the British people what government they should have.

There is a great deal of criticism in America, too, about what India wants. We are accused, by some newspapers, that we are blackmailing.' It is a curious charge for a people to make who themselves had for generations carried on a struggle for freedom. If for demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall, it is not going to stop us from working for our independence. We live for it and will die for it. I do not want to say anything at the present moment which might add to the feeling of bitterness that exists everywhere. I know that this War has produced great emotional reactions in people's minds

which is one of the worst effects of the War and which makes it very difficult for the people to think straight and not to think in terms of violent hatred.

Nobody in Whitehall can think straight, I suppose. There is falsity everywhere. You listen to the radios, London, Berlin or Tokyo. One does not know what is the truth. I am prepared to make many allowances for the emotional background in England and America. I do not really mind if people there get angry. But I feel sorry for the people in England and America who have a perverted way of looking at the Indian question. They are so wrong that they will certainly land themselves in difficulty. After all, just think what would have been the course of history, particularly that of Britain, if she had taken right steps with regard to India in the last two years. If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the War would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire. The fact is patent to me that the British Government and, for certain, the Government of India think the Indian National Congress to be their enemy number one. If the Government of India is going to treat the people of India like this, then we also know how to behave with them. We have seen in the last few months an unparalleled example of inefficiency and incompetency of this government. The whole system is a rotten one. I do not want to associate myself with the creaking, shaking machinery that the Government of India is. As for the so-called National War Front, there is neither the nation, nor the war, nor any front in it. All that this front is now doing is opposing the Congress. I certainly do not mind that. The whole Government of India is built that way. The only occasion when it does function effectively and efficiently is when overnight it starts rounding up large numbers of people. One of these days some such efficient functioning will reappear against Congressmen!

It is a curious tangle that we are in. It is not going to be resolved by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. May I, with all respect, suggest to the great people of America that they have all gone wrong in regard to India, China and the whole of Asia. Americans have looked upon India as an appendage to Britain, and Asia as the dependent of Europe and

America. Some of them have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries, but always with a taint of racial superiority. They have always considered them-selves, because of their inventions during this machine age, to be infinitely better than us and also that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother countries of the world. What is the good of such people, who, simply because they have some very great material achievements to their credit, have forgotten or are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor cars. This is a machine age. We will also learn to build machines-better machines. Americans have forgotten the magnificent achievements of China and India. It is China and India, with the experience of ages, who have learned the art of living decently even without the material achievements considered necessary for such living.

I hate poverty. My grievance against the British is that they have made Indians miserable, poverty-stricken wrecks of humanity. We are now taking a step from which there will be no going back. If there is goodwill on the other side, then everything would be all right and the whole course of the War and the future of the world would be changed. The change would be not merely emotional but in the material sense also. But that is not to be. There might be some difficulty. It is my conviction that this resolution is the only way, the effective way, in which we can help China and Russia and I know how terrible the situation is there. Britain and America must change their whole conception of the War. It is no good looking at Asia as a side-show. Asia is the centre of the War and it is Asia that is going to determine the final result of the War. Therefore, I want to prepare today, even at some risk and peril, so that the final result of the War should be the right kind of result. We must go forward even though it involves certain perils. I should like my friends, who do not agree with this resolution or who do not try to understand it, to respect our bona fides. People should realise that if there is any trouble in India, it is we who would suffer. If there is internal trouble or an external invasion by Japan, it is we who would suffer. England might be distantly affected but we will have to die immediately. The problem of meeting aggression concerns us deeply. How can I, after seeing the incompetence of the government, trust them? Their whole attitude is one of retreat. We, however, want to be valiant fighters. It is not a narrow nationalist resolution.

I am proud of Indian nationalism because it is broad-based and has an international background.

The movement contemplated is not for merely achieving national ends but for achieving world freedom. The congress is plunging into a stormy ocean and it would emerge either with a free India or go down. Unlike in the past, it is not going to be a movement for a few days, to be suspended and talked over. It is going to be a fight to the finish. The Congress has now burnt its boats and is about to embark on a desperate campaign. I can never persuade myself to work with a government which has neither vision nor intelligence. Nor would I remain a passive spectator of the great happenings that are taking place in the world. It appears to me, perhaps, I would live in eternal opposition to the Axis powers. I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are bargaining and haggling. In moments of excitement people are prone to say certain things, but this should not be dubbed as bargaining. How, by granting India's independence, would the war efforts of the United Nations be hampered or how would chaos and anarchy follow in India? The resolution does not give out even one-tenth of the real feelings of the Indians towards the British Government.

The debate on this resolution is over and I have also had my say. There are just a few points which I have partly said and partly not said-which I would like to say in English for the benefit of my friends who may not have followed me.

What is the resolution? You have seen and read it. It is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of cooperation. It is all that. It is not a threat but still behind it there, is the obvious warning that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples. There is going to be no cooperation on any other terms. On any other terms this resolution can only promise conflict and struggle. Let that be clear. Some of our friends abroad may think that we are acting unwisely. I do not blame them. They move in their own environment. I want them to realise what we are saying. We are in dead earnest about the course we are going to adopt. Let there be no doubt about it. You may occasionally cheer and clap but the fact is that we are on the brink of a precipice and we are in dead earnest about it. I think this resolution of ours is not only a resolution of the All India Congress Committee but it does represent - as on many other occasions our

resolutions have represented - the voice of India. I would even go a step further and say that it represent the voice of the entire oppressed humanity. If, by a miracle, Britain had accepted this resolution and acted according to its demands you would see such a wonderful change, not only in India but all over the world. It would have changed the whole nature of the War. It would have given it a real revolutionary background which it does not bear today.

Now, remember that the essential thing about this War is that it is something infinitely more than a war; it is a World War. That is big enough; but it is bigger than that: it is a part of, and prelude to, and precursor of a vast revolution that is enveloping the whole world. This War may end or it may, be carried on for some time, but no peace will be established, no equilibrium attained until this revolution runs its appointed course. Our misfortune has been that the leaders in the West did not realize the revolutionary significance of this War, or if they realized, they did not act accordingly. They are still carrying on in the same old way and think only in terms of more tanks and more aeroplanes. Probably in their position I would have done the same thing. They are not thinking of the vast surge of the elemental emotion of humanity. Unless they do this, they can never attain success. I hope they will learn, but, sometimes, I fear, that they will learn it too late.

Mr. Churchill and other Englishmen have not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race. In a recent speech Mr. Churchill visualised the day when the Anglo-Saxon race would march through the world in dignity and majesty. This is not a pleasant picture to contemplate and it is a thing not going to be tolerated by Asia at any rate. Let that be clear. There is too much talk of majesty and dignity of the Anglo - Saxon race or the German or the Italian race. There are other races also in the world and we have had enough of such talks. This racial superiority can no more be tolerated. We are going to cooperate with the British when we think it right to do so and when there is a right cause; but we are not going to act with them if we think that the cause is not right. At the present time, the Allied cause is only negatively right in the sense that Germany and Japan are worse. But Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the War and make it right positively. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who are helping the Germans would feel the impact of the change. It would, be a turning point of the War. But they simply talk about their own problems which have no significance for us and ask us

not to do this and that and go on in their own ruts. The people in England, America and elsewhere are looking at every question from the narrow standpoint of a soldier. And it does not matter to them how other people view the Indian question. India says something which we believe-and I honestly believe-is not only in the interest of India but enormously in the interest of the Allied cause provided they accept it. They talk about blackmailing and threaten us. I can only tell them that we will not be deterred from our course by any amount of threats. On the other hand the Westerners ought to realise that at this stage threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them. We have decided to take this course on which there is no going back. I repeat again : we shall try to remain calm. We have got big tasks ahead-a big task for our country, and a big task for the world. Whether we function as Indian National Congress or not, time may come when each individual will represent the Indian National Congress and work on his own. We must not in the excitement of the movement forget our high aims and objectives-high aims for India whose freedom we consider precious, and high aims and objectives with regard to the whole world. We are nationalists and we are proud of this fact. But we should not settle down to a narrow nationalism. We should always remember that we have to develop a right type of internationalism, but not pseudo-internationalism of the present-day world or of the League of Nations.

I beg everybody to consider this resolution in this spirit. Whether there are internal perils or external perils, after all, if the Japanese reach this country, you and I will suffer and not the people in London and Washington. You and I will have to die, face the situation, may have to face untold miseries and sufferings-we will have to face all that. People talk to us from Washington, New York and various other places. You know what Japan is. We know what subjection is and we know it better than Americans and Englishmen. We have had it for about two hundred years. We have come to the decision that it is better to throw off the fetters into the fire and come out as a free nation than be reduced to ashes.

We are prepared to pay any price for unity except the price of independence. What obstructions have not been placed in our path which have had no relation to the real issue? I can talk and negotiate with anybody who recognises the need for democratic freedom for India, but I cannot negotiate with anyone who refuses to recognise the fundamental issue-the freedom of India. I was told during the Cripps negotiations that a certain

leader insisted on behalf of Muslims that the Viceroy's power of veto should not be removed or in any way qualified. If any section wants that the British Viceroy should exercise his veto power against the decisions of his Indian cabinet, it means clearly that that section is against the freedom of India. I do not want to injure anyone's feelings especially at a time when we are about to launch a great struggle for freedom. I tried, for one whole year, to find out what the League wanted, but I was unable to understand what they wanted.

I have not been able to find a parallel to such a situation in the history of the world. I have not come across anywhere else such a situation except in the land of Hitler. The Sudeten crisis bears similarity to the situation here. For purposes of negotiations we were not allowed to select our own representatives. We are told that we cannot send Muslims to represent the Congress. This is

an insult to our great organization and to our revered President. We were prepared to stake everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect for finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked at the doors we found them bolted, and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice the mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all?

Our conscience is clear. We have done everything that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the communal issue, but all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated. The chief difficulty is that the problem is more political than communal.

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## Power to the People

*The following is the text of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee on the evening of August 8, 1942:*

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesman of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of the opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese people its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such arms and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling Power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war,

but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these Nations, whose ally India would be the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.I.C.C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India. On the declaration of India's Independence a Provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied powers, to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.





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दुरध्वनी :- २४१९५२००, फॅक्स: २४१५७४९७

(आय.एस.ओ.९००१-२००८ प्रमाणित)

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- महाराष्ट्र व गुजरात राज्यात ग्राहक सेवा
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- वार्षिक उलाढाल रु. १३९ कोटी
- ३० लाख निष्ठावंत ग्राहक
- तीन वेळा जमनालाल बजाज उचित व्यवहार पुरस्कार (१९८९, २००१, २०१३)
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- नॅशनल को-ऑपरेटिव्ह युनिअन ऑफ इंडिया तर्फे अॅवार्ड ऑफ एक्सीलन्स (२०१३)
- मुंबई जिल्हा मध्यवर्ती सहकारी बँक लि. यांच्या तर्फे सहकार गौरव पुरस्कार (२०१५)

आरोग्यसेवा :

- दादासाहेब सरफरे आरोग्य केंद्र व क्लिनिकल लॅबोरेटरी, नायगांव.

सामाजिक उपक्रम :

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- १) खरेदीवर वेळोवेळी विविध सवलती
- २) दर्जेदार वस्तू खात्रीपूर्वक मिळण्याचे ठिकाण
- ३) वेळ आणि पैसा यांची बचत
- ४) सणासुदीसाठी खास सवलत
- ५) मोफत घरपोच सेवा
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संचालक :- भारती शिरसाट, शिवाजी गावंड, विश्वनाथ मलुष्टे, अश्विन उपाध्याय, अंजना सावंत, नरेंद्र कदम,  
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The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign dominations. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other Colonial Power.

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems. " Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticism of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and in action and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India

and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. 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, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. 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.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. 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 along ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

## Mahatma Gandhi's Speech in Hinduatani

at A.I.C.C. meeting at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on August 8, 1942

I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

Time was when every Mussalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali Brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Mussalmans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

What these Communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from

thousands of platforms. Thousands of Mussalmans have told me that if the Hindu-Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Mussalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi fellow students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of [good] neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Mussalmans. It was as counsel for a Mussalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Mussalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

In India, too, I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made me offer my fullest co-operation to the Mussalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali Brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the truth of this assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow, like

the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Mussalmans in the hour of their trial.

In those days I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Mussalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an oldstyle structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath; it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Mussalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, 'Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you

distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted friend of yours.' It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

To the Qaid-e-Azam I would say: 'Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift, so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.'

The Qaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his feelings. Similarly I would say: I consider myself a friend of the Mussalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Qaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Mussalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Mussalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Mussalmans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and the Mussalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I, therefore, appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear.

Rajaji said: 'I do not believe in Pakistan. But Mussalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say 'yes' to them just now? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demand.' I said: 'It is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah, disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method.'

The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Mussalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be a perpetual war between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the country will be doomed to continue warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah Saheb, 'You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity

is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner.'

There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Mussalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this Empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Mussalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

The Qaid-e-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the Empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews—every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

Millions of Mussalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back.

What would his homeland be- Porbander or the Punjab? I ask the Mussalmans: 'If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?' His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say: 'I do not mind his becoming a Mussalman so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Mussalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as a Mussalman abjures wine and women. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-cooperation with him will have to continue.'

India is without doubt the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country. Every Mussalman should therefore cooperate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Mussalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Mussalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Mussalman against a Hindu's attack and vice versa. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Mussalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Mussalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nationwide struggle that is to come.

I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an Empire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of

satyagraha.

In satyagraha, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this Empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that the Empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet awhile. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the mean while? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know, the spinning-wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteenfold constructive programme is, of course, there for you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.

It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master: 'I was your bondsman till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food

and raiment. God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a free man and will no longer depend on you.'

You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. Maybe, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say: 'Nothing less than freedom.'

Here is a mantra, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is: 'Do or Die.' We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Every true Congressman or [Congress] woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your consideration. If the Government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

A word to the journalists I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing-presses, etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing-press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your Standing Committee, and you may declare that you will give up

writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his Press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are whole-heartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the Princes. I was born in a State. My grandfather refused to salute with his right hand any Prince other than his own. But he did not say to the Prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Princes' salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the Princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the Princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be State-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I do not. I have kept a place for the Princes and the zamindars in India that I envisage. I would ask the Princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The Princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people: 'You are the owners and masters of the State and we are your servants.' I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The Empire too bestows power on the Princes, but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek to do so as servants of the people. I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: 'Do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people?' You may write to the Political Department: 'The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large Empires are crumbling? We, therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them.' Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treaties enabling the Empire to coerce the Princes. The people of the States will also declare that though they are the Princes' subjects, they are part of



the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the People, but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go back on their word.

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive the bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.

I have a word to say to the Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Government that though he was a judge, he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held Social Reform Conference in the very pandal of the Congress. I would ask all the Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: "We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do?" I replied, "If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government: 'I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods.'"

Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and leave the army. Soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and to the Maulana and say: "We are wholly with you. We are tired of the governmental tyranny." To these soldiers I would say: "You may say to the Government, 'Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries.

We will obey your just orders, but will refuse to fire on our own people.'"

To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs, if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: 'We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress or to the Government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto freedom.' In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true brahmachari who does not fritter away his energy. He will, therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so, even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India.

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## Mahatma Gandhi's Speech

at A.I.C.C. meeting at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on August 8, 1942

I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated, when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

Therefore I was bound to share with you, such thoughts as were welling up in my breast and tell you in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step.

Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden is almost unbearable and I have got to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit for the time being. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so that some of them have now begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now, I hold that my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill afford to lose it.

Such occasions arise in the life of a man who is a pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the Empire; and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship, as I enjoy it today, with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out I do not know; but there has sprung up

a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C., was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me, and Lady Anne and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these titbits only to give you an earnest view of the personal bond which exists between us. And yet let me declare here that no personal bond will ever interfere with the stubborn struggle which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. It seems to me that I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions, with no limit but non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the British nation, to be true to the Empire. I mention it to testify that when that Empire forfeited my trust, the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me at this moment. The spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest tradition of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was friend of Gurudev, but he looked upon Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came to South Africa with a note of introduction from the late Gokhale. He is unfortunately gone. He was a fine Englishman. I know that the spirit of Andrews is listening to me. Then I have received a warm telegram from the Metropolitan (Dr. Westcote) of Calcutta, conveying his blessings, though, I know, he is opposed to my move today. I hold him to be a man of God. I can understand the language of his heart, and I know that his heart is with me.

With this background, I want to declare to the world that, whatever may be said to the contrary, and although I might have forfeited the regard and even the trust of many friends in the West, and I bow my head low, but even for their friendship or their love, I must not suppress the voice within, call it 'conscience', call it the 'prompting of my inner basic nature'. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology though I have not read many books on it. Such a man knows exactly what it is. That something in me which never deceives me tells me now: 'You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart.' It says, 'Forsake friends, wife, and all; but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die.'

Believe me, friends, I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. According to me, it is 120 years at least. By that time India will be free, the world will be free. Let me tell you, too, that I do not regard England, or for that matter America, as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage the coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history and their magnificent poetry have not said you shall not broaden the interpretation of that freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom, I am constrained to say, they are strangers to that freedom which their poets and teachers have described. If they will know the real freedom, they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of earnest seekers of Truth.

It is the fundamental truth with which India has been experimenting for 22 years. Unconsciously, from its very foundations, long ago, the Congress has departed though non-violently from what is known as the constitutional method. Dadabhai and Pherozshah who held the Congress India in the palm of their hands had held on to the latter. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced murder and secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India to launch upon a non-violent struggle on the widest scale<sup>5</sup>. I trust<sup>6</sup> the innate goodness of human nature which perceives

the truth and prevails during a crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this, I shall not swerve<sup>7</sup>. From its very inception the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods, and the subsequent generations added non-co-operation. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man, but the English people defeated Salisbury, and Dadabhai, went to Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, now India has outgrown.

It is with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their heart of hearts what crime India has committed in demanding independence today. I ask: Is it right for you to distrust us? Is it right to distrust such an organization with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right, I ask, that by hook or crook, aided by the Foreign Press, aided, I hope not, by the President of the U.S.A. or even by the Generalissimo of China, who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's stand in shocking lights?

I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madam Chiang who was my interpreter, and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madam Chiang. And he allowed me to read his mind through her. He has not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. There is a chorus of disapproval and protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for the British, but now British diplomacy stinks in<sup>1</sup> my nostrils. Yet others are learning their lessons. They may succeed in getting, through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time; but India will raise her voice against all the organized propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if the whole of the world forsakes me, I will say: 'You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands.'

Even if my eyes close and there is no freedom for India, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which today is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of a debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says: 'We won't hit below the belt. We have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence.' I have been the author of the non-

embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking this strong language. My non-embarrassment plea was always qualified by the proviso 'consistent with our honour and safety'. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

There are representatives of the Foreign Press assembled here today. Through them I wish to say to the world that United Nations, who say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their bona fides. If they miss it, they will be missing opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time and lost the battle. I want the blessing of the whole world, so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the United Powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental difference between Fascism and even this imperialism which I am

fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from the India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it if today you, who have power to help, do not exercise it. If you can exercise it, what seems impossible today will, under the glow of freedom, become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be opened. Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. What shall enable us to retrieve this situation? Where shall I go and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aflame in the cause of world-deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but today. I have, therefore, pledged the Congress and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die.

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# Gandhi, Nehru and Quit India

Madhu Limaye

We, who were in our teens or a year or two more, at the time of the outbreak of Second World War, are the last generation of freedom fighters. Looking back, I see the Ninth August struggle as the fourth and the culminating phase of the freedom movement.

The birth of the modern freedom movement is rightly traced to the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The Congress for many years was a Christmas gathering of India's educated elite who passed innocuous resolutions on reforms at their annual meetings. It was Lokmanya Tilak who first introduced a popular element in our movement. Valentine Chirol, a noted British journalist, called Tilak a "conspicuous" leader in the radical camp who was "destined to become one of the most dangerous pioneers of disaffection". If anyone can claim to be "truly the father of Indian unrest" Chirol wrote, "it is Bal Gangadhar Tilak". "From the Deccan his influence was projected far and wide", he wrote.

Tilak's British opponents acknowledged his growing mass popularity. "The great development of the cotton industry which had led to vast agglomerations of labour had given Tilak an opportunity of establishing contacts with a class of the population hitherto outside the purview of Indian politics". Tilak was tried and convicted for sedition twice, the second time to six years' imprisonment. There was a violent reaction among the masses "Some of Tilak's supporters had declared that there would be a day's bloodshed for every year to which he might be sentenced ... and as a matter of fact, he was sentenced to six years imprisonment and the riots lasted six days. The rioting assumed at times a very threatening character...The gravity of the disturbances however showed the extent of the influence Tilak had acquired over the lower classes in Bombay and not merely the turbulent mill hands", Chirol wrote. This was the first political action of the industrial working class, and this was acknowledged even by Lenin.

Montagu, who visited India in 1917-18, in his book *Indian Diary*, called Tilak "the biggest leader in India at the moment". The Montagu declaration on responsible government and the new reforms made an impact on Tilak. He thanked the King Emperor and offered

responsive co-operation. Tilak was enthused by the League of Nations and thought that the subject nations could take their cases to this international organisation and obtain justice. During his stay in England in 1919 he built good relations with the Labour movement, and made a financial contribution to the Labour Party. Just as Gokhale and the Liberals pinned their hopes on the Liberal Party, Tilak saw the possibility of co-operation with the rising Labour Party. Tilak had become optimistic about the achievement of self-government within the Empire in 10 to 15 years. In 1919-20 the Lokmanya had no new programme of struggle to offer. Advancing age and experience, it was said, had mellowed Tilak.

Gandhiji emerged as the new leader in 1919. His non-cooperation and civil disobedience programmes drew millions into the movement. Through his constructive programmes he penetrated the village India. He created a formidable new team of leaders like Rajaji, Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani. He won over Jawaharlal Nehru, and Jawaharlal's entire family was swept off its feet by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Jawaharlal was an ardent supporter of Gandhiji's militant programme. Suspension of civil disobedience after Chauri Chaura distressed him. Despite the opposition of his father to Gandhiji's Council boycott programme, Jawaharlal remained a firm no-changer. But he was not part of the faction of no-changers headed by Rajaji. Rajaji's views underwent an astonishing transformation; from the leader of no-changers (he was called the Deputy Gandhi) he became an articulate supporter of the policy of working the scheme of provincial autonomy in the thirties, and in the forties he consistently sought accommodation with the British Government.

Jawaharlal's radicalism and militancy increased during the late twenties and thirties. It was largely under the impetus provided by him and Subhas Babu that the Congress, under, the younger Nehru's presidentship at Lahore, adopted the creed of complete independence. Gandhiji assured his young colleague that he would wage a decisive struggle during his term. He was as true as his word. Then came the famous Dandi March, and the self-suffering of common people inspired by Gandhiji's

example, convulsed the whole country. Jawaharlal was opposed to the suspension of disobedience and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, although, with great reluctance, he ultimately fell in line.

The passion of freedom so possessed him in those years that for him the Hindu-Muslim question almost did not exist, and much as he approved the amelioration of the depressed classes he thought Gandhiji's fast "would obscure the main issue". He was perplexed by Gandhiji's anti-untouchability campaign and his repeated fasts. He confesses in his Autobiography that his mind was not largely filled by the Harijan movement in which Gandhiji was completely, engrossed at that time.

Jawaharlal opposed the Government of India Act, 1935, and he made herculean efforts to use the election campaign of 1935-36 as a weapon of mass awakening. He was dead set against acceptance of office in the provinces. However, he again submitted to the dominant opinion in the Congress and Gandhiji's advice. Probably it was during 1937-41 that changes in the international situation and the failure of his attempts to influence Congress ministerial policies from outside gave him a jolt. His hatred for the brutalities of Nazism, fascism and Japanese militarism diluted his militancy vis-a-vis the British, and he moved slowly, towards a position not far from that of Rajaji. This threatened to engulf the freedom movement in a tragedy in 1942.

What was the position in early 1942? The Japanese had destroyed the French and Dutch colonial empires in South-East Asia. They had dealt a crippling blow to British naval power in the Indian Ocean. The British forces and the Indian divisions had surrendered in Singapore. Burma fell, and the Japanese were now knocking at the North-Eastern frontiers of India. The half-hearted British attempt to win over India's support in the war effort through the ill-fated Cripps proposal had failed. The Indian political leadership was bogged in despondency and frustration. Subhas Babu, it became known, had gone to Germany and was making preparations for the liberation of India with the help of the Axis powers. Gandhiji did not doubt Subhas Babu's indomitable courage and burning patriotism. But he sincerely felt that freedom obtained by him with the help of the German and Japanese war machines would result only in exchanging one slavery for another.

Maulana Azad, Rajaji and Jawaharlal were anxious to make an honourable settlement with the British

Government provided real power was transferred to Indian hands. The British Government headed by Churchill had absolutely no intention of conceding real power or a Cabinet government to India. They exploited the opposition of the Muslim League, the princes and others to remain here as the effective rulers of the country. In their anxiety to fight Japanese militarism Nehru and Rajaji wanted to organise popular resistance under the aegis of a national government. They were disappointed. The British Government refused to budge. Rajaji, however, persisted in his efforts to secure a compromise and advocated acceptance of partition to secure the Muslim League's support for a settlement. Although mentally the Maulana and Jawaharlal were eager to co-operate, they would not agree to do so at the cost of self-respect. Meanwhile, Gandhiji was alarmed by the introduction of American troops into India. He wrote pungent articles against this. "Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied armies".

Gandhiji was shaken by the possibility of India becoming the arena of military conflict. Not only because he thought that the country would be devastated. He feared that India would get involved in a civil war. Jawaharlal was not opposed to the induction of American troops. He had openly talked in terms of armed resistance against the Japanese and the launching of a guerrilla war. He had even said that if Subhas Babu came in the van of the Japanese forces he would fight him with a sword in hand. The prospect of a conflict between India's two most popular leaders (next only to the Mahatma) made Gandhi sleepless. He was asked about his differences with Jawaharlal and Rajaji. "I am sorry", Gandhiji said about Jawaharlal, "that he has developed a fancy for guerrilla warfare. But I have no doubt that it will be a nine days' wonder. It will take no effect". He wrote to Jawaharlal on April 15, 1942 saying that he "was making a mistake. I see no good in American troops entering India and in our resorting to guerrilla warfare". When Rajaji persisted in his propaganda about unity with the Muslim League on the basis of partition, pressed by Vallabhbhai and other members of the Working Committee, he advised Rajaji to resign from the Assembly. In fact, he told him that he should "sever his connection" with the Congress and then

carry on his campaign with "all zeal and ability" he was "capable" of.

Jawaharlal offered to resign from the Working Committee. "I have thought over the matter a great deal and still feel that your capacity for service will increase if you withdraw" Gandhi said. In the same letter dated July 13, 1942 he informed Jawaharlal that the Maulana and himself (Gandhi) had drifted apart. "I do not understand him nor does he understand me ... No one is at fault. We have to face the facts. Therefore I suggest that the Maulana should relinquish presidentship but remain in the Committee, the Committee should elect an interim President and all should proceed unitedly". Gandhiji had already resolved on the launching of the mass movement. Through his Harijan articles, interviews and statements he had fired the enthusiasm of the masses, especially the younger people. He was sorry over the differences that had arisen. He acknowledged the fact that nobody had the "drive" which Jawaharlal had displayed. Gandhi grieved that they were on the verge of a parting of ways.

In early 1928, a similar situation had arisen. After the Madras Congress at the end of 1927, Gandhiji felt that Jawaharlal was "going too fast". He received a sharp reply from his young colleague. Gandhiji suggested that if he wanted to go his own way, he was welcome to do so. He should unfurl his banner of revolt. Jawaharlal was shaken and wisely retraced his steps. The freedom movement gained as a result. In 1942 also the two had continuous discussion. Gandhiji had taken the position that the British should withdraw from India. If they could not entrust power to a national government they should leave the country to anarchy or God. He thought that the continuance of British rule in India and the increasing strength of the American forces would invite Japanese invasion. He calculated that the Japanese had got bogged down in China and had swallowed the entire South East Asia. Their main concentration would be against the Americans, and if no threat of a flanking movement developed from the West (India), the Japanese, he suggested, might not embark on a new adventure. Even if they did, Gandhiji thought that a free India would so catch the imagination of the people that they would be able to resist the Japanese onslaught. Gandhiji was so determined that he proposed to undertake a fast unto death and self-immolation followed by similar fasts and self-immolation by his closest followers.

Jawaharlal, although his emotions impelled him the

other way, was convinced by the deadly logic of Gandhiji, his innate self-respect and sense of discipline. Nothing illustrates this better than the article he wrote in the National Herald on June 30, 1942, which made it clear that he was not contemplating a break with Mahatma Gandhi and that he would not join the Rajaji campaign. He declared that the empire must go, not only because it was evil but because it was a hindrance to victory of the progressive forces in the world. "That is why the cry of 'Quit India' becomes a vital, urgent, and essential cry for victory". Even more revealing is his letter to Sampurnanand, who was himself worried over Gandhiji's thinking. Jawaharlal admitted that he also was worried and distracted beyond measure. He continued: " Yet gradually I have come to the conclusion that there is no other way out. I am convinced that passivity is fatal now. Our soldiers will largely surrender to the Japanese, our people will submit to them. There is only one chance of changing this and that is by some action now. The risk is there. I hate anarchy and chaos but somehow in my bones I feel some terrible shake-up is necessary for our country. Otherwise we shall get more and more entangled in communal and other problems, people will get thoroughly disillusioned and will merely drift to disaster".

This time again Jawaharlal compromised with his leader and mentor. Again the nation was the gainer. The objective situation and the obstinacy of British imperialism forced Jawaharlal to support Gandhiji's plan of struggle. Gandhiji prepared draft instructions for civil resisters. This document was dated August 4, 1942. This was to be an all-out campaign, including hartals, withdrawal from government services, satyagraha and even no-tax campaign. Every Indian, in the event of the arrest of the national leaders, should obey the dictates of his or her conscience and offer such resistance as, he or she could. He laid down only one condition: that the people should not have recourse to violence. Gandhiji knew that a movement of this magnitude might not remain absolutely peaceful. So he made it clear that outbreak of disturbances would not, this time, deter him from pursuing his programme.

And so the AICC met at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay in the second week of August. I attended that meeting. I was only 20 years old then; I had started political and mass work in Khandesh at the end of 1939. In 1940 I had been sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment on account of my anti-war speeches. After my release I had resumed my work in the two districts

of Khandesh. We young socialists had become convinced, after the entry of Japan into the war, and, especially, after the fall of Singapore, that the country could not be saved from a Japanese take-over except by forcing British withdrawal through a mass struggle. In February 1942, on the insistence of Sane Guruji, I accompanied Vinoba Bhave on his tour of Khandesh. I remember I had asked him only one question: Can we attain Swaraj without a big mass struggle in the immediate future? The spiritual heir of Mahatma Gandhi said that we should concentrate on constructive programme and village self-sufficiency and the British rule would automatically disappear. No struggle was necessary. I felt heart-broken. If this was the view of Vinoba, I thought, Gandhiji also must be thinking on the same lines. My delight therefore knew no bounds when Gandhiji mounted his offensive after the collapse of the Cripps Mission and the introduction of American troops into India. We began our preparations in right earnest. The meeting of the West Khandesh District Congress Committee took place at Shirpur in an atmosphere of wild enthusiasm. Even Balubhai Mehta, mildest of Gandhians and an extreme "social conservative", President of the DCC, was euphoric. (My friends were active in East Khandesh DCC also). After the meeting we left for Bombay. But the local rivulet was in flood and we could start only after the flood subsided. With the help of Yusuf Meherally, the then Mayor of Bombay, whose fondness for the young people was proverbial, we managed entry into the AICC pandal itself. By the time Gandhiji began his inspired speech in Hindi (followed by a speech in English) I and my friends had edged very close to the platform. I was a witness to that grand moment in India's history. I had been a critic of some of Gandhiji's views, but by that inspired utterance late in the night he captivated me and millions of young people.

Gandhiji and the national leaders were not allowed formally to start the struggle. Gandhiji had declared that he would meet the Viceroy and make one final effort at an honourable compromise. In the early hours of August 9, 1942 the British Government arrested all these leaders and They remained in jail virtually for the next three years.

The 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 had been arrested. JP was in prison. Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Purshottam Tricumdas, S. M. Joshi, (N. G. Goray was in a Nizam jail), Shiroo Limaye and all the rest of us went underground. Aruna Asaf Ali joined us. Some Gandhian Congress leaders, presumably under Acharya Kripalani's direction given prior to his arrest along with other Working Committee members, had also taken counsel and had proceeded to establish an Underground AICC. Among them were Sucheta Kripalani, Sadiq Ali and Giridhari Kripalani. Lohia, who had previously worked with these people at the AICC, was a common link between this group of Gandhian AICC workers and the Socialists. The two groups determined, not surprisingly, to work together. They provided valuable guidance to the resistance movement throughout the country, JP joined them after his daring escape from Hazaribag jail with his colleagues. However, initially at least, there was a strong element of spontaneity in the August revolt. The AICC organisation stepped in later. The resistance movement did not of course stay 'within the limits of pure non-violence. Nevertheless, the Underground AICC discouraged acts of terrorism and asked the people to stick to the non-killing, non-injury formula.

I do not wish to relate here the brave deeds of our people. They form a glorious chapter in the history of our freedom movement. If Gandhiji had not given the Quit India call, I have no doubt that our freedom would have been delayed., I was not happy about Jawaharlal's activities in the first half of 1942. We thought that he was launched on a disastrous course. But he controlled himself in time and moved the Quit India resolution at the Bombay AICC. He also suffered imprisonment along with other leaders. I pay him a tribute for preserving the anti-imperialist unity in the decisive phase of our struggle for freedom.

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## 70 Years of Joy and Pain

**Kuldip Nayar**

Independence celebrations bring to my mind the days I spent in hometown Sialkot City. After earning the law degree I was settling to be a lawyer, but partition upset my whole plans. It made me leave the place where I was born and brought up. It's a sad recollection whenever I think about it.

But the silver lining is that personal relations between Hindus and Muslims were not mostly affected. My father, who practised medicine, was stopped from migrating whenever he thought of moving out of Sialkot. One day my mother and he decided to travel without getting the people know. They boarded the train unnoticed. Sometime later, a few youngsters from the neighbourhood recognized them and requested not to leave.

My father said that they were going to only meet the children who were already in Delhi and return soon after. But the boys were insistent not to let them travel. After some time they relented and told my parents that they could travel by the same train a day after. They were frank enough to admit that there was a plan to kill all passengers at the nearby Narowal Bridge.

And this happened. The following day they came to our place and told my parents that they could travel. They said they have made it sure that their journey would be safe. Not only that they helped my ailing parents to cross the bridge on foot and bid goodbye at the border.

I stayed back for a few days and took the other road route to Wagha. A brigadier who had been transferred to India had come to my father before he left and asked if he could do anything. My father looked towards me and asked the brigadier to take me across the border. I travelled in the back of the jeep which was full of luggage.

Sialkot is a little removed from the main road to Amritsar. But I was aghast to see the road was full of hundreds of people. One small stream was pouring into Pakistan and we, the bigger one, travelling to Amritsar. One thing was sure and there was no going back. I could smell the stench of dead bodies. People would make way for the jeep. At one place an old Sikh with a flowing beard stopped us and begged to carry his grandson to

the other side. I told him that I had just completed my study and I could not afford to bring up a child. He said it did not matter and requested me to leave him at a refugee camp and he would catch up with him soon. I said no and even today his helpless face haunts me.

At Sialkot one wealthy Muslim, Ghulam Qadar, opened one of his bungalows and told my father to occupy it as long as he felt that things were not safe in the city. That bungalow itself became a refugee camp and at one time we were about 100 people living there. Qadar would provide ration to all of us. Our milkman was very regular in his supply.

When I crossed the border, I had only a small bag with a pair of trousers and Rs. 120 which my mother had given. But I had BA (Hon) and LLB degrees and was confident that I would rebuild my life. However, I was worried about my father who would have to start all over again at Jalandhar. But he became very popular within a few days and patients would flock in from morning to evening.

I travelled to Delhi where maternal aunt was living at Darya Ganj. Jamma Masjid was quite near and I would eat there because good non-vegetarian food was available at cheap price. That is where I met someone who took me in the Urdu paper, Anjam, and that is how I began a career in journalism. The rest is history.

But I do not want to dwell on it. Was partition necessary because one million people died on both sides? That bitterness still lingers. And they continue to live in hostility. India and Pakistan have gone to war three times, in 1965, 1971 and 1999. Even today, the border bristles with enmity and armed soldiers who are always ready to trigger the guns.

We are celebrating the 70th Independence Day. But instead of having soft-borders, which I imagined, we have the barbed wires and patrolling all the time. The level of escalation on the long borders never subsides. The two countries are not on speaking terms. Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj has said that there could be no talks with Islamabad when it encourages infiltrators.

Pakistan says that they are not the stakeholders and had no control over the infiltrators' movement. Thus the two neighbouring countries continue to be at a distance without any contact. Getting visa has become very difficult. Relatives and friends on both sides are the real sufferers.

Pakistan wants the solution of Kashmir before any kind of relations. Kashmir itself is a long story because the partition formula recognizes India and Pakistan. There is no provision to reopen and think about the independence of the valley which the people there want. In fact, they have taken to guns to achieve their goal. Only recently, I met some of them in Srinagar and found them to be adamant to make the valley an independent Islamic state. No amount of argument that this was not possible convinces them. I cannot imagine our parliament even entertaining a resolution to make Kashmir independent. Pakistan considers that it was the lifeline for it. Therefore, I do not see any solution even for the next 70 years, the period we have wasted in firing at each other. The first thing should be to withdraw the petition from the UN and assure Pakistan that India wanted peace and good relations with Islamabad. Maybe, the media heads on both sides should sit across the table and make some concrete proposals, if that is possible.

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## Narmada-A Democratic Struggle that Deserves Wide Support

Thousands of Sardar Sarovar dam evictees and activists and supporters of Narmada Bachao Aandolan are fighting a very difficult battle to obtain justice for displaced people. The original promise of providing land to evictees has not been honored in Madhya Pradesh. The maximum number of displaced people is from Madhya Pradesh. Other rehabilitation and compensation efforts have been badly marred by corruption. As a result most of the people displaced by Sardar Sarovar dam are not in a position where a satisfactory rehabilitation can be ensured. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) has been demanding satisfactory rehabilitation before displacement or submergence. This is a justice based demand which should get wide support.

While just now justice for displaced people is certainly the main issue, earlier the NBA has also been raising other very important and relevant issues relating to what kind of development is promoted by gigantic projects like Sardar Sarovar, who benefits and who loses, in whose name approval is obtained but who actually benefits, what are the stated costs and what are the real costs including social and environmental costs, what is the assessment of such projects from the point of view of sustainability and sustainable development, why are such projects

promoted so strongly by certain big business interests and politicians having close ties to them. By raising such issues and seeking answers to such issues, the NBA contributed significantly to the debate on existing development model and to the yearning for an alternative development based on equality, justice and protection of environment.

The role of such social movements which raise such basic questions is very important in a democracy as these movements and the issues they raise with consistency can help to correct serious distortions and mistakes at the policy level and in the selection of projects and in the misallocation of scarce funds. However strong vested interests do not want such dissenting voices and such questioning voices to be heard. Hence all the time efforts are being made to silence or suppress these voices.

Despite such efforts being made all the time the NBA could emerge as a strong and respected voice in the alternative development paradigm debate. Today this movement is in the middle of a very important struggle for protecting the rights and interests of displaced people and in this struggle it needs and deserves wide support.

–Bharat Dogra

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# India's Malnourished Children

Neeraj Jain

India is at the epicentre of the global stunting crisis.

According to recently released data from the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16):<sup>1</sup>

- 38.4% of children under the age of five are stunted (low height for age, indicating chronic malnutrition);
- 35.7% are underweight (low weight for age, indicating both chronic and acute malnutrition);
- and 21% have wasting (low weight for height, indicating acute malnutrition).

Under/mal-nutrition severely stunts intellectual, emotional and physical growth. Studies also show that the effect of malnutrition is most acute in the age group from 0 to 3 and this cannot be mitigated in one's adult life; in other words, both body growth and brain development are permanently adversely affected.

Clearly, for any country, if more than one-third of its children are affected by malnourishment and stunting, this is the most important crisis facing its policy planners, and they need to urgently address it. How can a country develop if it does not take steps to develop the inherent potential of all its children, so that they can grow up to become capable and productive citizens?

However, the Modi Government is in complete denial about the existence of this crisis. The word 'hunger' does not even find a mention in the Economic Survey 2016-17. Worse, it is reducing the budget allocations for the Central schemes that are oriented towards tackling this crisis.

It is a very extreme right-wing government that is in power. It is willing to give away lakhs of crores of rupees in subsidies to corporate houses without blinking an eyelid, but when it comes to making provisions for providing the most essential services for the poor, even though the amounts are much smaller in comparison, it uses every trick in the book to reduce the allocations. This is going to appear surprising for the many Modi-fans who recently voted Prime Minister Modi as the best

Prime Minister ever. The reality is, the BJP Government is the most anti-people government in the country since independence.

## Rolling Back Nutrition-Oriented Schemes

The previous governments had put in place several "nutrition" schemes oriented towards pregnant women and children. While the funding for them was inadequate, at least they attempted to address the problem. Most of them are included under the umbrella of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and include Anganwadi services and the Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP), apart from some other smaller schemes. Another important scheme that is also nutrition-oriented, but comes under the Human Resource Development Ministry, is the Mid-Day Meal Scheme for school children.

In his first budget speech of 2014, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had stated that "a national programme in Mission Mode is urgently required to halt the deteriorating malnutrition situation in India, as present interventions are not adequate." He promised to put in place a "comprehensive strategy" within six months. It is now more than three years; forget a blueprint for improving the state of the nutrition services, even the allocations for these schemes are hopelessly inadequate, and furthermore, have been cut in real terms over the three years the BJP has been in power.

The total allocation for all these nutrition-related schemes in the Union Budget 2017-18 adds up to Rs 30,755 crore. It is a shamefully low sum that is hopelessly inadequate to combat the monumental nutrition crisis gripping the country. For a government that can afford to give Rs 5.5 lakh crore as tax concessions to the rich every year, it can easily afford to double, or triple this allocation - for the well-being of our country's children, the future of our country.

In the four budgets presented by Jaitley so far, the total allocations for all these nutrition oriented schemes made by the BJP Government has gone up by only Rs 2,033 crore or 7% over the allocation for 2014-15 (Table 1). It actually implies a 25% reduction in real terms!

**Table 1: Allocations for Nutrition-Oriented Schemes by BJP Government, 2014-15 to 2017-18 (Rs crore)**

Schemes	2014-15 A	2015-16 A	2016-17 (RE)	2017-18 (BE)
Core ICDS/ Anganwadi Services	16,664	15,433	14,560	15,245
IGMSY/MBP	343	233	634	2,700
Mid-day Meal (MDM)	10,524	9,145	9,700	10,000
National Nutrition Mission	20	56	175	1,500
Scheme for Adolescent Girls	622	475	460	460
National Creche Scheme	98	133	150	200
Child Protection Scheme	446	497	598	648
Scheme for welfare of working children in need of care and protection	5	7	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,722</b>	<b>25,979</b>	<b>26,280</b>	<b>30,755</b>

The government claims that these cuts would be more than compensated by the increase in the states' share in divisible pool of Central taxes from 32% previously to 42% from 2015-16 onwards. But, as we have shown in several of our earlier writings, in actuality, the Centre has been resorting to financial manipulation and has reduced other resource transfers to the States, so that on the whole, total transfers to the States as a percentage of gross tax revenues have barely increased, from 55.1% in 2014-15 to 56.8% in 2017-18 (See Table 2). So much for a 10% increase!

Let us briefly examine the state of allocations for the more important of these schemes.

#### *Core 'ICDS'/Anganwadi Services*

The most important of nutrition schemes is Anganwadi services, earlier called 'core ICDS'. It is a programme for providing supplementary nutrition to children below 6 years of age; it also provides other important services pertaining to health and education. Over the four budgets presented by Jaitley, the allocation for Anganwadi services has fallen sharply from Rs 16,664 crore in 2014-15 (Actuals) to Rs 15,433 crore in 2015-16 (Actuals) to Rs 15,245 crore in 2017-18 (BE), a cut of nearly 30% in real terms (See Table 1 above)! On the other hand, the government has doled out more than double this amount as subsidy to builders and corporations for building roads and highways this year. This huge reduction has been

**Table 2: Total Resources Transferred to States as Percentage of Gross Tax Revenues, 2014-15 to 2017-18 (Rs crore)**

	2014-15 A	2015-16 A	2016-17 (RE)	2017-18 (BE)
Total Resources Transferred to States	6,85,835	8,34,483	9,90,311	10,85,075
Gross Tax Revenues	12,44,885	14,55,648	17,03,243	19,11,579
Total Resources Transferred to States as % of Gross Tax Revenues	55.1%	57.3%	58.1%	56.8%

made, despite a damning Niti Ayog Report of 2015 showing that around 41% of the Anganwadis have inadequate space, 71% are not visited by doctors, 31% have no nutritional supplementation for malnourished children and 52% have bad hygienic conditions. With the government reducing the allocation, the conditions are only going to get worse. It is indicative of our ruling regime's complete insensitivity towards the 5 crore children in the country who are malnourished and the more than two crore pregnant women and lactating mothers. It also means that the Anganwadi workers who are being paid a pittance will continue to work at their very low wages.

In his latest 2017-18 budget, the finance minister announced a grand scheme of setting up Mahila Shakti Kendras in all the 14 lakh ICDS Anganwadi centres. He stated that they will provide one-stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition. Ambitious indeed! But the total allocation for these 14 lakh Kendras - a princely sum of Rs 500 crore. That works out to just Rs 3,571 for each Kendra! Furthermore, these services are to be provided by the low-paid Anganwadi workers-as an additional duty, without any additional pay! Implying that this scheme is a mere eye wash.

### **IGMSY/MBP**

Another important nutrition-oriented scheme is the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY). It was first introduced as a pilot scheme in 53 districts across the country in 2010, and gave a modest allowance of Rs 4,000 to pregnant and lactating mothers. In his address to the nation on December 31, 2016, Prime Minister Modi proudly announced that this scheme, now renamed as Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP), would be expanded to cover the whole country, and that it would provide financial assistance of Rs 6,000 to pregnant women for "hospital admission, vaccination and nutritional food". FM Jaitley followed it up with a similar announcement in his 2017 budget speech, and increased the allocation for this scheme from Rs 634 crore in 2016-17 RE to Rs 2,700 crore.

Actually, in announcing this expansion, the government was only fulfilling the provisions of the National Food Security Act, which provides for a maternity benefit of Rs 6,000. The Act had been passed in 2013, but Modi-Jaitley had turned a blind eye to this provision for the past three years. Activists had been mounting pressure on the government to implement this provision of the

Act, and had been organising public meetings across the country for this.

This upscaling was much needed. A letter signed by 60 leading academics and activists urging the government to implement the maternal benefits under the NFSA stated: "Maternity entitlements are essential to address India's staggering problem of low birth weights, poor maternal health and severe hardship during pregnancy." India's maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world; according to the World Health Statistics (2016), nearly 5 women die every hour in India due to pregnancy and delivery related complications.

It is a very insensitive government in power. Trust Jaitley to find a way to reduce the allocation for pregnant women too - which is one of the most high-risk groups in society and need utmost care. Jaitley has introduced conditionalities such as institutional delivery and full vaccination for women to be eligible for this financial assistance. These conditionalities actually end up excluding 60% of the country's women, because they don't deliver in hospitals, and/or are unable to vaccinate their children. But they are the ones who need these maternity benefits the most, as they include women from the poorest sections of the population, belong to Dalit and Adivasi communities, and live in the remotest areas of the country. They are unable to deliver in hospitals or vaccinate their children, because of the terrible state of government health services in the country. Instead of focussing on improving facilities in government hospitals, and making hospitals more accessible for the poor (by improving ambulance facilities), the suit-boot sarkar's FM/PM are putting the blame on the victims of our dismal public health system, and excluding them from receiving maternity benefits!

And therefore, the finance minister's increased allocation for this scheme in his 2017 budget is much less than that required for a genuine universalisation of the scheme. It is estimated that about 2.7 crore births take place in India each year. This means this scheme would require about Rs 16,000 crores. Assuming centre-state cost sharing to be 60:40, this would therefore require an allocation of Rs 9,700 crore in the Union Budget to cover all pregnant women in the country. The finance minister has allocated just 28% of this. The savings - Rs 7,000 crore. Contrast this allocation with another fact that the Prime Minister has conveniently forgotten to mention in his "December 31" or "Mann ki baat" speeches. The government recently restructured the loan of Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure Ltd



## Panagariya ends Unfinished Innings

**Mrinal K. Biswas**

Even before undertaking in full earnest the work for giving India a 15-year vision document in place of 5-year plans Arvind Panagariya quit NITI Aayog which he donned as vice-chairman at its very inception two and a half years ago. NITI or National Institute for Transforming India was the brainchild of Narendra Modi Government's new instrument to make the country an economic power to be reckoned with in the world community. NITI pushed into oblivion the Nehru-inspired planning commission which was buried in the midstream of the 12th 5-year plan.

Panagariya will resume his academic persuasion in Columbia University as professor of economics after he demits NITI post this August-end. His career progression has made this economist's India mission short-lived. Panagariya is famously associated with highly acclaimed economist Jagdish Bhagwati whose support for growth over development made the latter dearer to the Modi government while Amartya Sen was deliberately ignored.

Abandoning 5-year plans predictably failed to attract much criticism in the ascendance of market economy propagated and widely practiced the world over within the concept of neo-liberalism. The irony of history is that Nehruvian socialism's unending stretch of eclipse was first evident during the premiership of Nehru's grandson Rajiv Gandhi. Narendra Modi making no bones of his anti-Nehruism and by removing its offsprings he is set to initiate policies open to markets but not giving a lease to copybook market economy. Modi appears to be ready with bearing some social costs at the expense of economic growth models propounded by Bhagawati and his line of thinkers. Is it discouraging enough for Panagariya prompting him to think of shifting to the academic pastures than be the plough-boy of the political economy of Narendra Modi?

Panagariya however not only came out strongly in defence of Modi's demonetization but became the star mandarin to carry the message of Bhagawati and others of the ilk in this respect, to the satisfaction of Modi. He maintained the long-term benefit of the earth-shaking remonetization exercise simultaneously with discarding

of 500 and 2000 rupee notes would bring the country's growth story back on rails. Indeed, fall of GDP growth to 6.1 per cent in the last quarter of 2016-17 bringing down the annual growth to 7.1 per cent against projected 7.4 per growth struck the alarm bell. Demonetization was announced on November 8, 2016. Even in the uncertain period Panagariya held it would reach 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal (2017-18) and then the magical 8 per cent figure would be within reach. BJP's massive UP poll victory added to the belief that Modi's political economy is being favourably heard by the people at large.

The 8.1 per cent growth in 2004 and the NDA government's ouster then loomed large over and placed Panagariya's thinking. The NDA was led by Atal Behari Vajpayee. The subsequent UPA government ruled till 2014 and then left with only 6.9 per cent growth rate. Panagariya was drafted by the new NDA government as the executive head of the newly formed NITI Aayog with an ambitious programme. It was obvious he was persuaded to take a long lean from the US Ivy League university and placed on a high altitude in India.

In the process of preparing the 15-year vision document Panagariya could so far circulate a three-year Action Agenda to boost high productivity, high-wage jobs and a seven-year strategy paper. He stressed, to the discomfort of the Modi government, that subvention account is too heavy in India. About 47 per of revenue expenditure in the 2015-16 budget was made under headings other than development. Panagariya wants to lower it to 41 per cent by 2018-19. Revenue deficit needs to be contained at 0.9 per cent. This would severely cut the subsidy accounts which are firmly entrenched in the Indian economy. Not a feasible idea to the power that be in India. What is striking in the scheme of things of Panagariya is his stress on heavy industries for creation of big-ticket production capacities. One may recall Nehru-era and subsequent regimes' commanding heights of the economy with the focus on heavy industries based on the core sector of the economy. Modi has the contrary idea and prefers job creations through small and medium industries while the big may come through projects like Make in India.

Government think tank, NITI under Panagariya, has seen diminution of influence within couple of years of its creation. Modi cannot see his carefully building up of pro-poor image go haywire and certainly Panagariya is no help for him and for his *Sangh parivar*. Already its giant trade union BMS has openly dubbed Panagariya's proposals as anti-worker. Panagariya became expendable.

Another snag for Panagariya is his given status in the

Modi set-up. It was clear Jagdish Bhagwati wanted to work in India's economic development. Instead of him, Panagariya was brought in. But his status was not in line with that of a minister. His resumption of the post of a professor would be more honourable and enduring than remaining what may be called an adviser to the decision makers. He therefore leaves the post without completing the much drummed 15-year vision document. It is now for his successor Rajiv Kumar to take up the challenge.

न्याय्य हक्क मिळवून घेण्यासाठी आणि समस्यांची दाद लावून घेण्यासाठी  
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# Imagining India

## Visions of Swaraj and the Democratic Journey

Anand Kumar

Given the complexity and diversity of the Indian civilization, it is obvious that there has been a variety of conceptualizations about the modern Indian nation and the vision of Swaraj (independence from the foreign rule) from the later part of the 19th century which worked as the background for the making of the Constitution of India and the Indian nation-state. This century-long journey from the British Raj to Swaraj and democratic nation-building was guided by the consensus about the need of togetherness of a) justice, b) liberty, c) equality, and d) fraternity. But all students of Indian Constitution know that the founders of modern nation-state of India were deeply concerned about the need to assure two things after independence: 1. the dignity of the individual, and 2. the unity and integrity of the Nation. Both worries were based upon the traumatic experiences of the colonial era. Both needed deconstruction of the colonial discourse of power as well as democratic reconstructions.

The reality of 'humiliation' of being an Indian was one of 'the givens' of the colonial discourse of power. Racial discrimination was the sub-text of the colonial arrangement of 'order' from the Central Legislative Assembly to the prisons during the British Raj. It was a constant basis of objection of the Indian people against the British claim of being engaged in 'the moral and material progress of India'. It created a craving for putting an end to the era of being a 'subject' a world empire and inaugurates the age of 'citizenship' of a democratic nation-state. It resulted into creating a democratic revolution through the constitution of free India.

Similarly, there were traumatic experiences of the two centuries of foreign rule which culminated into most brutal partition of British India. Furthermore, there was great uncertainty about the process of integration of multiple faith communities, scores of ethno-linguistic regions, and more than 500 princely states into the proposed Republic of India. It had alarmed the makers of the Constitution of India about the need to be cautious about preservation of territorial unity through promotion of 'national integration'. The supporters of other 'Homelands' like Khalistan, Dravidistan, Achutistan, Nagaland,

Kashmir, etc. had to be constructively accommodated and engaged to avoid encouragement to the centrifugal forces and processes. According to Granville Austin, "The members of the Constituent Assembly, who met in New Delhi from 1946 to 1950, laid the foundation for an independent, republican India. They knew what the country needed and what they intended it should have: national unity and integrity, democracy and a social revolution to better the lot of the mass of citizens." (2002, p.319)

### The Colonial Denials and Distortions

Any contemporary discussion about nation-building in India after freedom from foreign rule and adoption of a democratic constitutional framework has to be linked with the idea of India and ideals of Indian nationhood. Let us start with the colonial 'denial' and Orientalist 'distortions' about India as a civilizational reality and geo-political complex with deep roots in history. Then only we can make sense of the nationalist responses which have stayed in our imagination since independence. For example, there have been five well known observations about India from the 19th century colonial administrators which contributed to the continuity of misunderstanding about the real nature of India - John Strachey, John Seeley, Thomas Macaulay, Thomas Munro, and John Metcalf. According to Sir John Strachey in 'India: Its Administration and Progress (1888)', "There is not and never was an India, no Indian nation, no people of India.'. Sir John R. Seeley has recorded similar views by asserting 'India was a mere geographical expression like Europe and Africa' in his book 'The Expansion of England (1883)'.

### Superiority of the West

Thomas Macaulay wrote, in his Minutes on Indian Education in 1835, that" (A) single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature in India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted...."Further, "It is, I believe no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at





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preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same."

### **'A land of innumerable village republics'**

A major distortion around the idea of India as a land of innumerable self-contained village republics was introduced through the Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East Indian Cy. in 1812. It was authored by Sir Thomas Munro (Dumont, 1966, pp 70-1). The concluding part of this report ('the Munro Report') says: "Under this simple form of municipal government, the inhabitants of the country have lived from time immemorial. The boundaries of the village have been but seldom altered; and though the villages themselves have been sometimes injured and even dislocated by war, famine and disease, the same name, the same limits, the same interests and even the same families, have continued for ages. The inhabitants gave themselves no trouble about the breaking up and divisions of kingdoms; while the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred or to what sovereign it devolves, its internal economy remains unchanged." (Fifth Report, 1812, pp. 84-5) (Quoted in Srinivas: 1987, 21)

It was followed by Report of the Select Committee of House of Commons in 1832. It is also known as 'Metcalf Report'. According to the Metcalf Report, "Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down. Revolution succeeds to revolution. Hindoo, Pathan, Mogul, Maratha, Sikh, English are all masters in turn but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. A hostile army passes through the country. The village communities collect their little cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked." (Quoted by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his speech in the Constituent Assembly on Nov. 4, 1948. See: Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, pp. 31 - 44)

Here is another relevant observation from the same report: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state by itself has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered." (Vol. III, App. 84, p.33)

### **'Never changing contaminated little communities'**

The importance of these reports can be measured by the fact that it became the basis of understanding of the architecture of Indian polity and society for some of the most influential thinkers like Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx wrote in 1853 that "(T)hese idyllic village-communities, inoffensive though they may appear...restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.... We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man the sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny." Marx erroneously saw in 19th century India the past of European society which led him to believe that the British Rule in India was producing the only revolution in Asia. According to Daniel Thorner, Marx believed that England had a double mission in India: to annihilate the old Asiatic society and to lay the foundations of a Western society. (1966, p. 42)

### **'Essentializing Indian civilization as unchanging castes'**

Then there was a tradition beginning with Mill and Hegel, of 'essentializing' India by underlining caste as the central pillar of their constructs. According to Ronald Inden, "Caste, considered the essence of Indian civilization, has often been treated as though it were the unchanging (substantialized) agent of the civilization, from the rise of the Indus Valley culture and the arrival of Aryans down to the present day of regionalism and caste in electoral politics." (1990, 83)

Susan Bayly has pointed out that: "It is true that Risley, who was the Empire's leading proponent of ethnology from the 1890s till his death in 1911, saw caste as a real factor in Indian life, an 'elemental force like gravitation or molecular attraction' that in his view gave order to the society and saved it from chaos." Sir Herbert Risley was Census Commissioner for 1901 Census of India and honorary director of the Ethnological Survey of the Indian Empire. She further reminds that: "Risley is best known for his scheme of hierarchical classification which divided Indians into seven racial 'types', with dark skinned 'Dravidians' defined as the most 'primitive', and fair 'Indo-Aryan' the most ethnologically 'advanced'. His most widely quoted remark is his claim to have discovered an

unfailing law of 'caste', this being that 'the social status of .... A particular group varies in inverse ratio to the mean relative width of their noses'." (Bayly: 1999, 129-132)

'Myth of Muslim monolith and deep Hindu-Muslim divide'

A significant, but less noted, distortion introduced by the colonial discourse was related with myth of Muslim unity (and consequential Hindu-Muslim compartmentalization) as exemplified in the following statement of Valentine Chirol (1852-1929): "Of all the great religions...Islam alone was borne forth into the world on a great wave of forceful conquest... There was seldom a pause in the consolidation Mahomedan power, seldom a break in the long drawn tale of plunder and carnage, cruelty and lust, unfolded in the history of the earlier dynasties that ruled India." It needs to read together with an observation of Reginald Craddock (1868-1937): "Hinduism with its love of images and symbols, and its polytheism, and Islam, with its strict Unitarian faith and its strong iconoclastic principles, is at opposite poles." (Quoted in Hasan: 1996, 185)

These descriptions were in total denial of the internal diversities of Islam and Muslims, and their overlapping cultural practices with the Hindus and others, like all other faith communities of the Indian sub-continent. As pointed out by Asoka Mehta, "The important and significant fact, often forgotten, is that the Hindus and Muslims composed their antagonisms and evolved a new culture. We get a correct perspective on that evolution when we compare it with the achievements of the similar Indo-British contact. That contact is now more than three hundred years old but it is barren of any creative synthesis which can be described as Indo-British culture. In the pre-British period, the Hindus mastered the intricacies of Persian and Arabis, the Muslim men of letters were captivated by the ageless charm of Sanskrit. Islam penetrated Hindu thought in a variety of ways. There was ferment due to the meeting of Ram and Rahmm that sought numerous outlets like Kabir and Nanak, Tukaram and Chaitanya, Jayasi and Ras Khan. (Saggi: 1968, 16-21) They ignored the fact that the annals of Muslim rule in India are full of dynastic, and not religious wars. On the historic battlefield of Panipat, Babar faced an armed might of a Muslim opponent, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. History repeated itself when the Afghan Sher Shah overwhelmed the forces of Humayun.

It was not different in the southern India. According to historian Tara Chand, in 'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture', "In spite of the fact that the Vijayanagar kingdom was continuously at war with the neighboring Muslim Kingdoms, there appears to be great religious tolerance and great appreciation of each other's cultures. The Adilshahi Sultana of Bijapur and Nizamshahis of Ahmednagar freely patronized Maratha chiefs and employed Hindu officers for their administration and Hindu troops in their armies. The latter (Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar) gave great impetus to Marathi language by making it the language of their official transactions. The Hindu rulers of Vijaynagar reciprocated these feelings; they took Muslim troops in their employ, encouraged Muslim traders and built mosques for their worship." (Ibid: 1946, 250-51) Further, the long drawn-out contest between the Mughal emperors and the Bahamani Kingdoms of the South is conclusive proof of the dynastic and non-religious character of these wars.

The myth of the Muslim monolith was also demolished, as written by Halide Edib (1937, 317-318), when, during the World War I, Pan Islamism was found to be a mere bogey. The attachment of the Indian Muslim to the interests of his country was a greater reality than his solidarity with Muslims outside India. It may be useful for the Western powers with Muslim colonies to realize that there is a distinct sense of nationhood separate from their religious life. The Indian Muslim would resent afghan-Muslim domination and fight it; the Arab-Muslim would resent Turkish-Muslim domination and fight it as much as he would any non-Muslim domination, if he ever got his independence. (Quoted from Hasan: 1996, 185)

The anxiety about the prevailing lack of unity among the Muslims due to ethnic, regional and sectarian diversities was prominent in the speeches and writings of Mohammed Ali Jinnah himself. In the text of his Presidential address to the Sindh Muslim League, titled 'An Appeal for Unity' and delivered in 1938, he says: "Not long ago the Mussalmans in Sind were divided and torn into groups but I am happy to find today a wonderful public spirit, solidarity and unity demonstrated and with proper organization.... In the all India Muslim struggle against the various forces which are out to destroy and divide Muslims by means of corruption and dishonest propaganda you have to guard yourself and stand solid behind the All India Muslim League which is the only authoritative and representative organization of the Mussalmans of India. It is an irony of fate that the two provinces for which the All India Muslim League fought

successfully, that is Sind and the North West Frontier Provinces, should remain outside the ken of the All India Muslim League....The Congress High Command is obsessed with one idea and is determined to divide the Musalmans and particularly to break the solidarity of the Muslim League, no matter how low they may have to stoop.....If the Musalmans are going to be defeated in their aspirations it will only be by the betrayal of the Musalmans among us as has happened in the past. For the renegades and the traitors I have nothing to say. They can do their worst. But I appeal most fervently to those Musalmans who honestly feel for their community and its welfare and those who are misled or misguided and indifferent to come on to the platform of the Muslim League and work under its flag: and please close your ranks and stand solid and united at any and all costs and speak and act with one voice..."(Roberts: 1939/2004, 466-476) These truths and anxieties about the deep diversities among the Muslims have been detailed by Rajmohan Gandhi (2008) by presenting the profiles of eight iconic Muslims of the British India period - Saiyad Ahmed Khan, Muhamed Iqbal, Muhamed Ali Jinnah, Liyaqat Ali, Muhammed Ali, FazlulHaque, AbulKalam Azad, and Zakir Hussain.

But the myth of a Muslim monolith and the All India Muslim League as its only representative body kept on growing due to a variety of factors, including the employment interests of the newly evolving educated classes among the Muslims and Hindus, politicization of socio-religious identities, the colonial provisions of measures to protect 'the Muslim interests' through the constitutions of 1909, 1919, and 1935, including separate electorates for Muslims. Their culmination in the Two-nation Theory based politics of All India Muslim League, brutal partition of India-Pakistan in 1947 by the departing British Raj, and non-viability of the idea of Islamic nationalism with the breakdown of Pakistan and birth of Bangladesh in within 25 years needs no further details at present.

### **'Non-viability of India as a nation'**

Pessimism about the viability of the idea of India, as a modern post-colonial nation-state continued to be reflected in the approach of colonial policy-makers till the very end of the British Raj. For example, while discussing the future of India, Sir Edward P. Moon, ICS wrote the following in 1945:"India's divisions are many and deep. There are caste divisions (e.g. between Brahman and non-Brahman), economic divisions (e.g.

between landlords and tenants), linguistic, racial and regional divisions (e.g. between Bengali and Madrasi) and political division (e.g. between British provinces and Native states). But all fade into insignificance beside the great division between Hindus and Muslims." (1945, p 23)

Even after independence, there was a group of public intellectuals, like Nirad Chaudhuri (1951). Selig Harrison (1960) and V. S. Naipaul (1964) among others, who saw a bleak future for post-colonial India. The 'Dedication' of the book by Nirad Chaudhuri titled 'Autobiograph of An Unknown Indian (1951) read the following:"To the memory of the British Empire in India. Which conferred subject-hood upon us, but withheld citizenship. To which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: " Civic Britannicus sum' because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped and quickened by the same British rule.". He was quite dismissive of the capacity of the makers of the new constitution of India and their capability to keep the nation together in a journey for a better tomorrow.

Similarly, Harrison emphasized the historic roots of 'the dimensions of India's dilemma' where there exists a history in a political sense of three Indias with interacting regional identities. Harrison pointed out that there has been the north Indian complex of regions centering in the basin of river Ganga. In the case of middle India, geography assured four separate linguistic and political identities within the seemingly integrated Deccan tableland. Then there is the Dravidian south with critical significance of Tamil (1960, Ch.2). He listed the 'stresses of Indian politics' which included 1. The indiscipline of Indian communism, 2.Multi-lingual revolutionists, 3.The Hindi controversy, 4.Caste and class, 5.The Constitutional issue, 6.The imbalance of the Union, and 6.Leadership succession 'after the tall leaders'.

V. S. Naipaul (1964) had called it 'an area of darkness' after being deeply disillusioned due to a series of disappointing experiences in India as a traveler. His roots in the Indian diaspora of the Caribbean Islands and education in the British universities provided additional authenticity to his pessimistic portrayal of the early years of India's independence.

### **The Indian Visions**

Here, it is relevant to recognize that there was plurality of perspectives among the nationalist thinkers as they

used different lenses to give content to the idea of Indian nation -a. economic, b. political, c. cultural, and d. territorial.

Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the first public intellectuals of India, is attributed the idea of economic nationalism on the basis of his monumental work 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' (1901/2016). Gandhi wrote in 'Hind Swaraj' in 1909 that "We must admit that he is the author of Nationalism." The writings of Ramesh Chandra Dutt were equally influential in the making of economic nationalism.

Similarly, the genesis of political nationalism has been associated with the Indian National Congress (1885) and Partition of Bengal (1905). To quote Gandhi again, 'The Congress brought together Indians from different parts of India, and enthused us with the idea of Nationality.' (1909). At the level of individual intellectual and political initiatives, there has been outstanding role of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Annie Besant, Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh and Subhash Bose among others. Lala Lajpat Rai (1916) makes a significant point about the political aspect of Indian nation when he points out that 'History does not record a single instance of India being ruled from without, by a people of purely non-Indian blood and in the interest of another country, and another people, before the British. India was always an empire by herself. She was never a part of another empire, much less a dependency.'

(to be concluded)

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## How unsafe are Muslims?

**Kuldip Nayar**

In a farewell message the outgoing vice-president, Hamid Ansari, has said that the Muslims do not feel safe in the country. Instead of introspecting on what he said, the RSS and the BJP have denounced him. Some have gone to the extent of saying that he could migrate to a country where he would feel safe.

The unkindest cut came from Prime Minister Narendra Modi who said that Ansari could now pursue his agenda. A few others, occupying high positions, also made more or less a similar remark. There was not an iota of examination by the Hindu leaders and thus a great opportunity to disarm the Muslims of their fear was lost.

True, the vice-president could have made the same remarks earlier and submitted his resignation while in office. But that would have created another kind of a crisis which the constitution experts would have found hard to sort out. That way the country would have been thrown into a cauldron of doubt and suspicion.

The majority community must try to find out why every Muslim leader raises reservation about his community's

welfare whenever he gets the opportunity, particularly on the eve of quitting office. The remark that Ansari could go to any country of his choice does not in any way meet the point he has raised. Ansari was not saying whether he was safe or not personally. The outgoing vice-president was only conveying the fears of Muslims.

Personal attacks on Ansari would not do. The government leaders should ponder over what the outgoing vice-president has said and how the majority community could make amends to retrieve the situation. But the message has not been taken in the spirit it should have been.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has reportedly endorsed the view that since Ansari did not feel happy in India he could go elsewhere. As head of a Hindu organization, Bhagwat's remark attains the representative character, unfortunately reducing the whole thing to the perennial debate of Hindus versus Muslims.

Since Ansari's remark is a public property and coming as it did from the country's vice-president, it should be debated at all responsible forums,

including parliament. The government at the centre has constituted in the past a commission to find out how the Muslims felt. Justice Rajinder Sachar, who led the commission, said in his report that the Muslims were treated worse than the dalits. And he found that West Bengal, after nearly three decades of communist rule, had only a 2.5 percent educated Muslims. Time is ripe to have another commission to find out if Justice Sachar's report had made any difference.

Unfortunately, similar remarks of regret have been made by other Muslims leaders in the past. In fact, some celebrities also have joined the chorus. Take for instance, what film star Aamir Khan remarked a couple of years ago when he took potshots at politicians, while referring to the fear his wife Kiran Rao had expressed about India's growing intolerance.

"When I chat with Kiran (his wife) at home, she says 'Should we move out of India?' That's a disastrous and big statement for Kiran to make. She fears for her child. She fears about what the atmosphere around us will be. She feels scared to open the newspapers every day. That does indicate that there is this sense of growing disquiet, there is growing despondency apart from alarm. You feel why this is happening, you feel low. That sense does exist in me," Aamir said.

award function, also endorsed the returning of awards by creative people saying it was a way to express their dissatisfaction or disappointment. "People who are our elected representatives, people who we select to look after us for five years, State or centre... when people take law into their hands, we look upon these people to take a strong stance, to make a strong statement, speed up the legal process, when we see that happening there is a sense of security but when we don't see that happening there is a sense of insecurity," said the celebrity actor.

Understandably, the BJP reacted to his remark and completely rejected the comment of Aamir. "He is not scared but he is trying to scare people. India gave him all the laurels and respect. He should not forget that India made him a star," said BJP spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain. Congress vice-president stoutly defended the actor and suggested that the Modi government should reach out to the people to know why they felt disturbed.

Rahul in a tweet said: "Instead of branding all those who question the government and Modiji as unpatriotic, anti-national or 'motivated', the government would do better to reach out to people to understand what's disturbing them." But the BJP

spokesman, as usual, pooh-poohed Rahul's comment saying that there was a conspiracy going on in the country to defame the nation!

The real problem is the line drawn by Radcliffe on the basis of religion. He did regret the killings in the wake of partition, but did not change the line. Those on the other side of the line are people of Pakistan who slowly and gradually are becoming part of the Islamic world. Fundamentalism has taken a firm grip.

There is practically no Hindu and Sikh on the other side of the border. Christians form the majority among the minorities in Pakistan. Their complaint is that the churches have been destroyed and there is a forced conversion. The democratically elected prime minister is doing whatever he can. But the last word is with the army. Unfortunately, the army is also getting contaminated.

Words of Ansari have great relevance because a soft kind of Hindutva is spreading in India. Those who are at the helm of affairs are pushing the division because elections fought on the basis of Hindus and Muslims are bound to benefit the Hindus. The fabric of secular India is being torn bit by bit. It's regrettable that ideology of secularism followed in the last seven decades is in great danger.

**Footprints of A Crusader  
(The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)**

by

**Rohini Gawankar**

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## Should Nawaz Sharif's Ouster Worry India?

D. K. Giri

Any major political or military event in Pakistan concerns India inasmuch as both countries are at daggers drawn on Kashmir. The ouster of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif should certainly worry India for a good many reasons. Nawaz Sharif had dealt with six Indian Prime Ministers and had developed working relations with all of them. With his business background, Sharif had realized that good trade and economic relations with India would ensure peace and harmony between the two countries. It is Nawaz Sharif more than any Pakistani Prime Minister who wanted to rein in on anti-India Pakistani military. In his second stint in 1997-99, as the Prime Minister, Sharif had removed two army chiefs in one year. He had appointed Pervez Musharaf by superseding other senior officers. It is another matter that Musharaf later staged a military coup and forced Sharif into exile. Pakistani Army thrives on antagonism with India and now Afghanistan as it believes such a stance brings them political and pecuniary gains. Furthermore, Sharif had taken on the pro-army Supreme Court which has the controversial habit of dismissing elected civilian governments. Sharif, although accused of rigging and manipulating elections by Pakistani media and political opponents, strove to establish the supremacy of the democratic state. Pakistan's politics is based on three pillars - the Islamic Groups, the Army and Kashmir; all the three confront, bedevil and squeeze the political democracy in the country.

Pakistan has a fledgling democracy which is yet to take firm roots. No civilian government in that country has ever completed its five-year term. Nawaz Sharif too did not run the full term in his three stints as the Prime Minister; 1990-93, 1997-99, and 2013-17. Earlier he was ejected by Army and now by the Supreme Court. Sharif's disproportionate income and assets were exposed by the Panama papers leaked by the law firm Mossack Fonesca. Nawaz Sharif has amassed wealth beyond his stated income, and his children had flats in expensive parts of London. The fact dug out from election records that Sharif did not disclose his firm in UAE during filing his nominations for National Assembly is another charge. Even Imran Khan of Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Sharif's *bête noir*, had also made faulty declarations of assets as a candidate. One recalls that Sharif was used in the past by the Army to attack Benazir Bhutto, and now Khan is being used against Nawaz Sharif.

The Supreme Court took cognizance of the Panama leaks and instituted a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) that included two army officials. The presence of army in JIT confirms that the Army was in pursuing Sharif who had tried to muscle into the Army's turf, the Kashmir policy, etc. The JIT submitted its report on 10 July and the Supreme Court gave its verdict on 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month. Invoking a clause of the constitution that stressed Islamic virtues that a Prime Minister "be sagacious, righteous, non-profligate, honest and upright", the Supreme Court decreed that Sharif was 'no longer fit to be the Prime Minister'. It asked the

Election Commission to de-notify Sharif from the National Assembly and ordered the National Accountability Bureau, an anti-corruption body to file charges within six weeks for the trial to be completed in six months. The court has thrown Pakistan's politics into turmoil as the general elections are due in a year.

The Muslim League (Nawaz) has the majority in the Lower House to elect the successor to Sharif. Nawaz Sharif would have liked his daughter Maryam to succeed him if she was not besmirched in the Panama saga. His second option was to bring in his younger brother Sahbaz, the current Chief Minister of Punjab province, the political stronghold of Nawaz's family. Until Sahbaz was inducted into the Lower House, Nawaz Sharif installed one of his loyalist-Ministers Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as the Prime Minister. The buzz now is that Shahbaz has been ditched in the family feud; Maryam and her mother did not want Sahbaz to have greater hold of the party at the centre and in Punjab where Shahbaz wanted his son Hamza to succeed him.

What will happen to Nawaz Sharif, Pakistani politics and India-Pakistan in the post-Sharif period? Nawaz Sharif's immediate future has become uncertain. He had confronted the power centers in the past. At one point, he ransacked the Supreme Court, challenged the political might of the powerful military, and ordered the removal of General Musharaf in 1999 when he felt that the army chief had bypassed him on Kargil. He had even planned to arrest Musharaf on his return from Sri Lanka.

As Musharaf was flying back into Pakistan in a commercial flight, Nawaz Sharif had got the Jinnah airport cordoned off, but the flight, on the pretext of refueling landed in another airport. Then Musharaf turned the table on Nawaz, contacted his military colleagues, quickly organized a coup, and put Nawaz under arrest. Sharif was handed a life imprisonment and was to be given a death sentence by the military courts. In a deal brokered by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia Nawaz escaped death and was exiled for 21 years. Ironically, again another deal with the army brought him back to Pakistan in 2007.

By most accounts, Sharif had tenuous relations with the Army. On 30 October 2016, Sharif has issued two stern messages to the army. One, the army should not interfere in the civilian administration and second, as Pakistan was getting internationally isolated for being soft on terrorists, the army should expeditiously conclude the investigation and trial on Pathankot and Mumbai attacks. The messages delivered in a closed-door meeting were leaked to the media, much to the outrage of the army. Although, later on, Sharif tried to mend it with the army by dismissing his officials responsible for leaking the deliberations to the media, it was too late. The army had planned to corner Sharif.

There are limited options for Sharif to escape the conspiratorial clutches of Courts, the Army and the Jihadists. As he is still popular with the people, he may call for early elections and win. He has steadied the economy, built closer relations with China, drawn 54 billion USD in FDI for the China-Pakistan economic corridor, mitigated the acute electricity shortages, etc. So the voters may still agree with him. On the other hand, the army is not sure if Imran Khan is

mature enough to rule Pakistan. Now, he is caught in sexual harassment complaints by the women workers in his party. The army may have found it more congenial with Shahbaz Sharif as he does not provoke as his elder brother did. But Shahbaz becoming the PM is not a certainty anymore. The army may leave it to the voters, as from General Kiyani to General Bazwa, the army is not keen on a take-over. Also the Supreme Court's activism with a Messianic complex may not go down well with the voters who would want full democracy.

On India-Pakistan relations, there may not be much of an impact although a stable democratic government is better for dialogue than the army. But on Kashmir, Nawaz Sharif is on the same page as the Army and the Jihadists whose *raison d'être* is fomenting trouble in India. The ties between India and Pakistan have plummeted to the lowest point at the moment. There have been no official meetings in the recent past. The walk-by greetings exchanged at Astana, Kazakhstan between Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif epitomized the animosity between New Delhi and Islamabad. There is not much hope for normalization of relations. The little hope that existed has been dashed by Sharif's exit. Only the international forces like US and China, which have stakes in the region for different reasons can help ease the tensions. USA has decidedly tilted towards India in its South Asia policy, and China which thrives on trade and investment would not like Pakistan to be embroiled in a bloody conflict with India. China has invested heavily in Pakistan and almost controls it as its vassal state. So, India need not worry though as USA and China, the big influencers in the region, will not like, the India-

Pakistan conflict to spiral out of control.

However, Nawaz had somewhat kept the doors for dialogue open. The door ajar under Nawaz may now be fully shut. The silver lining is the reassertion of democracy over other institutions like Supreme Court, military and jihadists. No wonder some terrorist groups have claimed that Nawaz Sharif had to go as he did not support jihad. In the event of democracy winning, the Pakistani voters might have the final say in the next general elections. India will watch the developments in its important neighbor with great interest and attention. If at all India could do anything it should encourage the promotion of democracy by Track-II diplomacy with its contacts with civil society actors. Unmistakably, a strong and stable democracy anywhere in the world and for India in Pakistan is good for peace, harmony and security.

### Books by Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan.** Price 600 rupees.
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# Imagining India

## Visions of Swaraj and the Democratic Journey- II

Anand Kumar

The cultural foundations of Indian unity and nationalism have originated, among others, with the writings of Sri Aurobindo (1996). The contributions of authors like Bankim, Iqbal, Subramaiyam Bharati, Savarkar and cultural historian Ananda Coomarswamy (1910) were also considered quite significant. Sociologist D.P. Mukherji (1958), while analyzing the philosophy of Indian history, has underlined the need to recognize the impact of five momentous phases of changes in the making of Indian culture and civilization before the interface with the Western influence: i. Vedic Aryan, ii. Buddhist, iii. Gupta period, iv. Harsh and Vikramaditya, and v. the Muslim rulers.

The claims of territorial nationalism have been related with classical sources including Vishnu Puran, Vayu Puran, Ramayan, Mahabharat and a variety of Smriti and Samhita and the concept of Bharat or Bharatvarsha. For example, the following Sanskrit Shloka (among many others) defining the sacred geography of the Indian culture have been quite often quoted as evidence of the territorial basis of ancient India:

१. उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिण यथा  
भारती नाम भारतं तद् वर्षं, संतति (पुराण विष्णु) (A depiction of the territorial framework of Bharat where the northern boundary is marked by the Himalayas and southern limits are merging with the oceans. Vishnu Puran)

२. गंगे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सरस्वति नर्मदे सिन्धु  
कावेरी जलेस्मिन् सन्निधिम कुरु (A well known morning prayer from the Puranas identifying the seven holiest rivers.)

३. अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी कांची अवंतिका.  
पूरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिकाः ( List of the seven holy cities which are the gate ways to Moksha.)

४. महेन्द्रो मलयः सह्यः शक्तिमात्रेक्षपर्वतः. विन्ध्यश्च  
पारियात्रश्च सप्तैते कुलपर्वताः ( Identification of the territory of Bharatvarsha as a land with seven mountain ranges from north to south and east to west.)

They were elaborated with help of several classical texts in the works of Radhakumud Mukherji (1909/ 1954). Mukherji cites several classical and traditional prayers where India is defined in terms of a network of places of worship and pilgrimage for worshippers of Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, and other gods and goddesses. Then he reminds about the lists of great kings preserved in Vedic literature and supplemented by other lists in Purana and other works. In his discussion significance is given to classics like Arthasastra of Kautilya, Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, Niti-Sastra of Kamandaka and the treasury of Jain and Buddhist texts to provide evidences of an Indian civilizational framework with territoriality and a system of multi-layered kingship.

Anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Bose suggests that there is a geographical background of Indian culture which is signified by “the comparative isolation or protection afforded by the northern mountain wall, and the character of the two coasts of the peninsula; the heat and rainfall, and the character of her soil; and lastly the presence of an extensive alluvial plain in the north, succeeded in the south by a plateau which locally takes on the character of steppe or savannah or of humid mesothermal forest.” (1967, p.1)

The evolution of Indian nationalism has been outlined by a number of Indian leaders from Lala Lajpat Rai in Young India (1916) to Jawaharlal Nehru in ‘Discovery of India’ (1946). According to Nehru (1927), “The modern idea of nationhood is of recent growth even in the West and India in the past century was not, and is not even now, wholly, a nation like France or England is today. It was too vast a country to develop on those lines before the advent of modern methods of communication. But even in the remote past there has always been a fundamental unity of India—a unity of a common faith and culture. India was Bharata, the holy land of the Hindus, and it is not without significance that the great places of Hindu pilgrimage are situated in the four corners of India—the extreme south overlooking Ceylone, the extreme west washed by the Arabian sea, the east facing the Bay of Bengal and the north in the Himalayas. Sanskrit was the language of the learned throughout the length and breadth of the country and the provincial languages in the north were all derived from Sanskrit and were closely allied, the four principal southern languages being greatly influenced by Sanskrit. Every resident of the country felt a certain kinship with all others who lived in the great sub-continent, and those who came from outside India were the foreigners, the barbarians.”

The Ideals and anxieties about Swaraj It is true that there was an ever evolving vision of Swaraj which provided the continuity in the imagination about freedom and India after the British Raj. At the same time there were apprehensions about what awaits for India and Indians after the departure of

the British rulers and partition of an ancient civilization to create space for two post-colonial nation-states. There was an environment of anxiety and alert among the constitution-makers also. It will be relevant to have a synoptic view of the thinking of the representative voices of the people of India about the challenges before the people after Swaraj from the British Raj.

Let us remember that Congress adopted the resolution of Purna Swaraj at Lahore session on 26 January, 1930. It was 45 years after the establishment of the Indian National Congress, 25 years after the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 14 years after the Congress-League Pact, 13 years after the Gandhian-led Champaran Satyagraha, and 9 years after the Non-cooperation Movement. According to the Lahore Resolution: "We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, or any other people, to have freedom and, to enjoy the fruits of their toil, and have the necessities of life, so that they may have the full opportunities of growth. We believed also that, if any government deprives a people of their rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence."

Explaining his vision, Gandhi wrote in 1937, "Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete political independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them moral and social, the

corresponding end is Dharam; i.e. religion in the right sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. but is superior to them all. . . Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue." (*Harijan*, 2.1.'37)

According to Rabindranath Tagore, writing in 1940, "The turning of the wheel of fortune will compel the British one day to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India they will leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their two centuries' rule runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth will be revealed, bearing a tale of utter futility! There was a time when I used to believe that the springs of a true civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. Today, as I am about to quit the world, that faith has gone bankrupt. . . . I look back on the stretch of past years and see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization lying heaped as garbage out of history. And yet I will not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man, accepting his present defeat as final. I shall look forward to a turning in history after the cataclysm is over and the sky is again unburdened and passionless." (Tagore: 1967, 358-9)

In 1940, Congress Socialist Jaiprakash Narayan presented 'An Outline Picture of Swaraj' which was published by Mahatma Gandhi in his periodical *Harijan* with appreciative note. It asserted that: ". . . The free Indian state shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly. The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating from inherited

social status or the State. The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. . . All large-scale collective production will be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized. The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. . . . The State shall protect the interests of all the classes, but when any of these impinges upon the interests of those who have been poor and downtrodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice." (Prasad: 1964, 37-39)

Let us turn to the resolution outlining the main objectives of the Constituent Assembly which was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru on December 13, 1946. It was a 8-point resolution which wanted to underline the following assurances: 1. To proclaim India as an independent sovereign republic, 2. Autonomy of the constituting units, 3. Guaranteeing and securing justice, equality, and freedoms to all the people of India, 4. Adequate safeguards for minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other backward classes, and 5. Contribution to world peace and the welfare of mankind. (Shiva Rao: 1967, Vol. II, 3-4) All of these commitments became reference points in the coming years for claims and counter-claims of interest groups, social communities, and ethno-national identities and regions. They also got

recognized as the guiding stars for conflict resolution and policy-making.

### **A Painful Transition to Swaraj**

It is true that the most challenging situation related with the dawn of Purna Swaraj (complete independence) was related with the proposed partition of British India to create two new nation-states – India and Pakistan. All India Congress Committee (AICC) adopted a resolution on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1947 announcing its acceptance the Partition with a majority vote. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and the Congress Socialist members of the Congress Working Committee Jaayaprakash Narayanan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia had voted against it. Here are the relevant parts of this statement which became a turning point for the coming years of democratic nation-building: “...Ever since its inception, more than 60 years ago, the National Congress has labored for the realization of a free and united India, and millions of our people have suffered in this great cause. Not only the labours and sacrifices of the past two generations but the long course of India’s history and tradition bear witness to this essential unity. Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India as she is and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. Economic circumstance and the insistent demands of international affairs make the unity of India still more necessary. The picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds and hearts. The A. I. C. C. earnestly trusts that when present passions have subsided, India’s problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all. The proposals of June 3 are likely to lead to the secession of some parts of the country from India. However much this may be regretted, the A.I.C.C. accepts this possibility in the

circumstance now prevailing.. (Shiva Rao 1966, Vol. I, 529-530)

Let us not forget that if the coming of Swaraj (independence) was tarred by ‘the partition’ and separation of the Muslim majority provinces in the eastern and western parts of British India as ‘Pakistan’, there was also integration of more than 500 princely states into the newly created Union of India. But it was a mixed blessing due to ‘moving from an alliance between democracies and dynasties’ to ‘really a union of the Indian people built on the concept of sovereignty of the people’. “It removes all barriers between the people of the States and the people of Provinces and achieves for the time the objective of a strong democratic India built on the foundation of a cooperative enterprise on the part of the people of the Provinces and States alike.” according to Vallabh Bhai Patel, in a speech, in the Constituent Assembly on October 12, 1949. But Patel underlines the inherent problems in this exercise which needed due care and caution to avoid separatism and disintegration in near future as the following: “As the House is aware, the States, as we inherited them were in varying stages of development. In most cases the advance had to be made from the starting point of pure aristocracy. Having regard to the magnitude of the task which confronted the Government of the Unions in the transitional period, and to the fact that neither the services inherited by them nor the political organizations, as they existed there, were in a position to assume, unaided full responsibilities of the administration, we made a provision in some of the covenants that till the new Constitution came into operation in these Unions, the Rajapramukh and the Council of Ministers shall, in the exercise of their functions, be under the general control of the Government of India and

comply with the instructions issued by the Government from time to time. The stress of the transitional phase is likely to continue for some years. We are ourselves most anxious that the people of these states should shoulder their responsibilities; however, we cannot ignore the fact that while the administrative organization and political institutions are to be found in most of the States in a relatively less developed state, the problems relating to the integration of the States and the change-over from an autocratic to a democratic order are such as to test the mettle of long established administrations and experienced leaders of the people.” (Shiva Rao: 1968, Vol. IV, 568)

It is also relevant to include the prophecy-like concerns of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who presided over the Drafting Committee and Dr. Rajendra Prasad who was the chairman of the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar underlined dangers of a major contradiction which was about to be introduced with the new constitution and its consequences for the future of political democracy in the following words: “On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality to our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so

laboriously built up.” (Shiva Rao: 1968, p. 945)

It was followed up Dr. Rajendra Prasad who expressed concern about the need of integrity and character among the future leaders of India to be able to carry forward the task of peoples’ wellbeing and nation’s progress on the basis of newly created constitution. According to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, “After all, a Constitution like a machine is lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them. There is a fissiparous tendency arising out of various elements in our life. We have communal differences, caste differences, language differences, provincial differences and so forth...” (Shiva Rao: 1968, p. 958)

Within a few months of adopting this Constitution, Jawaharlal Nehru issued a press statement as the first prime minister of democratic India where three major problems were underlined by him.

To quote from the statement of 12 September, 1950 in National Herald, “What are our principal problems? Broadly speaking, they may be placed under three heads: international, economic policy, and communal...” (Gopal & Iyengar: 2001)

### **Constitutional Basis of post-colonial India**

Most of these early contributors and their trajectories became part of the intellectual history of modern India with the making of a Constitution which not only inaugurated an era of civic nationalism but also paved the way to move towards a new set of universal and humane ideals. India was on her way to re-invent herself through democratic values, representative institutions and participatory processes. Here all citizens of India were to be recognized through two lenses – i) a decolonized democratic polity based upon interdependent union of states and an overarching Constitutional Center, and ii). a common citizenship of a multi-cultural nation-state with a set of

fundamental rights and construction of four new clusters of such citizens who needed special constitutional protections and support. They were: 1. the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) or the Intermediate Castes, 2. the Scheduled Castes, 3. the Scheduled Tribes, and 4. the religious minorities. These were part of the promised social engineering in the resolution about the ‘Objectives’ of the Constituent Assembly. It was to achieve the goal of democratic nation-building through differential entitlements, along with a set of ‘fundamental rights’, for different categories of men and women as citizens of newly established republic. A new legitimacy system on the basis of universal adult suffrage, multi-party representative democracy and regular elections have incrementally institutionalized a dynamic interaction between and within these clusters for democratic power. Elite recruitment, new vertical and horizontal solidarities and a variety of coalitions are some of the significant consequences of this socio-political reconstruction in quest of unity in diversity.

(To be concluded)

### **Box 1 – The Preamble Democracy and Nation-building in the 1960s**

## **Preamble**

- **WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA**, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** and to secure to all its citizens:
- **JUSTICE**, social, economic and political;
- **LIBERTY** of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
- **EQUALITY** of status and of opportunity;
- and to promote among them all
- **FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the individual and the **unity and integrity** of the Nation;
- **IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY** this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**



## Some aspects of the President's inaugural speech

**Rajindar Sachar**

The Presidents oath taking though is a routine function, also is an event for people to judge whether the dignitary who is going to take over the highest office under the constitution has shed off his political loyalty to the political party and is now above groupism.

The inaugural speech of President R.N. Kovind passes a fair deal of test but it is unfortunate that he left a little chink which one wishes could have been avoided. In his address he showed himself to be rising above the din of regressive communal atmosphere that Modi government is encouraging when he very openly said; “Our diversity is the core that makes us so unique. In this land, we find mix of states and regions, religions, languages, cultures, lifestyles and much more. We are so different and yet so similar and united”. This effect was spoiled by some BJP persons shouting *Jai Shri Ram* - a slogan totally out of place at the oath taking ceremony.

But a chink appeared in this welcome approach and cast a little shadow. President rightly pointed out the massive contribution to the India's freedom struggle and its development. He specially openly mentioned Gandhiji, “Patel”, Ambedkar contribution. The reference to Deen Dayal Upadhaya though not very apt at the occasion may be papered over as loyalty to one of his earliest political leaders.

But what has hit the public is the total omission to mention of Nehru even though he may not have praised him on his political achievement. But to talk of

India's freedom movement without mention of Pandit Nehru is unacceptable, rather heresy. No one grudges praise for Sardar Patel, he could have mentioned him as strong leader and his vast contribution to the country - Sardar Patel's role in integrating princely states is incomparable. Nehru's name should at least have found place, even though without praising his important role in the freedoms struggle. The truth is that whether you like it or not. Nehru's massive contribution in the freedom struggle cannot be put under cover.

I will give instance of how even being a committed member of Socialist Party of J.P. and Dr. Lohia since 1946 I faced a similar situation and how I dealt with in my humble manner.

It must be recognized that the reverence and hero worship for Nehru was normal and strong of my generation who had been brought up on the heroism, sacrifice and intellectualism of Pt. Nehru. I remember basking in Nehru's presence when he came to Lahore to canvass for my father's assembly election. Again when in 1945, after his release from prison, Pt. Nehru while going to Srinagar, broke his journey at Lahore – my father had invited him and some other important leaders for an informal get together at our place. I remember the awe, inspiration, admiration and respect with which all of us felt in his presence. And yet I behaved what many may call it unacceptable and foolish behavior of mine in 1955, which I confess in later time makes me somewhat feel stupid and yet it shows the different phases one passes through.

In 1955 Punjab High Court at Chandigarh was to be formally inaugurated by Pt. Nehru. I was then general secretary of High Court Bar Association. Pt. Nehru had come to Chandigarh the evening before. My father who was then the Chief Minister of Punjab invited Pt. Nehru for breakfast at his residence in the morning. I was staying with father though my office was in another sector. Here was an occasion for a young man like me, who had hero worshipped Pt. Nehru from his waking period and amongst the earlier books which had inspired me were Nehru's Autobiography, and Letters from Prison to Indira. But then I had grown up, become a full blooded socialist and still in thirties. We in the socialist party were convinced (rightly or wrongly, time alone will tell) that Pt. Nehru, who had shown the vision of socialism to us had not kept that pace, and was following wrong policies. Our disappointments with his policies were deep, though I was a small fry in part of that milieu. So I told father that I will not be at breakfast table to receive Pt. Nehru, though my wife will certainly be there along with my mother to play the hostess and look after the arrangements. My father and I had beautiful understanding and our sense of values and respecting each others' views were the same. That is why he accepted my hesitation though he mentioned that I was being childish. I thereafter next early morning went out of the residence to my office before Pt. Nehru arrived for breakfast. I had even at that time that admiration and inspiration for Nehru that I could not

think of being at home and be rude by not joining for breakfast. Of course I behaved absolutely correctly and all of us office bearers received Pt. Nehru with all the dignity and respect and deference due to him when he came to the High Court to inaugurate it.

Later on and now I laugh at my

presumptuousness – a chit of boy, whom Pt. Nehru will not even notice beating his chest by absenting himself and denying to himself such a close breakfast meeting with one of the greatest of leaders of India and who had been a hero of our family. But then I take it that such are the peculiarities of radical youth, the devil may care attitude and the almost

fatalistic belief in the rightness of the cause of one's own party. But then I suppose that is the real difference between youth and old age – one may laugh now, but one does not demean it because at that time it represented what I like to feel was a youthful, genuine and unshakeable faith in a socialist society – which faith, fortunately I have still not lost.

## Denying children admission on technical grounds

Sandeep Pandey

The founder-manager of City Montessori School in Lucknow, Jagdish Gandhi, has recently published full page advertisements in local edition of all national dailies claiming that even though he would like to admit children under section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act, 2009, the children whose admissions were ordered by the District Magistrate and the Basic Shiksha Adhikari in his school did not fulfill one or more criteria required for such admissions. The children either live more than a kilometer away, the definition of 'neighbourhood' stated by Uttar Pradesh government and a necessary criterion to be fulfilled by children seeking admission under the abovementioned section of the Act, or were less than 6 years of age whereas the Act applies to children in the age group 6 to 14 years.

In an order delivered by Justice Saumitra Dayal Singh of the Allahabad High Court on 9 August, 2017 regarding the admission of child Chaitanya Dev to Nursery class in Maharishi Patanjali Vidya Mandir of Allahabad, in the matter of Sudhir Kumar, father of Chaitanya, vs. State of U.P. and others, said that for schools which run Kindergarten, Preparatory or Nursery classes the

provisions of the Act apply even if the age of child is less than 6 years. The school claimed that the child did not live in neighbourhood. On this the Judge reprimanded the school saying that since it had not admitted even one child against the 202 seats which were supposed to be reserved for children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, which is 25% of the strength of entry level classes in this school as prescribed by the Act, the criterion of neighbourhood was irrelevant. Only if the school had admitted 25% children under the abovementioned categories the question of neighbourhood could have been examined. The Judge took the school to task saying that since the school had wasted one full year of the child, it was now its responsibility to educate the child till class XII instead of the stipulated class VIII. The government will compensate the education of child from classes I to VIII at the rate of Rs. 450 per month but the school will have to take care of the expenses on Chaitanya's education from classes IX to XII on its own. He added that if any of the buses run by school to carry its children go in the direction of Chaitanya's house then the school will have to provide free bus service to

him for the duration of his study in the school.

It is hoped that after such a clear cut and strict order by the HC the schools which have been playing truant in admission of children under the Act will now stop resisting the entry of children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections into their precincts. The Judge said that denying admission to children under section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act on technical grounds is against the spirit of the Act. The Act has been made to facilitate the admission of children who are denied education. If the private schools will put all their energies in blocking the admission of underprivileged children then the purpose of the Act would be defeated.

Jagdish Gandhi challenged the admission of 31 children in academic year 2015-16 under the Act ordered by DM, Lucknow. The HC and then the Supreme Court ordered him to admit 13 out of these 31 children who lived in the neighbourhood of one km. In 2016-17 Jagdish Gandhi again refused to admit 55 children, 14 of whom are still in court against him even after the entire academic year is over.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

## Who cracked the *Mahagathbandhan*?

**J. L. Jawahar**

It is cracked, no doubt. The question is who the culprit is. It is not surprising that everybody says “not in my name” particularly when a criminal is obviously there before your eyes. But we should not jump to conclusion based on apparent situation. We should not ignore facts – good or bad. Maha or not, the gathbandhan (coalition) had a short life. Why was it formed at all? After the BJP swept the polls in 2014 and got unexpected majority to form government in the center, everybody has seen the writings on the wall. They realized it was a tsunami and it could not be stopped unless all the other forces join hands and stand together. It is no doubt a wise political decision. The fact is that there is nothing common between the parties that have joined hands except that they have a common enemy – the BJP that has swept the polls. “My enemy’s enemy is my friend” is the principle on which they came together. That is the only cement that holds together the bricks to appear like a wall. Naturally their survival depends on the enemy. The parties have not discarded their identities. They kept their members as separate camps. Obviously they expected the coalition as a short term arrangement. The only agreement is that they will form a government under the leadership of M Nitish Kumar after elections to the Assembly. Why did they choose him as Chief Minister beforehand? They know he is the only one that has credibility among them. Such coalitions will necessarily break down after the enemy disappears by any reason. Unfortunately, in this case, the enemy is getting stronger day by day and becoming invincible at least for the near future.

The political situation does not stand still. Changes happen and one has to deal with it wisely. The change in this case is in the form of allegations of corruption against the Deputy Chief Minister. The coalition tried to prevail on the Chief Minister to close his eyes on this issue and allow him to continue in the cabinet. But the world is not confined to only the coalition partners. There are other people observing the situation. Political parties are jealous of each other. When opportunity arises they will try to prove the other as unprincipled, particularly when the candidate is the one claiming some moral ground. They allege that he is closing his eyes as he is fond of the Chair and he is in no way better than any of the other politicians. In the heart of hearts even the members of coalition are of the same view. How could he be different when he joined hands with us? He knows what the RJD party is when he joined hands. How can he refuse to accept its candidate now in the cabinet? That is, when you joined hands with a corrupt party to form the government, you have to carry on with the corrupt member in the cabinet. It amounts to a compromise on the part of Nitish Kumar. Isn’t it? Everybody knows that the head of the party is disqualified on allegations of corruption. Does it mean that everybody in that party is also corrupt? We find that almost all the terrorists are Muslims. In spite of it, we do not agree that all Muslims are terrorists. It could be the same with the party also. The person nominated by that party to join the cabinet has no allegations against him. The Chief Minister has no objection for him. No doubt, that is also a compromise to some extent. But it is pragmatic. Those

who find fault with Nitish now, should have objected then.

Suddenly some allegations were raised about the Dy. Chief Minister by no less an organization than the CBI. He was not removed from the cabinet immediately as it would precipitate a crisis in the coalition. It has to be done with concurrence of all coalition members. It would have been the simplest and easiest step if he was replaced with another member of the same party. By that the cabinet could have maintained a clean image. But the head of that party was shouting from (his) house tops that he would not resign under any circumstances. As a loyal member of coalition, Nitish was meeting all the members of coalition pleading that the member may be told to resign and some other member be nominated for cabinet. But none of them had the courage to tell that to the arrogant head of that party. Others were taunting Nitish on that. He was not removing him as it would jeopardise his Chair. But if he removes the member, it would certainly lead to break down of coalition and he would be blamed for that. It would be a sin on his part if not a crime. Instead of cooperating with the Chief Minister to maintain coalition respectably, the other partners were willing to play the game and see the fun.

At this juncture came another development that has thickened the quagmire and entangled him deeply. It was the election of President. A long time was available for the parties to select their candidates. In fact, the coalition members met many times to select the candidate, but could not

identify any one that is acceptable to all of them. There was no unity of purpose. To cover up the absence of unity they declared that they will announce their candidate after the official party announces their candidate. Obviously, they preferred to react rather than to act. That was how they lead the coalition. The common enemy was there that drove them to form a coalition. But now there is no common friend to unite them. The ruling party selected a Dalit candidate who happened to be the governor of Bihar at that time. As Chief Minister of the state Nitish had to work with him on daily basis and he has developed cordial relations with him. He could not but congratulate him and offer his support as he was sure to be the next President. The coalition has not yet selected its candidate and even if the selection is made it would be only as a matter of token as he was sure to be defeated. But the coalition partners did not like it. They never feel like one with the Chief Minister. They only wanted to show their supremacy over the CM as partners of coalition that made him the Chief Minister. If they were wise enough to take advantage of selecting their candidate in advance, Nitish would have naturally committed to him even if he was not likely to get elected as President. Even if it is in the interest of the state, what he has done has become a confrontation with the coalition partners. They have nominated another Dalit candidate to contest election for President. The habitual communal politics came into play. There may not be anything to choose between the two candidates except the party to which they are affiliated. But the coalition candidate is a woman and also from Bihar state. Thus, the fact that Nitish could not support her became a remark against him. The play of gender card is only an opportunism. The bill to reserve some seats in Parliament to women is lying there for decades. That is how

they show value for women. Even Hillary Clinton could not get any advantage of playing the gender card in America. In spite of insulting women in the most uncivilized manner, most of the women in America voted for Trump and made him the President. Feminism has no place in politics.

Then came the time to select a candidate for Vice-President. This time the coalition was wise enough to announce their candidate immediately in one sitting. Nitish offered his support to that candidate along with the coalition members. Obviously, he was not thinking of going against coalition partners and expecting they will prevail on the recalcitrant party to cooperate with the Chief Minister and save coalition. All in vain.

The nominee of the ruling party won the election as President. As a matter of courtesy, Nitish had to go and congratulate him, which he did. There was no indication that the partners will act to solve his problem. They wanted to see how Nitish will solve the problem. Or, in their opinion, there is no problem at all. For Nitish, it is a grave situation. He has to act. Instead of removing the tainted minister and bear the sin of breaking the coalition, he decided to resign as Chief Minister and stepped out. Things moved fast. The ruling party BJP immediately offered support as if they were waiting for such a development. If he accepts the offer he would be able to continue as Chief Minister without the support of the present coalition members. But support is coming from a party which he condemned earlier. If he does not accept it, there would be either a President's rule or elections in the state of Bihar. What could he get by that? And what could he lose if he accepts the support offered by BJP and form a government? The support is an

opportunistic movement on the part of BJP. There will be a blame that he accepted the offer as he was fond of power. What is wrong in it? Is it not for grabbing power that political parties are formed? Is there anybody who would be benefitted if Nitish refuses to accept the offer of support from BJP? There would be a price for accepting the support from BJP. They may try to dictate. But he can always decline to toe the line if it is unworthy and quit if necessary. Why to reject it now without trying? He decided to accept the offer and took charge as Chief Minister again. The fast developments gave rise to suspicions that it was all prearranged. If it was really a prearranged affair, it could have been prevented by facilitating Nitish continue as Chief Minister of coalition by removing the tainted minister. Having refused to do that, the coalition has only to regret but not to blame anybody. There is no use of searching for scapegoats.

Having observed this sick drama from the beginning, even the socialist friends who have claimed Nitish as their own all these days, try to find fault with him and blame him as crazy for power. They blame him for breaking the coalition. I feel particularly sorry when *Janata* weekly did not hesitate to call it "treachery of Nitish". But they did not have the courage to call the party any names who "preferred to the family's fortune more than the ideology". On the other hand complements are paid for "his impeccable secular character". It is clearly showing prejudice. It is depressing to note that even among the so-called socialists there is so much of bias and partiality. Naturally it lead to tilted analysis of the situation and failed to call the spade a spade. If there is any life in the coalition, there is nothing to prevent them from electing another person in the place of Nitish

when he resigned. They refuse to see the reason and allege that it is not any principle that made Nitish resign. It is only the “desire to remain in power that caused the move.” That is the crux of the problem. Everybody in the coalition lost the power while Nitish even after resigning regained his power. Naturally it caused jealousy and became an excuse to blame him. They refuse to ask why such a situation was allowed to develop. Why none of the coalition partners were willing to get rid of a tainted minister to save the

coalition? They want to retain power at the cost of reputation of Nitish. If there is any trace of principle and morality in Indian politics, it is only in people like Nitish and not in those who created a situation where he was compelled to commit *hara-kiri*. By that he hurt himself, but strangely, others are weeping. Allegations against Nitish are illogical and do not get credibility just by referring to Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. It is a shallow attempt. It is time to realise that the coalition broke

because of its intrinsic defects, its lack of any common base except enmity with the ruling party. It was not a coherent group. The partners refused to take any responsibility to ensure the success of coalition. They enjoyed the situation where Nitish faced a moral crisis. The coalition partners have neither mutual trust nor respect for each other. Still we could not find any other politician who stood for his own convictions to the extent Nitish did. Let us wait and see what is in store for him in future.

*(Continued from Page 10)*

Imitating CMS, several other schools like Navyug Radiance, owned by Bhartiya Janata Party leader Sudhir Halwasiya, City International, owned by Jagdish Gandhi's daughter Sunita Gandhi, Dr. Virendra Swaroop Public School, Mahanagar and two branches of Saint Mary Intermediate College did not admit a total of 105 children in 2016-17.

In the current academic year 2017-18, 296 admissions have been ordered by the local administration and of the 167 children who have approached CMS, all of them have been declared undeserving by it. According to the school 117 of them live outside the limit of one km, 135 are below 6 years of age, 89 are already enrolled in other schools and 38 don't qualify to be in economically weaker section category. Some of the children fail on more than one criterion. The number of schools which are defiant about not admitting children under the Act is going up every year as a result of CMS's stance. It is entirely because of CMS that admissions to schools under section 12(1)(c) has become such an uphill task.

If Jagdish Gandhi is rightly claiming that all admissions ordered

by the office of BSA are faulty then action must be taken against the BSA. However, if the BSA is correct then administration or the government must take action against the truant schools.

An important question which arises is whether Jagdish Gandhi has a right to examine the criteria required for admission for each of the children who are admitted to his school. If in this manner, every non-governmental person started examining the correctness of government's decision then the entire work of government can come to standstill. For example, if the fair price shop owner took a stand that s(he) would first examine the genuineness of the ration cards owners before distributing the food grains as part of Public Distribution System, then the whole scheme would be hampered.

In the same advertisement published by Jagdish Gandhi in which he has given reasons for not admitting children under the RTE Act, he has also claimed in one corner that he and his wife Bharti Gandhi do not own any private property, jewellery nor have large bank balances. The question which must be asked is where is

Jagdish Gandhi getting the funds from for publishing expensive advertisements and hiring costly lawyers like Shanti Bhushan and Abhishek Manu Singhvi? Is it from the fees that he charges from the parents of children who study in 20 branches of CMS? Does he have a right to waste the hard earned money of parents on contesting the admissions of underprivileged children in his school?

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## Bengal Chemicals up for sale

*Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944) was Professor of Chemistry at Presidency College, Calcutta (now Kolkata), an Indian patriot, educationist, and industrial pioneer who established the famous Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals as early as in 1901 when India was still under foreign rule. Addressing students in Trivandrum, Kerala on 13 March 1925, Mahatma Gandhi had held Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray out as an example to follow :*

*"I would like you to keep the two most brilliant examples we have in our own dear country, and those two are Drs. J.C. Bose and P.C. Ray. At least to the students of science, they must be household words, household names. I believe that they are household names to the whole of the educated India. They went in for science for the sake of science and we know what they have achieved. They never thought of what the profession of science would bring them in the shape of money or fame. They cultivated it for the sake of it ...".*

*Today the famous Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals, which Acharya Ray established more than 115 years ago, and which had throughout the 20th century given many foreign companies a run for their money, might be up for sale. Efforts are on to prevent this. See the article below by Rabin Majumdar, himself a retired Professor of Chemical Technology, published in The Statesman.*

**–Anil Nauriya**

On the eve of our preparation to celebrate the 157th birthday of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray falling on 2 August came the perturbing news that Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Limited (BCPL) and its landed assets have been put on sale by the Government of India, the owner of the company since 1980-81.

The celebrity composer-artist Pratul Mukhopadhyay sings with gusto - alu becho chhola becho, ... O bandhu... tomar... swapno becho na (sell potato, sell gram (but) dear friend... don't sell your... dreams).

The audience is enchanted, they cheer and applaud. But when dreams are thrown out in the open market for bidding and selling, we keep mum. BCPL owes its origin to Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Limited (BCPWL, 1901) popularly known as Bengal Chemical or BCPW. Its founder-proprietor was none other than Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray who described BCPW as his daughter (and his students as his sons).

Prafulla Chandra was a great dreamer and a visionary. Among his many projects undertaken to ameliorate the condition of his countrymen, BCPW was perhaps the best vehicle to realise his dream. It was also instrumental in demonstrating his ideas and methods to his countrymen.

As India's first own Heavy Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry, BCPW rose to dizzying heights in his lifetime and became a symbol of indigenous wisdom and pride.

The story of BCPW and its creator spread far and wide and the people of Bombay (now Mumbai) placed at the disposal of Ray a handsome morsel of land at a token price of just one rupee to set up a Bombay unit of BCPW which became a reality in 1938.

The successes were not miracles, they were won through great perseverance, hard labour and research. In fact, research and

innovation were in-built into BCPW from conception to its development into a successful industry. Just before he fell seriously ill for the last time and became inactive, Ray got disillusioned and quit from the Board of Directors and that too on a question of reinvestment of company profits into research and well-being of workers that he favoured, against other members who wanted this to be paid to shareholders.

BCPW strived to demonstrate, inter alia, how to weave education and research to the benefit of an industry and how an industry having significant pollution potential can live and grow sustainably. We failed to recognise the significance of BCPW and thus Prafulla Chandra Ray has never been given credit as a pioneer of industrialisation in modern India.

He has been widely misinterpreted and misunderstood albeit being sort of worshipped and further distorted in the process. In Independent India, we ignored him and others like him and indulged in other easier routes to

industrialisation; we even failed to realize the necessity of researching, developing and inculcating ideas and methodologies expounded by him and demonstrated through BCPW.

Quite a few research institutes grew up in free India bearing the names of scientists winning recognition of Western countries, mainly Europe. PC Ray was a notable exception. BCPW has often been described as merely a Swadeshi adventure of an idiosyncratic scientist and failed to attract necessary sympathy and support.

It started to show signs of wilting in Independent India; efforts to make it profitable brought about further decline. Finally, the Central Government took it over, rechristened it as BCPL and a new government company emerged. It continued to survive with subsidies and capital loans on soft terms only to grow more sick.

A closer look reveals that the popular household products, industrial and agricultural chemicals that were the hallmark of BCPW got little support to expand. Emphasis was laid on 'producing' tablets and capsules of medicines and formulations of wellknown brands. Marketing was the other area sought to be modernised - BCPL joined hands with on-line shoppers and retail chains. Consequently, it was the in-house R & D that suffered casualty.

The net result was that BCPW minus Dreams = BCPL. It was reported that BCPL made a profit of more than Rs 4 crore in the last financial year (2016-17) after prolonged losses over six decades. Wasn't it a reflection of the company's turnaround, of gaining

inherent strength towards sustained growth to make profit? Why then is the current call for putting BCPL in the list of companies for disinvestment and sell-out?

BCPL workers have filed a case at Kolkata High Court against the decision and have obtained an interim order of stay. This might be considered as a welcome step but will it be sufficient to save BCPL from eventual death? It is hardly any exaggeration that our education and research in science and technology today have become mere parasites thriving on everything alien to the realities in India, particularly in respect of the needs and aspirations of people.

Our precious resources like land, forests, water bodies, mines and coasts are on sale or lease, so are our education, agriculture, health and biodiversity, with active assistance from governments in Delhi and in States. When even 'Navratnas' are not spared, can the government be moved by appealing in the name of dreams, freedom, self-respect and sustainability?

Even in these days of open global market and business, developed countries are eager, on the one hand, to export dirty industries to greener countries ready to embrace them and, on the other, are still keen on focusing in areas of their strength and maintaining their supremacy and control. Only those who are conscious, alert and have self-esteem can possibly resist the imminent death of BCPL.

They can join in chorus with workers of the company and restrain the spree of disinvestment and sale/lease for temporary benefits to the exchequer.

Let us assert that BCPL and its lands must not be sold or leased out to

promoters/investors. Instead, let the government take appropriate steps to set up an Industrial Laboratory cum Research Institute in the name of PC Ray to innovate and develop sustainable technologies not only for BCPL but also for other similar industries in India.

Let there also be provision for complimentary research into themes like History of Science, Technology and Industry, Social basis of Technology and Industry, Industrialisation in relation to History, Environment and Social Culture etc. - research topics that were initiated by the Acharya himself.

And that will possibly be the surest way to rejuvenate not only BCPL but also India. Death is always sad, but death of dreams is dreadful to a nation. Silence in such a situation is to commit suicide and that is a crime.

Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

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# janata

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## Talaq, Talaq, Talaq

**Kuldip Nayar**

The Supreme Court's judgment is harsh and unequivocal. There could be no compromise on the basics of the Indian constitution, freedom to women and men to lead their lives as they wanted. I wish the Muslim community had accepted the bar on triple talaq, which goes against the spirit of the constitution. But it looks as if the fundamentalists have been having their way.

This was even the case with Shah Bano, a Muslim woman, where the Supreme Court intervened and fixed alimony in 1985 after a long legal battle. The Muslims did not accept the judgment and argued that the courts were not at liberty to interfere in matters which relate to their personal law. According to the Muslim personal law board, the issue of support to divorced women by means of maintenance and *mahr* is provided under the Shariat. But the Supreme Court did not accept the plea and fix the amount for maintenance.

The triple talaq had no place in a secular society. Most Muslim countries in the world, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, have banned it. But the situation in India

is such that a debate on the subject is not possible. Even a semblance of discussion is rejected outright as an interference. The triple talaq continues to be invoked and the male dominance remains undiminished.

In contrast, the Hindu Personal Law came into being after the intervention of the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. It was he who introduced divorce in the Hindu religion for the first time. He was strongly opposed by Dr Rajendra Prasad, who was the chairman of the Constituent Assembly and widely respected. Nehru had his way because he controlled the government machinery.

Muslims have faced a similar challenge for decades. The triple talaq has no Quranic sanction but it has been there for a long time. Some Muslim women challenged it in the Supreme Court which has said that gender equality should be considered in this regard. The government thought of issuing a questionnaire to find out the consensus but refrained from doing so.

The Muslim Personal Law Board vehemently opposed this move. Incidentally, it has no woman member and continues to dictate terms without any consultation with women. This has been resented by the women themselves but the Muslim Personal Law Board continues to follow a policy which doesn't even entertain the women's opinion. And thus, the fundamentalists continue to have their say.

The question is bound to come up before Parliament some day because the different sections of the Muslim community and even others are agitated over the situation. There are social boycotts by most Muslim women. Muslim men, on the other hand, continue to dominate, even though they grant that the Prophet wanted both men and women to be treated as equal. However, when it comes to codifying this idea, the Board doesn't care.

How can a debate take place when the Muslim Personal Law Board is straightaway opposed to the questionnaire seeking people's opinion? Women hailing from different parts of the country have protested and demanded that they should be consulted. The Narendra Modi government is reluctant to take any step lest it should be misunderstood. Things cannot be left at that point.

Parliament should step in first to debate on the issue in both Houses and then find out how the community, particularly its women, feel about this question. Political parties understandably want to maintain silence because of electoral considerations. In many states, including Uttar Pradesh which is the largest Hindi-speaking seats with 80

Lok Sabha seats, the Muslim community seems to be the king makers.

For instance, Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav was able to garner Muslim votes since he was respected in the community who felt alienated from the Congress. In the recent assembly elections in UP, the anti-incumbency factor had come into play and the Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav was defeated despite having Azam Khan, then his cabinet minister, who was projected as the custodian of Muslims.

Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi, indiscreet in his speeches, has been trying to get Muslims on his side. But he doesn't sell generally among the people and it would probably be better for Sonia Gandhi herself to lead the party. There is no Italian-tag attached to her any longer. And she attracts the crowd in her own name more than her son does. This is a challenge for the Congress which has staked its future with Rahul but feels increasingly convinced that he does not go down well with the masses. In fact, his sister Priyanka Vadra has more of a popular face than him.

It is a shame that a secular democratic country has been living with a practice like triple talaq fearing the annoyance of the community. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi bungled by bringing in legislation on stipend for Muslim widows. It unnecessarily fuelled the anti-Babri Masjid agitation and during the P.V. Narasimha Rao government the mosque was demolished. The rest is history.

In the same way, triple talaq cannot continue because it goes against the grain of what is enshrined

in the Constitution. In fact, it is surprising that it has lasted so long despite the directive principles to have a common civil code. The successive governments since independence have evaded the question. The Modi government may also do the same. But this is not the solution. The triple talaq will have to go, sooner or later. The Supreme Court has indicated how the constitution should be interpreted in this regard.

The Muslim community is being misled by the fundamentalists. Unfortunately, the politics has also come in. The ruling Bhartiya Janata Party has its eyes on the next general election in 2019. Be that as it may the atmosphere of pluralism should not be polluted. The Supreme Court or for that matter any Court would have no ground to interfere if the preamble of the constitution is followed, that is secular and democratic policy.

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## To End the Commission System

**Sandeep Pandey**

Even after the matter of death of 23 children on 10 August, 2017 at Baba Raghav Das Medical College Hospital had come to light, children continued to die there. In all 30 children died over two days 10-11 August and 60 children died over five days from 7 to 11 August indicating that Yogi government had little control over the turn of events.

Yogi says he has been working on the problem of death of children due to Japanese encephalitis since 1996-97 but if there is no improvement in the situation then responsibility must be fixed.

After becoming the Chief Minister he has said on more than one occasion that he is only a part time politician. If this is the truth then it is inexplicable why he chose to become the Member of Parliament four times in a row. If he thinks he can't give full time to his chief minister-ship then he must give up the post. In the Indian historical tradition there are not many instances when a monk or a saint became a ruler. The role of monk or saint has usually been that of an advisor to the ruler.

Yogi says that nobody can be more concerned about the children in Gorakhpur than him. But merely a statement won't do unless he is able to bring to end the high incidence of children's deaths.

On the fourth day from the tragedy in Gorakhpur Yogi made a statement that he cannot stop observance of Janamashtmi in Police Stations until offering of Namaz on roads is stopped. He said that until

people in the Kanwar yatra don't make a noise through whatever instruments they have and don't dance how will it appear to be a Kanwar yatra. Otherwise it may appear to be a funeral procession. He said if microphone is to be banned in Kanwar yatra it should first be banned in all religious places. No voice should be audible outside a religious place. He asked the officials whether they can enforce such an order? He further said that if they cannot do this, then no ban would be imposed on anything. He made an appeal to people to shower flower petals on kanwariyas.

How can we believe that even before the headlines about children's death in Gorakhpur have disappeared from the newspapers somebody who is concerned about children will talk like this on a non-priority issue and even that in an aggressive tone. Even after becoming the CM he is keen to represent his religious identity and wants it to be assertive. He is obviously more worried about the Kanwariyas than the children.

Maybe the people who don't have children and more importantly have kept themselves aloof from living in human relationships should not hold high executive offices. When they don't have children and family how will they have empathy for the loss of children? Only a person who has experienced family life will understand the difficulties of life better and will also be in a better position to come up with solutions. That is why problems for common poor and lower middle class people have increased in the Modi-Yogi

regimes.

The Gorakhpur incident also offers a glimpse of what will happen if health care is privatised. The company which held the oxygen supply contract simply stopped the supply when payment was not made. Private hospitals will not treat the poor because the reason for their existence is profit making. For the poor the only hope is government hospitals. Therefore more people keep coming to BRD Medical College even after knowing that there is a danger to their child and they are probably not going to get the best of facilities.

In a democratic country education and health care should remain in the government sector so that all citizens have access to good quality of these services. Privatisation of these sectors will be an anti-poor stand. The government should take complete responsibility for these two sectors and must make effort to make available to people high quality services in them. Even after news of death of children made national headlines garbage strewn over floor in the corridors of the BRD Medical College could still be found. What can be a bigger mockery of the national clean India campaign?

A three member investigation team from the Central government declared that the deaths of children were not caused due to lack of oxygen supply. This has been a matter of debate since the very first day. Whether the children died due to stoppage in Oxygen supply or not, fact remains that the hospital owed

close to Rs. 70 lakhs to the vendor who was contracted to make the supply, even though money was available with the hospital. Clearly it was an issue of commission not having been paid or a higher demand for commission remaining unfulfilled.

In this country payment and receipt of commissions is the primary mode of corruption and the Narendra Modi government, ostensibly committed to end corruption, has not even acknowledged the existence of this problem.

Part of the money generated from commissions is ploughed back into electoral politics. This is unaccounted or black money. If the practice of commissions is done away with, it will be the beginning of ending of corruption campaign and the first visible sign will be clean elections.

It is blot on this country that rate of commission have been set for every government department, office, scheme, project, etc. If one wants to be the beneficiary of one of the many government schemes a prescribed amount of money has to be paid. If some construction is to be done, then officials of development authority and anybody who has to give any approval will demand their share of cut. Rates are fixed for movement of files from one table to another in government offices. If somebody has taken a government contract then money will have to be paid to in-charge government officials. Different amounts are fixed for different works, departments, supply of items, for copying in examinations, people's representatives of ruling party and higher level officials. The bribe amount is also shared with colluding

officials above and below. This system of commissions is still flourishing because it finances electoral politics.

Does the Yogi or Modi government have the political will to strike at the roots of corruption in this country?

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## Remembering Prof. Bhargava

**Bharat Dogra**

With the recent demise of Prof. Pushpa M. Bhargava India lost one of its most capable scientists and also a scientist of the highest integrity. Along with his very impressive scientific achievements he was known for his deep commitment to protecting the interests of people and environment. This combination made him particularly suitable for understanding the full depth of the very serious threats posed by Genetically Modified or GM crops to sustainable farming based livelihoods, health and environment as well as overall food sovereignty and security, particularly in the context of India. With his comprehensive understanding of the issue strengthened further by the strong ethical base of the stand taken by him, he openly and firmly confronted and exposed the multinational companies and local interests colluding with them in a very courageous and inspiring way.

A few quotes from his writings in the last years of his life would help to make clearer the strong stand taken by him on this issue. Writing in *The HindustanTimes* (August 7, 2014) he wrote, "There are over 500 research publications by scientists of indisputable integrity, who have no conflict of interest, that establish harmful effects of GM crops on human, animal and plant health, and on the environment and biodiversity. For example, a recent paper by Indian scientists showed

that the Bt gene in both cotton and brinjal leads to inhibition of growth and development of the plant. On the other hand, virtually every paper supporting GM crops is by scientists who have a declared conflict of interest or whose credibility and integrity can be doubted."

Elsewhere in this article he commented, "The central government departments that have been acting as peddlers of GM technology-probably in collusion with MNCs marketing GM seeds - have shown little respect for law."

He further wrote, "It is well-known that the US would like to control food production around the world by marketing patented GM seeds... The MNCs that sell GM seeds that are protected by intellectual property rights also sell agri-chemicals. If we allow such MNCs to control our seed production, we would simply de facto lose our freedom."

In a letter dated July 26 2015 addressed to the Prime Minister on this issue Prof. Bhargava wrote, "I have provided to the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee a list of tests that must be done before a GM crop is approved. However, only less than 10 per cent of the tests are actually being done before approval of GM crops."

We should remember the strong stand taken by this eminent scientist on this critical issue in his last years.

# For a Universalised Public Distribution System

Neeraj Jain

The government is speedily pushing ahead with what is being called in official circles as the JAM trinity. That refers to three things: vast numbers of no-frills Jan Dhan bank accounts created under the Prime Minister's programme; an identification number for (eventually) nearly all Indians; and near-universal mobile telephony. The government's Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian tells us in the *Economic Survey 2016–17* that once these are fully adopted, then welfare services can be delivered to the poor by a 'administratively more efficient' mode—the government can then transfer cash directly to individual accounts, in place of providing goods and services to the people. This will solve the present problem with our existing welfare schemes, which are 'riddled with misallocation, leakages and exclusion of the poor'.<sup>1</sup> Explaining the philosophy behind the JAM initiative, the finance minister stated: 'the question was whether to continue subsidies indefinitely with an unquantified amount going to an unidentified number of people, or target specific categories of people needing them.'<sup>2</sup>

## Targeting at the poor

One of these welfare schemes whose delivery the government wants to make more 'efficient' is food subsidy. Subramanian claims that by eliminating the ration system, and transferring the food subsidies directly to the accounts of the poor through JAM, the government will be able to eliminate leakages and

exclude the better-off from receiving benefits, resulting in significant savings for the government.<sup>3</sup> What does the government plan to do with these savings? Does it want to use them to increase the cash transfers to the poor, or expand the number of poor to be given this food subsidy?

The main scheme through which the government distributes food subsidy to the poor is the National Food Security Act (NFSA). Under this, the government distributes five kilograms of grains (rice/wheat/millets) per person per month at the price of Rs 3/2/1 per kg to 67% of the country's population, through the public distribution system (PDS). As we have discussed elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> the NFSA is a very inadequate Act. The government needs to: (i) significantly expand its coverage, that is, it needs to expand the number of people who are eligible for this food subsidy; (ii) increase the amount of foodgrains that are to be distributed to every person at subsidised rates under this Act, from the 5 kg per person per month at present to at least 7 kg if not more (the Indian Council for Medical Research recommends that an adult requires 14 kg of foodgrains per month); and (iii) expand the entitlements from only cereals at present to include other basic food necessities such as pulses and edible oil which are much required to combat malnutrition.

But the government wants to do none of this with the savings from improved targeting of food subsidy. Subramanian and Jaitley are very

explicit about it: the government wants to reduce its food subsidy bill, so that it can channelise the savings into public investment in infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> In today's economic scenario of neoliberal reforms, this means the government wants to transfer these savings as subsidies to the private sector for investment in infrastructure, through what it calls the Public–Private–Partnership (PPP) route.

## Subsidies to the rich

As it is, the government gives huge subsidies to the corporate houses. The amounts are mindboggling. To give just three absolutely amazing examples:

- In this year's budget, the government has allocated Rs 64,900 crore for the construction of roads and highways—which essentially means that this is the amount that is going to be doled out as grants to the private corporate sector in the name of PPP. This is a substantial increase from last year's allocation of Rs 52,400 crore (2016–17 RE).<sup>6</sup> And yet the government wants to reduce food subsidy and further hike this 'subsidy' to private businesses!
- During the three years it has been in power, the Modi Government has given away Rs 16.5 lakh crore in tax concessions to the country's richie rich. These concessions are in corporate taxes, custom duties and excise duties.<sup>7</sup>
- Over the period 2004–16, first the UPA Government and now the

BJP Government have waived loans given to country's rich to the tune of Rs 2.6 lakh crore. (Of this, Rs 1 lakh crore has been waived by the Modi Government during its first two years in power.)<sup>8</sup> Additionally they have also restructured loans to the tune of Rs 6 lakh crore<sup>9</sup>—this is a roundabout way being resorted to by public sector banks in collusion with the government to eventually write-off these loans.

Note that these subsidies (in the form of loan write-offs, tax concessions, government grants, etc.) are being given to some of the richest people in the world. India today boasts of having the fourth largest number of billionaires in the world.<sup>10</sup> In comparison to these several lakh crore rupees worth of subsidies, the food subsidy bill of the government is only Rs 1.45 lakh crore (2017–18 BE). This is for providing bare minimum calories—that too, only in the form of cereals—to the largest population of hungry people in the world. And yet the government wants to reduce its food subsidy bill, and transfer the savings to building roads and highways!

### Failure of targetting

Let us now examine the other aspect of the government argument—that it wants to target food subsidy and direct it to those who really need it, so as to eliminate 'leakages'. But, the fact of the matter is, 'targetting' of food subsidy has been going on since 1997, when the then government replaced the Universal Public Distribution System with the Targeted Public Distribution System. Twenty years later, the finance minister says the leakages are continuing, and wants still better targetting!

This only means that targetting has miserably failed to check leakages. This is in fact brought out in a Planning Commission study, which shows that leakages from the PDS doubled after targetting! The PDS was universal in 1993–94 but targeted in 2004–05. NSS data for these years show that for rice and wheat together, leakages increased from 28% in 1993–94 to 54% in 2004–05. On the other hand, even after the Central Government introduced targetting, those states such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which did not accept the Central targetting norms, continued to provide universal or near-universal PDS coverage, and also took steps to improve PDS functioning through various reforms, had almost no or very low leakage.<sup>11</sup>

This leads us to exactly the opposite conclusion to that drawn by Arvind Subramanian and Arun Jaitley—that to reduce the leakages from the PDS, genuinely eliminate hunger, and provide food security to all in an efficient manner, what is needed is not further targetting, but universalisation of PDS.

This suggestion would leave many of our leading economists aghast. They had opposed the country's emaciated NFSA too, claiming that even that was not affordable. They will now exclaim: this suggestion will absolutely bankrupt the country, increase the fiscal deficit to unsustainable levels, will push us back to the pre-globalisation decades of slow growth, blah blah blah.

### How much will a universal PDS cost?

Let us therefore make an estimate of what universalisation of the PDS is going to cost the country. We base our calculations on a simple

methodology developed by Praveen Jha (with the School of Social Sciences, JNU) and Nilachala Acharya (research consultant with Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, Delhi); and modify it in accordance with another research paper by Himanshu and Abhijit Sen, both with the JNU. We update their calculations to this year (2017).<sup>12</sup>

Even if the PDS is universalised, Himanshu and Abhijit argue that the maximum all-India proportion of households who would choose to buy cereals from it would not exceed 70%. Let us base our calculations on a higher percentage, of 75%.

Our exercise is further based on the following assumptions:

- Total number of households at present is 24 crore (approximate); therefore, total number of households accessing the universal PDS would be 18 crore households.
- Provision of distribution of rice or wheat under PDS to all households at 35 kg per month per household;
- Provision of distribution of millets under PDS to all households at 5 kg per month per household;
- Distribution of rice and wheat is in the ratio of 2:1;
- Central issue price (CIP) for rice, wheat and millets to be same as that in the NFSA, at Rs 3/2/1 respectively.

In our calculation, we take the economic cost (EC) for wheat and rice as that given in official documents for 2017–18: for wheat, this is Rs 2,409 per quintal, and for rice, is Rs 3,264 per quintal; further we assume price of millets as Rs 2,400 per quintal.<sup>13</sup> See the Table:

	Description	Units	Amount
I.	Amount of rice required to be distributed (per annum) at 23.33 kg/month per household	Million tons	50.4
II.	Amount of wheat required to be distributed (per annum) at 11.67 kg/month per household	Million tons	25.2
III.	Amount of millets required to be distributed (per annum) at 5 kg/month per household	Million tons	10.8
IV.	Total foodgrains required to be distributed (I+II+III)	Million tons	86.4
V.	Total recovery per annum for distribution of rice: I x Rs 3	Rs crore	15,120
VI.	Total recovery per annum for distribution of wheat: II x Rs 2	Rs crore	5,040
VII.	Total recovery per annum for distribution of millets: III x Re 1	Rs crore	1,080
VIII.	Total recovery through CIP: (IV+V+VI)	Rs crore	21,240
IX.	Total EC for distribution of rice	Rs crore	1,64,506
X.	Total EC for distribution of wheat	Rs crore	60,707
XI.	Total EC for distribution of millets	Rs crore	25,920
XII.	Total EC for distribution of rice, wheat and millets (VII+VIII+IX)	Rs crore	2,51,133
XIII.	Amount of Food Subsidy required per annum (C – B)	Rs crore	2,29,893
XIV.	Present budgetary provision for food subsidy (2017–18 BE)	Rs crore	1,45,339
XV.	Additional Food subsidy required for universalisation of PDS: (D – E)	Rs crore	84,554

Based on these assumptions, the total additional food subsidy required for universalisation of PDS works out to only around Rs 85,000 crore for this year. This is not an unaffordable amount for the Government of India! It has been giving more than Rs 5 lakh crore as tax concessions to the country's richie rich every year, it has given them more than Rs 8 lakh crore in the form of loan write-offs and restructurings, it has handed over to them control of the country's mineral wealth virtually for free resulting in losses to the national exchequer to the tune of several lakhs of crores of rupees . . . the list of concessions being given to the

country's corporate houses and uber-rich is very long.

But for Modi–Jaitley, this suggestion of increasing India's food subsidy bill is simply unthinkable. The 'nationalist' government in power at the Centre would rather have people starve than reduce the mindboggling subsidies being given to India's elites...

1. *Economic Survey, 2016–17*, p. 174, <http://indiabudget.nic.in>.
2. "Constructing Theoretical Justifications to Suppress People's Social Claims", *Aspects of India's Economy*, No. 62, January 2016, <http://www.rupe-india.org>.

[/www.rupe-india.org](http://www.rupe-india.org).

3. See *Economic Survey, 2014–15*, Volume 1, pp. 20–25, <http://indiabudget.nic.in>.
4. Neeraj Jain, *Education Under Globalisation : Burial of the Constitutional Dream*, Aakar Books, 2015, Delhi, pp. 261-63.
5. See *Economic Survey, 2014–15*, Volume 1, pp. 20–25, <http://indiabudget.nic.in>.
6. Neeraj Jain, "Pandering to Dictates of Global Finance", *Janata*, February 19, 2017, <http://www.janataweekly.org>.
7. Ibid.

(Continued on Page 15)

**Sandip Das**

## A Socialist Wanderer

When a friend told me Sandip Das was no more I was overwhelmed with a flood of emotions. The icy hand of death took his life on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> July and the news was on my monitor the next day. His last rites at a cremation centre I missed because the place was too far away and I knew I would not make it. The wanderer with distinct political ideals was always smitten by the essence of social concerns and the loner that he was, Sandip Das did not have the mind or capacity to sit tight as a helpless onlooker. He would be there whether his socialist comrades are there or not. He had his affiliations with the PSP, Socialist Party, of course, and was elected to the West Bengal State Legislature as a Janata Party candidate from the posh Chowringee constituency of Kolkata in 1977. Even before that Sandip Das committing himself to

Total Revolution accompanied JP and toured extensively in Bihar and West Bengal. The Gandhian traits in Socialist Sandip were becoming evident by that time. To extremely mobile Sandip Das I put the inconvenient question socialism carried no meaning without a socialist party and why he was not doing meaningful work towards that direction he brushed that off saying party life was not for him. It seems he preferred to remain a wayfarer without caring for set direction.

But he was always fondly received by his socialist friends, remnants of the Gandhians and far wider sections of people in this country and Bangladesh because of his simplicity, amiability and distilled integrity. A man without foe and full of friends. Even when he was not in fullness of his mental strength Sandip

used to tell me he would like to invite Janata editor G G Parikh to Calcutta to show people here who this socialist legend is! That was not to be.

Sandip Das was a bachelor and 79 when the life curtain fell on him. He was a philosophy lecturer in Howah's Uluberia College and later became the visiting lecturer at Wardha's Gandhian Institute of Social Sciences. In honour of his holistic religious views Sandip's family members held the last performance of the departed soul, *but not sradh*, in which texts of Koran, Bible and Gita were read out on the 30<sup>th</sup> July. His friends and admirers outnumbered the narrow political circle. It is sad Sandip's closest friend Jahanara Begum and her close relative Samad were absent because of ailments.

—Mrinal K Biswas

## Distinguished Gandhian Socialist

The former Legislator of West Bengal Assembly, a distinguished Gandhian and Socialist leader and lifelong bachelor Prof. Sandip Das passed away at 9.50 p.m. on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. He was eighty. During the seventies Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan sent him as his representative to the South East Asian Socialist Conference..

He played a notable role in the struggle for the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, for which Sheikh Hasina felicitated him in recognition of his contribution. In 1974-75 he took the plunge in the anti-corruption

agitation under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan and helped to spread it across West Bengal. During the Emergency he was detained under MISA and spent 17 months behind the bars. In the 1977 elections he was elected to the West Bengal Assembly from the Chowringhee constituency. The former Chief Minister of West Bengal Prafulla Chandra Sen developed a soft corner and grew very affectionate towards him.

He was a Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, a permanent Lecturer of Uluberia College and served as

Honorary Visiting Lecturer in Vidyasagar University and the Gandhian Institute at Wardha. He contributed numerous articles in different journals and edited the J.P. Centenary volume. He was one of the editors of the Collected Works of Prof. Amlan Dutta which is due to be published in five volumes soon.

He also served in the Editorial Board of Jayasree and came in contact with Deshnetri Leela Roy in 1961 when she was the chairperson of the state Praja Socialist Party.

—Bejoy



# My Abduction

**Bilal Khan**

I, along with four others, reached Bombay Hospital, Indore on August 8 to meet Medha Patkar who was forcefully hospitalised on the 12th day of her indefinite fast by the Madhya Pradesh Police. Medha Patkar was fasting to protest against the illegal submergence of 192 villages and one township in Madhya Pradesh by the backwaters of the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

I work closely with Medha Patkar. I work with the 'Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan' (Save Home-Build Home Movement) in Mumbai. Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan (GBGBA) has exposed major scams from Adarsh to scams in slum rehabilitation scheme in Golibar undertaken by Shivalik Developers. Medha Patkar has been the leader of this movement. I am also engaged with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) as a part time activist. I was taking part in the indefinite fast protest organised by NBA.

Some of us decided to visit Bombay Hospital, Indore as soon as we found out where the police had taken Medha after forcefully picking her up from Chikhaldia - the fasting site. As we reached the hospital, we realised that no one was allowed to meet with Medha. It is worth noting that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted that Medha was just hospitalised given her deteriorating health due to her fast and not arrested. Hence, we got into argument with the police as they were restricting entry to meet

Medha Patkar. Our demand was to at least allow one attendant with her if not visitors. The media recorded our arguments with the police and started broadcasting the incident. The police were visibly annoyed by us. I could sense that I was under watch in the hospital premises.

This suspicion was confirmed as I made my way to the washroom. I entered inside with the permission from the watchman. A cop suddenly came from behind and caught hold of me. He grabbed me with his arm around my neck and held my right hand with his other hand as if he was shaking hands with me. He smiled after holding me like this. His smile gave me the impression that I was not in trouble; that he would either ask me to go back to where I had been waiting or perhaps even take me to meet Medha (after all, he knew I was associated with her).

These thoughts, however, were short lived as he ordered someone to take my phone out of my pocket. I didn't see the point in protesting, as I was already encircled by a lot of police. I did not even bother to see who was taking out my phone from my pocket. By now I had accepted that I am in real trouble.

The cop took me to a place that appeared like a lounge. All the visitors present in the area were asked to vacate the premises. More cops poured into the vacated area. I saw one constable with a lathi and I prepared myself for the ensuing event. Although I knew my pleas

would be in vain, I still tried to tell the cops that I had come in just to use the washroom. After a while, the constable with the lathi went outside. Finally, the cop took his hands off me and made me stand to the side. He called two cops inside who were in civil dress. They were continuously staring at me. I thought they might thrash me. One of the two left and I was made to sit with another on a bench. This cop showed me the photographs of other colleagues of mine which he shot when we were giving bytes to the media. He started asking for their names. After a while a constable came inside and informed that the jeep has arrived. I was made to sit in that.

I saw the senior officials saying something in the ears of those constables who were to accompany me to wherever they were going to take me. I was driven to a faraway police station; I couldn't even see the name of the police station. I had become upset by seeing the highhandedness in picking me up despite being innocent. I had stop protesting or reacting and was just observing whatever was happening. I visit Mumbai's police stations very frequently and deal with topmost cops with a sense of confidence while advocating on the side of slum dwellers whenever there is a slum demolition but now all my confidence was gone and I felt betrayed.

My Muslim identity had also added to my nervousness. I was not telling them my full name and it is

only after their insistence that I was sharing my surname. My politics as well as my identity makes me feel more vulnerable .

Finally I entered the police station and immediately asked for three things: lawyer, water and bathroom. First two demands were denied and for the third one I was asked to use the toilet that was there in the lock-up. Then the constable who brought me from the hospital made me stand in front of a duty officer who asked my name and address. He asked me where I had come from and why I came. I told him that I was from Mumbai and how I am associated with Medha Patkar and wanted to meet her. He hurled a filthy epithet at me and asked me to sit in a corner that was stinky and dirty, by taking off my shoes. After a moment he called me and asked me to deposit all the money I had with me. I took out all the cash, counted and gave it to him. Then another officer sitting in another corner asked that duty officer to not deposit the money with him. I found myself totally disconnected with the outside world without a phone and any access to a lawyer or friend. No one would know where I was. I was missing now.

What I was most worried about in the police station was my mother. I was wondering how my mother would react when she would not be able to contact me. She speaks with me on phone every day and sometime twice a day with one or the other excuse just to ensure that I am safe. Initially she did not like my work but later when she realised that I was not leaving activism she just asks me to not go in front during any action and warns me about possible threats. I always defy her tactfully. I cannot imagine making

her upset knowingly. My main worry was my mother only-how will she react to my missing.

One or the other cops would come after regular interval and ask for the same information again and again - my name and my residence and every time my answer was the same. After almost an hour I could see the change in behaviour of constables, they started treating me well. I was given a bottle of mineral water and asked for if I wanted food. I took the water and thanked them for asking about food. After a while the duty officer called for me and told me that I would be released after their senior comes to police station. He also gave me tea. I felt half relieved as I still did not trust them fully.

By now, I was abducted and had been missing for two hours. Now I thought to ask them of my release because the senior police officer did not seem to be coming. However, the trauma of my abduction had made me so upset that I did not want to talk to anybody and let anything happen to me. Injustice had already happened to me. Agitating against it would mean begging for justice. Finally I was called and made to write and sign an apology letter for entering the hospital without permission. After I signed the letter, I was returned my phone and asked to go.

I took an auto rickshaw and asked to get dropped at the Bombay hospital - from where I was abducted by the police - thinking that I would change the route in case I find any danger. My concern about danger was confirmed as soon as I switched on my phone to talk to the local Indore supporters. I called our Indore supporter and informed him that I

was coming to Bombay Hospital. He asked me stay where I was and that he would come to pick me up. I said I would come back on my own because I did not want to take the risk of being caught again by the police while waiting for him. I had received several calls from the police station to come back.

The moment I entered the hospital I was encircled by a crowd which had come to demand my release. I was then immediately mobbed by the media asking for my byte. I did not receive any further calls from the police station as soon as I started appearing to the media. Every state news channel started claiming that it was due to the impact of their news that I was released. Soon I received a call from a politician who asked about my wellbeing in order to convey that it was due to his influence that I reappeared.

In reality, it was local supporters Latika and Deepmala who created a buzz when I went missing. I had informed Latika when I left for washroom in the hospital. I was also informed that a sympathetic former IG of Indore had also intervened to get me released. Probably the quick media campaign and the intervention of some influential persons was the reason behind the change of behaviour of the cops in the police station towards me.

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## India and North Korean Crisis

D.K. Giri

North Korea and United States are likely to go to war anytime as things stand at present. North Korea has been threatening to bomb Guam, an American territory in the Pacific. And the US is ready to retaliate heavily. Donald Trump, unlike his predecessors in the White House has already blown the bugle for war. Should North Korea lift a finger at US, Donald Trump vows to respond with “fire and fury” that the world has never seen before. He warned that US army is ‘locked and loaded’ to take on North-Korea. In the last few days, the war cry has become a bit subdued with North Korea putting off its threat on Guam. Also, China, the mainstay behind North Korea has joined the fray and has urged both Washington and Pyongyang to restrain. North-Korea has heeded Chinese advice, as the former’s nuclear-military power is the creation of China. Should there be a war; China has little option other than defending North Korea. China has so much at stake in North Korea. Out of total trade of North Korea, China controls more than 90 percent. North Korea’s military and nuclear arsenal is built entirely by China. It is asserted by the Chinese that their relations with North Korea are as close as the ‘lips and teeth’.

So if China is involved in North Korean and US stand-off, can India be far behind! India and China seem to stalk each other in international arena, and currently, they have a face-off at Doklam for last two months. Only a couple of days ago, the Chinese and Indian soldiers came to blows in the Ladakh Border.

India’s stake in Korean peninsula is immense. India should be wary of North Korea. India has a huge trade relation with South Korea, the primary stakeholder of North Korean nuclearisation and aggression. North Korea has aided Pakistan’s nuclear process and has supported Pakistan’s position on Kashmir. Moreover, North Korea is the closest ally of China. So, dealing with North Korea alongside South Korea, Japan and USA is engaging with China. India, therefore, needs to engage. Recently, the US admiral Harry Harris urged India to play its role; he said, “India’s voice is a loud voice, and people pay attention to it”.

The war-like situation developed in North Korea when it tested two ICBMs – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, which can carry nuclear warheads to strike any part of the American territory. Pyongyang embarked on nuclearisation with active material support of Beijing in violation of the restraining agreements, mainly the 1992 Declaration on the Denuclearisation of Korean peninsula, on reconciliation and non-aggression. Some experts believed that Pyongyang’s nuclear belligerence was meant to secure diplomatic concessions from United States. Others interpret it as North Korean’s apprehension of going Iraq and Afghanistan way under US aggression, unless they equip to defend themselves. It is no secret that US has been on the side of South Korea doing brisk business and has maintained that North Korea’s nuclear ambitions are not congenial

to Korean peace. The United States has been carrying out joint military drills with South Korea, and 28,500 US troops - soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are stationed in South Korea. China has been aiding and abetting North Korea’s militarization as it is alarmed by THAAD – Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, a joint-mechanism by USA and South Korea. The powerful radar installed in it can see far into China. However, later, the current President Kim Jong-Un went beyond Chinese control. Beijing joined other countries in imposing sanctions against North Korea.

China is in a fix on North Korea. If there were a war, United States would get instant support of South Korea and Japan and its other allies, and the conflict may spill over to East China and North China. Therefore, although China realizes that US “only wants to heighten the sanctions and the military threats against Pyongyang” Xi Jinping’s government has banned Pyongyang’s exports of coal, iron ore, and seafood. But is Beijing willing and able to enforce these sanctions? Will China accommodate the American wish to stop the sale of oil and gas to Pyongyang, to deny Pyongyang’s access to Chinese banks, and stop cross-border movement of consumer goods? It is very unlikely.

As China is caught in long-standing border dispute with India, its major competitor in Asia, China may not want to escalate the tensions between North Korea and the United States. The aggressive,

unprecedented posturing by Donald Trump has caught China off-guard. In fact, one theory is that Donald Trump has turned Doklam tide in India's favour by raising heat over North Korea. On Doklam, US and the United Kingdom are more on Indian side than on Chinese. According to Lord Meghnad Desai, Prime Minister Modi and President Donald Trump are in direct contact over Doklam stand-off. When President Trump called Modi to greet him on Indian Independence Day, Prime Minister Modi is said to have praised Trump on his handling of North Korea.

India has been involved in Korean peninsula in the past, but has not been effective primarily because India is still not a permanent member of the Security Council. Secondly, as a non-aligned country, India had the support of some Third World countries, but had not much clout. Now, it is perceived as an ally of United States, Israel, Japan, and other European countries. So, it commands greater attention. China has been bullying its neighbours with its nouveau riche status in the world; it has been buying off Indian neighbours by trade, investment and financial support. As Karl Marx had suggested, capitalism leads to imperialism, China is treading dangerously that path. What India needs to do is to engage China along with South Korea, Japan and US on North Korea and make it realize that Beijing cannot throw its weight around, flex its economic muscle and exacerbate conflicts between North and South Korea, India and Pakistan and so on.

China's policies have created war like situations in several conflict zones which may explode anytime. China knew how to make money by

using cheap labour with an authoritarian, anti-democratic political set-up. But it has limited diplomatic skills. It can create conflicts but cannot contain or mitigate them. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi has said that Japan and US are itching for a limited military conflict in North Korea. The same could be said about China on South China Sea, Doklam, and other border areas connecting India. North Korea provides an opportunity for India to prove a point to China that is cannot go on bullying others with its economic strength. There are principles, laws, treaties and conventions that govern international relations.

China says it cannot stop either US or North Korea. It urges an "end to China's responsibility theory". But it can indeed restrain North Korea as it has militarised the state in the first place and has great strategic stake. US, on the other hand has been inconsistent in its North Korean policy. During the Presidential campaign, Donald Trump had boasted that he could sort out North Korea over a hamburger with its President. After he became the President, he is spewing fire on Pyongyang. At the same time, his Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson says to North Korea, "we are not your enemy, we are not your threat". He indicates US willingness to negotiate. But the sabre rattling between Washington and Pyongyang continues.

The world is watching anxiously if North Korea and US resort to a nuclear war. That will be simply a catastrophe for the whole world. That is why there was a unanimous position at the UN last month against the North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Un. Even China joined the rest on

imposing sanctions against Pyongyang which could cost the country one billion USD a year. The countries on the firing line are cautious in their reaction to the situation. South Korean President Moon Jae-In, while urging restraint on US and North Korea, said, "any military action on the Korean peninsula can only be decided by South Korea and no one else". There are mixed feelings in Japan, China and Guam. While their governments are busy preparing for any eventuality, the common people are not so perturbed. They seem to be habituated to the sounds of war-planes flying over their sky. However, war must be avoided at any cost as the costs of war would be too heavy to bear. China, as the main ally of North Korea has a lot to lose if at all there is a war. Therefore, even if the rhetoric reaches the crescendo they should force the warring parties to the negotiating table not to war machines. India, in its 'new international avatar' could play a role in defusing the situation while securing diplomatic gains for itself and its allies. Is India up to it!

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## Imagining India Visions of Swaraj and the Democratic Journey- III

Anand Kumar

### Democracy and Nation-building in the 1960s

What were the primary concerns about India as a nation among the political leaders in the 1960's after several national elections and increasing disenchantment with the cycle of dominant party democracy? 'National integration', 'fissiparous tendencies', 'provincialism', 'linguism', 'casteism and communalism', 'centripetal forces', 'self-reliance', 'decentralization', 'development', and 'corruption' were some of the key words and issues of this period.

Let us start with a resolution on national integration adopted by Indian National Congress in its session at Bhavnagar in January, 1961: "Democracy, with its widespread system of elections, which is vitally important and which is the very basis of our Constitution, has also resulted in some ways in encouraging certain disintegrating forces. Under cover of political and social activities, the old evils of communalism, casteism, provincialism and linguism have appeared again in some measure... Communalism which has in the past done so much injury to the nation is again coming into evidence and taking advantage of the democratic apparatus to undermine this unity to encourage reactionary tendencies. Provincialism and linguism have also injured the cause for which the Congress stands. Caste, although losing its basic force, is beginning to function in a new political garb. If these tendencies are allowed to flourish, then India's progress will be

gravely retarded and even freedom will be imperilled." It was followed by a special committee headed by Indira Gandhi which submitted a report recommending a national outlook in education and promotion of opportunities for the minorities in the economic field among other suggestions. Then there was a session of National Integration Conference in October, 1961 which found it necessary to look into the problems of emotional integration and need of moral and religious instructions.

But according to Prof. Balraj Madhok, (a leading ideologue of Bharatiya Jana Sangh), the need of Indianization of Muslims and Christians were the major issue of national integration. Presenting this thesis on Indian Nationalism (1969), Madhok asserted that India is an ancient nation possessing all the unities, physical as well as cultural, and not a nation-in-making. Secondly, Indian, Hindu and Bharatiya are synonymous words. They all refer to the nationals of India. It is wrong to talk of Hinduism as a religion in the sense in which Islam and Christianity are religions. It is Hinduism or Hindutva of a man which makes him a national of India. The only way to correct this situation is to make Muslims and other separatist groups to realize that separatism will not pay. They must learn to take pride in India's past which is their past as well. (Then he sites examples of the Muslims and their ways in Indonesia and China). Finally, Indian nationalism should not mean different things to different

political parties. Otherwise, national unity and solidarity will continue to be threatened by fissiparous tendencies which are being directly and indirectly fostered and encouraged by anti-national forces from within and outside the country. (1969: 93-99)

On the other hand, the left ideologue and eminent Communist leader E. M. S. Namboodiripad, in Problems of National Integration (1966), recommended need of independent stand by the Communist Party because of the inherent weaknesses of the 'policies pursued by the bourgeoisie which accentuate the conflict on questions of language, provincial and regional inequality, caste, communal and tribal discontent.' His programme included six issues – i. Firm opposition to separatism and support to twin principles of linguistic states and maximum possible autonomy for the states, ii. Replacing English by the regional languages at the state level and Hindi at the centre as official language, iii. Most rapid reduction of provincial and regional disparities in development, iv. Protecting the tribal people from the exploitation of landlord and capitalist elements from the plains, v. Educational concessions and reservations in government jobs to continue for the 'lower castes', and vi. Firm stand on the principle of secularism and fight against intrusion of religion in the political life of the country. ( 1966: 92-95)

Architect of 'Congress Hatao—Desh Bachao' (Non-Congressism) and socialist leader Dr. Rammanohar

Lohia presented a different critique of the crisis of nation-building where prominence was given to four areas of policy failures. They were language policy, caste policy, price policy and the challenge of national security. The language policy was marked by the neglect of the Indian languages and continuity of colonial practice of preference to English in administration, legislature, education, and judiciary. There was no move towards preferential opportunities for the Backward sections of the Indian society to create national rejuvenation – the women, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the backward castes and the under-privileged sections among the Muslims. The national price policy was loaded in favour of manufacturing sector and negligent of making agriculture profitable. Finally, there was need to secure the national frontiers with a holistic 'Save Himalaya' thrust after the tragedy of Tibet in 1959 and the Chinese aggression of 1962 (Lohia: 1966).

Sarvodaya leader and non-partisan statesman Jayaprakash Narayan was one of the most well-known public intellectuals since the days of the freedom struggle that consistently remained vigilant, and made constructive contributions, about the problems of nation-building (1972). In his view a) Hindu-Muslim unity, b) question of the minorities and communal riots, c) national language, d) problem of linguistic states, e) the Sikh Problem and Punjabi Suba issue, f) Kashmir, and g) Nagaland were in need of constructive solutions through dialogue and deliberations.

Addressing at a reception on August 12, 1966 by the Baptist Church Council and Peace Centre at Kohima, Jayaprakash Narayan said: "The nation-state is a

comparatively new phenomenon. It is not older than 200 years. Earlier there were no nations in the modern sense of the term. There were kingdoms, empires, tribes, unions of tribes, city states, but no nations. There are many nations today. But there is no nation in the world that is not a mixture of sub-nations. Every nation today is a multi-nation, a multi-national state. Look at Soviet Russia, look at China. In Soviet Russia there are about 76 nations, national minorities. The British nation has at least three sub-nations: English, Scottish, Welsh. And the British Constitution gives to the Scottish and Welsh national minorities certain rights and guarantees. Most modern nations are result of violence, some are voluntary unions." (Ibid: 357-58)

Jayaprakash Narayan found it urgent to have clarity of vision of India as a nation with political unity in the following words at a nation conference of all political parties and eminent scholars at Delhi in 1969 where he emphasized the following (1974): "If the people of India with their many diversities are to become an emotionally united nation able to preserve and strengthen their political unity, they cannot but deliberately and understandingly choose the ideal of a composite, non-sectarian nationhood and work actively to that end." He underlined the need to avoid equating between 'cultural unity' and political unity' – a problem with the Hindu nationalists who insist about India as a Hindu-Rashtra and not a nation-in-making. It is important to be able to recognize the challenges of nation-building more clearly: "The confusion here is between the cultural unity of a people and their political unity. Despite the fact that the people of India, from the Himachal to the Setu, have shared for centuries (with local variations) a common cultural heritage they very

rarely belonged to a single political state. Nor is this a peculiarly Indian phenomenon. Elsewhere too such as in Europe or in the Arab world, cultural unity has coexisted for centuries with political disunity. Our central concern at the present moment of our history is to ensure that the political unity established by the constitution should be made firm and enduring. Events have shown that even those sections of the people who share India's ancient heritage have not hesitated when aggrieved, whether rightly or wrongly, to harbour, even proclaim secessionist sentiments. It would be therefore wrong to think that the task of moulding a modern nation out of the diverse elements of Indian society has already been completed by the achievements of our savants and sages." (Ibid: 419-20)

### **The scenario of 1990s**

By 1990s, after four decades of the emergence of the cycle of dominant party democracy through the hegemony of the Congress party under the charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (leading the Indian government from 1947 to 1964), there was manifestation of anxiety about increasing togetherness of four 'C's in the discourse of democratic power – i. corruption, ii. criminalization, iii. casteism and iv. communalization. There were the long shadows of the Emergency Raj (1975-77) and disorientation of democracy due to populist politics of Indira Gandhi (the prime minister from 1966 to 1984 with a short interruption of 1977-79). They together had caused a dual phenomenon – awakening of the masses with democratic aspirations and institutional erosion in the battle for power. It was not associated with the political culture of India till the 'Sixties.

There was alarm about the decline of democratic institutions, including the parliamentary system, party organizations, election process and increasing use of 'black money'. There were fears about entering of the criminalized types into the spaces created by the erosion of the dominant party system and its main instrument the Congress party. It was compounded by the disorderly functioning and chaotic

fragmentations of the Janata Party (1977-79) and Janata Dal (1989-92) and their failures in providing alternative way of effective and orderly democratic governance.

There were signs of nexus between communalism and criminalization as manifested during the Sikh killings in 1984 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and Babri Masjid-

Ram Janmabhumi confrontations in 1992. In socio-economic terms, it was correlated with new politics of the forces of status quo for 'suppressing awakening at the bottom' and 'backlash at the top'. It was seen as 'using violence as a mechanism of both suppressing the awakening and of channelizing it in directions that take away from the politics of transformation'.

**(To be concluded)**

*(Continued from Page 7)*

8. We have calculated this from the following data: (i) Loans written off by public sector banks over the period 2004-15 totalled Rs 2.11 lakh crore ("PSU Banks' Write-Off of Bad Loans at Rs 1,14,000 Cr in 2013-15: RBI", February 8, 2016, <http://www.domain-b.com>); (ii) PSBs wrote off Rs 49,018 crore in 2014-15, and they further wrote off NPAs of Rs 56,012 crore during 2015-16, according to Minister of State for Finance S.K. Gangwar in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha ("PSU Banks Write Off Rs 1.54 Lakh Crore Bad Loans", December 8, 2016, <https://yourstory.com>).

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## Ugly Side of Godmen

**Kuldip Nayar**

Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim was a Bhindranwale in making. He, too, saw to it that nobody dared him. But he turned out to be a paper tiger. When CBI court judge Jagdeep Singh pronounced his verdict, the Baba wept openly in the court and implored him not to give severe punishment. His followers, too, were reportedly surprised over the manner in which the Baba capsized.

But there is no doubting about the Baba's vast following. It did not bother that he was being punished for raping two sadhvis, who were his followers at the Dera. It shows how ignorant and gullible can the followers be as they always looked towards him for leadership and guidance blindly. Bhindranwale, too, had become so powerful because of the vast following that the government turned a blind eye towards whatever he did.

Now that the verdict is out with the quantum of punishment pronounced on rape cases, there is a likelihood of more skeletons tumbling out of the Dera cupboards. The CBI court is already hearing murder charges against the Baba and it will be sooner than later that the court will give its verdict on

them, too. There are other cases of castration of male followers in the Dera which are being pursued. All these clearly indicate the mindset of the Baba and the connivance of the authorities.

There are some similarities between Bhindrawale and Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim. If the former was the creation of the Congress Party, the latter has had the support of a plethora of parties in the state of Haryana, including the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The Baba may not be a militant like Bhindranwale but his motivation was very clear as he used political benevolence to further his own interests. Otherwise, he could not have amassed huge wealth and built as many as 132 deras around the world, including in the UK and the US.

The Akalis were gaining upper hand and slowly eroding the base of the Congress in Punjab after the Akali-Janata Party government came to power in 1977. That was when the Congress under Sanjay Gandhi and Zail Singh selected and supported Bhindranwale to take on the Akalis. He became so powerful that by the time Indira Gandhi realised that a Frankenstein had been created and it was time for him to go, nothing less than

the Indian Army would do to flush him out of Akal Takht inside the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar.

Before using the tanks the Army sought the permission of Mrs Gandhi and woke her up at midnight. Mrs Gandhi ended up committing a costly mistake by sending in the Army into the sanctum sanctorum in June 1984. Bhindranwale was killed but the anger over Operation Bluestar cost Mrs Gandhi her life four months later.

Similarly, Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim was encouraged by the leaders of the BJP because it suited the party's vote bank politics. The Baba endorsed the BJP in both the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and the Haryana assembly elections in the same year. He also supported the saffron party in Punjab against Captain Amarinder Singh's Congress but that was not good enough to make it win. There are rumours that the entire Manohar Lal Khatter's cabinet, minus the chief minister, visited Baba's Dera Sachcha Souda in Sirsa after the swearing-in ceremony to pay obeisance to him.

But it is not as if the other parties are not complicit. In 2009, the Dera chief extended his support to the Congress which was his return gift for

the Z plus security cover the UPA provided to him in 2007. It was palpable how the Baba had become powerful that the state went weak in the knees when challenged by his private army. That the state of Haryana deliberately bungled in imposing Section 144 before the verdict, sending a cold invitation to murderers, asking them to take over.

Apparently, there were intelligence reports before the verdict and both the states of Punjab and Haryana, including the Chandigarh Administration, were warned of the trouble brewing as the Dera followers were gathering in Panchkula and preparing themselves for the show of strength if the verdict went against the Baba. Punjab, however, did safeguard its interests taking all necessary measures while Haryana, despite assuring that they were well prepared to meet any situation, failed to stop the followers from destroying public property and killing people. Only after the Punjab and Haryana High Court's order did the Haryana government wake up and make preparations to stall any further damage.

When history repeats itself, it is basically mocking at our system of not learning any lessons. Who will account

for the loss of 30 lives and damage to public property? But the BJP leadership has not done anything to touch chief minister Khattar because of the backing he has from the RSS. But then the problem in India is how to curb the godmen and to stop the government from supporting them? Maybe, they provide the vote bank but they do an irreparable damage to the polity.

Democracy demands a direct contact between the voter and the party. The Babas come in the way and try to become a parallel authority. When the ballot box is stalled by another force, democracy gets weakened. Therefore the godmen have no place in a system which runs with the consent of the people. They are only like *mahants* in temples. The more they are allowed to have say in public affairs, the less there would be free expressions.

Religion is a private affair. There are no problems with the Asarams, Nithyanandas and Ram Rahims as long as they pursue and preach spiritual thoughts. The problem arises when they indulge in fraudulent and illegal activity, going to the extent of committing rapes and murders. What gives the whole thing an ugly shape is the support of the political parties for their own gains.

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# Nepal PM Visit: Repairing & Rebuilding Relations

D. K. Giri

The recent visit of Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to India assumes unusually great significance in the current scenario. The Doklam stand-off lasting for 74 days between India and China has just been “temporarily” resolved. And Kathmandu claims to maintain “special relations” with both countries.

India’s strategic concern of being encircled by China through its neighbours is most evident in Nepal. When there was the economic blockade of Nepal on Indian borders, with ‘alleged’ support from New Delhi, Kathmandu turned to Beijing, which pumped in requisite goods and services. Kathmandu has tangibly turned to China as it was wary of South Block’s Nepal policy, especially since it abolished the monarchy and became a republic.

First, it feels India has not been supportive in the difficult transition to democracy. It was only taking up the cause of Madhesis, who were fighting for equal representation etc under the new Constitution. Second, New Delhi is micro-managing the politics in Kathmandu. Third, RSS leadership is more interested in Nepal being a Hindu Kingdom than a Secular Republic and would like the influence of Monarchy to be revived and retained which was apparently conditioned to Nepal’s Hindu profile. Fourth, Nepal would like to dip its hands into the deep pockets of China, as India’s Ambassador to Nepal Deep Kumar Upadhyay said in an IDSA seminar: “It is China who has the surplus money today and we are trying, like others, to get some of it in investment etc.”

Deuba’s five-day visit was also important as, admittedly, India-Nepal relations have become sour after the enactment of the Constitution on 20 September 2015; and the Madhesis, Nepalese with their origins from Bihar and Eastern UP, felt discriminated. They led protests in Parliament and on the streets and these were believed to have New Delhi’s tacit support. At one point, it was said that India had imposed the economic blockade, causing considerable strain to Nepal’s economy and society. Though the Indian government vehemently denied it saying the blockade was caused by internal conflicts in Nepal, it failed to convince the Nepalese.

Relations between the two plummeted for a brief period since. There was an anti-India feeling sweeping across the hills as the people in the Terai region claimed the support of Government of India. Although, in recent years there has been ebb in flow of the relationship, the two have had a very special relationship since the signing of the Friendship Treaty in 1950. Nepal is the only country which enjoys borderless access to India and Nepalese are treated at par with Indians and vice-versa.

However, with emergence of China as a big power in the neighbourhood, India’s relations with its neighbours are being influenced. Nepal is no exception. India’s neighbours play the China card whenever they are concerned about the “overlordship of India, or they seek to gain greater concessions from their big brother, India.”

India has been the biggest donor and

trade partner of Nepal. Now, China claims to have overtaken it in its trade and investment. India-Nepal relations’ survey reveals: They have historical and civilisational links; are connected through kinship and culture, both religion and language; Nepal has 1,800 km of open border with India touching five States - Bihar, UP, West Bengal, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand; there are one million Indians living in Nepal and four million-odd Nepalese residing in India; the Indian Army has 32,000 Gurkhas serving and 126,000 retired pensioners; after the One rank one pension scheme Rs 4,000 crore pension is paid to retired Nepalese.

Additionally, India is its largest trading partner. The trade between the two increased from 29 percent to 66 percent. Exports from Nepal increased from NR 230 cr to 3713.5 cr in 2013-14. Likewise, Indian exports to Nepal increased from 1525 cr in 1995-96 to 29545.6 cr in 2013-2014. India’s direct investment in Nepal amounts 40 per cent of its total FDI. In development assistance, New Delhi has extended Rs300 cr aid to Kathmandu; gives 3,000 scholarships for higher studies; has given three lines of big credit so far, US\$ 100 million in 2006-7, \$250 million in 2011-12 and \$1billion in 2013-2014. In this visit, both have inked eight MOUs of \$250 million. However, from Kathmandu’s point of view it is worried over the persistent trade deficit with India.

There is no gainsaying the fact that China is trying all means to woo Nepal. It is worried that Deuba chose to make India his first foreign visit. He is also known to be more India-inclined than

both Khadga Prasad, Sharma Oli, of the Communist Party of Nepal, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Chairman, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-centre). During the latter two PMs' tenure, Nepal joined the adventurous one-belt-one-road (OBOR) project of China. And Nepal remains neutral on the Doklam stand-off.

Deuba has to do tight-rope walking between India and China. His detractors are watching if he could get New Delhi to start some of the big projects signed. One such being the hydro project, called Mahakali Treaty signed in 1996, in his earlier stint as PM, which sadly is yet to take-off.

New Delhi has also apparently shifted its position, which is staying away from Nepal's internal

contradictions, extending help only if it is called for, and dealing with Nepal as a country. It would remain neutral to the internal contestations on the nature of the Constitution, the nature and degree of representation to different sections of people. India has to be sensitive to the deep as well as widespread political divisions across the country.

At this particular time of Nepal's painful and fractious democratic evolution, maintaining unity of perspective and opinions is difficult, exacerbating the differences is easy. India should do all it can to bring the political actors in Nepal together. At the same time, Nepal in its pursuit of national interest should not distance from its long term partner and mentor that India has been. It has done so by joining OBOR

without India and remaining neutral on Doklam. Notably, the Nepalese Ambassador in Delhi kept mum when asked whether he expected India to be neutral when Kathmandu is in trouble or in conflict with another country!

Both India and Nepal have to realise and reaffirm that their relations are more than transactional, covering whole gamut of contacts between their people. China is wary of a resurgent India and is seeking to encircle it, by buying off its neighbours. New Delhi will have to show it to Beijing that the latter may have a military and economic edge over it at present, but its success in winning lies in its display of democracy, that is viable and enduring. Kathmandu too should see that difference, as it struggles for past 11 years, since the monarchy, to stabilise its nascent democracy.

### *Letter to The Editor*

#### **Observations of Parliamentary Panel Crucial For GM Crop Debate**

On August 25, 2017 the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests submitted its report on Genetically Modified (GM) Crops and Their Impact on Environment. This Committee has 31 Members of Parliament from various political parties including 11 from the BJP. This report has made very strong criticism of the pro-GM lobby bias of government policies and regulations on this issue and is a wake-up call to the government to show more concern for protecting the health, environment and agriculture of the nation. This report will be remembered for long for standing up for the true national interests of the country at a time when these are very badly threatened by the very strong and resourceful lobbyists for GM crops with their reach to the topmost levels of policy making in India.

The Parliamentary Panel has regretted that the regulators in India are relying on data made available by the applicants of GM crops. The Panel expressed that this leaves scope for the technology developers to fudge data to suit their own requirements, and regretted that no governmental in-house study has been carried out till date to analyse the impact of GM crops on human health.

“This Committee strongly believes that unless the bio-safety and socio-economic desirability taking into consideration long run effects is evaluated by a participatory, independent and transparent process and a retrieval and accountability regime is put in place, no GM crop should be introduced in the country.”

Coming more specifically to the current debate on GM Mustard the Committee has stated that in this case there are several unanswered questions. Further the Committee observed, “The Committee has also come to know that many state governments in the country are opposed to its entry even in the form of field trials, let alone commercial cultivation.”

The Committee has noted that GM Mustard being an herbicide-tolerant GM organism, the clear evidence on the adverse impacts of such GMOs available from various parts of the world needs to be noted.

The environment ministry should examine the impact of GM crops on environment thoroughly. The Committee has regretted that the government has been painting a rosy picture of the performance of Bt cotton while the actual facts reveal very disturbing trends related to Bt cotton.

—*Bharat Dogra*, New Delhi

# Remembering Balraj Puri – a true patriot

## The Difference Between Patriotism and Jingoism

**Ramachandra Guha**

I have been thinking a great deal recently about the difference between patriotism and jingoism. The provocation - or inspiration rather - was a visit to Jammu to speak in memory of Balraj Puri - writer, social reformer and political activist - who embodied Indian democracy at its best.

There are a great many hyper-patriots active in India today who spend their days and nights abusing either Pakistan or China, and, sometimes, both. Balraj Puri expressed his love for his country in an altogether different manner. Over the course of a long life, he fought for independence from the British, for freedom from the autocratic rule of the Kashmir maharaja, for the human rights of Kashmiris and for regional autonomy for Jammu and Ladakh as well.

Balraj Puri's life as an Indian patriot started early, at the age of 14, when he started an Urdu weekly inspired by the Quit India movement. He was an active journalist for many decades thereafter, and also wrote many books in English, among them an important study of Indian Muslims, an analysis of the complicated relations between Jammu province and the Kashmir Valley, and an authoritative analysis of the origins of the insurgency in Kashmir.

Balraj Puri was admired for his writings, and for his probity and personal courage. In the 1980s and 1990s, Jammu was prone to bouts of communal violence, provoked on the one side by Hindu militants of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and on the other by the persecution of the Pandits

by Islamists in the Valley. Contemporaries carry vivid memories of Puri, then well into his sixties, moving around his home town on a battered old scooter, seeking to calm tempers and prevent anger being converted into violence.

In a state riven by suspicion and discord, Balraj Puri was trusted in all regions and by all communities. When he died in August 2014, one obituarist wrote that "Jammu has lost the champion of its regional identity, Kashmir has lost a crusader for democracy and human rights, the State as a whole has lost a peace activist, and the nation has lost a liberal and progressive voice." Another compared Puri to India's second prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri; both men whose small and slight frame "concealed a human dynamo with boundless energy for all constructive causes..."

A large crowd of mourners accompanied Balraj Puri's body to the crematorium in Jammu. Among them was an elderly man crying loudly while muttering, 'This person was not up for sale,' 'This person was not up for sale.' Puri's family and friends had never before seen this grieving Jammu-ite, whose spontaneous tribute was as moving, and as just, as any offered later in print.

Within Jammu and Kashmir, Balraj Puri remains a greatly respected figure. However, outside his home state, his work remains less known than it should be. That is a pity. For now, more than ever, India needs patriots like Balraj Puri. It needs men and women whose

patriotism is expressed not in the continuous vilification of some other country, but in words and actions aimed at making our own country more tolerant, more prosperous, less unhappy, and less conflict-ridden. For perhaps the most important form of patriotism is that which seeks to give dignity to oppressed groups such as Dalits and women while simultaneously seeking to promote tolerance and mutual respect among citizens otherwise divided by language, caste or religion.

Unlike the hyper-ventilating hyper-patriots of the present time, Balraj Puri was not consumed by the desire to make India more powerful than its neighbours. Rather, he wanted to make India itself a better and safer place for its citizens. That was the first lesson of Puri's life. A second lesson is that there is no one singular patriotism; rather, there are multiple and overlapping forms of patriotism.

There is a famous saying, 'Charity begins at home.' Patriotism also begins at home. Balraj Puri loved his town and his district, but he loved his state and his country too. He was a Jammu city patriot, a Jammu province patriot, a Jammu and Kashmir patriot and an Indian patriot - all at the same time. He demonstrated by example that love for your locality and for your province could be perfectly consistent with love for your country.

Notably, Balraj Puri devoted a great deal of energy to promoting peace and self-respect in the neighbouring state of Punjab. Among the half-a-dozen

languages he himself spoke fluently was Punjabi. He urged the Hindus of Punjab to honour the mother tongue they shared with the Sikhs, rather than succumb to sanghparivar chauvinists who wanted them to promote Hindi instead. At the same time, he unequivocally opposed Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his band of gun-toting Sikh extremists. He was one of the first from outside the state to visit Punjab after Operation Bluestar, speaking out against violence and in favour of reconciliation.

Some would like to reduce patriotism to the worshipping of symbols. However, offering puja to the tirangajhanda ten times a day may or may not make you a better patriot. A more lasting, more constructive, form of patriotism is to endeavour to make your locality, your town, your district, your province and country a more tolerant, inclusive and democratic place.

Balraj Puri's own patriotism was substantive rather than symbolic. He did not exhibit his love for the motherland by shouting 'Mera Bharat Mahan' every now and then, interspersing this with shouts of 'Pakistan murdabad'. Rather, in how he behaved, what he wrote, and what he struggled about, he tried to make our country more worthy of the ideals of the Indian Constitution by promoting respect, honour, dignity, equality and justice in everyday life.

Balraj Puri was admirable and exemplary, but not, of course, unique. There are many such patriots active in our land, who promote the values of the Constitution while working in village, town, district, state or country. Some of these patriots are written about occasionally in the press. Others remain unknown. Not that they mind. For publicity, or at least an excess of it, can be antithetical to true patriotism and nation-building. The more you crave

publicity, the less time you can actually devote to social reform or constructive work.

Balraj Puri was a patriot, not a jingoist. Making his own country a better place was far more important to him than demonizing other countries. He recognized that patriotism begins at home, with the place one is in, yet also understood that one must have a wider view of how one's locality related to one's state and one's nation. In presenting his views, he never resorted to violence, not even to violence in language. And he worked out of passion and conviction, not for honour or reward.

There is one last aspect of Balraj

Courtesy: **The Telegraph**

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## The Champaran Crusade

**Jawaharlal Jasthi**

On 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 a significant event took place in Hyderabad. A small book in Telugu titled A GREAT HISTORICAL MOVEMENT – CHAMPARAN RIGHTEOUS CRUSADE was released by Sri Nayani Narasimhareddy, the Home Minister of the state of Telangana. Sri P Janardanreddy presided over the meeting. It is significant as it marks the centenary of the Champaran movement led by Gandhi. It was the movement to free the farmers of Champaran in Bihar from the suffocating grip of the colonial authorities.

It is no doubt a small book containing translations of articles by Tushar Gandhi, Irfan Habeeb and J B Kripalani. Particularly Kripalani happened to be himself a partner in the great movement and explained the troubles and travails of Gandhi in organising and conducting the movement. Added to that is a part of

Puri's life that I would like to recall. Seventy years after Independence, India remains a deeply divided society, this divisiveness stoked and encouraged by power-obsessed politicians and by a TRP-obsessed media. In this atmosphere, one of the hardest jobs in India is reconciliation. But also perhaps one of the most necessary. For India can stay united and democratic only when respect and recognition replace suspicion and animosity in relations among castes, regions, languages and religions. This reconciliation is what Balraj Puri strove for all his life, admirably following in the footsteps of that other great patriot and reconciler, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Autobiography of Gandhi wherein he explains how he was drawn into the troubles of the innocent farmers. How he was discriminated against initially due to caste apprehensions, but accepted and honoured later. He was magnanimous enough to understand the influence of the traditions prevailing then and did not complain. His method was first to acquaint himself of the problem by direct contact with the indigo farmers and then infuse confidence in them to stand united against the government to get out of their predicament. It was no doubt difficult to make them understand that they could resist the onslaught of the colonial power in a non-violent way without incurring the wrath of the inhuman power.

Gandhi knows he has to defy the law if he wants to save the farmers and it will necessarily attract violent punishment from the government. He

has to be careful not to provoke the government to the extent of deploying their forces. He was tactical to respond humbly to the dictates of the authorities. When he was asked to leave the state he said politely that he came to help the innocent farmers and would leave immediately after their problems were solved. The government was forced to take note of the problems of the farmers and realise the justice in the demands of the movement. By showing his willingness to undergo the punishment for his defiance, he introduced an element of ethics into his movement. It was the first time that Gandhi had to run a movement of farmers in India after coming from South Africa. While dealing with the innocent and fearing farmers on one side and the inhuman colonial power on the other, Gandhi could find a way to success in a non-violent method. That was a big relief and he decided to apply the same method throughout the fight for freedom for the entire country. It was as if Champaran was a training ground for Gandhi to become a leader of the freedom movement and succeed without violence. In fact non-violent resistance is considered the most significant contribution of Gandhi. The foundation for it was laid in Champaran. That is the significance of that movement. Encouraged by that example agricultural movements took place later in other parts of the country.

Mr Tushar Gandhi, the great grandson of the Mahatma pleaded that the Champaran Movement shall not be considered as confined to the indigo farmers of Champaran alone. Rather, it has to be seen as an attempt to encourage and empower the weaker sections and helpless farmers. It was an effort to organise them to achieve and enjoy freedom.

Of more significance is the fact that

the Marxist intellectual Irfan Habeeb paid a glowing tribute to Gandhi for what he did in Champaran and the manner in which he did it. It was almost a lesson on how to organize a mass movement, the breathe of Marxists. Irfan referred to the way in which Gandhi reacted to the dictates of the colonial authorities and finally made them support his activities. Irfan was particularly appreciative of the manner in which Gandhi earned the confidence of the people who were strangers when he approached them. As Marxist, he might not agree to all Gandhi did. But he had the intellectual honesty to appreciate what Gandhi did as a pragmatist revolutionary, because what he did was nothing less than a revolution in Champaran. Perhaps, Irfan Habeeb felt that was what a Marxist should have done in that situation. Such an intellectual honesty is a scarcity in our present day politics. To what party he belongs is not relevant.

In spite of the significance of this movement in the history and economy of the country, it is a pity that the present generation is not aware of it. The present work brings to the notice of the young generation not only the historical importance but also the relevance of Gandhian principles to the present society. As stated by Sudhir Chandra at the end, remembering Champaran amounts to remembering Gandhi himself.

While releasing the book, the Hon'ble minister referred to the present conditions of farmers and took the opportunity to explain the various schemes of his government to ameliorate the conditions of farmers. The pity is that the conditions of farmers are the same as were in Champaran a century ago. The troubles of farmers are the same. But the social situation has worsened. Earlier there was cohesion in the

society. Neighbours used to share the burden of each other. But now in the name of progress the society is atomized and farmers feel helpless in time of trouble. Suicides have become the order of the day.

Mr K Pratap Reddy, a senior advocate, emphasised the relevance of Gandhian principles at the present juncture to solve the problems. The path shown by Gandhi is valid even 70 years after his death, he said.

Prof G R S Rao explained the social significance of the movement started by Gandhi and its impact on the various aspects in development. He also emphasized the way the movement was conducted which gave results without much of violence. He lamented that the leaders now are wary of going to the level of the people to understand their problems but they want to lead them. They naturally fail to get dedicated followers. There will be no mass movements.

The book is compiled by Sri P Janardan Reddy, ex-MLA and the doyen of socialist movement in this part of the country. He was assisted by Sri Ravela Somayya in compilation and in organizing the function successfully. The translation from English was done by Mr "Gourav", an established writer in Telugu, who is eager to propagate progressive ideas, without bearing any "ism" on his sleeves. The translations run smoothly bringing out the flow and cohesion in the original essays.

The book is published by the Hyderabad Writers, Printers and Publishers Cooperative Society. There is dearth of non-fiction books in Telugu and the publishers are filling that vacuum now. We can expect more books like this from them and enrich the Telugu literature.

# Needless Controversy about the Battle of Haldighati

**Bharat Dogra**

It is both sad and surprising that an entirely needless controversy is being whipped up in Rajasthan to somehow show that Rana Pratap won the battle of Haldighati and then somehow get this included in text books. This is really surprising because history is supposed to have moved beyond battle winning kings and warriors a long time back, but it is clear that some people despite their long experience and despite occupying senior positions are not aware of this. What is even more worrying that sometimes this kind of narrow thinking is only a precursor to later giving a dangerous communal twist to the entire issue. In such efforts describing the virtues of Rana is necessarily accompanied by unwarranted criticisms of Akbar. Why should not admirers of Rana Pratap concentrate on the very real courage and other virtues of the Rana while avoiding needless downgrading of Akbar whose several memorable achievements have been well documented by historians.

Maharana Pratap is one of the most courageous heroes of India's history. Pratap defended his much smaller kingdom of Mewar very bravely against the much more powerful forces sent by Akbar, the great Mughal emperor in the famous battle of Haldighati. Later he continued his struggles from forests and hills with guerilla warfare type tactics, and by the time of his death he was able to reclaim some of his territory and forts.

However we should at the same time remember that in the battle of

Haldighati the brave resistance offered by Maharana Pratap was led to a considerable extent by his brave commander Hakim Khan Sur (or Suri) and his Muslim soldiers. This aspect that Maharana Pratap was greatly helped by Muslim soldiers is often deliberately suppressed, even though people of Mewar still remember the great courage of Hakim Khan Sur and his soldiers with great respect and a memorial has also been erected to pay respect to Hakim Khan Sur.

Side by side another related fact that has been suppressed is that Pratap had good relations with Muslim rulers like Taj Khan of Jalaur. He had given jagirs to Sindhi Muslims. He extended encouragement to Muslim artists who achieved a lot of accomplishments during his rule.

What is most important is to remember that while Hakim Khan Sur was a main commander of Maharana Pratap in the famous battle of Haldighati, Akbar's forces were led by Raja Mansingh, a highly respected Hindu general of Akbar who was time and again given the most crucial responsibilities by him. Thus there is absolutely no justification for calling this a fight between Hindus and Muslims, even though such distortions have been repeated time and again.

It may also be noted here that Akbar's rule was identified mainly with policies of social harmony and unity of all religions. Due to this he faced anger of Muslim religious fundamentalists and to suppress this

revolt he sent armies led by Mansingh and Todarmal! So to call these medieval battles Hindu-Muslim battles is absolute junk.

Another neglected aspect of Rana Pratap's role is the respect he gave to adivasis. As a result during his years of exile the adivasis became his most trusted soldiers. They were also most capable of handling guerilla warfare type tactics needed by Pratap during his years of exile in forests and hills. So the great thing about Rana Pratap is that he could build a wider unity of Hindus, Muslims and Adivasis as he believed in respect for all communities. This was the real strength of his great struggles.

## Books by Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..** Price 600 rupees.
2. **Samajwad, Dharma Nirapekshata aur Samajik Nyaya** Reissued as second edition; Price 500 rupees
3. **Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunautiyan.** Price 400 rupees.
4. **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyan:** (This booklet was published late last year.) Price 25 rupees.

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# Imagining India

## Visions of Swaraj and the Democratic Journey- IV

Anand Kumar

### a. Black Money and Corruption:

Black money is result of all that income generated through illegal activities and corruption is abuse of public authority for private gains. It is said that the two are like twins in the Indian political economy inherited from the British Raj. They are patronized and promoted by unholy alliance of dishonest businessmen, powerful politicians, and bureaucrats at senior posts in the government system. Economists tell us that the size of black economy is a measure of illegality prevailing in the economy and it has been growing rapidly in the Indian economy in the recent decades. The figure of 50 per cent of GDP is one of the lowest estimates available from experts who may be considered conservative. It is asserted that the failure of India's public institutions to keep pace with the dramatic political, economic, and social transformations under way has led to severe gap in governance. The end result of this disjuncture has been a proliferation of grand corruption – a malaise made up of a diverse array of regulatory, extractive, and political rent-seeking activities. (Vaishnav: 2017, 25-69)

Arun Kumar points out that some argue that black economy is not a problem since it exists in all nations or that it recycles incomes within the country and generate employment. But, in reality, the black economy is the single biggest cause of most of the macro and micro problems confronted by the economy since 1970s. While it generates some employment, a large part of it is related to criminal activities

or to violation of laws, which then result in a large expansion of law and order and enforcement and intelligence apparatus, all of which is unproductive employment. The result is a waste of the nation's resources akin to digging holes and filling holes – there is activity without productivity. The economic potential of the country declines when investment goes into unproductive channels, such as holding gold, speculating in real estate, or if capital is spirited out of the country. All these activities are associated with black economy and the absolute size of the black economy in 2010 was estimated to be around Rs. 50 lakh crore. No aspect of the citizen's lives is untouched by the black economy and no sector is clean. These black incomes are concentrated in the hands of 3 per cent of the population. They are also elite of our society who are able to influence the opinion makers and policy makers. What is the way out? Right to information to introduce transparency in governance, electoral reforms and audit of party accounts, judicial reforms for accountability, business watch dogs and tax reforms, and political will are needed to act together to bring dynamism in economy and institutional health in the polity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century India. (Ibid: 2013, 417 – 457)

**b. Criminalization of Politics:** The realities of crime-politics nexus entered into public discourse with the observations of N. N. Vohra Committee Report. It can be called 'the pathologist's report' about power and governance. It underlined the

phenomenon of state losing its grip and emergence of 'parallel authority of a nexus of criminals-police and politicians' in some significant states including the National Capital Region (NCR) (1993) and became more and more explicit in the electoral system and government machinery with the passage of time. First the report has narrated the context of the emergence of the crime syndicate and Mafia in small towns, port cities and the bigger cities. Then it has cited patterns of crime-politics nexus with eye-opening examples. According to the Vohra Committee Report, "3.2: An organized crime Syndicate/Mafia generally commences its activities by indulging in petty crime at the local level, mostly relating to illicit distillation/gambling/organized Satta and prostitution in the larger towns. In port towns, their activities involve smuggling and sale of imported goods and progressively graduate to narcotics and drug trafficking. In the bigger cities, the main source of income relates to real estate – forcibly occupying lands/buildings, procuring such properties at cheap rates by forcing out the existing occupants/tenants, etc. Over time, the money power thus acquired is used for building up contacts with bureaucrats and politicians and expansion of activities with impunity. The money power is used to develop a network of muscle-power which is also used by the politicians during elections."

It is followed by details of the growing inter-dependence between the crime-Syndicates and bureaucrats, politicians and police on the basis the

information from Central Bureau of Investigation and other intelligence services. According to the Report (1993), “6.2: Like the Director, CBI, the IDB has also stated that there has been a rapid spread and growth of criminal gangs, armed Senas, drug Mafias, smuggling gangs, and economic lobbies in the country, which have, over the years, developed an extensive network of contacts with the bureaucrats/government functionaries at the local levels, politicians, media persons and strategically located individuals in the non-state sector. Some of these Syndicates also have international linkages including the foreign intelligence agencies.”

Then this pathological report provides some glaring examples of degeneration of the political elite, governance system, economic and financial spheres, preventive and detective systems, and the Indian electoral process as the following:

“In this context the IDB has given the following examples: 6.2.i. In certain states like Bihar, Haryana and U.P., these gangs enjoy the patronage of local level politicians, cutting across party lines and the protection of governmental functionaries. Some political leaders become leaders of these gangs/Armed Senas and, over the years, get themselves elected to local bodies, state assemblies, and the national parliament. Resultantly, such elements have acquired considerable political clout seriously jeopardizing the smooth functioning of the administration and the safety of life and property of common man, causing a sense of despair and alienation among the people.”

“6.2.ii. The big smuggling Syndicates, having international linkages, have spread into and infected the various economic and financial activities, including Havala transactions,

circulation of Black money and operations of vicious parallel economy causing serious damage to the economic fibre of the country. The Syndicates have acquired substantial financial and muscle-power and social respectability and have successfully corrupted the government machinery at all the levels and wield enough influences to make the task of investigating and prosecuting agencies extremely difficult. Even the members of the judicial system have not escaped the embrace of the Mafia.”

“6.2.iii. Certain elements of the Mafia have shifted to narcotics, drugs and weapon smuggling and established narco-terrorism networks, especially in the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The cost of contesting elections has thrown the politicians into lap of these elements and led to a grave compromise by officials of preventive/detective systems. The virus has spread to almost all the centres in the country; the coastal and border states have been particularly affected.”

“6.2.iv. The Bombay bomb blast case and the communal riots in Surat and Ahmedabad have demonstrated how the Indian underworld has been exploited by the Pak ISI and latter’s network in UAE (United Arab Emirate) to cause sabotage, subversion and communal tensions in various parts of the country. The investigation into the Bombay blast cases has revealed the extensive linkages of the underworld in the various governmental agencies, political circles, business sector and the film world.”

**c. Indian Political Class after the Vohra Committee Report:** It is relevant to check if there was any change in the state of affairs during the years after this report? We have a reflective assessment after 10 years of the coming

out of the Vohra Committee Report in 1993 by an ‘insider’ (a former Cabinet Secretary of the Government of India who had also been the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh), and a comparative picture of crime-politics nexus from the top of the Indian parliamentary order – the characteristics of the members of Lok Sabha who got elected by the voters in 2009 and 2014 on the basis of a research report of a non-partisan body of concerned citizens. According to T. S. R. Subramanian in ‘Journeys through Babudom and NetaLand (2004), “The bottom third of our population is invisible when the curtains are drawn, counted out in all calculations: it does not exist in India for all practical purposes. All the policy initiatives and development actions are taken by the top half of the population, for their own benefit; and all the moves are driven by the group interests of the major players: the politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, professionals, and the judiciary. There is an unspoken conspiracy that India belongs to the ruling class, with the middle classes being the beneficiaries of the leftovers. And the poorest one-third left behind. This is the post-Independence Dharma of India.” (Ibid: Preface) Subramanian argues further that “If an explanation must be found for the present rot, it can be argued that the success and efficiency of the British system of administration was in the context of a colonial state and a subject people, outside the democratic framework. Our society had its primordial loyalties to the family, caste, clan or faith and furthermore, the ground reality was that of a deeply hierarchical society with skewed distribution of wealth and privileges. This was an inheritance from many centuries. The kinds of checks and balances and accountability needed to anchor a modern administration within a democratic framework were just not in place after independence. So, in this view, the developments in the fifty-five

years since Independence are simply an inevitable unfolding of an inherent structural weakness. But such analysis can become an endless and arid zone of debate, secondary to the sheer immediacy of the quiet drama that is being executed in India.”(2004: Preface)

Two decades after the Vohra Committee Report (1993) and a decade after the Subramanian reflections (2004), the situation has become more disappointing according to the study of Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). It has found that there were 158 or 30 per cent of total Lok Sabha members elected in 2009 with criminal charges pending against them. At least 77 new M.P.s, or 15 per cent, had serious criminal charges like murder, kidnapping and loot. In economic terms, 300, or 58 per cent reported to be multi-millionaires (‘Crorepati’). There were 57 women members (11 per cent) in the Lok Sabha of 2009–2014. In the elections of 2014, the number of M.P.s with criminal charges increased to 185, or 34 per cent, including 112, or 21 per cent, with serious criminal charges. There were 2 with charge of crime against women, 10 with murder charges, and 16 with charges of involvement in acts of communal disharmony. The number of multi-millionaire members (‘Crorepati’) has increased to 443 or 82 per cent while the number of women members remained 62, or 11 per cent. In terms of the educational qualifications, 126 M.P.s (23%) reported to have education up to Standard 10+2 or less and 495 (75%) had studied till Graduation or above. The age profile of 2014–19 Lok Sabha included 207 (37%) members between 25–50 years, 298 (55%) members between 50 and 70 years and 41 (8%) members above 70 years of age.(2014)

**d. Nepotism and dynastic democracy:** Nepotism (‘Parivarwad’ in Hindi) in Indian party system and political processes is a growing concern of political sociologists. It is also termed as ‘Family politics’ (French, 2011) or ‘democratic dynasties’ (Chandra, 2016). It has been another grave issue in the political culture of the second cycle of Indian democratic nation-building since 1977. It has been expanding in the 1990s as a major phenomenon causing grave crisis in the deepening of democracy through the multi-party system. Like the menace of criminalization of politics, nepotism or dynastic democracy has contributed towards growth of ‘neo-feudal’ layer which has the potential of neutralizing the dividends of expanding of social base and opening of new spaces for the, so far, under-represented in the domains of democratic governance.

According to an analysis of the members of the fifteenth Lok Sabha (2009-2014) (Patrick French: 2011), 28.6 per cent of M.P.s had a hereditary connection. Every M.P. under thirty years of age had inherited a seat through ‘family connection’. It was disappointing that nearly 70 per cent of women were with hereditary link. At the same time there were exceptions of effective leaders like Mayawati, Jayalalitha and Mamta Banerjee who were self-made women leaders. In party terms, the Rashtriya Lok Dal ranked first with 5 out of 5 M.P.s with hereditary links. The second was Nationalist Congress Party with 7 out of 9 hereditary M.P.s. The Biju Janata Dal was the third with 6 out of 14, the Indian National Congress fourth with 78 out of 208. There were a number of regional parties with in-between ranking from 33 per cent to 19 per cent like Bahujan Samaj Party (33%), Dravida Munetra Kazhgam (33%), Samajwadi Party (27%), Communist

Party of India (Marxist) (25%), Janata Dal(United) (20%) and Bharatiya Janata party (19%). On the other hand there were two parties without a single hereditary M.P.s – All India Anna Dravid Munetra Kazhgan (0 out of 9 M.P.s) and Telugu Desam Party (0 out of M.P.s).

In regional terms, family politics appeared to be strongest in the north Indian states from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab to Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The tendency to turn politics into a family business was being emulated at state level, with legislatures nominating children and spouses. It was found that there was concentration of ‘hyper-hereditary’ M.P.s in four states– Uttar Pradesh, Andhra, Punjab and Haryana.

It may be relevant to ask if the Indian parliament is increasingly changing from Lok Sabha to ‘Vansh Sabha’ – from peoples’ house to house of dynasties. Is this the expected result of the efforts of Indian Constituent Assembly which was led by Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani, Sarojini Naidu, Ambedkar, and Maulana Azad, among others, to make it sure that heredity and dynasty were knocked aside as a criterion for rule? (French: 2011, 91-123)

**e. ‘Casteism’ after decades of democratization:** If caste and religion were considered as two major hurdles before the leaders of the Indian national movement for independence, these two social institutions were found to be two major puzzles in the discourse of democratic nation-building. As the Indian Constitution provided a three layered frame for the democratic reconstruction of the Indian polity in the post-colonial era, there was significance of the local, including the dominant castes, in conjunction with the

provincial and the national levels of power configurations, institutions and elites. The substantialization of caste contributed by the Census of India between 1881 and 1831 was furthered through constitutionally sanctioned corporate identities like the Other Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes. There was a wave of social change since independence due to 'enhanced' togetherness of a) new education, b) new associations, and c) new occupations which had already originated since the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was different from the trajectories of the Western democratic nation-states. According to Subrat Mitra, "The contrast of the Indian case with stable Western democracies could not be more striking. In the West, the local, the minority, and the poor were violently cleansed prior to the introduction of modern, democratic institutions (Moore 1966; Tilly 1975; Gilmour 1992). India at independence faced a different and difficult scenario. The constitutional guarantee of the right to participation, the judiciary and other watchdog institutions protecting citizens' rights, and competitive politics enjoined upon the national leadership

to induct the local and marginal as partners in governance. Unlike their tragic European counterparts during the period of the transition to industrial society, these vulnerable social groups and local level of politics acquired a new lease of life." (2001, 106)

Susan Bayly (1999) has remarked that, "Despite the fact that the ideas about the power and reality of caste pollution and untouchability are so widely shared in Indian society, 'caste society' should not be seen as static, unchanging and harmonious. Quite the contrary: without subscribing to a simplistic idea of India as a domain of universal high-caste oppression and 'Dalit resistance', one can see that in the India of 1990s a significant proportion of regional and pan-Indian economic and social conflict has come to be bound up with claims of caste-based solidarity and moral mandate. (Ibid: 340-41)

Recognizing the role of open and secular bodies in Indian nation-building like the universities, legal and medical professions, new civic bodies like the Indian National Congress, Beteille

argues that citizenship-building has been a product of history and the Constitution. It was promoted by spread of science, technology, business, enterprises and voluntary action. But the Indian democracy has survived not by adhering strictly to the ideal of a constitutional democracy but by moving away from it towards a more populist form. He argues that such a setting has simultaneously weakened and strengthened the caste system in the post-Independence decades (See: Table 2). How? There has been togetherness of two patterns of representation of India as a society – 1. India as a society of castes and communities, and 2. A nation of citizens. (2012: Ch. 6)

### **Performance of Indians as nation-builders and democratic citizens**

But how has been the performance of the Indians from the perspective of establishing a representative democracy and building a post-colonial nation? What is the proportion of representation and participation at the levels of local, provincial and national processes and institutions of democracy? How far it is

**Table 2 –Changes in the Caste System since Independence**

Weakening of Castes	Strengthening of Castes
Purity and Pollution	Caste identity consciousness
Food and water exchange	Democratic politics
Agriculture and ritual cycles	Reservations system
Link between caste and occupations	Caste associations
Educational barriers	Social capital
Individual mobility	Socio-cultural traditions
Rules of marriage	Social justice

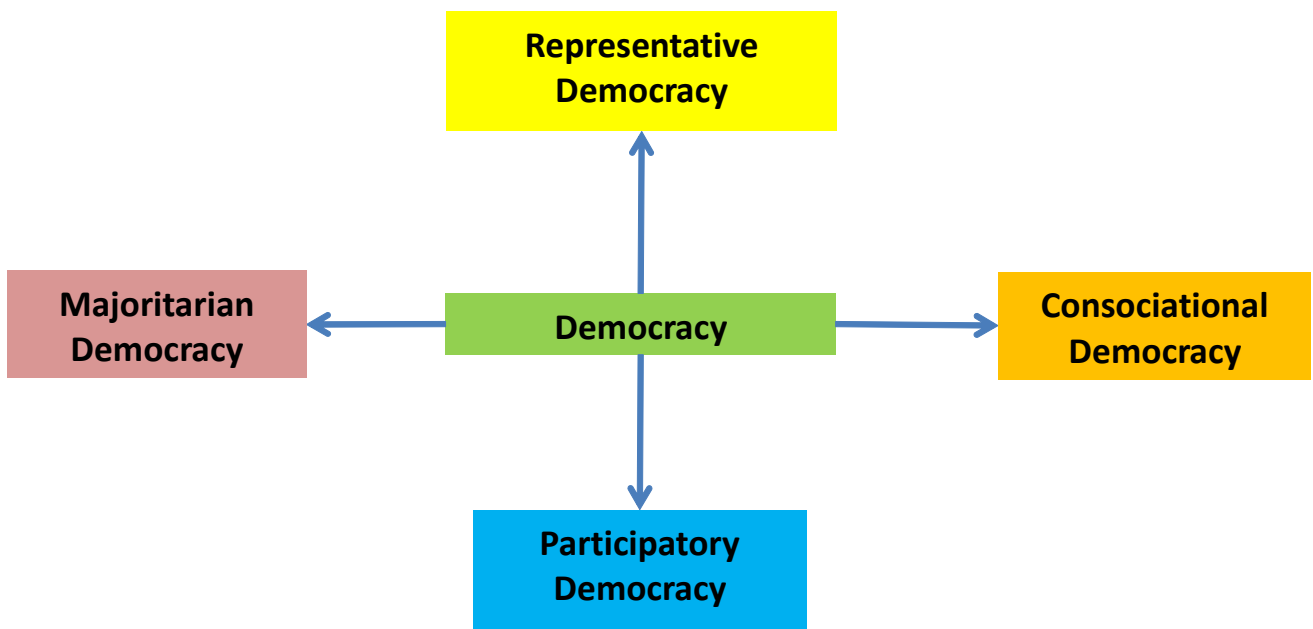
growing as a consociational and how much of it appears to be a majoritarian democracy? (See: Fig. 6) What are the characteristics of India as a post-colonial nation after half a century of constitutional reconstructions and consequential reforms to promote triple justice based unity and fraternity among the citizens? (See: Table 3) It will be helpful to have a look at some of the most divergent evaluative over-views representing different conclusions (See:

Fig. 6).

First, the perspective of Khilnani who has summarized the overall process of evolution of the democratic Indian nation-state, with a comparative view, in the following words: “(T)he history of independent India can be seen, most narrowly but also most sharply, as the history of a state: one of the first, largest and poorest of the many created by the

ebb of European empire after the end of the Second World War.....Rather more expansively, the period of Indian history since 1947 might be seen as the adventure of a political idea: democracy. From this perspective, the history of independent India appears as the third moment in the great democratic experiment launched at the end of the eighteenth century by the American and French revolutions.”(2003, 3-4)

**Fig. 7 –Dimensions of democracy**



Interestingly, Rajni Kothari (2004), the proponent of dominant party democracy (‘the Congress system’) approach, appears quite disenchanted as he provides details of his specific doubts and disappointments as the following: “I particularly think that we may be reaching the limits of representative democracy and its capacity to promote social change. Elections are no doubt still an instrument of effecting changes in government but the changes that are taking place are increasingly losing any relevance for fundamental social change, whether it is restructuring of the social base of the polity or the ushering in the of regimes of social

justice. There is an emerging hiatus, it seems to me, between the two types of changes – changes in replacing one government by another and changes desired by large masses of people as well as thinking intellectuals – in respect of achieving fundamental social justice and political transformation. This emerging hiatus is sought to be filled by two opposite pursuits. One is of the Mandal and post-Mandal type meant to empower the marginalized strata. The other is the Mandir type, shifting attention from secular re-fashioning to communal and religious revamping, of late further reinforced by militarized and chauvinistic appeals.” (Ibid: 46-47)

Is it such a deep seated systemic crisis? Or we must look, more carefully, at the changing role of the Indian state in the Indian political economy to make sense of the challenges and opportunities. According to Lloyd Rudolph and Susan Rudolph, “After 1989 both the planned economy and the centralized state have gradually given way to a regulatory state more suited to coalition governments in a multiparty system, to economic decentralization, and to more independent and competitive federal states. Judicial activism and an independent president and Election Commission have filled the space partially vacated by a less ambitious,

less capable, and more constrained parliamentary executive. Our analysis of India's emergent constitutional design reveals how a relatively centralized, interventionist, and tutelary state is being replaced by a relatively regulatory state willing to rely on, but not surrender to, a market economy and self-reliant (and sometimes self-destructive) civil society." (2001: 162)

A number of scholars have gone further as they point out to the growing togetherness of increase in institutional erosions causing violence and decline in democratic nation-building (Misra: 2013; Kumar: 2013; Sundar, 2017). They find two problems at this juncture. Firstly, violence, direct or indirect, is in the air. The growth process is itself based on violence of various kinds. Politicians and businessman have increasingly cornered resources (land, water, and so on) using violence against people and nature – destroying the environment, displacing people, creating greater inequality and damaging the idea of a nation. Systems have become unresponsive to the people and their plight, so that they are also forced to respond with aggression leading to a vicious cycle of escalating violence. Secondly, the right of the marginals to develop at their own pace is denied, marketization by itself is proving to be inadequate to force people to give up their customary rights to their resources for paltry sum of money. economic conditions are being created so that they give them up through coercion; this is jeopardizing their future. With rampant corruption, the weight of the official machinery – political, bureaucratic and judicial – has been brought to bear on the people to let go off their hold over their resources. This is supplemented through private pressures and strong arm tactics, which the official machinery connives to overlook (as in POSCO and Singur).

This violence is provoking a reaction. The trend of growing violence, alienation and marginalization are making the present path unsustainable in the long run. Hence, there is a need for alternative(s). (Kumar: 2013, 737)

It may be also useful to refer to the 'conclusions' of Achin Vanaik about changes in the class configurations sustaining democracy in India, "It is impossible to avoid concluding that the rich peasantry has imposed (and will continue to impose) a decisive stamp on Indian bourgeois democracy. It has had a vested interest in sustaining a system of elections and of voting procedures at various levels, and strengthening a democratic-functionalist system of power sharing. It was responsible for institutionalizing Congress electoral support up to the mid-sixties, and subsequently for helping to de-institutionalize it. It resorts increasingly to extra-parliamentary mass agitations even as its influence in state assemblies, state governments and regional parties grows. It fights the industrial bourgeoisie for a greater share of centrally allocated resources but has no fundamental opposition to the extension of industry. Indeed, it seeks to benefit from the growing integration of town and country, industry and agriculture and to enter the expanding small-scale industrial sector, whether agro-based or not. Along with their petty-bourgeois allies, the rich farmers oppose the mores of the urban middle class and extol the virtues of farming life, though they are certainly immune to the consumerist culture that dominates much of urban middle-class life. This rural block accuses the centre and state governments of being biased in favour of urban India but seeks places for its non-farming members in the state bureaucracies, where its influence has grown steadily." (1990: 80)

Let us summarize this discussion with help of Francine Frankel's evaluation sheet about India's performance. Her 'Introduction' (2000) to 'Transforming India' – a remarkable inter-disciplinary collection of evaluative essays by a group of 15 international experts marking half a century of the Indian project of democratization – gives a different version but similar conclusions, including concurrence with one of the key postulates of this study that in these several decades India has become a 'democracy of caste groups'. Of course, it is not the same as saying that there has been a dominant caste democracy since 1970s. To quote Frankel, "Democratic institutions and practices, adapted to the Indian historical and social context, have had a transforming effect. They have undermined the legitimacy of the hierarchical social structure, and destroyed the historical capability of the upper castes to enforce unequal status and power relations as the basis of stability in the society. Rather, democratization has unleashed an upsurge of participation from among the poor and the illiterate of the lower social strata, and a 'democracy of caste groups', which has dramatically increased their representation in elected institutions of governance. Similarly, reservations in educational institutions and the civil services for Dalits and the Other Backward Classes have provided more opportunities for social mobility among the top layers of the disadvantaged. Democracy has not, however, accomplished an overall increase of equality in social and economic life. Rather, after five decades of competitive politics, caste and communal conflicts have intensified in a struggle to control the scarce resources of the state. Most of all, the second democratic upsurge, concentrated in the traditional northern heartland of the ancient Sanskrit culture, threatens to finally end the

domination of the upper castes and upper classes in the bureaucracy, as well as in parliamentary institutions of government, once their impregnable strongholds. Meanwhile, the rapidly growing urban middle classes, as the major beneficiaries of the economic reforms, seek protection from the corruption and political disorder that threaten the opportunities for further gains. Democratization has fragmented political parties along state, sub-regional, caste and religious lines, crafting unstable coalition governments, paralyzed from within, without the capacity to carry out unfinished

reforms. Apprehension that political stability will indefinitely remain elusive because of shifting tactical calculations by rival groups in local arenas has raised the question of whether the parliamentary system has run its course in India.”(Ibid: 20-21)

In other words, there is need to recognize the constitutional metamorphosis of the Indian social formation through democratization in these seven decades. Today, more than ever before, India and the citizens of India cannot be understood by any single lens – be it caste, class, religion,

or region. Constitutionally, there are four asymmetric groups of citizens whose presence is uneven in different states due to historical reasons. Socio-economically, none of them is a monolith. Each one of them has presence of cleavages of caste, class, and gender among other factors. The process of internal differentiation is making them subject to intersectionalities of caste-class-gender-faith-interest groups which need to be recognized for nation-building through democratic values, institutions and processes.(See: Fig. 7; and Table - 3)

**Table 3 – Social Re-construction of Indian Nation**

RELIGION	Scheduled Castes (%)	Scheduled Tribes (%)	Other Backward Classes (%)	Others (%)
Hindu	22.2	9.1	42.8	26
Muslim	0.8	0.5	39.2	59.5
Christian	9	32.8	24.8	33.3
Sikh	30.7	0.9	22.4	46.1
Jain	0	2.6	3.0	94.3
Buddhists	89.5	7.4	0.4	2.7
Zorastrians	0	15.9	13.7	70.4
The Others	2.6	82.5	6.2	8.7
TOTAL	19.5	8.7	41.1	30.8

Source: Sachar Report (2006: 7)

(Concluded)

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## Another Effort to Revive Bigotism

**Kuldip Nayar**

With a clutch of followers, Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat was about to storm in Kolkata when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee cancelled the use of hall which the RSS had hired to address a meeting. He is quite right when he criticized the cancellation as undemocratic. But the record of RSS in polluting the Hindu-Muslim equation is so long that the precaution is quite in order. True, Mamta Banerjee looks dictatorial. But her act can be rationalized. Still I wish that she had allowed another voice, however, critical to be raised.

Other steps like including Muslims in Other Backward Classes (OBC) and giving stipend to selected Mullahs and Moulvis do not go well with the democratic India we are trying to build. Appealing to the sentiments of a particular community is obviously meant to get their vote. This is worse than what RSS does.

With a small temple, which came up overnight on the site where the Babri Masjid stood once, the chapter had been closed for the time being at least. But that does not seem to satisfy the Muslims, nor is it in their interest, as

they perceive. The BJP, guided by the RSS is trying to create the same atmosphere. The equivocal stand by the government on pluralism has only helped the Hindutva elements.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi could have done something positive to clear the vitiated atmosphere. But his party does not appear to do so because it's getting dividends in keeping the society polarized. No outsider could interfere because the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Kalyan Singh, did little to follow the Supreme Court's judgment, which said that the status quo should be maintained.

By 'Hinduisng' a secular society, the integrity of the country is in danger. Religion can never integrate a nation as the example of Bangladesh cutting itself asunder from Pakistan shows. The imposition of Urdu forced the same Islamic East Pakistan to become independent, sovereign republic of Bangladesh.

India has stayed as one country because the various cultural entities have not been disturbed. True, the Hindus are 80 per cent of the population. But the minority, the

Muslims, have not been threatened except by a lunatic fringe.

If the RSS is really interested in Hindutva, it should be agitating for the rights of dalits who, despite discrimination have remained in the fold of Hinduism. True, some have sought freedom through conversions to other religions. But they have only adversely affected the Muslim and Christian societies. The converts from among the dalits face more or less the same discrimination in the religious society they join.

The RSS chief, claiming to be championing the cause of Hindus, did not react to the recent burning of a dalit because his goat strayed into the land of an upper caste member. Now that Modi has caught the imagination of the country, he should help the dalits and ask the upper castes to give up discrimination against the dalits.

I have not seen even a mild criticism by Modi or his ardent followers, who claim that they would build a future India which will know of no discrepancy. At least the burning of dalits, if not the daily prejudice, should have been covered by the widely-watched Doordarshan network. But it seems that the government itself doesn't want to raise the pitch on this issue because it is dominated by the upper castes. Even otherwise, there seems to be an unwritten law which dictates that such stories should not be printed. Surely, this does not constitute the freedom of the press.

Consequently, the institutions in the country are languishing. Had the media, an important institution, been free from pressure, the RSS would not have dared to challenge the basic structure of the constitution, which includes secularism. The RSS chief should

realize that the core of Hinduism is a sense of accommodation and spirit of tolerance, not the division of the society.

The spread of the BJP is a point of concern because it ignores the aspirations of Muslims. Modi's slogan of development has gone down well because it gives the hope of reducing, if not ousting, poverty. He has done well not to deviate from that path. Unfortunately, his regular contacts with the RSS and that of his Man Friday Amit Shah, effaces even the wishful thinking that Modi would build the society without any prejudice or bias.

Things would have been different if the demand by some liberal BJP men to sever all connections with the RSS had been implemented. This possibility was on the anvil when the Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan was able to convince the top Jan Sangh leaders to dissolve the outfit and join the Janata Party. However, the old Jan Sangh members stayed constantly in touch with the RSS and this negated the very purpose.

Not long ago, the liberal Atal Behari Vajpayee tried his best to terminate the relationship between the RSS and the Jan Sangh. He, however, succeeded only on paper. He could not dilute the loyalty of the old members. L.K. Advani too was the one who had founded the BJP. He thought that the old Jan Sangh members were not trusted any longer in the Janata Party. He was successful in building the party because the Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan had given credibility to the Jan Sangh members when he brought them into the Janata fold. Obviously, he did not succeed in his mission. But the situation today is worse. The Congress is no more relevant and there is no other opposition in the horizon.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar can stop the BJP onslaught if he brings all the non-BJP parties on one platform to fight against the BJP. Even this combination would be late if it is not brought into being immediately. The soft Hindutava which has spread in the country will thicken and push the idea of India, secular and democratic, in the background. This is a harrowing prospect.

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# Why Should the Children be Penalised for Delinquent Teachers?

**Sandeep Pandey**

Section 16 of the Right to Education Act, 2009, says that ‘no child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education.’ Further section 30(1) says ‘no child shall be required to pass any Board examination till completion of elementary education.’

However, the central government moved an amendment Bill no. 166 on 11 August, 2017 in Parliament with the aim of withdrawing the provision of ‘no detention policy.’ The government intends to reintroduce examinations in classes V and VIII which the students will be required to clear if they wish to seek promotion to the next class.

The main argument being given for withdrawal of no detention policy is that children have stopped learning and their capabilities have really suffered. However, the question which needs to be asked is whether the children stopped learning because of any fault of theirs or because the teachers have stopped teaching? The child is in any case ignorant, which is the prime reason for her to be in the classroom. If she doesn’t learn in spite of attending school then whose fault should it be? We cannot expect a small child to study on her own. She will need either parents’ or teachers’ assistance. If the parents are illiterate then this responsibility falls more squarely on teachers’ shoulders. If the child is not learning then it is because the teacher is not fulfilling her responsibility fully.

There are examples of schools where there is no examination till the

elementary stage and they offer extremely high quality education. Among the well known schools, those being run by J. Krishnamurti Foundation are wonderful examples. There is a school ‘Study Hall’ in Lucknow which doesn’t subject its students to examination till class VII. This school doesn’t advertise itself. Which means this school is not in the business of commercialisation of education. The quality of such schools is extremely good because the people who run them truly believe that education is meant for all round development of child and should be a joyful process. If the child is subjected to a system of punishment and reward, the child is likely to grow with constricted mentality.

If the child is continuously told to do well in examinations, then the child will develop a competitive mindset. Only a select few can excel in any competition. If the others develop this feeling that they’re not competent enough and can never excel then they’ll start using unfair means. This is the beginning of corruption in our life. Our education system teaches us corruption. Cheating in examination is the first corruption in life for most people.

According to 2014-15 data of Ministry of Human Resources Development, 4.34% children dropped out of school at the primary level and 17.86% at the secondary level. If we assume that almost as many children never see the inside of a school because they’re involved in child labour or begging, almost half the children in India are not in school beyond the class VIII stage.

The no detention policy was introduced so that children who find it difficult to move beyond the elementary level have a smooth sailing till class VIII and more students are able to finish their high school, intermediate or higher education. Withdrawal of no detention policy will offset the gains made in retaining the children in school and providing them an opportunity to finish school. Direct impact of this change would be swelling the ranks of child labour.

If clearing examinations at classes V and VIII stage will determine who’ll move to upper classes then let us ponder who is most likely to fail. The children of poor, mostly belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities category, whose parents are less likely to be well educated or may not have the wherewithal to provide additional coaching to their children will lose the race to the children of well to do families. Girls, who are expected to share household chores or in some cases may be handling the complete responsibility of running a household, with probably an extra burden to take care of a younger sibling, are also likely to fall behind academically. As the girls grow up and move into higher classes, the distance of secondary or higher-secondary school is likely to increase from their homes, the parents are in any case not inclined to send them to school. This is the reason that far greater number of children drop out at the secondary level than at the primary level. Among the children dropping out at secondary level, most would be girls.

*(Continued on Page 14)*

# BRICS and India at Xiamen

D. K. Giri

Indian media is euphoric that India came out with flying colours in the 9<sup>th</sup> BRICS meeting at Xiamen, held last Monday and Tuesday. This is the second diplomatic success following the peaceful disengagement at Doklam after 74 days of military stand-off between India and China. At Xiamen, for the first time, BRICS leadership resolved to fight terrorism together and mentioned Pakistan based terrorist groups - Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammad. This was a clear departure from Chinese intransigence on eschewing any mention of Pakistan as terror hub. At Goa, in the last BRICS meeting, in October, terrorism was not discussed at all on China's objection. The Chinese president, after meetings of BRICS leaders and the bilateral meeting with Narendra Modi said, "We should put our relations on the right track, and China will seek guidance from Panchsheel, the five principles agreed between the two countries for peaceful co-existence". That is a profound and promising statement for co-operation inasmuch as relations between India and China had plummeted quite low in the recent past. Our foreign secretary also said, the talks between two heads of states were forward-looking not backward looking". However, although India appears to be the gainer in this meeting; it was a successful summit concluded to the satisfaction of both India and China.

How did it come about? What were the drivers for reconciliation, and promise of partnership between New Delhi and Beijing? The naysayers and the prophets of doom would argue that China makes the right sounds in

international forums, but does not adhere to its promises. Beijing is known for duplicitous behaviour. Some China-watchers also warn against being carried away by Chinese bonhomie. Chinese do not really mean it. Critics would remind us of Hindi-Chini bhai bhai (brothers) days that preceded the India-China wars in 1960s. Such apprehensions may come true, or may not. Times have changed. There is greater transparency and accountability now in international politics both in words and actions.

BRICS was launched in 2006, largely at China's behest to create an alternative centre of power, both in political and economic terms. Both China and Russia were wary of countering America's growing power in the world. Beijing and Moscow sought to create a multipolar world to promote multilateralism. BRICS was meant to be a hedge against American domination of world politics. Brazil and South Africa joined with their respective calculations. India was wary of American calling the shots in Asia without a countervailing force. India found in China a big economy, in search of markets. As an immediate neighbour, it was in the interest of India to stay as a friend and partner in BRICS with China. India seeks to have a multipolar Asia. It needs to engage China in BRICS.

BRICS has progressed well since its launch. A new Development Bank to support development in BRICS countries has been set up at Shanghai. On seven infrastructure project 1.5 billion USD has been invested. The second package is of 2.5 to 3 billion

USD. A Contingent Reserve Arrangement a financial mechanism, that protects members against fluctuations in their currencies, is in place. This is similar to 'stabex' stabilisation of foreign exchange, set up by European Commission in its Lome Convention. In the beginning of the last year, an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank was set up.

The other objective of BRICS was to help improve global governance, and reform of the global financial architecture, the voting pattern in IMF and World Bank etc. Thanks to BRICS, the current president of WTO is a Brazilian. BRICS countries represent 40 percent of world population. International political experts suggest that BRICS is better than G-20 which is too unwieldy. So far so good. But, as SAARC is stalled by the rivalry between India and Pakistan, BRICS viability was being threatened by the tension between Beijing and New Delhi. Kerry Brown of Kings College London, a Professor of Chinese Studies said, BRICS is promising, but it requires stronger partnership for a brighter future. The Chinese negotiators perhaps heard him, and at Xiamen, they put their stamp on a stronger partnership with India.

There are a few discernible drivers for the Chinese diplomacy to accommodate India's biggest concern over Pakistan sponsored terrorism. India made China to realize that they have a role in global governance, as the space is vacated by USA. Under Donald Trump, USA is retreating to protectionism, China has the opportunity to lead the globalisation

process. Second, China's new ally Russia seems to have prevailed on China to take a stand on terrorism, and not overprotect Pakistan, which is on international radar for hosting terrorist groups. China could do so at the risk of heavy loss of credibility. Beijing is under cloud as China is the only country for supporting North Korea, which continues to conduct nuclear tests. Third, China began to reckon India's growing clout in international politics, its diplomatic ability to garner support and make friends. Chinese realized that their military push and shrill media rhetoric will not work anymore. Sun Tzu's Art of War - tiring out the opponent, subdue the enemy without fighting. Fourth, China's strength in the world lies in its USD 12 trillion economy, built by international trade. It is neither their diplomacy nor military. They did not want to jeopardize their economy through bad diplomacy. China is in business with India in almost every sector, solar energy to smart cities, construction to turbines, toys to technology. Huawei alone has 22000 employees in Bengaluru. The Chinese mobile phone is advertised by the world popular Indian cricket team. China could not risk all of those huge business opportunities. Fifth, the Congress of the Communist Party of China, which meets once in five years, is scheduled to meet in October 2017. Xi Jinping who has been bestowed the 'Core Leader' status by the party, an honour given to towering leaders like Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, is most likely to be re-elected. That would secure his position till 2022. The party would not like their leader to fumble at BRICS meeting in their own country, which has been driven largely by Chinese. Xi Jinping was conscious of the loss of image if BRICS was stalled at Xiamen. Sixth, China is concerned about the new axis built around its territory, comprising Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and India fully

backed by America and Israel. It would not like to alienate India completely. On Indian part, it is apparently competing with China, and by 2032, it may overtake Chinese population, if not anything else, and try to reap the demographic dividend as the biggest population of the world. India has no cause to foster antagonism with China. It is trying to catch up with Chinese economy while tackling the issues that its vibrant but often chaotic democracy throws up.

There were many other issues discussed by diplomats of all the five countries like the voting share in IMF and WB, BRICS energy research platform, SMEs, joint information network etc. The BRICS countries committed to an open and inclusive multilateral trading system. They affirmed that multilateralism should not be derailed by bilateral problems between the member countries with an implicit reference to India-China disputes, like they have issues like Tibet, South China Sea and Dalai Lama, borders etc. There was a unanimous concern over the nuclear build-up by North Korea and the consequent escalation in the Korean Peninsula. BRICS heeded the Chinese line of settling the issues with North Korea through dialogue not the use of force.

What overshadowed the summit was the build-up of tensions between Beijing and New Delhi. For now, the air is clear, clouds of enmity have passed. Post-Xiamen, let the two countries work to maintain peace and stability in border areas, and in other areas, work together in mutual benefit and progress. The mandarins in South Block can claim credit for back-to-back wins in Doklam and Xiamen. But, their wins do not defeat China. The onus is on New Delhi to continue to engage China in a win-win approach. No doubt, this is going to be a tall order

that will require deft diplomacy. Will the much-acclaimed BRICS language on terrorist groups like JeT and JeM translate into actionable points as a show of good faith? Though Pakistan has not been named, it has already blamed the BRICS declaration on these groups. Can there be bigger evidence of Pakistan's support for the terrorist groups operating from its soil? Will China support the declaration of JeM chief Massod Azhar as a global terrorist, a move at the UNSC, China has been blocking so far.

The other two big concerns of India are: the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) project of China. The CPEC passes through the contentious parts of Kashmir. Even Sri Lanka has supported India's concern that, "it passes through the heart of India's interests". In a recent report, Economic and Social Commission of Asia Pacific (ESCAP), the UN's Regional Development arm had warned that CPEC running through POK could create tension with India and lead to further political instability in the region. Will China backtrack on this? It has already invested \$50 billion in this corridor. China is connecting Pakistan cities in a surveillance system. Thus, Pakistan becoming a Chinese colony and a surveillance base is a threat to India.

Finally, an authoritarian state like China, intolerant of dissent, expansionist in its approach despite having a large territory, scoffing at international law cannot improve global governance; commented our former foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal. So it may be. But for India, containing and engaging China is in India's interest. We lag far behind China in economy. It supports its foreign policy with its

*(Continued on Page 14)*

# The Laws We Make – The Loss We Suffer

**J. L. Jawahar**

Nobody disputes that India is a democratic republic. But its credentials are not of full satisfaction. Rule of law is basic for democracy. But we make laws that are inconsistent with democracy. We have no respect for law. We want law to support whatever we want to do. If it comes in the way it is immediately changed to suit the purpose so that what we do becomes legal and following it will make us democrats. This is illustrated by analysing what has happened recently in the Gujarat Assembly.

According to the constitution, the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) consists of 238 members who are elected by the legislative assemblies of states and by Union Territories. Twelve more members are nominated by the President. Each state is allocated a prescribed number of representatives to be selected by the Assembly. As a matter of routine, Gujarat had to elect three members this year and there were four contestants. Art 80(4) states that "The representatives of each State in the Council of States shall be elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of the State in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote." Single transferable vote is prescribed when more than one person is to be elected. It means that the voter shall have to select the candidates by showing his order of preference. (They can also say that none of them is worth being elected.) That is, he has to vote for the prescribed number of persons to be selected. As three members are to be elected, the voter has to mark the ballot paper with three members

showing his order of preference. Naturally the decision is made based on the number of first preference votes the contestant gets. The vote required to win is determined in advance based on a formula. Naturally all the required contestants cannot get elected on first vote. Then the second preference votes are to be taken into consideration to be added to the next person. Thus there is a complicated process to determine the winners by single transferable vote. In practice, the members of the Legislative Assembly are not given that freedom to elect the members according to their preference. It is all dictated by the political parties. As the votes required to win are estimated in advance, the required number of members of the party are allotted to each of the contestants so that there is no chance of losing the election. In the case of Gujarat Assembly, BJP happens to be the biggest party with 121 members. The votes required to win are estimated to be 45. Thus the party has allotted 45 members to each of the two contestants. It leaves 31 members more and the party is tempted to make use of the excess members to get another nominee of the party elected by taking support from other parties 'by hook or crook'. Immediately there was a furore that the party is trying to buy the votes of other parties and it is unethical and illegal. In the present atmosphere prevailing, nobody expects a party to support another party except by demanding a *quid pro quo*, which is called bribe. There is no consideration for the character of the contestant or his stature. It is the party that sets the criteria.

There are some basic points for consideration at this stage. By allocating the members to support a prescribed contestant, the provisions of constitution are avoided successfully. The freedom of members to choose the contestants to whom they want to vote is nullified and that right is given to the heads of parties. Peculiar arguments are made to justify the same. It is stated that the individual members are susceptible to various temptations thus affecting the "Purity of the election". That danger is avoided by putting the right in the hands of party heads. The Assembly members are given the right to elect representatives to the Council of States as they happen to be elected by the people. But now they are made to vote according to the dictates of the party. The heads of parties are not elected by the public. They are lords of internal organization which is nothing but a group formed to catch power 'by hook or crook'. Thus the right of elected members is placed in the hands of unelected persons. Naturally the attention shifts from individual members to the parties. If it is the genuine intention to avoid horse trading, it is now taking the shape of group trading. The bribe goes to the party instead of to the member. The quantum increases. How does it help 'purity of election'?

All this is made in the name of Acts and Rules made thereunder. What are the Acts?

The constitution was adopted with effect from January 26, 1950. Logically, the purpose of forming the Constituent Assembly was fulfilled and it should have been dissolved. The first general elections were held in 1952 under the

constitution to form the Parliament which, by definition, consists of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the President. But there would be no rules and regulations to conduct the election. To fill that gap the Provisional Parliament was given the right to pass the Representation of Peoples Act in 1951. The Constituent Assembly was metamorphosed into the Provisional Parliament and given the right to amend the constitution to introduce Schedule IX and to pass the Representation of the Peoples Act under Art. 379 of the constitution which was deleted subsequently as its purpose was over.

When the Representation of Peoples Act was passed in 1951 it contained the following provisions for constitution of the Council of States:

**Section 3.** A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a representative of any State or Union Territory in the Council of States unless he is an elector for a parliamentary constituency in that State or Union Territory;

**Section 59.** At every election when a poll is taken votes shall be given by ballot in such a manner as may be prescribed and no votes shall be received by proxy;

**Section 94.** No witness or other person shall be required to state for whom he has voted at an election:

**Section 128(1)** Every officer, clerk, agent or other person who performs any duty in connection with the recording and counting of votes at any election shall not (except for some purpose authorised by or under any law) communicate to any person any information calculated to violate such secrecy;

(2) Any person who contravenes

the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or fine or with both.

It is clear from the above provisions that the candidate for election to the Council of States shall be a resident of the state. It is also obvious that much attention is paid to maintain secrecy of the vote. Under Sn.94 the word 'witness' is used for the elector. That is even when the elector is called to be a witness in any court, he shall not be required to reveal his preference in voting. Under Sn.128(1) other officers involved in the election process are allowed to tell what they know if prescribed under any law, for example the Evidence Act. There can be no objection for any of the provisions and it would have certainly promoted a healthy way of conducting elections. But to follow the law, even when it is ethical and reasonable, is not in our DNA. This Act was amended in 2003 by making the following changes:

**Under Sn.3** the restriction regarding domicile was removed so that a person living anywhere in India will be eligible to be elected by any state as its representative to the Council of States.

**Under Sn.59** it was "provided that the votes at any election to fill a seat or seats in the Council of States shall be given by open ballot". There is no more secrecy about the vote. It is open. The difference could be as between a closed marriage and an open marriage.

**Under Sn.94** it was "provided that this section shall not apply to such witness or other person when he has voted by open ballot." It is the natural consequence when the open ballot is prescribed.

**Under Sn.128(1)** it was "provided that the provisions of this sub-section

shall not apply to such officer, clerk, agent or other person who performs any such duty at an election to fill a seat or seats in the Council of States."

It is obvious that these amendments are made to facilitate something, which is not in line with the principles enunciated originally in the Act. The principles are diluted. Naturally it is outrageous to conscientious citizens. The veteran journalist Kuldip Nayyar raised objection that it violates the basic structure of the constitution and affects the fundamental right of the voter under Sn.19. But the courts were not willing to uphold any principles. They stated that secrecy of vote is not a fundamental right of the voter. It is a right given by the constitution and it can be overridden by any Act passed by the Parliament. It sounds as if people do not have any other rights except the fundamental rights as mentioned in the constitution. Of course even the fundamental rights are diluted as and when found in the way. In fact secrecy of vote was found necessary to keep the election pure and privileged – free and fair, so to say. If it is asked to be revealed to any person, the voter could be subjected to various pressures. In fact that is what the amendment wanted to achieve. Instead, they have taken the interference of voting to a higher level opening doors to group trading as stated earlier. It was stated that the right to vote on election of representatives to Council of States is not a basic right of a member of Legislative Assembly. They vote in an ex-officio capacity only and so it need not be protected. Support was derived from the report of Ethics Committee of Parliament in 1998 wherein it was suggested that cross voting is a menace that has to be curbed and breaking secrecy of vote is the only way for it. It is a strange argument in view of so many other provisions available to curb bribing and an ineffective means is selected by breaking certain golden

principles. It is only avoiding a constitutional responsibility to secure the privacy of the member by destroying a right of the voter. It is like telling the women not to come out of the house as there is danger of being raped.

After all, what is meant by cross voting? What is it that the voter can cross to commit an offense in the process of voting? Crossing occurs only when there is a line drawn. Those limits are drawn by giving constitutional recognition to the political parties. While recognizing the parties certain overriding rights were given to them damaging the very fabric of democracy. Vote is considered a secret because it is the *sine qua non* for purity of election. Now that secrecy itself is being alleged as the cause of disturbing the purity of election. Strange are the ways of politics! It is not clear how the election can be called 'free and fair' unless the voter is free to choose his candidate. But in this case the argument is reversed. The cart is put before the horse! If the members do not have the right under the constitution, how can it be given to the parties? It is said that in a general election people are free to choose any candidate of any party. But once they exercise that right the elected candidate comes as a representative of a political party and so it is legitimate to give the right to the party to control the votes of members. A devastating argument! The party is controlled by persons not elected by the people. The so-called high command of the party is not elected even by the members of the party. But the rights of members elected by the people are put in the hands of the parties. What does it talk of our democracy? In such a case where is the need for ballots by members? The votes can be counted based on the number of members belonging to each party and the election completed. But as shown earlier, there will be some members remaining and

also some parties having members less than required to elect a representative. What will happen to them? Obviously, the constitution did not contemplate interference by political parties in the election of representatives to the Council of States or in any other activity of elected members in the Parliament. It is a prerogative of individual members. But now, controlling powers are given to the parties and corruption elevated to higher levels.

The aberration is not yet over. Under section 59 of the Act it is provided that the votes shall be given by ballot in such a manner as may be prescribed. But it is not stated as to who shall make prescription. The Election Commission made the Rules. Under Rule 39A maintenance of secrecy of voting by electors within polling station and voting procedure was prescribed. It states: (1) Every elector to whom a ballot paper has been issued under Rule 38A or any other provision of these Rules, shall maintain secrecy of voting within the polling station and for that purpose observe the voting procedure hereinafter laid down;

(2) The elector, on receiving the ballot paper, shall forthwith

- (a) proceed to one of the voting compartments;
- (b) record his vote in accordance with sub-rule (2) of rule 37A with the article supplied for the purpose;
- (c) fold the ballot paper so as to conceal his vote;
- (d) if required show to the presiding officer the distinguishing mark on the ballot paper;
- (e) insert the folded paper into the ballot box and

(f) quit the polling station

(3) Every elector shall vote without undue delay;

(4) No elector shall be allowed to enter voting compartment when another elector is inside it

It can be seen that every precaution is taken to ensure that the voting is secret and known only to the elector. But strangely, it was suggested that the voting shall be shown to the presiding officer 'if required'. There is no indication as to what could be the circumstances under which the presiding officer can ask for showing the marked ballot paper. His main purpose is to ensure that the members cast their vote freely without any external influence.

Later on, another sub-rule 39AA was added to change the entire scenario.

Rule 39AA. Information regarding casting of votes:

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in Rule 39A, the presiding officer shall, between the period when the elector, being a member of a political party, records his vote on the ballot paper and before such elector inserts the ballot paper inside the ballot box, allow the authorized agent of the political party to verify as to whom such elector has cast his vote;

Provided that if the elector refuses to show his marked ballot paper to the authorized agent of his political party, the ballot paper issued to him shall be taken back by the presiding officer or a polling officer under the direction of the presiding officer and the ballot paper so taken shall then be further dealt with in the manner specified in sub-rule 6 to 8 of Rule 39A as if such ballot paper



has been taken back under sub-rule 5 of Rule 39A.

(2) Every political party whose member, as an elector, casts a vote at the polling station shall, for the purpose of sub-rule (1) appoint in Form 22-A two authorized agents;

(3) An authorized agent appointed under sub-rule (2) shall be present throughout the polling hours at the polling station and the other shall relieve him when he goes out of the polling station and vice versa.

It can be seen how regimented the voting process has become under the revised rules. It is not explained why the presiding officer is entitled to have a look into the marked ballot paper of a voter. Such power is not given to any presiding officer of any other election. Under the new rule 39AA every political party is expected to appoint two persons as agents to be present at the polling station throughout the period of polling. Care is taken to ensure that one agent is always present by prescribing two persons to be appointed so that they can have break. This agent is given the right to verify to whom the member has voted. If the member refuses to show the ballot paper to the agent, it can be taken back by the polling officer and confiscated to be dealt with separately. That is, the vote can be invalidated against the will of the member. All this to happen after the member marks his preference on the ballot. Care is taken to prescribe every detail in the process as if it is the most important step of election procedure. It is not stated whether the agents also must be from the members of the political party or even outsiders can be appointed. In such case muscle power can also be introduced into the process. The rule does not say what the party shall do with the recalcitrant member. Whether deliberate or inadvertent, no

provision is made to entitle the agent to nullify the vote. There is no provision for the parties to issue whips to their members in this case. But the result is as if there is a whip. In the case of elections for President and Vice-President there is no provision for parties to issue whips. As if to extend that sanctity to the election of representatives to Council of States, the whip is not prescribed. But the loss is made good by making rules.

What happened in Gujarat is something that is not contemplated under the rules made in such detail. The rule only states that the marked ballot of a member shall be shown to the official agent of that party before placing it in the ballot box. It did not say that it shall not be shown to any other person. Perhaps they felt it not necessary as the ballot is basically accepted to be a secret. Showing it to the party agent is provided as an exception to that basic principle. It implies that it shall not be shown to any other person. But the exactly opposite happened in Gujarat. Two members of Congress party showed their marked ballot to the agent of another party – to the BJP agent. That created a problem. The Congress party naturally insisted that the votes shall not be counted. BJP on the other hand demanded that they shall be counted as they were in favour of them. Ultimately the Election Commission held that the votes are not valid as they were shown to the agent of opposite party. What would have happened if the members showed their ballots to the agent of their own party? The agent could only note it and take action on those members later. But the votes remain valid as there is no authority given to the agent of a party to withhold ballots that are not in their favour.

In order to prevent such a situation hereafter, the Commission is reported to be thinking of making some physical

arrangements within the polling office. That is, they do not want to tamper with the rules again to prevent members from showing the marked ballot to any other person than the agent of their own party. They plan to make it physically impossible to do that. Perhaps they may make some arrangements in the polling booth so that the member of any party shall not have access to any other person after marking the ballot. The path may be marked to lead directly to the agent sitting in a sofa on the way to ballot box. Strange are the ways of conducting elections in a democracy!

Law is expected to be valid for a long time to enable rule of law. But we have scant regard for it. We are eager to change laws to serve immediate purpose unmindful of long term consequences. This is the result.

It is not clear why the Election Commission felt it necessary to give so much of importance to the political parties in this case. Clearly, the rules have corrupted the process of selecting representatives to the Council of States by the respective Legislative Assemblies. All this in the name of securing 'purity of elections'. It is stated that Abdullah the Great gambled his kingdom for a woman and lost both. We made Acts, amendments and rules to secure 'purity of elections' at the cost of 'secrecy of vote'. We lost both finally. As we sow, so we reap.

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## Voices of Protest

# Gauri Lankesh the Lionhearted, won't be Silenced by Gunshots

H. S. Shiva Prakash

The murder of Gauri Lankesh, the journalist and social activist, has sent shockwaves across Bengaluru and the country. The murder of rationalist scholar MM Kalburgi two years ago has not yet been unraveled, and already another similar murder has taken place in the same state of Karnataka. Both these victims of unidentified bullets were upholders of secularism and egalitarianism – and crusaders against cant convention and superstition.

I had spoken with Kalburgi couple of days before he was killed. Both of us were students of pre-modern Kannada culture and literature and had known each other for decades. Gauri was the daughter of one of my teachers, also a great Kannada writer and journalist, Lankesh. Her father inspired many writers and thinkers of my generation.

Gauri was a symbol of socialist, secularist and humanist values that she inherited from her father. When he passed away in 2000, she perhaps had no particular reason to take up the mantle and keep alive the unique weekly 'Lankesh Patrike' which had played a major influence in directing the culture and politics of Karnataka for over two decades. It had survived only because of its popularity among readers. Always uncompromising in its principles, the weekly survived without any private or public funding. It was not at the mercy of any party, group, caste or class.

Born in 1962, Gauri got her undergraduate education in Bengaluru and then went onto a post-graduation in journalism and mass communication in Delhi. She worked for several

newspapers and media houses till her father's death. But by taking on her father's mantle, Gauri took the difficult path. To keep alive her father's heritage she started her own weekly, 'Gauri Lankesh Patrike'. Till then only an English journalist, she now became a powerful communicator in Kannada. But the circulation of the weekly had shrunk. It was no more a financially viable option. It was only her single-minded commitment that kept it going. Her journalism became a weapon to defend the cause of progressives, minorities and the underdogs. She was fierce and fearless in her attacks. She was also active on social media. She was stoutly defended by her friends and brutally attacked by her foes.

Whereas her father often invoked the Gandhian or Lohiaite common pursuit and was deeply critical of communists, Gauri's journalism took an open Leftist turn. This drew a lot of bitterness from her ideological antagonists. She was a lone fighter in her life and profession. She lived alone in financial straits. I learn from my close friends that her health was feeble. But she was lionhearted when it came to her fights. During the recent troubles in JNU, she stood firmly behind the Left groups. She declared on social media that Kanhaiya Kumar was her son. She fully supported the demand by Lingayats for recognition as an independent religion, which elicited the ire of Hindutva groups. This was also a cause that was close to Kalburgi's heart. Lankesh rejected any kind of patronage throughout his journalistic career. In spite of all hardships, Gauri followed the same example. However she was going through such a big money

crunch that she had to start looking for government advertisements for the special issue of her weekly. Unidentified gunshots have put an end to all that.

There is demand everywhere that justice should soon be done. It's the job of the police to name, shame and punish the murderers. This particular event is frightening enough, but the overall context is much more alarming. This murder is one in a chain of political murders dotting India drenching our mother earth with more blood. What can we do to set that right? Let there be crusades for forgiveness, tolerance and compassion.

### Books by Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..** Price 600 rupees.
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- Published by Rajkamal Prakashan, 2a Netaji Subhash Road, New Delhi 11002
3. **Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunautiyan.** Price 400 rupees.
4. **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyan:** (This booklet was published late last year.) Price 25 rupees.

Published by Anamika Publishers and Distributors. Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002

# Death of a Journalist

**Nandana Reddy**

We live in treacherous times. The insidious stench of fear and violence threatens to permeate the very core of our being. We are browbeaten into silence, our citizenship redefined and constitutional rights blurred. Never has India faced such a threat to her democracy. And yet, some continue to speak out. Gauri Lankesh, journalist and activist, was one who voiced her opinions boldly and vociferously, no holds barred. Gunned down on the doorstep as she returned home from work on the evening of September 5, she is the latest free voice to be silenced. In 2015, rationalist M M Kalburgi and CPI leader Govind Pansare were shot dead in similar fashion. And in 2013, anti-superstition activist Narendra Dabholkar. All these cowardly killings were in non-BJP ruled states.

Lankesh opposed the communal totalitarian politics of the BJP and its twisted interpretation of Hinduism. She stood against the caste system, inequality, and gender discrimination. She was feisty, blunt and forthright and diplomacy was not on her agenda. She was sharp and critical of injustice and made as many friends as she made enemies.

Her father, P Lankesh, poet, playwright and journalist, was known to be left leaning and had close ties with socialist thinkers U R Ananthamurthy, Gopal Gowda and S Venkatram. His play *Kranthi Banthu Kranthi* (The Revolution is Coming), that forecast the state of Emergency and made strong arguments against the use of violence as a political tool, was made into a film by my parents, Pattabhirama Reddy and Snehalata Reddy (my mother died

as a result of her incarceration in the regime of Mrs Gandhi). It is ironic that his daughter, a crusader for democracy, should die by the gun. After her father's death in 2000, Gauri became the editor of *Lankesh Patrike*, a popular Kannada tabloid founded by her father, while her brother Indrajit became the paper's proprietor, managing editor and publisher. However, in 2005, the siblings had a falling out due to ideological differences. Indrajit accused Gauri of leftist leanings and Gauri started her own publication, *Gauri Lankesh Patrike*.

Among her many crusades, Gauri called for a meaningful dialogue between the government and Naxalites, facilitating the surrender of Maoists who wanted to give up their weapons and join the mainstream. She endorsed the demand for a separate religious tag for the Lingayat community, the followers of Basavanna, who rejected the caste system and scorned temple and idol worship, fought against discrimination on the basis of gender and birth and abhorred superstitions. They used Kannada instead and essentially discarded everything discriminatory about the Hindu religion and rebelled against it. Her support earned her the wrath of the Veerashaivas.

In 2008, she alleged that BJP MPs, Prahlad Joshi and Umesh Dhusi, were involved in criminal dealings based on what she said was "inside" information. Though several other media had published the same allegations, in November 2016 she was convicted in a defamation case, and sentenced to six months in jail and a fine.

Karnataka has been subjected to turbulent politics for the past two decades. Be it the BJP or the Congress, the focus has been on the politics of language, religion and caste. For the BJP this is a political tool for destabilisation and creating fear and uncertainty. The Congress, not seeing the writing on the wall, plays the same game, but badly.

Kalburgi was murdered two years ago and the culprits have not been found. Bengaluru is increasingly becoming a very unsafe place for women. The youth of Udupi and Mangalore are subject to the RSS's moral policing. And the Congress is more concerned about building steel flyovers and financing the next election, leaving citizens a choice between the frying pan and the fire.

A vocal critic of both the ruling Congress, and right-wing forces including the BJP, Gauri condemned both. Giving numerous examples of attacks against Muslims and Dalits, she said she was worried for the future of the state. "We have no dearth of Yogi Adityanaths in Karnataka," she said.

Soon after Gauri was gunned down, protests erupted outside her residence in Bengaluru and accusations were hurled against the state government for failing to protect Kalburgi and Gauri. Her brother demanded a CBI probe and the home minister, Ramalinga Reddy, was heckled, shifting the focus from the communal and right-wing agenda of the BJP to the ham-fisted incompetent governance of the Congress. Almost immediately, right-

wing social media was rife with venomous tweets.

Gauri is not the first to be silenced. She will not be the

last if we do not take a firm stand to defend our Constitution and democratic rights. No political party today seems to have this on their agenda and some

like the BJP, backed by the RSS, are manipulating our narrative by changing the vocabulary. May Gauri's death not be in vain.

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## Murder of Constitutional Rights

National Alliance of People's Movements is deeply shocked and shattered at the cowardly and cold-blooded murder of well-known journalist, editor and fearless firebrand activist, Gauri Lankesh who, time and again, locked horns with divisive, communal and casteist forces, in particular the right-wing Hindutva brigade. We have enough reason to believe that her political assassination is a direct consequence of her publicly expressed progressive positions as well as the lack of conviction of the murderers responsible for the calculated political killings of M M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Narendra Dabholkar, even after months and years! It is precisely this tacit and active support by the current regime in India that is further emboldening the right wing Hindutva forces to commit more brazen crimes, against progressive and people's voices.

Gauri was widely known and loved across Karnataka and the country for her relentless writings, talks and campaigns in solidarity with the oppressed – be it dalits, adivasis, women, students, minorities etc. As one of the fiercest contemporary critics of divisive politics, she worked hard to counter the growth of Hindutva politics that created an atmosphere of fear and intolerance. Alongside, she also continued to write on and engage with various social and developmental issues and constantly raised her voice against injustices. She extended and expanded

by many bounds the legacy of her father P.Lankesh, an eminent journalist and a well known writer and literary critique.

Gauri openly and publicly questioned and challenged politicians, bureaucrats, judiciary, chauvinists and stood by the oppressed. Her last post on social media on the inhuman denial of refuge to the persecuted Rohingyas by Indian Government speaks of her concern and compassion for the oppressed humanity. **We salute the conviction and courageous life of Gauri and commit to joins hands with all progressive forces across the country to bring justice to her, her values and intensify our struggle against the silencing of democratic and dissenting voices.**

The spate of killings, threats, ban on food and personal choices, books, movies, artistic works and fast spreading atmosphere of hatred against rational, scientific and constitutional temper with tacit support from popular governments to keep their vote banks intact is shameful in a modern democracy. We are constantly being pushed in the dark ages, where rational and critical thinking is being silenced, mythologies are being promoted as science and scientific knowledge and temperament is derided. It is with this tendency to wipe out a secular and socialist outlook in the country that text books are being 're-written' and new dominant Hindutva narrative is being promoted all in the name of cultural and national pride.

It is nothing but an absolute failure of Indian Government that rationalists and human rights defenders are being murdered, one after the other, by fascist forces with complete impunity. As reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 27 Indian journalists were murdered due to their fearless independent writings between 1992 and July 2016, but the state governments failed to secure conviction in even one of them ! This is a complete shame for India where journalists, rationalists, fearless and critical voices are important for a positive and progressive change in society. In her own words, Gauri Lankesh said *"Along with that, my criticism of Hindutva politics and the caste system ... makes my critics brand me as a Hindu hater. But I consider it my constitutional duty to continue – in my own little way – the struggle of Basavanna and [social reformer] Dr [Bhimrao Ramji] Ambedkar towards establishing an egalitarian society."* There is ample evidence, therefore, suggesting that this is a political assassination since Gauri's views have not found favour with the Hindutva hardliners and goondas !

NAPM unequivocally condemns the heinous gunning down of Gauri Lankesh and deeply mourns the irreplaceable loss of an outspoken human rights activist and a voice of conscience, communal harmony and sanity. We demand the following:

1. Government of Karnataka must immediately institute an independent, high level and time bound judicial inquiry, with a Special Investigation Team to nab all those guilty of committing and conspiring this grave crime. The unlawful and terror-infusing role of groups such as the Hindu Jagarana Vedike, VHP, Bajarang dal, Srirama Sene, Sanathana Samsthe and all other affiliates of RSS must also be inquired into by this Judicial Commission and strictest action must be taken, as per law.

2. Taking cognizance of the common pattern in the murders of Dhabolkar, Pansare, Kalaburagi and Gauri Lankesh and assassinations carried out by a organised terror group/s which evidently holds an ideology opposed to secular, democratic and constitutional forces, Govt. of India must constitute a Joint Parliamentary Committee to take stock of such groups and their political benefactors, responsible for such actions and serious erosion of constitutional values, freedoms, rights and spaces and recommend action against all those conspiring to tear the secular fabric of India as well as assassinate voice of reason and constitutional justice.

3. The murderers of M M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Narendra Dabholkar must also be identified and convicted at the earliest.

Even as we are aroused by the outpour of outrage across the country, we call upon media fraternity, people's organizations and all progressive and concerned citizens to stand up and fight this cowardly act and rise up to the defence of rights, freedom and the constitutional values which are under attack today from right wing fascist forces in a consistent manner. We hope all like-minded persons and groups would to keep the spirit of Gauri

Lankesh alive by questioning injustices even when it is committed by the powerful people in power.

–**Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Shankar Singh, P. Chennaiah, Ramakrishnam**

**Raju, Meera Sanghamitra, Prafulla Samantara, Lingraj Azad, Binayak Sen and Kavita Srivastava, Sandeep Pandey, Maj Gen S.G. Vombatkere (Retd), Gabriele Dietrich, Penn Urimay Iyakkam, Kaladas Dahariya, Bilal Khan and others**

## Murder of Democracy

All India Forum for Right To Education is shocked and deeply saddened by the cold-blooded murder of senior journalist and activist Gauri Lankesh at her Bangalore residence.

Gauri Lankesh was shot dead in her home in northern Bengaluru on the night of 5<sup>th</sup> September. Unidentified men fired at least five shots at her before escaping by motorbike.

Gauri Lankesh was a fierce journalist and the most vocal critic of communal forces in Karnataka and in India. She was committed till her last breath in her struggle against communalism and supported progressive forces in maintaining communal harmony in Karnataka. She was one of the founding members of Karnataka Komu Souharda Vedike (KKS), an organisation dedicated to maintaining communal harmony in Karnataka. She worked vociferously to bring together people with similar ideology on a common platform in the fight against the class, caste and religious fundamentalist forces.

She was closely associated with All India Forum for Right To Education and has always been supportive of student struggles against fascism, privatisation of education, communalisation and caste and gender based discrimination. She had supported immensely and also participated in the All India Convention of Student Struggles (AICSS)

conducted on 5-6 August 2017 in Bangalore.

Known for her fearless and outspoken attitude, Gauri Lankesh was the editor of Gauri Lankesh Patrike, a kannada fortnightly newspaper and has authored several books. She was a staunch critic of right wing Hindutva politics and wrote extensively about it. The newspaper exposed corrupt politicians and called out the communal agenda and bigotry of hindutva brigade on several occasions. It provided space for progressive voices in the rapidly diminishing democratic space in media.

This is the second murder in Karnataka and fourth in India where a public intellectual has been killed in broad daylight. The cold blooded murder bears similarity with the killings of Narendra Dhabolkar, Govind pansare and Dr. M.M. Kalburgi. There seems to be a pattern and a network operating behind these murders. The earlier murders remain unsolved.

In view of the seriousness of the crime, AIFRTE along with all other progressive-democratic voices demands that,

1. A judicially monitored probe for the murder of Gauri Lankesh is conducted.

2. This shall be declared as an act of terror.

3. Joint parliamentary committee must be formed to recommend action against the groups operating behind the assassinations of rationalists and thinkers.

You can kill a person but you cannot kill the ideas! We all are Gauri Lankesh!!!

—AIFRTE Presidium

(Continued from Page 3)

Failing a student is also likely to hurt her self-confidence. Even if the child succeeds in second attempt it would be matter of shame for her that her earlier colleagues would have moved a class ahead. Such children are most vulnerable to drop out of school.

Ideally the children who are weak should get more attention of teacher and the teacher should help them to catch up with the remaining class. If the teacher takes interest there is no reason why a child should not do well. For this teachers will have to keep a continuous watch over children, which was the basic idea behind Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation.

The RTE 2009 was supposed to create a conducive atmosphere for education of children from socio-economic weaker background. However, the withdrawal of no detention policy will be a blow to the spirit of the Act.

(Continued from Page 5)

huge economic might. This has been India's deficit in its foreign policy based on principles of peace and progress for all. India has an edge over China in its political perspectives and structures, which it should use in its diplomacy although a progressive politics no substitute for poorer economy.

Interestingly, immediately after BRICS, India has got into joint military exercise with Japan, much to the chagrin of China. It is no secret that China sees Japan as a competitor in military power in Asia. India joining

Assault on individuals seeking a rational and scientific way of thinking is not new. Even today there exit people who disbelieve the theory of evolution and that humans are causing global warming.

Belief in god is perhaps as old as history of thought. Each individual should choose what they believe in. However I am against institutionalised and systematic propagation of superstition and through it the exploitation of human vulnerabilities. It is the responsibility of educated human beings to bring rational and logical way of thinking to solving unsolved mysteries of life and also to prepare people to have patience with those unsolved mysteries (such as how cancer can be cured) until we are able to find an answer. It is better to live with unsolved mysteries of life than to entertain superstitious ideas that claim to have an answer to every question and solution to every problem.

Those who have a financial stake in people's vulnerability to irrational and superstitious thinking will always feel threatened by rationalists. They will always resort to violence to silence the voice of reason. The best defense against such assault is assertion of reason and not countering irrational ideas with irrational counter attacks. Evidence based restrained discourse is the only way to open people to a rational way of life.

I do not also believe that everything can be explained through rational thinking. For example, to understand human behavior one must develop

Japan will give jitters to China. In international politics, there are no permanent friends or foes, what counts is one's national interest. It seems New Delhi is learning this dictum by heart.


empathy. Empathy helps us understand people who don't think like us and feel like us. A rational human being endowed with empathy has a far greater chance of drawing most out of hidden gems of life than those who succumb to the manipulations of those who want us to blindly follow superstitions and irrational ideas.

In the wake of the murder of Gauri Lankesh in India, let us all commit to fighting superstition instead of throwing accusations at the political parties we oppose.

Those who seek to capitalise on people's superstitious, irrational vulnerabilities will be defeated if we fight the war against superstitions in the minds of vulnerable masses.

—Uday Dandavate

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# International Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation

**Bharat Dogra**

International trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation has emerged as a very serious problem in many parts of the world causing immense distress to millions of women and children and their family members in recent years.

In a research paper Prof Donna M Hughes has written about the trends in Eastern Europe after the break-up of the Soviet Union and its ally states and related economic and political changes there in the 1990s, "Budapest is a destination and transit city for women trafficked from Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Romania and Yugoslavia.... Budapest is now the biggest centre for pornography production in Europe, eclipsing rivals such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Most Western European producers of sex videos use Eastern European actors whenever possible."

Prof Hughes also informs us that pimps and traffickers have been using the web to advertise the availability of women and children for use in making pornography. She also provides an idea of the extent of this exploitation by providing more information about a single such center of making pornographic materials. This centre located in Latvia was called the Logo Centre which produced pornography and also used minors for this. This centre had several web-sites with pornography, information about minors and photographs of their so-called models in various sex acts. This single centre trapped as many as 2000 women, children and men in making pornography and prostitution.

If a single such centre could trap such a large number, one can imagine the full scale of this exploitation!

Another paper written in the context of Japan provides an idea of the enormity of this problem and the distress associated with this. This paper has been written by Seiya Morita for the Anti-Pornography and Prostitution Research Group. He writes, "As Japan became an affluent society through the high-speed economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s the main victims of human trafficking in Japan became the women and children of the Third World, especially South-east Asia. Some researchers estimate that

thousands of foreign women and children are illegally brought into Japan every year, and forcibly made to engage in the sex industry by pimps. The profit generated by this forced labour is about 33 billion dollars....It can be estimated that about 500,000 to one million women have been brought to Japan as sex slaves. Living under miserable conditions, many foreign women committed suicide or were murdered in Japan."

Such data indicate the massive extent of the problem as well as the enormous distress associated with it. Surely much more efforts are needed to check these trends and the causes behind these trends.

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by

**Rohini Gawankar**

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**Constitutionalism, Social Justice  
and Black Money**  
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## Is India Run by Dynasty?

Kuldip Nayar

Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi is wrong when he says that all of India runs on dynasties. Ruling means wielding power at the centre. Only Jawaharlal Nehru's family has had the opportunity to do so. Nehru ruled for 17 years, his daughter Indira Gandhi for 18 years and Rajiv Gandhi, son of Indira Gandhi for 5 years. Thus, the dynasty has been in power at the centre for 40 years, more than half of the period since independence in August 1947.

Nehru saw to it that his daughter would rule, if not soon after his rule but in due course. When I was working as Information Officer to Lal Bahadur Shastri then the Home Minister, I would tell him to get ready, particularly, when Nehru had a stroke. Shastri told me that *unke man me to unki saputri he* (His daughter in his mind), adding that it would not be easy. He would not challenge Panditji and go back to Allahabad. But Morarji Desai would not accept Indira Gandhi.

This happened when Nehru died. K.Kamraj, the then Congress President, was a staunch follower of Nehru. He wanted, who he had discovered, was one key that opened many locks. Sanjiva Reddy from the

South, Atulya Ghosh from Calcutta and S.K. Patil from Bombay were stalwarts in their own right but were willing to accept Shastri because he did not push himself to give them the feeling as if they were not equal.

I was working as Political Correspondence of *Indian Express*. I wrote at that time that: "In the hush of a summer night in 1963, five men groped their way to a sequestered bungalow overlooking an expansive valley in the temple town of Tirupati down South. One was ungainly and heavy, another portly, the third brisk and breezy, the fourth, slight in stature, and the fifth looked like a muscular wrestler. All of them came from different directions to defy detection, and they succeeded in doing so. There was hardly anybody in the streets. Most people had gone to bed to get sufficient sleep before responding to the pre-dawn call of the temple". After Shastri's death, power reverted back to the dynasty.

Rahul Gandhi, is, however, correct when he criticizes Prime Minister Narendra Modi for creating an 'atmosphere of intolerance'. As many as 17 crores Muslims in the country do

not figure anywhere. They have also withdrawn from the public gaze. It is as if they have accepted themselves the status of being number-2 citizen in their own country.

On the other hand, the Hindus on the whole have not forgiven them for partition. Even today, when there is tension between India and Pakistan, the Muslims are seen with the eye of mistrust. Even otherwise they are left to fend for themselves in the localities which are slums. Employment-wise, they can be counted on fingers. Very few make in competitive exams. The Sachar's committee has brought out how their plight is worse than that of dalits.

The Hindus have to retrieve them from the pool of poverty. But they are left to wallow in the abyss of helplessness. Partition on the basis of religion has drawn a line whereby the Muslims in India have suffered the most and still they are for the religious prejudice. Even mixed colonies are disappearing and Muslims feel safe among their own community people when the living condition is impossible.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule, the gulf between the two is increasing. RSS men are seeing to it that no Muslim holds a key position in the public sector. I recall that a Muslim engineer who dropped me at the Srinagar airport complained that he had gone to Bangalore in search of a job but was rejected straightaway when his credentials were known.

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, envisaged that the both countries, one with Hindu majority and the other with Muslim majority would conduct affairs in such a way that religion does not come in the way of state affairs.

It is a pity that the Congress has become irrelevant. Otherwise, it could have provided secular platform to the country. Rahul Gandhi would increasingly realize that his party would have to work at the grassroots once again and try to change the temperament of the people. India fought for a democratic and secular country both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru reminded the people of their heritage which had both Hindus and Muslims as it's inherent. In fact, it is surprising that Nehru's name is sought to be effaced. Liberal BJP leader, AtalBehari Vajpayee was an ardent follower of Nehru.

Once when Vajpayee was Prime Minister, I, then Member of Parliament met him in his room, he very proudly told me that he occupied the same chair

which once Nehru did. But today the BJP is even trying to change the name of Nehru from the Nehru Memorial Centre. Some scholars are trying to stop the effort but the matter has been left to the prime minister office (PMO).

They should remember that Nehru was one of the stalwarts who sacrificed everything to oust the British. He went to jail many a time but this did not in any way lessen his determination for the country's independence. Rahul Gandhi, his great grandson, should tear a leaf from his book and put up the fight, not for the perpetuation of the dynasty but for the protection of country's ethos: democracy and secularism. People of India would again make Congress relevant. The important thing is the heritage: United, Secular and Democratic.

## **Another Horrific Act of Capitalist-Communal Nexus**

The Socialist Party strongly condemns the murder of GauriLankesh, activist and editor of 'GauriLankeshPatrike'. The party calls upon the state and the central governments to arrest and sentence the killers of GauriLankesh at the earliest.

The Socialist Party believes that the killing of intellectuals, writers, journalists and political activists is being committed one after the other due to the capitalist-communal nexus operating within the country's politics. That could be the only reason why the governmental system does not make serious efforts to even identify the killers.

The party considers that the suicides of lakhs of farmers and the mob-lynching of the citizens of minority community too is a result of this capitalist-communal nexus, whose main players are the BJP and the Congress.

In the party's view, the increasing communal fanaticism in the country can be curbed only when neo-liberal fanaticism is rejected. Only then can there be an end to day-to-day killings and suicides.

**– Abhijit Vaidya**

# Yogi Should First Get Children Admitted

**Sandeep Pandey**

There is a high profile event being organised by famous media house India Today at the City Montessori School in Lucknow to present sanitation awards in which the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, two deputy CMs, Vidhan Sabha Speaker and State Minister for Law and Justice, Mayor of Varanasi and film personality ShilpaShetty are participating.

City Montessori School has been defying the order of District Magistrate of Lucknow for admission of children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections for free education from classes I to VIII to its various branches under section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act 2009. 13 Valmiki children were admitted in its Indira Nagar branch in 2015-16 because of a Supreme Court's direction. But the school has not admitted a single child on its own after that even though orders of admission of 18, 55 and 296 children for the academic years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, respectively, are pending.

CM's visit to CMS will provide legitimacy to a school which doesn't honour the orders of his government or administration and flouts the national law openly. Yogi has made a pronouncement earlier that he'll improve the quality of government schools to such an extent that people will not have any need to get their children admitted to private schools. He has also said that everybody should get their children educated in government schools. It is noteworthy that there is a 2015 High Court order of Justice Sudhir Agarwal in U.P.

which has directed the U.P. government to make it compulsory for everybody receiving salary from the government to send their children to government schools. The previous Akhilesh Yadav government didn't implement it and neither has the Yogi Adityanath government given any indication that it is serious about implementing it. Yogi has only made a statement once supporting the spirit of the judgement. But he'll join hands with the lobby of private schools so soon in his chief ministership was not expected. He was expected to not give any importance to private schools.

The Bhartiya Janata Party government, like its predecessors, too has become a patron of the private education mafia. May be it is politically expedient for parties to protect the interests of the capitalists.

Jagdish Gandhi is the most gross symbol of commercialisation of education and questions will be raised about any government which hobnobs with him. AkhileshYadav government awarded him with YashBharti award. After Jagdish Gandhi opposed the admissions of children under section 12(1)(c) of RTE Act in his school in 2015, the AkhileshYadav government also awarded his wife Bharti Gandhi with Rani LaxmiBai bravery award. Was the bravery of the Gandhis in opposing the admissions of underprivileged children? Now the Yogi government also seems to have come under the influence of Jagdish Gandhi.

The BJP is a pro-capitalist party anyway. Narendra Modi has said that

the government schools which are not being run well should be handed over to the private groups. It is not difficult to imagine that privatisation of education is a sure way of damaging the quality of government schools and making good education out of reach of the poor child. The process of privatisation is in general anti-poor. The basic premise of privatisation is to carry out activity with the sole motive of earning profit. When schools will be run for profit making, as is already happening, how are the poor children expected to have access to them? The section 12(1)(c) of RTE Act had opened a window of opportunity for underprivileged children upto 25% of class strength in private schools for free education. But the manner in which Jagdish Gandhi and other owners of private schools are out to scuttle this provision of the Act it doesn't appear that underprivileged children will gain much from this.

A local businessman and BJP leader in Lucknow Sudhir Halwasiya has also denied admissions under RTE Act in his school Navyug Radiance. When a BJP leader is also openly violating the Act it can be imagined what the state of affairs of its implementation would be. The parents whose children have been issued orders for admission under section 12(1)(c) of the Act are running from pillar to post but their dream of getting their children educated in good schools has been grounded. Some are approaching the Court but it is not within everyone's means to take that course.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# India's Foreign Policy: Less Continuity and More Change!

D. K. Giri

It was believed for long that the foundation of India's foreign policy was laid by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. He left a deep and lasting impact on the foreign policy of independent India. The core principles of foreign policy enunciated by him continue to serve as the guiding principles of all subsequent governments and Prime Ministers after him. Of course, changes in the policy were introduced from time to time in keeping with the changes in international politics. But the core remained unchanged. That is how the 'cliché' "India's foreign policy: continuity and change", gained currency. Professor Bimal Prasad formerly at Jawaharlal Nehru University as Dean of School of International Studies, then our Ambassador to Nepal promoted this approach in a seminal book under the same name. But, evidently, since the last three years with Narendra Modi of Bharatiya Janata Party as the Prime Minister our foreign policy has undergone radical changes, a clear departure from Nehruvian approach. In fact, if Nehru's architecture of our foreign policy could be called Nehru doctrine, it has now been replaced by what is termed as Modi doctrine. Visibly, there is less continuity and lot more change in our foreign policy. As someone perceptively commented on India's foreign policy, "Modi has broken the mould without rocking the boat."

Foreign Policy experts like Sumit Ganguly, in his book "India's Foreign Policy – Past, Present and Future" (2015, OUP), divides India's foreign policy into 4 phases. The first is the Nehruvian era (1947-64), which set

the benchmark for India's foreign policy. This was a period of high idealism. The second phase overlaps with tenures of Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Indira Gandhi. This phase was marked by security concerns and dependence on Soviet Union especially after 1971 war with Pakistan over Bangladesh. The third is of 1990s when trade and economy replaced security as the overriding foreign policy interest. In an informal conversation with the author, the Indian Ambassador to France confirmed in late 1990s that all the Indian Missions were asked to scout for trade and investment opportunities unlike in the past when defence deals were a priority. The fourth is the current phase 'a new phase in India's foreign policy, "a period of pragmatism".'

On a deeper analysis, however, one would find that there were only two distinct phases in India's foreign policy, one under the Congress regime, another under Narendra Modi, although intervening governments of Morarji Desai (1977-80) and I.K. Gujral (1997-98) and Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004) had some small shifts in our foreign policy in favour of the neighbours, namely Pakistan. The Janata government of Morarji Desai is also known for espousing "genuine non-alignment".

India's foreign policy, rather her national interest suffered from four cardinal faults under Nehru. Narendra Modi has begun to correct those fault lines, and that defines the radical new phase of India's foreign policy. Congress foreign apologists would contend that Modi's foreign policy is continuation of Manmohan

Singh's government's approach. Sashi Tharoor Minister of State for External Affairs in Manmohan Singh's government, says that the "hallmark of our government was the concrete decision of India's foreign policy to link India's economic transformation and growth of India with its foreign policy approach and objectives." In fact, that is part of the story. They have to acknowledge that India has given up on Nehruvian approach and corrected the historic mistakes of that period. Shashi Tharoor, before joining Congress had correctly assessed Nehru's approach to our foreign policy as a "moral commentary on world affairs." Be that as it was, it is in order that we recall those landmark events and examine how they were undone.

First, Nehru's emphasis on moralism in foreign policy in lieu of pragmatism to save our national interest; for instance, he considered the European countries and United States as capitalists-imperialists, and tilted towards Soviet Union, borrowing a lot of ideas from the latter. Thus Nehru was called a crypto communist. He dismissed the formation of European Community in 1957, a 'capitalist club' and so we did not have EEC/EU policy for long although around 60 percent of trade deficit was with EU countries. Modi has deepened our contact with EU countries and initiated new ones. Second, our policy of non-alignment was unviable, and not in our interest. For greater gains, countries surrender voluntarily part of their sovereignty. Take the case of EU countries, Germany's defence policy, Japan's and Korea's defence ties with US. As a result, all these countries, Germany,

Japan, Korea have emerged economically powerful. In fact, our non-alignment approach had to be compromised in 1956, when Soviet Union invaded Hungary, and there was an Anglo-French attack on Suez Canal at the same time. Nehru was critical of France and UK but kept quiet on Soviet action as he was dependent on USSR for their veto on Kashmir. Modi has given up non-alignment by beginning to build strategic alliances. India as a poor country had paid heavily to defend itself on its own, despite our friendship treaty with USSR in 1971. The treaty was in violation of principle of non-alignment, and drained us off as we were compelled to buy armaments from USSR.

Thirdly, Nehru's approach to Kashmir; our Kashmir policy has defined many of our foreign policy objectives. When Indian Army was beating back the tribal invaders of Kashmir backed by Pakistani Army, Nehru ordered the Army to halt, as he wanted to take the matter to the United Nation. He did this against the advice of the Army commander who wanted to a few days to clear the entire Kashmir including what is now called PoK off the invaders. Without heeding the advice, Nehru took it to UN. The rest is all before us. Successive governments have tried to fudge the issue and evade it with some veto support from USSR. But, the present government sees the problem differently. The Kashmir issue has to be settled through international military support that works as a deterrent; so no one would meddle in Kashmir.

Fourthly, Nehru's policy on Tibet; it was the British sagacity that they made a buffer between India and China in Tibet, an independent country. Nehru got carried away with Chinese overtures, so called *Hindi Chini bhai-bhai*, and gave away Tibet without any

reciprocal concessions. China came close to our borders and began to breathe down our neck. The present government has stood up to our fractious neighbours China and Pakistan, by drawing close to the United States. It is our proximity with US that China and Pakistan are holding off. We do need friends in world politics, although there is no permanent friend or foe. We have made such friends now, US, Japan, Germany, Israel and others. Such alliances are the bulwark against any invasion or trouble-making in the country. That is the departure from moralistic non-aligned third worldism of the past.

One more historical blunder needs to be noted. In 1955, India was offered a United Nations Security Council seat by the United States, how even, to the surprise of many, Nehru declined the seat and suggested the seat be reserved for China instead, as at the time China was ruled by Chiang Kai Shek, the dictator. Having lost this great opportunity to be a part of UN Security Council we are now lobbying hard to get a seat in a Security Council. Similarly, in 1957, Bhabha suggested that India was ready for a nuclear explosion. Nehru refused. If we had done so, we would have long precedent Pakistan and even China in joining the nuclear group. China made its bomb only in 1961. Thereafter, the world powers decided to ban further nuclearisation along those to retain who already had. India would have been there without any difficulty. Now we have the difficulty for entering into the NSG – Nuclear Supply Group etc.

Kashmir is a test case for the new government as it has been for the previous ones since Nehru's. As said before in this article Kashmir defines or deflates our foreign policy quite a lot. India insists on dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir, expects Pakistan

to stop aiding terrorists operating in Kashmir, before dialogues could begin. But, is there an agenda for dialogue? Pakistan wants Kashmir; does not want any dialogue until their demand is met. India does not want to part with an inch of Kashmir. New Delhi says we can talk anything under the sun, but no partition of Kashmir from India, no way. With such rigid positions, how can there be any dialogue. Yes, there can be a dialogue, provided that we are creative, flexible and willing to learn from others.

Let me venture to suggest that Kashmir and Northern Ireland is somewhat similar. Yet, in Northern Ireland, peace prevails now. How was it done? The peace accord was achieved during the tenure of Tony Blair as the Prime Minister. In his autobiography, from his experience, he lists ten core principles of conflict resolution; one, at the heart of any conflict resolution must be a framework based on agreed principles; two, to proceed to resolution, the thing needs to be gripped and focused on continually, in exhaustively, relentlessly; three, in conflict resolution, small things can be big things; four, one has to be creative; five, the conflict won't be resolved by the parties, it left to themselves. If it were possible for them to resolve it on their own, they would have done it. They need help; Six, we must realize that, for both sides, resolving a conflict must be a journey, a process; Seven, the path to peace is disrupted by those who believe that the conflict must continue; Eight, leaders matter, the quality of leadership is a sine qua non; Nine, the external circumstances, must militate in favour of not against; Ten never give up.

Finally, who are the parties to this dialogue or negotiation, India and Pakistan? Not really. As India and

## Visions of Secularism: Triple Talaq Judgment

Irfan Engineer

Pakistan have irreconcilable a priori position on the affiliation of Kashmir. India says it is an integral part of India, Pakistan says it should come to them. So, for India, the parties are New Delhi and Kashmir separatists and militants. Once India, closes the space for dissent and revolt, Pakistan will have no role. Let us begin the process.

On balance, Modi's foreign policy seems more confrontational than collaborative especially with our neighbours. Confrontation affects all parties negatively although some temporary benefits may accrue so, on the lines of dynamics between 'war and peace', suggested by Leo Tolstoy, confrontation must precede conciliation and collaboration in mutual benefit. Second, foreign policy is both promotion of national interest, and reflection of domestic situation. We are struggling, even after seven decades of independence, to address chronic and massive poverty, illiteracy, poor-infrastructure, lack of large-scale livelihoods, and so on. India's position in Human Development Index is much lower. This has to change if we expect to play a bigger role in international politics. Hans J. Morgethau, the author of real politik had remarked India could not pursue its laudable objectives in its foreign policy due to its persistent, wide-spread poverty. China lacks political skills as it is single-party authoritarian state, but uses its economic might in its conduct of foreign policy. Third, India has moved closer to US, and its allies, but it should retain the confidence of its long-time friends like Russia and Iran. Time and again, these countries have stood by India. True, new allies lend new support and strength, but it is equally important to nurture long-time friends, or at least, not antagonise them. This is what will test the mettle in India's foreign policy.

Secularism is once again being debated after the 5-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of India set aside by majority of 3:2 Judgment in Writ Petition (C) No. 118 of 2016 (Shayara Bano vs. Union of India & others), talaq-e-biddat or instant triple talaq in one sitting resorted to by some Muslim men. The Judgment is welcome in so far as it relieves Muslim women from the misery or potential misery of instant triple talaq in one sitting. However, this is only a partial amelioration of their misery. Patriarchal interpretation Qur'an's message, different Sunni fiqhs (Islamic schools of jurisprudence) – Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi, and Shia fiqhs (collectively called as Muslim personal law) will continue to rein even when they are in violation of fundamental rights mentioned in Part III of the Indian Constitution on fundamental rights of citizens.

There were some common grounds in three separate Judgments given in the Shayara Bano case – none of the three Judgments contested the ground that "personal laws", not being a law passed by the state, cannot be subjected to test of violation of fundamental rights of citizens. The Chief Justice of India and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer in their joint Judgment held that personal laws or laws that govern family relations viz. marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody of children, intestate succession, adoption of children, guardianship, etc., as they are not laws passed by the state, could not be subjected to judicial scrutiny as to whether they violate fundamental rights of the citizens.

It was not within the realm of discretion of judiciary to set aside a matter of faith and religion, held CJI and Nazeer J. They stated in their judgment, *"It is not difficult to comprehend, what kind of challenges would be raised by rationalists, assailing practices of different faiths on diverse grounds, based on all kinds of enlightened sensibilities. We have to be guarded, lest we find our conscience traversing into every nook and corner of religious practices, and 'personal law'."* The Honourable Justices further held, *"...while examining issues falling in the realm of religious practices or 'personal law', it is not for a court to make a choice of something which it considers as forward looking or non-fundamentalist. It is not for a court to determine whether religious practices were prudent or progressive or regressive. Religion and 'personal law' must be perceived, as it is accepted, by the followers of the faith. And not, how another would like it to be (-including self-proclaimed rationalists, of the same faith). Article 25 obliges all Constitutional Courts to protect 'personal laws' and not to find fault therewith. Interference in matters of 'personal law' is clearly beyond judicial examination. The judiciary must therefore, always exercise absolute restraint, no matter how compelling and attractive the opportunity to do societal good may seem."* (Shayara Bano vs. Union of India, 2017, p. 267, para 196). To follow personal law then, is part of freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion, unless it falls foul of

reasonable restrictions mentioned in Article 25 of the Constitution, viz. public order, morality and health.

Rohinton F. Nariman and Uday U. Lalit JJ in their joint Judgment did not contest the premise viz., that personal laws are beyond the pale of judicial scrutiny. They held that the practice of talaq-e-biddat was recognized and enforced by Section 2 of 'The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937', a Colonial legislation. Talaq-e-biddat was therefore 'law in force' within the meaning of Article 13 (1) of the Constitution and liable to be struck down if talaq-e-biddat fell foul of the Part III of the Constitution of India on fundamental rights. The Constitutional Courts therefore had power to set it aside on the ground that it was arbitrary. Justice Kurian Joseph in his Judgment agreed with the premise propounded by the CJI and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, viz. that talaq-e-biddat could not be termed as 'law in force' being a customary law and traditional practice. Impugned practice of instant talaq therefore was part of personal law and was amenable to judicial scrutiny for violation of fundamental rights. However, Kurian J. disagreed with the CJI and Nazeer J. on the issue that talaq-e-biddat was against the tenets of Holy Quran and that being so, it was ultra vires the S. 2 of the Shariat Act, 1937 and did not enjoy Constitutional protection. Talaq-e-biddat was therefore liable to be set aside.

### **Unrestrained freedom of personal laws**

It could therefore be said that the learned Judges of the Constitutional Bench gave a 3:0, if not 5:0, verdict that personal laws of all communities would reign unrestrained and enjoyed the protection of Article 25[1] of the Constitution which guarantees right to freedom of religion. Personal laws, as

mentioned above, are rules of decision which pertain to marriage, divorce, etc. Unless codified (and to the extent codified) by the legislature, they are based on religious scriptures, customs, traditions and usages of communities. Custodians of religious scriptures and customs of all communities have been patriarchal and feudal elite. They often enforce them using fear of God and at times use coercive force which may include threat of exclusion from community controlled institutions, social boycott and even physical force. Personal laws often privilege a section (feudal and patriarchal elite) and disadvantage the rest in various degrees. Women and children have always been disadvantaged by the prevalent understanding of religious scriptures mediated through patriarchal culture. The custodians of personal laws – we can call them cultural entrepreneurs or gate keepers of culture, customs and traditions – are necessarily conservative, may be with a few exceptions. Much necessary changes in customs and traditions come about when individuals within communities challenge the practices and traditions in face of ostracization and coercive harassment.

Freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion accrues to all persons. All persons are equally entitled to that freedom. However, if personal laws are accorded unbridled Constitutional protection by Art. 25, the cultural gate keepers will enjoy higher degree of freedom as they can impose their understanding of religion and personal law on others. The elite cultural gatekeepers often draw lines to construct separate communal walls. These custodians of community would judge right behaviour from wrong for their entire community. Can we then say *all persons equally* enjoy freedom of religion? The elite would enjoy more rights to profess and practice religion

than other members of a community. There would be hierarchy within each community based on gender and other birth based social status. The cultural gatekeepers defend these hierarchies as God made. India would then look more like confederation of communities rather than nation of equal citizens.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Social democracy is a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. He warned us, *"On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which is Assembly has to laboriously built up."* (Dr. Ambedkar, 1949)

Despite setting aside the practice of instant triple talaq in one sitting by 3:2 verdict, there is a cause of worry. Personal laws have been placed on a pedestal of freedom of religion. There is not even a whisper of gender equality in the entire judgment. R. F. Nariman and U. U. Lalit JJ. invoke Art. 14 in support, however, on the issue of arbitrary nature of talaq-e-biddat.

### AIMPLB reaction

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) in its initial reaction reminded us that the Court had upheld their submissions viz. personal laws are part of freedom of religion and cannot be interfered with. AIMPLB felt that their position had been vindicated. The Ulemas of various schools of jurisprudence would still be sitting over the lives of Muslim women enforcing their writ. Though talaq-e-biddat has been set aside, Muslim women could still be divorced by talaq-e-ahsan (two pronouncements with a gap of three months) and talaq-e-hasan (pronouncing talaq once every month three times when his wife is not menstruating). The instant talaq would be replaced by a procedure to be followed over a period of three months. While no marriage can be forced upon either partner, and it is not prudent to continue a marriage when there is an irretrievable breakdown, divorced women should not be left in a situation of destitution to fend for herself. To AIMPLB, the practice of talaq-e-biddat (something they agreed was bad in theology, though good in law) has been sacrificed but the Muslim personal law has been saved.

### Secularism

The Shayara Bano Judgment has drawn red lines for the judiciary. Personal law having been declared integral part of freedom of religion, they would not be amenable to judicial scrutiny for violation of fundamental rights. Ironically, under Article 25, right to freedom of religion is not absolute. It has been subjected to 6 reasonable restrictions. 1) public order; 2) morality, 3) health, 4) other provisions of Part III of the Constitution (fundamental rights), 5) regulation or restriction on economic, financial, political or secular activity associated with religious

practice and 6) providing for welfare and reforms. The last two restrictions would require legislative intervention. In our humble understanding, when the judiciary is mandated to protect the freedom of religion, the language of Art. 25 is clear – it is subject to the other provisions of Part III, including Articles 14, 15 and 16 right to equality, recognized for all persons including gender equality.

However, so far as personal laws are concerned, The Shayara Bano Judgment seems to have passed the buck on to the executive and legislature to make it compliant with the fundamental rights. Given the political agenda of uniform civil code of the present regime, minorities fear that the legislature may impose a family law that is entirely alien to their way of life and with the intention to “integrate them into a Hinduized nation”. The learned former Attorney General – Mukul Rohatgi submitted before the Court that if they set aside the practice, the Central Government was ready to bring in legislation. This fear of imposition of an alien code keeps the flock of minority together. They fear any change, howsoever desirable and good for the community.

The Shayara Bano Judgment seems to imply that the Judiciary is obliged to uphold religious freedom of religio-cultural gatekeepers in their enforcement of personal laws. The Judiciary would refrain from protecting fundamental rights of members of the community vis-a-vis the religio-cultural gatekeepers. The Judiciary would encourage church within Islam even though the religion does not permit one. There is no agent between God and believer. Believer can seek help to understand the guidance of Quran but she is solely responsible and responsible only to God, not the religio-cultural gatekeepers. Shayara Bano Judgment

leaves gullible followers to the mercy of the self-appointed church – institutions propounding and enforcing various *fiqhs* and the AIMPLB. Islam does not oblige believer to follow any school of jurisprudence, just be guided onto the straight path (*sirat ul mustaqim*) by her own understanding and be responsible only to Allah. There is enough space in Islam for enlightened understanding evolution of law in accordance with changing times and the process is called *ijtihad*. The Ulemas of various *fiqhs* closed the gates of *ijtihad* and merely follow their respective *fiqhs*. They extol the virtue of *taqlid*, i.e. merely submitting and following without application of mind to their *fiqhs*.

While the Shayara Bano Judgment is welcome in so far as it sets aside the practice of talaq-e-biddat, the protection accorded to Muslim Personal Law on the grounds of freedom of religion is worrisome. The Judgment has left minority citizens to either the mercy of cultural gatekeepers propagating *taqlid* or to a Parliament wherein the Hindu supremacists are in majority – between the devil and the deep sea.

Three Ld. Judges of the Constitutional Bench accord protection to personal laws on the basis of Article 13 (1), which provides that only *laws* in force before the commencement of the Constitution can be declared void in so far as they are inconsistent with the Constitution. The CJI, Nazeer and Kurian JJ. held that Muslim personal law is not a ‘law’ within the meaning of the term, and therefore cannot be tested on the ground of inconsistency with the Constitution, including the fundamental rights.

Nariman and Lalit JJ. opined that personal laws operate under the Shariat



Act, 1937 and therefore is a law as defined in Article 13 (3). Article 13 (3) (a) includes within the meaning of law even customs and usages having force of law within the territory of India. Muslim personal law is not only customs and usages having force of law within the territory of India, the customs and usages are also mandated under the Shariat Act, 1937. On both counts under Article 13 Muslim personal law is "law" as defined under Art. 13 and therefore to the extent it is inconsistent with the fundamental rights under Part III of the Constitution, it is liable to be declared void and inoperative.

Operation of Muslim Personal law impacts 172 million Indians in important area of marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody of children, testate and intestate succession, guardianship, adoption of children, etc. Can we leave this vast and important area of life to the whims of cultural gatekeepers and exclude it from important rights as equality, justice, right to life and liberty?

Religion may not be subjected the challenges raised by rationalists or enlightened sensibilities; religion and 'personal law' may be perceived, as it is accepted, by the followers of the faith and not, how another would like it to be as opined by the CJI and Nazeer J. However, should the cultural gatekeepers be allowed unrestrained freedom in the name of personal law and force a section of citizens, particularly women of the community, to live as slaves or second class citizens and the judiciary feel helpless to come to their rescue?

We are not against Muslim Personal Law or any other personal law for that matter. They all have their strengths and are good for their followers. We firmly stand for diversity. However, so far as any provision of a personal law is inconsistent with the fundamental rights

of the citizens, it should be held to be void. In Shayara Bano Judgment we have achieved only partial victory. We have to carry on the struggle till these religio-cultural gatekeepers are completely marginalized or they too are in consonance with Constitutional objectives.

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[1] Article 25: Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—

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*(Continued from Page 3)*

People like Jagdish Gandhi who were running their schools like fiefdoms are averse to any government interference in their school in the form of 25% of their admissions being thrown open to public. In a way this is 25% nationalisation of private schools which private schools are resisting. It is upto the government to take a stand on whether it'll allow private schools to have their way or will enforce compliance of the national Act by securing admissions for underprivileged children who too now have a right to the same education as the children of rich receive.

In UP corrupt politics has made an alliance with education mafia. People who were under the impression that corruption will decrease if not be completely eliminated under the BJP rule should at least be disillusioned now. In reality corruption under BJP regime has increased. There is a

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;

(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.


*Explanation I.*- The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.

*Explanation II.*- In sub clause (b) of clause reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

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simple reason for this. BJP needs more money to contest elections than other parties.

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## Articles 370 and 35A

### Pannalal Surana

A few citizens, who during the transition period of partition, had migrated to J&K from some parts of West Pakistan, have recently formed an NGO by name "We the people". It has filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court of India challenging the validity of Article 35A. Their contention is that besides being partial to the permanent residents of J&K, it being a constitutional amendment was not included in the Constitution by following due procedure laid in Art. 368.

Before going into the legal aspects, it is necessary to bear in mind a few relevant facts:

1. At the time of partition, former princely states were advised to merge with either Pakistan or India. But Maharaja Hari Singh, then ruler of J&K did not do so till 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1947 when Pakistani men invaded that state.
2. The maharaja had an army of only 1100 while the invaders were more than 5000. Realising that he would not be able to defend the state, he asked for military help from India.
3. Government of India said that they would be able to do so only if that state merges with it. Otherwise it would be charged that it had invaded foreign territory.
4. The maharaja signed Instrument of Accession on 25<sup>th</sup> night specifically mentioning that it is restricted to only three subjects, viz, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. It further stated that final decision would be taken after ascertaining the "wishes of the people".
5. India accepted IA instantly and rushed its jawans to resist the advancing Pak invaders. There was no time to engage in legal niceties.
6. The UNO had passed a resolution saying that referendum would be held only after Pakistan withdrew all its forces from all the territory of J&K.
7. Pakistan did not comply. So referendum could not be taken till today.
8. India had already started Constitution making. J&K said that as it has not finally merged with India and so, instead of participating in that Constitution-making, it would have its own Constitution. India could not say 'no'.
9. India adopted its Constitution on 26 November, 1949 and its implementation was ushered in on 26 January 1950. Constitution making of J&K was lingering on. So, with the consent of the State of J&K, Article 370 was inserted in the Constitution of India which says that article 1 of its Constitution, which states that Bharat is the name of the Indian Union would be treated as part of the Constitution of J&K, and further that the laws passed by its Parliament would be applicable to J&K only after approved by the Vidhan Sabha of the J&K. It may be mentioned here that that the Parliament can pass laws only on the subjects included in the Union List. It cannot pass laws on subjects included in the State List and can do so for items in concurrent List only with the consent of the State/s. So no fault can be found with Art. 370 on the ground that much more has been given to the State of J&K only.
10. Constitution of J&K was finally adopted in November, 1954 and thereafter, that Constituent Assembly was dissolved. The people of J&K said that exclusive rights of the permanent residents in matters of purchasing land in the State, contesting election to its Vidhan Sabha, appointment to State bureaucracy and obtaining scholarship, which have been enshrined in the State laws adopted as early as 1927 and 1932 could be transgressed by Indian Parliament because it has exclusive power under Article 35 to enact laws included in the Union List and Citizenship is part of the Union List. With a view to safeguard those rights of the permanent residents of J&K and upon asking by the Government of J&K The President of India promulgated The Constitution (Application to the State of J&K) Order 1954 which says that Article 35 A would be treated as being part of the Constitution of India since 1950. The President is empowered by the Article 392 to rectify legal and procedural lacunae. So Article 35A was embodied which contains the provision that Vidhan Sabha of J&K would be able to enact laws

about according status of permanent resident to those who have migrated from that part of J&K which is occupied by Pakistan.

That is the bone of contention raised by the NGO “We the people”.

Perusing all the facts narrated above, it becomes clear that-

1. Rights of permanent residents of J&K about purchasing land in that State figured in Art. 370 and 35A not for the first time, but were enacted by the erstwhile Ruler of the State. There was apprehension in those days that monied people from Europe and/or Punjab may purchase lands of the poor peasants of J&K. So, with a view to safeguard means of livelihood of the poor peasants of the State, laws of 1927 and 1932 were adopted by the then Ruler after due consultation with the then British Government at Delhi.

2. The NGO argues that the provision of Article 35A transgresses their fundamental right to equality before law under Article 14 of the Constitution.

Here, it is relevant to look at the Preamble of the Constitution which has accorded first place to Justice above Equality. Its import must be fully grasped. Equality is not to be viewed from arithmetical angle but to be appreciated as in consonance with Justice. It is obvious that no average peasant of any part of India outside J&K is going to purchase land in that State. Climate differences are so vast. Only a few rich persons may like to purchase land in J&K with a view to put up 5-star hotel there. Is it proper to allow them to deprive poor peasants of J&K of their means of livelihood?

Secondly, inclusion of Article 35A in the Constitution is to be accepted as rectification of procedural lacuna in the transitional period when Constituent Assembly of J&K was being dissolved. Art. 392 has been included in our Constitution with a view to overcome lacunas which could not be prevented at those tumultuous times. It is futile to say that Art. 35A should be treated as Constitutional amendment.

Let us uphold superb value of Justice and let it guide all our governance.

Every Indian citizen should extend friendly hand to our brethren in J&K which have suffered so much.

Let us not do anything that would strengthen hands of those who would like to alienate those people from mainstream India.

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## Senior Economists about Demonetization

### Bharat Dogra

Pronab Sen, Former Chairman, National Statistical Commission, has said that demonetization was an economic disaster and its worst impact on economic growth is likely to be revealed later when new data comes in.

Responding to questions by *India Today* magazine (September 18) Sen said, “the main adverse effects of demonetization have been on the non-corporate sector, and the present GDP estimates reflect only the performance of the corporates, and the non-corporate estimates will only be incorporated once the informal sector survey data becomes available. In so far as the corporate sector is concerned, demonetization has had a relatively small effect arising from the demand side.”

On the other hand the impact on the informal sector has been much more severe. Dr. Sen continues, “The big casualty is the informal sector, which includes agriculture and a large part of construction. Since these sectors are the main generators of jobs and livelihoods, these are also casualties.”

Pronab Sen has added that the after effects are likely to linger on for some

time. He has stated, “I expect the pain to last at least another year. Perhaps much longer. In 2017-18, I do not expect the growth rate of GDP, even as measured by corporate data, to be above 6.5 per cent. With non-corporate data, it will probably be sub-6 per cent, may be significantly lower.”

In a very significant observation Dr. Sen has stated “What it (demonetization) has done is to increase the formalization of economy, not by increasing the formal sector but by reducing the informal.”

Summing up Dr. Sen says about the impact of demonetization, “A political masterstroke and an economic disaster.” Elsewhere in the response he says that at best demonetization can be called an economic misadventure and at worst a disaster.

In another article written for the *Hindu* (September 8), Pronab Sen has said that as most of those having loads of black money hold most of it not in cash but in real estate, gold, stock market and in tax havens or other places abroad and the share of black cash in total black money is only 6 per cent, demonetization policy

was at variance with the main stated objective of dealing a big blow to black money. The outcomes of demonetization in terms of both the originally stated aims of reducing black money and reducing fake currency notes are, according to Dr. Sen “abysmal”.

The *Hindu* of the same date has also carried the comments on this issue of Prof. Arun Kumar, a leading expert on black money who has stated in very clear terms that if extinguishing black money was the intention of demonetization not even 0.01% of that has been achieved. He has added that the government is highly embarrassed, and to cover it up, it has changed the goalpost.

Further Prof. Arun Kumar has stated, “The brunt of this move (demonetization) has been borne by those who never had any black money... The big failure of demonetization is that it was carried out without preparation and caused big losses to the unorganized sector. This has not been factored into the recent data on growth rate, so the loss to the economy would be in lakhs of crores of rupees.”

Dr. Ajit Ranade, Chief Economic Advisor, Aditya Birla Group, told *India Today*, “Demonetization has definitely dented growth. The rural, cash-intensive and informal economies have borne the most adverse impact. In the informal economy, a lot of work had to be stopped and some of the jobs are lost forever. The falling prices of agricultural products, especially perishables, greatly affected farm income which will take a few quarters to recover.”

Dr. Ranade said further that the informal sector has been the biggest casualty of demonetization. He has pointed out, “Costs that are upfront are

costs of printing, replacing old currency with new currency, cost of lower GDP of two or three quarters. A one percentage point lower growth means a loss of Rs. 1.5 lakh crore of national income and more than a million jobs not created.”

Prof. Rohini Somanathan of Delhi School of Economics told *India Today*, “The greatest immediate suffering may

have been on the most vulnerable—the sick needing to go to hospitals, workers with minimal savings who could not get their daily wages, artisans who faced sharp declines in demand since their goods were not daily essentials... If the lack of demand for particular products causes some industries to shut down and if these people can't find opportunities elsewhere their pain will last indefinitely long.”

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## Peace is Every Step: from India to Pakistan

Priyanka Pandey

India and Pakistan turned 70 this year but continue to be enemies since their partition in 1947. Much like a family feud, the two nations remain hostile and the conflict has escalated since the bitter division at the time British rule was ending. The official story in each country projects the other as precisely that, “the other” and so an enemy. There is no doubt there are serious grievances and issues that the governments and armies of the two countries have with each other. But the negative views that are perpetuated make the conflict much worse.

History textbooks project a distorted view to children. The media feeds this by exaggerating and replaying any negative event involving the other side over and over, and blaming the “other” often without substantiated basis. Efforts to reach out to the other are treated with suspicion. Political leaders on either side who make such attempts are denounced by hardliners of their own side: hardliners who use religion to divide and seize every chance to fuel hatred and revenge. False information and misperceptions create more conflict and make the official story line seem true in the eyes of ordinary Indians and Pakistanis, just like in a family.

It usually takes Indians and Pakistanis step into a third country to get a chance to meet each other. This is when, more often than not, they become friends and see that they are like each other sharing similar food, culture, and language. I have had friends from Pakistan who go out of their way, in small and big ways, therefore my perception about the other side has been very positive. But on a recent visit to Pakistan, I experienced firsthand our sameness and more important, the desire for peace that so many there spoke about, which I guess is a universal quality of the human heart.

I came across several people but I did not see an enemy. They were people just like us. They spoke the same language, wore similar clothes, and looked like us. Lahore looked a lot like Delhi. Except for the road signs in Urdu, I could have been in parts of Delhi. I did not get a feeling that I was in a foreign country. A taxi driver who took me around observed that the two countries try to scare each other by acquiring weapons and bombs. If they tried to be friends, he felt both would save a huge amount of spending on defense which could instead be used to improve the lives of their people. He was without a doubt that the people of

both countries would be better off if the two governments became allies.

This view was echoed by others I came across. One person shared enthusiastically that he was from Haryana state in India, his family spoke Haryanvi, and they looked up to India because India seemed to have greater equality for women. A young woman shared the story of her grandmother who migrated from India at the time of partition and although old by now, continued to reminisce about her hometown in India. When the person at the hotel desk asked for an identity proof, I gave my passport. It turned out he had not seen an Indian passport before because he was new in the job. He looked at it carefully, making a comparison to the green color of a Pakistani passport and then declared “we are one”. He recalled visits from members of his mother’s side of the family who live in India.

There were a couple of times when I was mistaken for a Pakistani because of my appearance and language, which reaffirmed for me that we are indeed the same people. Among those I met, I did not sense any hostility towards Indians. I received a lot of warmth and friendship. A long time friend who is a practicing Muslim mentioned during a conversation that a true Muslim holds values of forgiveness and compassion, and not hatred and revenge for others. If more Hindus and Muslims come to see that our religions have similar values at their core, forgiveness, compassion, and tolerance, then maybe there is a chance for religion to unite and not divide us. Neither religion in its essence promotes or condones violence and so any narrative that promotes division and hatred violates the religions

I left Pakistan feeling there is hope for peace. We as people hold the power to shift the stories of our two countries. We can tell a different story; one that is based on our experiences and honors the reality of our people. The people in the two lands are not each other’s enemies; the problems are because of the two governments and the militaries, as well as our perceptions. When someone speaks of the other country negatively, we do not have to validate that perception without checking the facts. We do not have to participate in spreading a negative view of the other without knowing more. We can correct, one at a time, the misperceptions that fuel strong feelings of resentment between the two countries.

Next time someone says “Pakistan is like this” or “India is like that”, we should ask if we hold the right perception. We can pause and remind ourselves that once we lived side by side in the same country. I wonder where we can be if we hold ourselves back from blaming an entire people or religion for the conflict the two sides are in. Every time there is a terrorist attack on the other side, its people suffer just like we suffer when there is an attack in our country. The people on the other side are just like us. They are also someone’s daughter, son, mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, or parent. They have the same hopes, dreams and fears as us and they too want peace. They are our real partners for peace.

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# Constitutionalism, Social Justice and Black Money

## B. Sudershan Reddy

....Let me start with what ought to be an unexceptional premise, but which unfortunately we seem to have lost along the way. That fealty to the Constitutional values is required of all the stakeholders and not just the Constitutional courts alone. While the Courts are needed to resolve a genuine dispute of law, or to find minimal action as being normatively needed by the State when abdication of responsibility towards a citizen or a group of citizens is of such magnitude and of an egregious nature, the Constitution places an obligation on all the major players to ensure that constitutional values are adhered to.

This point needs to be made explicit, because of late there seems to be a tendency to assume that as long as a law, and the action by the state that law mandates or gives rise to have not been examined by a constitutional court and its vires or constitutionality not ascertained the other stakeholders have no responsibility to assess the legality of their actions on the touchstone of Constitutional values. I was aghast recently, when I heard on television one prominent politician telling the anchor of a TV channel that he does not want to hear about how the decision by his party could be contrary to the Constitutional provisions. At first the politician blustered on about the law not being contrary to the Constitution, and when he realized that he was actually wrong he went on to claim that all of that does not matter as the people will support their move. The claim implicitly was that popular

support itself is sufficient to make any kind of action lawful and moral. While we could all be spouting about Kenneth Arrow's insight, that barring a referendum on each issue, no one can ever know whether a majority/plurality of the populace actually supported one amongst the many issues on which the individuals votes get cast on, there is a far simpler and preliminary reason to be aghast: it seems many of the powers that be have begun to assume that we are a majoritarian democracy and not a constitutional democracy.

The collapse of the distinction between the two, and incidence of such transgressions in an increasing number of arenas and assertions – rights of the minorities, re-subjugation of Dalits, safety of women, and high arenas of executive and even legislative action – point to the limits of constitutionalism. Yet, that only further underlines the importance of constitutionalism to protect the citizens from the vagaries and rapacity of the elites and the powers that dance not to the benefit of all the people, but to the interests of the few.

Modern constitutionalism is a product of a long historical debate of how to restrain collective power vested in a small group of people – restraining them against the collectives of people as a whole or against particular groups of them. The second facet of the debates, about vesting of collective power in rulers or institutional arrangements, revolves around what the scope of the work of

the State needs to be. As we look at historical developments, we should not expect that when an idea, especially regarding liberty or justice, is first formulated it would be visualized as being universal in coverage. Who were expected to be covered by the permissive structure of a liberty or enjoy the benefit of the uplifting blanket of justice would depend on who were thought of as lesser or greater, who was deemed to be worthy or unworthy, who was deemed to be an insider or an outsider and who was deemed to be a freeman or a slave – these were all matters of intense contestation, and the scope of coverage expanded over long spans of time covering many centuries. However, a progressive idea applicable to some necessarily raises questions about its non-applicability in the case of others. The intrinsic nature of liberties and principles of justice is that they are often founded on a core morality that speaks to essential aspects of humanity of all. The strength of a particular normative formulation would then depend on the robustness of its logic regarding the extent of its applicability. Extension of rights and principles of justice to groups hitherto excluded have occurred for multiple reasons, including but not limited to: (1) diffusion and spread of ideas, along with their adaptation; (2) spread on account of dominant cultures, both at the international level and also at the level of individual nations, whether involving colonialism or not; (3) adaptation of values and normative structures as a part of modernization of state and society; (4) struggles, both

peaceful and violent, for inclusion by hitherto excluded groups, or by entire populations seeking new rights or measures of justice, etc.

Thus, one of the primordial modes of characterizing constitutionalism would be the degree to which the State has been enabled and/or achieved extension of equal rights: (a) to periodically vote in or vote out governments, beginning with restricted franchise to a model of universal adult franchise, along with a vertically and a horizontally divided branches of government; (b) equality before the law and equal (and effective) protections of the law (including but not limited to protection from economic forces, natural forces and foreseeing the potential risks and protecting the populace from them) and benefits of armed forces – both civil and armed; (c) the nature and kinds of freedoms conceived, their distributions across groups within the jurisdiction; (d) the nature of fundamental rights assured or guaranteed, and coverage across the entire populace and/or groups; and (e) nature and principles of justice that are conceived and extended to the populace, and distributed across groups. But any which way we understand it, because of the relentless pressure from populaces in each nation for extension of values implicit in each of the organizing categories as listed by me above, all of them or some combinations of them, central normative theme of the debates in and about constitutionalism, and its progress, has been around the question of equality - equality conceived as both procedural and substantive., in actuality and as an ontological assumption and a normative imperative.

What level and kind of equality, along with liberties and policies for

substantive justice, do constitutions of modern democracies envisage in the modern world? It would be useful to begin this analysis from a conception of the state as a “nightwatchman”, providing defence and possibly policing coupled with a legal system to protect property and enforce contracts. At the other end of the spectrum are collectivized communist models, with alleged intra-party democracy. <sup>1</sup>

The first model is often associated with Friedrich Hayek<sup>2</sup>. It is unfortunate that more often than not, our homegrown neo-liberal elites chant Hayek’s name to propose a complete evisceration of any and all roles of the State in the market. While Hayek’s orientation was generally informed by a suspicion of any form of coercive regulation of markets by the State, he recognized that in addition to the role of a night watchman, the State would be needed to regulate activities that destroy nature (protection of environment), activities that will endanger health (as for instance spurious and unverified drugs, or broadly speaking against fraud in markets and in favour of laws against deception) and efforts to provide a security net against hunger and bad health (as minimal charity in societies that have enough or can afford). The obvious problems associated with this model would be about what happens when there are no substantive improvements in the lives of those already poor, and competing with those with much. Could such a state of affair undergird a stable social and political structure? Why couldn’t the elites capture governmental machinery, in the name of greater liberties for themselves, eliminate any and all forms of regulation and suppress even the political freedoms of the poor? Who is to prevent the destruction of nature, and engendering of all sorts of

externalities that destroy the political freedoms and liberties – including right to life – of the many? And if all that matters are the choices made by individuals – as those are to be considered to be the sole measure of goodness, then if the poor and the ones who have lost form a collective to topple the state controlled by elite, why shouldn’t such an event also be treated as a natural expression of choice? For the youngsters here, I would recommend the works G.A. Cohen, particularly his “On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and Other Essays in Political Philosophy”, and “Rescuing Justice and Equality” to read and absorb the debates about what ought to be the purpose of the State.

The second model is akin to the collectivized communist models in which groups of bureaucrats decide not just what gets produced but also how it gets produced, prescription of what is acceptable culture and is not, and distribution not according to what one “deserves” but according to what one needs (also to be determined by a bureaucrat). The obvious problems associated with this would be about the destruction of freedoms and liberties, as individuals and being subjected to the whims and caprice of those deciding on behalf of the collective. Because vast powers are vested in small numbers of experts, and the coercive machinery of the State is in their hands, they could take wrong decisions (even if intentions were genuine). And this could happen, even if we assume that they are genuinely concerned about the welfare of the populace, because they do not take into account all the information available, and being used to centralized decision making process in which only small coterie are permitted they do not have any feedback loops of criticism and helpful critique.

**(to be concluded)**

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## A cruel joke on the poor of india

**Rajindar Sachar**

It is a tragedy of Indian politics that the massive amount of Rs. 1.10 lakh crores being spent on Bullet Train project from Ahmadabad to Mumbai is hailed by Modi government as a great achievement - still more tragic and utter lack of people's politics is the reaction of other political parties. Thus Malikarjun Kharge, the Congress leader in parliament has hastened to clarify that the Congress is not against the project but wants to draw the attention of the public to the motive of the inauguration on the eve of Gujarat poll - and it is a political use of national project. To leave no one in doubt that the Congress is even more keen on bullet train concept in the whole of India, he has openly welcomed the project and has emphasized that it was first conceived in 2005 and later in 2013 when Congress was in power and that it was the Congress which had ordered viability survey by Japanese government and that Congress is happy that Japanese government has kept the schedule. Thus Congress objection is not against this project, rather it welcomes it (project which I consider as disastrously wasteful and amounts to mocking the poor in India.)

The position of some other

opposition parties has surprisingly not been made clear excepting by Socialist Party (India) whose President Dr. Prem Singh has publically opposed it. I have not seen any other opposition party condemning this bullet train project - rather I find that Akhilesh Yadav of Samejwadi Party has welcomed the idea of a bullet Train but is of the view that it should run between Delhi and Kolkata passing through Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, containing the maximum number of unemployed and poor. Is it not ironic that though extreme poverty line in being highlighted yet there is no condemning the aristocratic Bullet Train concept - rather the grievance is that Modi has favoured Gujarat, rather than U.P. and Bihar

It was reported in the press that the opposition parties were to meet at Jaipur on 14<sup>th</sup> of September, 2017 for third edition of 'Sanjhi Virasat', shared culture, campaign to oppose the NDA government's effort to "Create Social Disharmony". Akhilesh Yadav was one of those who was to attend the meet, apart from other leaders of CPM, TMC, Rashtriya Lok Dal. One has not heard of this group opposing the concept of Bullet Train - does that mean that opposition does not find the whole

concept of Bullet Train an assault on the dignity of the poor. Has the opposition the same priority as billionaire's favourite Modi. I am also disappointed that powerful Railway unions and other trade unions have not opposed this mad venture.

The Bullet Train is also expected to pass through under sea. India has no experience in this technology at all. Is our dependence on a foreign country for decades, (however friendly it may be at this time), a wise decision tested on grounds of security and defence. Should this money be not spent on improving our existing railway quality so as to exclude frequent rail accidents which have taken place in the recent past.

If we go on with Bullet Train, it is already having a very bad impact. It is said that Maharashtra Chief Minister though of BJP was not inclined to allot land unless he extracted promise that there will also be a bullet train from Mumbai to Nagpur (which is his home town). On paper there is already a programme of bullet train from Delhi to Bombay, notwithstanding the protests by poor farmers whose lands will be acquired thus creating a social crisis in the country.

Farmers of Maharashtra have already gone on protest at this wasteful expense while they are groaning under loans repayment and which have not been waived by the State government.

Even from practical point of view the concept of Bullet Train is deeply flawed, looked at from any angle. The fares in the Bullet Train are such that any government having the welfare of the people would not touch it with a pair of tongs. The fare could be around 2 times the existing A/c first class fare

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## Steps to Empower Women

**Kuldip Nayar**

For some reasons, mainly male chauvinism, the Women Reservation Bill has not been passed by parliament. It was introduced in the Lok Sabha for the first time in 1996 when the then Prime Minister, Deve Gowda, was in office. As in the past, the bill was marked by high drama and hit roadblocks in each of its outings in Parliament before the historic measure cleared the first legislative hurdle in 2010.

The bill called for reserving 33 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies for women. As per the draft, the seats were to be reserved for women on a rotation basis and would be determined by draw of lots in such a way that a seat would be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections. The draft said reservation of seats for women would cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of the amendment Act.

In fact, the 108th Constitution Amendment Bill, or what was popularly known as the Women's Reservation Bill, completed 21 years of being in existence last week on September 12. In all these years, it managed to get only the assent of the Rajya Sabha, thus far. In the last two decades the bill has seen much drama in both houses of parliament, clearly aimed at scuttling the measure, with some members even attempting to physically attack the then Rajya Sabha chairman Hamid Ansari to disrupt its tabling.

The battle for greater representation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was routinely punctuated, thanks to frayed tempers and war of

words among members which, at times, got physical ever since different governments tossed around the bill passed for various reasons without success.

The bill, however, failed to get the approval of the house and was instead referred to a joint parliamentary committee. The committee submitted its report to the Lok Sabha soon after and in 1998, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who headed the first National Democratic Alliance government, reintroduced the bill in the Lok Sabha. After M. Thambidurai, then Law Minister, introduced the bill in the House, a Rashtriya Janata Dal MP snatched it from the Speaker and tore it into pieces. Thereafter, the bill lapsed every time the House was dissolved and was re-introduced by the government of the day in 1999, in 2002 and 2003.

Unfortunately, however, over the years a number of male parliamentarians have opposed the passing of the bill, leaving it in its current state. Even though the Congress, the Left and the BJP were heard openly pledging support for the bill, it just couldn't be passed in the Lok Sabha. No doubt, the Vajpayee government was certainly dependent on other parties for survival in 1998 which many political observers often suggest was the reason for not being able to assert itself.

However, after the 1999 mid-term polls, even though Vajpayee came back to power, the mandate was for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which won 303 of the 544 Lok Sabha seats. This time Vajpayee was pushed into a situation where he had to keep

all the parties together. Yet, given the support from the Congress and Left, the bill would have sailed through the House had it been formally put to vote. But that was not to be.

Just before the Lok Sabha elections in 2004, Vajpayee blamed Congress for stalling the bill and said that the BJP and its allies would pass the legislation after getting a decisive mandate in 2004 elections. In 2004, the UPA government had included it in the Common Minimum Programme, which said: "The UPA government will take the lead to introduce legislation for one-third reservations for women in Vidhan Sabhas and in the Lok Sabha." In 2005, BJP announced complete support for the bill.

In 2008, the Manmohan Singh government introduced the bill in the Rajya Sabha. Two years later on March 9, 2010, a huge political barrier was overcome when it was passed by the House in spite of high drama and scuffles between members. The BJP, the Left and some other parties came together with the ruling Congress to help pass it in the upper house.

Seven years have passed since that moment when top women leaders from the three major parties—Sonia Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj and Brinda Karat—gave a rare moment to media photographers by walking hand in hand in impromptu celebration of that historic occasion. And yet, in 2017, it has still not seen the light of the day, simply because the political will to help make it a law has been lacking in the lower house. The UPA II government, in spite of having 262 seats in the Lok Sabha, too couldn't make it happen, citing the same excuse of being in a coalition.

Fortunately, the BJP does not suffer from that handicap. The party has the

strength and can pass the bill. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also determined to get the legislation on his table. But I would be surprised if the bill becomes an act. Male parliamentarians in all the parties do not want to share power with women. When they do not treat them with dignity at home, they believe that women should not be empowered beyond a limit.

True, Modi for the first time has made a woman as the country's Defence Minister. This is a huge departure from the past. Even an all-powerful Indira Gandhi could look after only the foreign

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or almost the same as Air fare of over Rs. 3000 - 3500/-. Bullet train will need 100 trips daily to be financially viable - a study by IIM Ahmadabad has come to the conclusion that this project would be in losses from day one.

Japan's government and its rail companies lobbied the US for years to sell its bullet train technology and found little success.

To justify this Modi has given an example by saying that it will save the passenger trouble of going to airport in car, avoiding traffic and then waiting at the airport. The ironic cruelty of this explanation has been missed by prime Minister - poor in India do not own cars. In fact figures of car registration in India averaged 108690.89 cars from 1991 until 2017.

According to World Bank report, India has 224 million living below the international poverty line of around Rs. 120 a day. Modi's bullet train venture is a cruel joke on, and ridicules, the poor of India because the fare of Ahmadabad - Mumbai (one way fare) will not be less than Rs. 3000, which works out at 25

affairs. But both defence and foreign affairs going to women is definitely a bold step taken by Prime Minister Modi. These are indications of a positive thinking by Modi.

My only hope is that Modi would stay as determined as he is today to have the bill passed in parliament. Some people say that this is a measure only to get the votes of women with the 2019 general elections beckoning. Whatever the reasons, the women would be able to play an important role in the affairs of India if they are in substantial number in the Lok Sabha.

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times the daily earning of the millions in India.

The concept of Bullet Train accepts the vilest of inequality in our country. Thus the position in the India is that richest 1% of Indians own more than 53% of India's wealth. Further shameful inequality is reflected in the fact that 57 billionaires in India control 70% of India's wealth.

The position in India after 70 years of Independence is that about 48% of Indian urban population and in rural areas 60% of population remains without access to toilets. It needs to be emphasized that building toilets in rural India was one of the major promises made by Prime Minister Modi.

There is another more serious objection to the massive expense on Bullet Train. Only 44% of rural households have access to electricity.

The project is expected to be completed normally in 2025 or not earlier than by December, 2023 in any case. Modi, whose term expires by mid 2019 has no legal or moral justification to bind the next governments which could be (non-BJP).

# Building India-Japan axis in Asian politics

D. K. Giri

The 12<sup>th</sup> India-Japan bilateral summit held on 14 September 2017, between Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister, Shizo Abe was viewed in the media as an occasion for introduction of the Bullet train in India. Well, that is really a simplistic understanding of the evolving strategic partnership between the two countries. Let us recall that a decade ago, the western countries including those of EU, and US were talking of “Chindia’s” competitive threat to their economies, as the economies of China and India were growing fast. Similar acronyms are evolving here in Asia, the Japindia (Japan plus India) is emerging rapidly in response to Chinpak (China + Pakistan) on the economic corridor, and OBOR, one belt and one road, etc. The significance of the relationship sprinting into a ‘special, strategic and global’ partnership between New Delhi and Tokyo should not be lost on the observers and experts of India’s foreign policy as well as international politics. In fact, the 12<sup>th</sup> annual summit, 4<sup>th</sup> between Modi and Abe was on this very theme of ‘global and strategic’ partnership.

What were the highlights and the outcomes of the summit? What is well known in the media is the project on high-speed (bullet) train from Ahmadabad to Mumbai. Undoubtedly, this will lead to a quantum jump for India in skills and indigenous capacities at the highest level of manufacturing in engineering and locomotives. There are catty criticisms of the project which allude to the poor conditions of existing railway network compared to the high-tech quality bullet trains. Such voices are heard whenever a new technology

is initiated or quality brought into the system. Quality in one area will inspire and engender quality upgradation everywhere else.

However, on the partnership, in addition to the bullet train, the summit reiterated the resolve of New Delhi and Tokyo in working on the multipolarity and stable balances in the Asian region. It is no secret that the United States under Trump is embarking on isolationism, looking inward, thereby vacating the space in Asia and elsewhere vis-à-vis security. The US policies imply that other countries should contribute to the world security or defend their own. This shift in US foreign policy has prompted China to feed its territorial appetite and fuel its expansionist tendencies. It has found an obliging partner in Pakistan. China is wary of India’s rise as rival power centre in Asia, and Pakistan has its unsatiated anti-India stance, mainly over Kashmir. Japan’s concern over China and India’s with Pakistan, bring New Delhi and Tokyo together as they realize their combined strategic weight, economic might and military power can contain China. The joint statement issued after the summit stated, “the two leaders affirmed their commitment to their value-based partnership in achieving a free, open and prosperous Asia-Pacific region where sovereignty and international laws are respected and differences are resolved through dialogue and where all countries, large and small, enjoy freedoms of the global commons, development and trade.” This may sound as a usual diplomatic statement, but reading between the lines, it becomes obvious that “peaceful dialogue” is a counter to China’s

belligerent and bullish approach to border issues, and Pakistan’s unmaintainable claim on Kashmir by using cross-border terrorism.

There were also serious exchange and uniformity of views on North-Korea’s nuclearisation which is a major worry for Japan; cross border terrorism, a continuing concern for India, ASEAN’s centrality to the region, where both India and Japan have a stake vis-à-vis China, North China Sea where China is making unlawful territorial claims while surreptitiously usurping under water space. Both leaders resolved to align India’s Act East policy and Japan’s Indo-Pacific engagement. There was an outline drawn for building an Asia-Africa growth corridor, which again will counter China’s ambitious OBOR project. Japan pledged to support India’s national development programmes. Japan, unquestionably, is the pre-eminent economic partner of India.

In the summit, the atmosphere was friendly and highly congenial. The warmth of interaction and mutual trust and confidence observed around the visit of Japanese Prime Minister were remarkable. The intimacy between the two countries has been evolving since a decade, dating back to 2007 address of Prime Minister Abe to the Indian Parliament titled “Confluence of Two States”.

Aligning their Asia strategies is leading to a close alliance between the two countries. In the UN General Assembly taking place this week, India, Japan and USA are likely to take a

common position on North Korea. In fact, there was a trilateral meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the three countries on the fringe of UNGA. Both Washington and Tokyo are seeking help from India in making UN sanctions against North Korea effective. New Delhi has promised to explore the proliferation linkages in building up North Korea's nuclear and missile programme. The hand of suspicion points to China and Pakistan. Both US and Japan are extremely wary of the tin pot of North Korea who is bent upon testing nuclear bombs and hurling them across Japan. The situation is dangerously critical as Donald Trump has threatened to wipe out North Korea unless the latter restrained from throwing bombs at Japan and threatening the United States with its bombs. India is expected to give them a hand in averting this impending catastrophe.

By most calculations, the strategic partnership between India and Japan will grow deeper irrespective of the nature of leadership in either country. Undeniably, the political leadership is an important variable in bilateral relations. New Delhi and Tokyo would try to consolidate the partnership in mutual interest as well as their respective national interests. India will like to cultivate Japan for investment in sustainable infrastructure. Second, New Delhi will pursue Japan to access civil nuclear technology from Japan to meet the energy appetite for India's growing economy. Third, India would like to secure high-end defense technology from Japan. Fourth, Japan is the most formidable ally in containing China. Fifth, India needs Japan, like it needs Israel to get US on its side. On the part of Japan, India is the important partner for variety of reasons – one, China, Japan's arch rival is a major

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## Rohingyas tread uncertain paths

**Mrinal K. Biswas**

The Buddhist-dominated Myanmar's brutal drive to eliminate any trace of Rohingya Muslim militancy consequent to vast exodus of this community people to Bangladesh who are spilling over to India as well has not only threatened disruption of the country's demographic structure in the east with increasing risk perception but is also putting to test India's concern for the terrorized people who are leaving their habitats. Some 400 000 fleeing Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh and are forced to stay in most trying conditions.

India, smarting under international concern for the displaced Rohingyas and conflicting emotions on them at home, have noted Myanmar army's "carrying out their legitimate duty to restore order in response to the latest escalation of violence ignited by acts of terrorism." China competing for influence with the western powers in her southern neighbour has backed Myanmar's efforts to safeguard "development and stability". Understandably, the Muslim world has decried the actions against the Rohingya Muslims who have over 1.1 million settlements in the northwestern province of Myanmar. Bangladesh initially offering joint military operations with Myanmar against any non-State perpetrators of violence under "Arakan Army" is seeking India's help to cope with the deluge of Rohingya refugees with the urge for an Indian initiative for Myanmar restraint on the issue.

Bangladesh, under exodus pressure, states that Rohingya crisis is humanitarian as well a security issue. (Bangladesh deputy foreign minister

Shariyar Alam in Kolkata on September 18, 2017).

Indian government's response to Supreme Court hearing to a petition against deportation of 40,000 Rohingyas highlights the "organized influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar through agents and touts ... via Benapole-Haridaspur, Hilli, Kolkata (all West Bengal), Sonapura (Tripura) and Guwahati (Assam)." Reports say that at least 14,000 such Rohingyas are living in Jammu while others are spread out in the other parts of the country with suspected additions to their strength all along. India is concerned about Rohingya Muslims being radicalized under militant Islamic world which have successfully nurtured and made innumerable instances of terrorist attacks the world over cannot be altogether overlooked.

Of course, there is a different attitude among a section of Indian public. The invariable opposition comes from Mamata Banerjee, the maverick Chief Minister of West Bengal whose concern for Muslim sentiments has come to the fore once again while asserting for grants of refugee status to the fleeing Rohingya Muslims in our country. Her State government has gone further by refusing to make a list of children and others for deportation. The all-time Indian liberals, careful to remain labeled as such with avowed sympathy for the minorities, rule out any security threat but state it is more important for India to stay put with her tradition of not sending back refugees against their wishes, when they are threatened with persecutions in their homelands. In that

India faces the wrath of the UN high commissioner for human rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, for not giving right attention to Myanmar's "brutal" security campaign resorted to in violation of international law. The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing, he said.

Human rights violations have no doubt stirred the world's moral authorities as evident from statements of Pope Francis, Dalai Lama, scores of Nobel laureates and others who appear disappointed with Aung San Suu Kyi who heads the Myanmar civilian government with army collaboration. She is to cope with the overwhelmingly Buddhist majority in her country which are genetically opposed to the Rohingya Muslims because of their "illegal" stay in their country. For how many years? A serious question here.

Bangladesh foreign ministry has protested Myanmar's description of Rohingya militants as "Bengal terrorists" and said none of its citizens have crossed the border to carry out such activities. They are "actually Myanshiopsmar nationals."

From pages of history it is seen that Buddhism took roots in the Arakans area in the beginning of the last millennium and the Arab seafarers came there seven hundred years late. Some Arabians stayed back after surviving shipwrecks and created a distinct community by mixing with local aboriginals. Their language is also of Arab origin though early-Bengali language influence is traced by some linguists. Though there are some Buddhist population with a few Hindu settlements in Rakhine province, earlier known as Arakan, the Muslim shelter seekers in that area outnumbered them in course of time. They became known as Rohingyas

with Muslim identity refusing to be integral part of mainstream Buddhist Myanmar population. The word *raham* (save us) was the cry for help by the Arab sailors while their ships were about to capsize. Rohingya was believed to be a derivative word.

Rakhine state or province came into being through another phase of history. Min Saw Mon as virtual ruler of Myanmar (1430-34) ceded some territory to a Bengal Sultan with whom came *kameins* (menials). Rakhine (of the kameins) state then actually became the land of the descendants of these kameins and earlier Arab intermixing groups. They were never friendly to the host country population and the hostility was mutual.

After the first Indo-Burmese war the British annexed Arakan in 1826 and encouraged Bengali Muslim immigrants to work there as farm workers. The Muslim population had reached 5 per cent of Rakhine's total in 1869 and then keeping up. (The British made the whole of Burma - earlier name Myanmar - a **British** Indian province in 1886 till it was separated in 1947 to ultimately become independent in 1948). Bouts of illegal migration from newly formed State of (East) Pakistan in 1947 and its emergence as Bangladesh in 1971 threw up Rohingya population to 1.23 million. In spite of immigrants from Bangladesh the Arab influence never fell and all the Rohingyas became extremist *salaphi* followers. The Buddhists of course resented these movements seeing the Rohingyas getting dug in in Rakhine leaving the Buddhists little leeway.

The communal strife first flared up with the 1942 Arakan massacre when the British army's Rohingya recruits run terror in the camps of Buddhist Rakhine people with open cries

denigrating Gautam Buddha. After Myanmar's independence the Rohingyas, feeling encouraged by over 100 recalcitrant ethnic groups' rebellion, raised their own Mujahidden separatist movement. The current Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army inherited that tradition with wider ramifications like its alleged links with both non-State Islamic terrorist groups and Pakistan's ISI. Even some of the Rohingyas were suspected to be involved with Bangladesh extremists for creation of a greater Muslim land comprising Bangladesh, Rakhine, parts of Assam and West Bengal.

Even then Bangladesh allows entry of Rohingya people into its land on humanitarian grounds shedding its earlier stand of pushing them back while the current Myanmar army crackdown made these desperate people to cross the borders. But Hasina government made it clear they would be refugees only without any settlement prospects. Current Indian government leadership is already worried about continuous illegal immigrations across eastern borders and views Rohingya influx a security threat. What is unstated is the Indian fear that the demographic structure will be upset if Rohingyas are allowed en masse entry with the possibility of their backers raising demand for their permanent settlements in this country.

What is of utmost concern for both the countries is that the Rohingyas are rebellious in nature, prone to violence because of which they are stereotyping as a group of people bearing all negative features who cannot live in harmony with other segments of a society. Hence when persecuted the Rohingyas hear expressions of love and sympathy from the wider world but their immediate neighbouring countries are circumspect before being liberal.

# Yusuf Meherally-Freedom Fighter Par Excellence

G. S. Bhargava

Lord Byron said that he got up one morning and found himself great. Though Meherally is too modest to put forth any such claim, he too overnight shot into prominence. One single day, February 8, 1928, put him on the pinnacle of popularity; his name was on the lips of everybody; his reputation reached the four corners of the country. Not that there was spade work before it but, as in the case of Byron's lyrical genius, the recognition was so sudden and complete.

On that day, he had not only dared to shout "Go back, Simon!" (a slogan of his own creation, which echoed in every nook and corner of India) to the face of the all-mighty, British plenipotentiary, but had also defied the injunctions of his political superiors who counselled inaction. His impetuousness and dare-devilry, the extreme originality of his ideas, struck even Gandhiji, who complimented him. In a primitive world, he would have become a legend, an Ajax defying the lightning of despotism. Poets would have made of his heroics songs for a nation. The tale of his perils and patriotism would have been the model to inspire and inform children.

Born in late 1903, Meherally was only twenty-four at the time of the Simon Commission's visit. His father, Jaffer Meherally, was a prosperous businessman and the children were brought up in the typical, aristocratic way. Fifty years earlier, his great grandfather, built India's first textile mill in Bombay and laid the foundation stone for the country's light industry. The transition from feudal to capitalist economy was fairly set; factories and

slums were multiplying in the urban areas.

Their family was traditionally pro-British and all the upper class prejudices were handed down from generation to generation, as a part of ancestral bequest. When Yusuf went to jail in 1930, several of his elders said it was a disgrace to the family that one of its members was a "law-breaker".

The first nine years of his life were spent in Calcutta, then the storm-centre of Vande Mataram and anti-Bengal-partition agitations. But only after Gandhiji arrived on the Indian political scene and took the country spell-bound, did he enter active politics. At the age of ten, Yusuf returned to Bombay, his birth place. He then joined the St. Xavier's High School. While still in the high school, he studied the revolutionary movements of the different countries and was impressed by the role youth had played in them. He read Mazzini and Garibaldi and closely followed the Russian and Chinese (Sun-Yat-sen's) revolutions. The successful boycott of the Milner Mission in Egypt and the birth and growth of the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, interested him deeply.

In Gandhiji's Non-cooperation Movement, he found a parallel to these liberation struggles, but its abrupt and inconclusive end on grounds of alleged excesses at Chauri Chaura, dismayed and puzzled him. He shared the depression which set in among the youth after the calling-off of the movement. He thought that if a group of young people, intellectually well-equipped

and properly trained, dedicated themselves to the cause of the country, the revolution could be led to a successful conclusion. This idea found fruition in the Bombay Provincial Youth League which was inaugurated in February 1928.

The Youth Conference opened a new era in the country's political history; for the first time, youth was canalised for national action. About 1700 delegates from all over the province attended the conference, which was presided over by K. F. Nariman. Meherally was the moving spirit behind the organisation.

The most important decision of the conference was to organise an effective boycott of the Simon Commission and a detailed, though ambitious, programme was chalked out for the same. Though this decision was in consonance with the principle of the Congress decision, yet in the matter of procedure, it went a long way ahead. And here lay the rub.

The Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Liberal Party were all united on the principle of boycott of the Commission. At that time, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was the President of the Bombay Congress, Jinnah the President of the League, Jayakar was in charge of the Mahasabha and Setalvad was guiding the destinies of the Liberals. These luminaries met and formed a joint committee to conduct the boycott, which, according to them, should merely mean a public meeting where speeches would be delivered and resolutions passed. To the Youth

League, with Meherally at its helm, this seemed the most ineffectual way of boycott. The Government, with their sycophants, had planned receptions to Simon and his colleagues, and such inaction on the part of the public would lend colour to the got-up shows.

February 3, 1928, dawned a decisive day in the history of Bombay. The Youth Leaguers planned an ambitious expedition on boats to meet the Commission on the sea itself, but it leaked out and the police took precautions to scotch it. They also wanted a hartal in the city but without Congress sanction it would not materialise. But undaunted, a band of 400 resolute young men led by Yusuf, formed into a procession and marched to the harbour, before day-break. It was another Charge of the Light Brigade except for the fact that the commander as well as the followers consciously believed in what they were doing. There, they staged one of the most heroic and resolute demonstrations the country had ever witnessed. They were thrice lathi-charged but did not budge an inch. Meherally himself was cruelly manhandled by an over-zealous police sergeant. None of the Congress leaders, who later claimed kudos and voters for the incident, cared to attend it. The news of the demonstration and the lathi-charge, exaggerated as usual, spread like wild fire and shops and establishments observed spontaneous hartal.

The bulk of the students were with the Youth League and so naturally abstained from classes. Thus, a good part of the Youth League's boycott programme came to be implemented in spite of the nonassociation of the Congress with it.

Meherally was the hero of the day. The following incident speaks of the popular esteem he had won that

morning. After the lathi-charge, Yusuf was returning home, his bruised, bandaged hand in a sling when he was accosted on the way by a youthful passer-by. "Were you hurt in the morning's lathicharge?" he asked. "Yes", Yusuf replied. "Our leader, Meherally, was also badly injured. He is in the hospital", the stranger informed Yusuf. Suppressing his laughter, Yusuf retorted: "That is all exaggeration; he was not so much hurt." The man got angry and cursed the apostasy of Yusuf. Later, in the evening's public meeting, when he was revealed as Meherally himself, the confounded stranger came to him and apologised.

That year, Yusuf lost his father and as the eldest of the four children, he had to take up the family responsibility. His father originally wanted him to be a barrister and arranged with Mr. Jinnah to take him as his apprentice. But Yusuf's ambition was from the beginning to be a full-time political worker. The sudden death of his father created difficulties. As the head of the family he had to start earning to maintain the old family standards. But he did not want to give up politics, especially at that time and so brought about a revolutionary change in the domestic standards so that they could live within their means.

He had by that time qualified himself for the Bar. Relations and friends like Nariman were pressing him to apply for the advocate's sanad. He was reluctant but at last gave in. Here again, his anti-Simon demonstration came in the way. At the instance of Nariman, Yusuf launched prosecution against the police sergeant who assaulted him on February 3, 1928. The case lasted nine months and the lower court fined the sergeant. On appeal, the High Court quashed the conviction and acquitted him. But, because he launched proceedings against a police officer,

Yusuf was refused enrolment as an advocate.

His is the only case in the whole of India, where a qualified lawyer was refused sanad by the High Court for political reasons.

When acquainted of this, Jinnah was very angry that disregarding his advice, Meherally, participated in politics. "Young man, your life is ruined", shouted Jinnah at him. "No, Mr. Jinnah a life is not so easily ruined". Yusuf retorted with his characteristic optimism. He actually welcomed the refusal because it supplied him with an excuse for full-time political work. The history of the two subsequent decades has vindicated Meherally! After all, there is an aspect of life which Mr. Jinnah and his like cannot appreciate.

During the 1930 Civil Disobedience Movement, when processions and public meetings were disallowed, as today, these volunteers did marvellous work in keeping up the morale of the people.

During the Salt Satyagraha, Yusuf and his associates gave a terrible fight to the bureaucracy. The local Congress higher-ups courted imprisonment and went to jail. The whole movement was run by him. He also saw Gandhiji twice during the Dandi March and got his sanction for his plan of work. At that time, he published in his Vanguard, which was suppressed just after that, an interview with Gandhiji which proved unique.

He was first arrested in 1930 and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Again in 1932, he was charged with conspiracy and sentenced to two years. It was then, inside the 'C' class of Nasik prison, that he established close contacts with his



Socialist colleagues. He is one of the founder-members of the Congress Socialist Party.

He was again arrested in connection with the Individual Satyagraha in 1940, and was released the next year. That year, he presided over the All India Students' Conference at Patna. Later, during a tour of Punjab, he was again arrested on a charge of having defied a prohibitory order. In this connection, he was in Lahore jail for nearly a year where he wrote his satirical masterpiece *My Trip to Pakistan*. Politics and personalities of Punjab were dealt with in such great detail that even long residents of the province had something to learn from it.

While still in Lahore jail, he was elected the Mayor of Bombay. His mayoralty again was unique not for got-up receptions and publicity stunts but for real constructive work and civic service. He was at that time the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party and accepted the mayoral office, only on the express condition that he would be allowed to devote himself to Party work as usual. He created a new precedent by personally attending to citizen's complaints on civic matters; he initiated the system of quick despatch of files and put down official slackness with an iron hand. On the question of A.R.P. finances he literally made history. His predecessor in office, with the support of the majority Congress party, sanctioned 24 lakhs of Municipal money towards the Government A.R.P. scheme. But Meherally, as Mayor, refused to pay even a pie. He met the Governor in this connection and frankly told him that the people had no faith in the Government and that they were afraid the British would withdraw from India also, as they did from Burma and Malaya. So, he argued, the defence organisation of the people should be in

Who coined the iconic slogan “**Quit India**”, the rallying cry of a movement for freedom launched this day 75 years ago? Contrary to popular belief, it was not Mohandas Gandhi.

Gandhi kick-started the Quit India movement on August 8, 1942, at the All India Congress Committee meeting in Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan. He also infused it with the spirit of his phrase “do or die”. Over the following few months, freedom fighters across India responded with waves of civic rebellion, despite the arrest of Gandhi and other leaders, and violent backlash from the British authorities.

But the “Quit India” slogan is credited to another Congress leader, Yusuf Meherally, who is said to have come up with the phrase at a meeting of Gandhi's close associates in Mumbai some time before the launch of the movement. At the time, 39-year-old Meherally was the mayor of Bombay – the first socialist to be elected to the post. He would be imprisoned eight times during the freedom struggle.

In his book *Gandhi and Bombay*, K Gopaldaswami describes how “Quit India” came to be adopted as the slogan that would dominate the last years of India's independence movement:

“Shantikumar Morarji has recorded that Gandhi conferred with his colleagues in Bombay on the best slogan for independence – when this was is not stated. One of them suggested ‘Get out’. Gandhi rejected it as being impolite. Rajagopalachari mentioned ‘Retreat’ or ‘Withdraw’. That too did not find favour. Yusuf Meherali presented Gandhi with a bow bearing the inscription ‘Quit India’. Gandhi said in approval, ‘Amen’.”

According to his biographer MadhuDandavate, Meherally published a booklet titled “Quit India” on the eve of the 1942 movement. It was sold out in a matter of weeks. “He also popularised the slogan by getting over a thousand ‘Quit India’ badges printed before the All India Congress Committee meeting began on August 7,” said

–*Aarefa Johari in Scroll.in*

the hands of those who would remain on the scene whoever might come. This led to the organisation of the People's Volunteer Brigade. Bombay is the only city in India where the Municipality was allowed to run the A.R.P.

Just before August 8, 1942, Meherally conducted a C.S.P. camp at Poona, where was discussed a comprehensive plan of revolt. But, somehow, the police got the whole information in advance and wrecked the plan. On August 9, 1942, he was

arrested and detained. It was during this period, that he got the heart attack, which finally claimed his life. The authorities offered to give special facilities for treatment at St. George Hospital, but he demanded that two other ailing colleagues of his should also get the same facilities. They refused and he remained in prison. In 1943, when he was released, he was already collapsing and the doctors gave up all hope. For seven days, he was lying unconscious in the general

(Continued on Page 11)

# Violent politics of Sangh Parivar

**Sandeep Pandey**

The Prime Minister's birthday was celebrated by dedicating the Sardar Sarovar dam to the nation. There are 244 villages and one town going to be submerged by this dam. The cost of the dam is nearing Rs. one lakh crores. Of this estimated Rs. 1,500 crores was embezzled in the process of rehabilitation. An enquiry commission headed by Justice S.S. Jha was established to look into the corruption in rehabilitation. The government is not ready to make the report public.

Because of closure of sluice gates of the dam, 40,000 families faced submergence at once. The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal had ordained that any family before being submerged should be rehabilitated six months in advance. However, these 40,000 families are being made to evacuate like rats by flooding their homes. This is akin to inflicting violence on people. Hence the birthday of PM resulted in violence against the people.

On the other hand Medha Patkar and 37 other people affected by the dam were standing in Narmada water protesting the observance of PM's birthday. Earlier she was on fast with others and was sent to jail on false charges of causing damage to government property. Till the PM's birthday not a single official of either the Madhya Pradesh government or the central government has met Medha Patkar. This demonstrates Bhartiya Janata Party's lack of faith in democracy and their tendency to curb all dissent with brutal force.

This should not come as a surprise because Rashtriya Swayamsewak

Sangh, BJP, etc., members of the larger Hindutva family have always used violence to promote themselves. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 is probably their most gruesome and cowardly act which is still justified by some Sangh parivar members. The rath-yatra of Lal Krishna Advani which culminated in demolition of Babri mosque in 1992 was responsible for the birth of the problem of terrorism in India. First serial bomb blasts took place in India in 1993 in Mumbai. People have been convicted for this but not for the incident of demolition of Babri mosque which instigated the Mumbai bomb blasts of 1993. Even though it was Indira Gandhi who carried out the first nuclear tests in 1974, it was only in 1998 tests carried out by Atal Behari Vajpayee government that India declared possession of nuclear weapon and initiated a nuclear arms race with Pakistan. In any case because of BJP's foreign policy India's relationship with neighbouring countries has been adversely affected. The 2002 communal violence took place in Gujarat when Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister in which over a thousand people were killed. This will always remain a blot on his name. After Narendra Modi took over as PM several incidents of public violence against people suspected of being involved in cow slaughter have killed over twenty people including Mohammed Akhlaq and Pehlu Khan. Rationalists and intellectuals like Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh have been targetted and murdered. Even an innocuous looking programme of PM - clean India

campaign - took the life of one Zafar Khan in Rajasthan in an incident related to open defecation when government employees beat him to death.

It is quite logical that as Narendra Modi's stature has grown he'll need bigger sacrifices with more devastating impact to move ahead. Inauguration of Sardar Sarovar dam has made 40,000 people landless and homeless in one stroke. The government of Myanmar is expelling the Rohingya Muslims from their country because of political vendetta but what was the fault of 40,000 families, all legitimate citizens of India, when they were expelled in a similar manner from their homes? Do they not enjoy fundamental right to life enshrined in our Constitution?

Sangh parivar is enamoured about the Indian culture in which the value of sacrifice is held very highly. Who can be a better symbol of this than Medha Patkar? The BJP governments of M.P. and centre are indulging in humiliation of Medha Patkar by ignoring her. The moral force of Medha Patkar is bigger than most of the so-called leaders. To become a leader by winning election is one thing and quite another to be accepted by people as a leader because of her participation in people's struggles. Whether it is the arrogance of Narendra Modi or that of Shivraj Singh Chauhan the Sangh parivar cannot escape the blot of submerging 40,000 people forcibly. Once again it has been proved that violence is in the seed of Sangh parivar ideology.

The personality of Narendra Modi, by misuse of the office of PM, has in

this one event emerged as arrogant, self-centered, patriarchal, feudal, insensitive person appearing like a dwarf before the 32 years long historic struggle of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. His concept of development is purely

materialistic in which there is no scope for human feelings. His lonely family life is an example of this. It is unfortunate that India which has a tradition of rich and towering intellectual and political leadership there is now a person at the

helm of affairs who is very parochial and insecure. He would like himself to be juxtaposed alongside Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel or Vivekanand but he is so short-sighted that he'll take the whole country down with him.

*(Continued from Page 5)*

actor in international politics. Tokyo will need New Delhi's support to contain China. Second, Japan needs to step in and defend its interest in the region in view of the decreasing engagement of US in the region. Third, Japan would engage in India following the growing US interest in India. Fourth, Japan needs India's help in securing trade and energy networks in critical maritime space. Fifth and the obvious, Japan

would like to tap the market potential of India.

The only hurdle that can hamper the growth of partnership is the "famed" Indian bureaucracy. India's defence officialdom is cumbersome. It fails to prioritize strategic decision making over processes and procedures. A prize deal on defence equipments namely the US-2

amphibian aircraft from Japan is still under negotiation. Now, we have a new Defence Minister, a political greenhorn but supposed to be administratively competent. It will be interesting to watch Japindia evolve into a solid axis in Asian politics, and bilaterally in trade, economy and defence. The onus is more on New Delhi in view of its complacent and less flexible foreign policy bureaucracy.

*(Continued from Page 9)*

ward of the J. J. Hospital, this darling of Bombay's thousands. In 1947, he left for America for treatment and returned in November 1948, considerably improved. This was his second visit to U.S.

Among his acquaintance are world renowned artists, sculptors, writers and politicians. He possesses a rare collection of art works and is considered a top-rank art critic. His house is a warehouse of books and magazines which he is never tired of poring over. Even in sickness, books are his companions. He claims that they make him bear the bodily pain. The Indian National Exhibition, a portrayal in drawings of our national struggle from the 1857 revolt is one of his brain-

children and is the only one of its kind in this country.

Among his publications, the two volumes of "Leaders of India" (biographical sketches of national leaders) have run into six editions. As a biographer, he is unsurpassed. Study of personalities and their impact on history has come to him naturally. Yusuf Meherally is no more. He has literally given his lifeblood for the country's cau

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# Constitutionalism, Social Justice and Black Money - II

## B. Sudershan Reddy

Moreover, the temptation to bureaucratize all decisions by inflexible rules is an all too tempting factor for the bureaucrat. For instance, it is speculated that China could have industrialized in the 12th century itself, but the Chinese bureaucrats, comprised of the upper caste/upper class elites, decided that they knew everything that was all there to know, and prescribed specific ideals beyond which there was nothing to seek. And, if sought, the seeker to be punished. And China declined to become a colony where a vast majority of its people were made to be addicted to the opium being sent there by the British. For the students here, I would recommend that they also read Frank Dikotter's "The Tragedy of Liberation" that describes the horrific consequences, in which five million civilians were driven to their deaths by Mao and his unilateral decision to drag scores of millions of peasants away from agriculture to cottage industry. It is such experiences in governance that have informed modern constitutionalism to always be wary of the one policy as being the solution for all evils.

For India, neither of these models in their purer form was deemed to be ideal for us. At the time of independence, in our Constituent Assembly debates, and in the early years of our Republic there was a significant debate amongst our founding fathers. It was about whether we would choose to adopt an evolutionary path to social justice, in which progressively we would eliminate conditions that kept us poor and living in a socially unjust society. The other option explored was the revolutionary path, in which all property and wealth would be taken over by the State or a

more egalitarian structure be established through a massive redistribution of resources. The violence implicit in the latter options did not appeal to our founding fathers. And this was not just on account of some inherent incapacity for violence, as some chest thumping nationalists seem to think today, but because history seemed to support the idea that violence for equality only ends up promoting one set of new elites in *the place of the old*.

*A glance* at what India was emerging out of, and the problems it confronted at the time of independence and the framing of the Constitution would underline the necessity of the structure carved out by the Constitutional pledges and mandate. For nearly fifty years prior to Independence, India's GDP had grown at less than 1% per annum, and in no year in that period did it exceed 1%. In the decade immediately preceding 1947, India's GDP grew at -3.5% per annum. India's economic surplus had been drained out by the imperial forces, and an essentially feudal structure implied that whatever little surplus was being generated was being enjoyed mostly by the indolent few. We slipped from the second largest economy, with a global product share of over 15% to less than 1% under the British rule. Our ancient crafts and village industries were in shambles. A huge numbers of our artisans and skilled labourers were transformed into rural labourers, unskilled and producing opium.<sup>3</sup>

Add to the above, our own problems that have plagued our societies for centuries. Of casteism, that divided the

society and imposed horrific hardships on the lowered castes, of rampant illiteracy and ignorance, again largely due to casteist restrictions on knowledge acquisition, and absolute poverty rates were well over 75%. Of communalism that divided us on religious basis. From middle of 1800s India faced a succession of famines – one more devastating than the other, one every 7-8 years. Some were large enough to alter the demographic course itself and none which killed fewer than a few millions. Our per capita income was, in inflation adjusted 1973 rupee terms, Rs.7.20 per annum, while poverty ceiling was estimated at Rs 23 per annum! Many from our elite segments had willingly collaborated with the colonialists in denuding this country, for the sake of continuance of their domination. We were enslaved as a nation by a foreign power, and we had also managed to enslave and/or deprive most of our populace to serve a few of us.

The above is of course a rather quick and a very rough image of what India was reduced to, and what most Indians were subject to at the time of independence. Whenever I listen to or read Panditji's speech after he took oath as independent India's first Prime Minister, and as the first sentence rolls through my mind, "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially", I am reminded that our Constitution is a continuing rededication to the task of liberating our people from the effects of not just the colonial past, but also the traits in our culture that hierarchizes and deprives.

The words of Seamus Heaney, of course written well after India's independence, and written in the context of dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, sums up the moral and emotional foundations for a constitutional project of rebuilding a nation of pluralities into a just nation state:

"History says, Don't hope  
On this side of the grave,  
But then, once in a lifetime  
The longed-for tidal wave  
Of justice can rise up  
And hope and history rhyme.<sup>4</sup>"

In order to ensure that hope of justice is translated into reality, so that history begins recording the righting of wrongs and instantiation of a just society, we also need to be ever conscious of the risk of core national purposes being side-tracked, and the nation-state's endeavours subverted for the benefit of the few. In this regard we necessarily need to pay heed to Dr. Ambedkar's warning, at the ratification of the Constitution, that though we have instantiated a democracy based on notions of political equality, the continuation of systemic, deep and widespread inequalities, and unconscionable deprivation and oppression as a consequent result of graded inequalities in the social and economic contexts, will likely destroy the foundations of democracy. His prognosis was that the contradictions, if allowed to persist for long, will destroy the project of establishing, sustaining and nurturing a constitutional democracy in which social justice in all walks of life would be established.

It pays to cite extensively from that speech, because I believe Dr. Ambedkar's understanding of the tension between political economies that guarantee only empty political freedoms and the demands for social

justice was one of the finest expositions in the annals of scholarship in this area. He said:

"On the 26th of January 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The same thought comes to my mind. What would happen to her democratic Constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again. This is the second thought that comes to my mind and makes me as anxious as the first.

It is not that India did not know what is Democracy. There was a time when India was studded with republics, and even where there were monarchies, they were either elected or limited. They were never absolute. It is not that India did not know Parliaments or Parliamentary Procedure. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that not only there were Parliaments-for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments – but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of Parliamentary Procedure known to modern times. They had rules regarding seating arrangements, rules regarding Motions, Resolutions, Quorum, Whip, Counting of Votes, Voting by Ballot, Censure Motion, Regularization, Res Judicata, etc. Although these rules of Parliamentary Procedure were applied by the Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the Political Assemblies functioning in the country in his time.

This democratic system India lost. Will she lose it a second time? I do not know. But it is quite possible in a country like India – where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new – there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form

but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater.

If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? **The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives.** It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us.

**The second thing we must do is to observe the caution** which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, **not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions"**. There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered life-long services to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness. As has been well said by the Irish Patriot Daniel O'Connell, no man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty. **This caution is far more necessary in the case of India than in the case of any other country. For in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship,**

**plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.**

**The third thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well.** Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them. We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian Society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality by which we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many

who live in abject poverty. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.”

What the above meant, as India emerged after centuries of colonial oppression, was that the State necessarily had to take a lead role in building a democratic polity and an executive apparatus that would ensure the rule of law, and also undertake the affirmative obligation of ensuring that at least some measure of resources are diverted for uplifting the people from the vicious cycle of ignorance, poverty and exploitation that they were stuck in. They needed to be protected from potential plunderers and exploiters within, and also invest in building up their capacities so that the masses could themselves be given the skills, resources and space to be able to use the machinery of the state in protecting their fundamental rights. And it needed to be done urgently, and it is this urgency that Dr. Ambedkar spoke so eloquently of when he talked about the dangers of the democratic experiment failing if the situation of graded inequality in economic and social spheres continued.

So, how did we do? How did we construct our tryst with destiny?

As a political democracy, we have certainly thrived. So far. At the time of framing the Constitution, many respected scholars from across the Globe ridiculed the idea that democracy could take root here. Especially, because of illiteracy and poverty, it was assumed that universal adult franchise would be a failure. Yet, we must largely admit that it is the poor, and those who have little, particularly in the rural areas, who vote in large numbers. They are the true believers and saviours of democracy in India. Yet, very little gets written about the fact that it is the poor voting in large numbers have repeatedly voted out of power autocrats powers, and corrupt and the inept regimes.

This was no mean accomplishment. After all, having a say in the political process and about who gets to hold the reins of the state is a key feature of being an equal citizen (at least at some level). It meant that they could exercise some measure of control over what is deemed to be the main purposes of the nation-state itself were, even if the realization of those goals were to be in some indeterminate distant future. Political freedom is itself a form of development, or rather one element of development, because it assures human beings an important measure/element of their human dignity.

However, when we come to evaluating how well we did, as a people and as a nation, in the social and economic sphere, we are immediately confronted with significant underachievements. Writing a bit over a decade ago, Amartya Sen in his book *The Argumentative India* assessed it as “measurable underachievement and not necessarily one of immeasurable failure” – a characteristically muted academic criticism. However, a decade later, in

Uncertain Glory, a book he co-authored with Jean Dreze his tone had changed to one of urgency. We are an increasingly younger nation, and instead of hoping to reap the windfall gains of the demographic dividend we seem to be staring at the sand that drops ever so faster into the bottom half of the developmental hourglass. The question that ought to be uppermost in our minds is: are we racing against time, and staring at a potential demographic disaster? Because of non-investments into social and economic sector to substantially reduce the horrific graded inequality that Dr. Ambedkar speaks about.

One does not have to reel off pages and pages of statistics to figure out that we haven't done too well. While the votaries of neo-liberal political economy gloat about the most significant reduction in levels of poverty level, they essentially mean that the number of people below the starvation level have come down significantly. That would be true. However, from the perspective of social justice, would we think of a person who has just escaped starvation level poverty as not poor. Take one parameter – would a person who is just above the absolute poverty line be in a position to demand and protect his core fundamental rights? For instance - not to be assaulted by a policeman on the street? By what ethical standards could we possibly gloat about how much we have reduced poverty if most of the populace cannot even begin to approach an authority, such as a court or for that matter even an elected politician for redressal, if an agent of the State chooses to grab a little from the meagre earnings of a street vendor?

The point I am making is that we ought not to be misled nor mislead ourselves into thinking that we have made giant strides towards realizing constitutional goals by achieving goals

of lifting people out of poverty. We have made giant strides, it would seem, in how we can keep redefining poverty to ensure that figures seem better and better for us. On every front: education, health and health care, who bears the consequences of externalities such as pollution, violence (random and deliberately perpetrated). .... on every parameter that could be an indicia of Human Development we seem to be sorely lagging behind.

Our health indices are awful. Even though the average life span has gone up, we are sorely lagging behind on many key factors. We have the highest number of stunted children in the entire world. The impact of childhood nutritional deprivations on our populace is humongous, in terms of their overall health, their lifetime productivity, and yes even in terms of their cognitive and intellectual abilities. Barring the education that a few elite segments of the populace can afford, and most of the lower middle class may be able to afford only if they have staked all of their assets and leave nothing for the parents as they grow old, few can afford the world class primary education that is required to enable our children to truly revel in, explore and acquire knowledge along with abilities to discover or develop new knowledge. Education has been eloquently called the “cultural action for freedom” – freedom from the shackles of illiteracy and ignorance, and incapacity to think critically and grow up to be reasoning and reasonable citizens of the country and denizens of the world. Yet very few of our children receive such an education.

### **Black Money**

One of the keys to achieving such objectives was to build appropriate state capacity. For this the State needed sufficient financial resources, which in

turn would have depended on our investments in capital – both physical and social (which includes human resources as a subset) – and the systems we have to ensure that the amounts due to the State are actually received and spent on legitimate constitutional purposes. Most reasonable people would agree that we have failed significantly in this regard. While some part of the failure is on account of governmental wastage, leakages due to corruption, and wrong policy choices and program designs, a large part of the failure was on account of the State not receiving a significant portion of what is due to it as tax revenues, bulk of which is what is known in popular parlance as “black money”.

There are many different estimates about the size of the black economy and the magnitude of black money. Prof. Arun Kumar estimates the black economy in India to be around 62 percent of the GDP, which would, in 2016-2017 prices amount to Rs 93 lakh crore (USD 1.4 trillion approximately). How large is that? To get a perspective Prof. Arun Kumar points out that it is much larger than the combined income generated by agriculture and industry. It is much larger than the combined spending of the central and all the state governments put together. Prof. Arun Kumar also estimates that the country's economy has been losing, on an average 5% growth from 1970s. He also estimates that if we hadn't seen such leakages our economy would have been seven times larger than the Rs 150 lakh crore GDP/annum economy we have at present. The loss to the Government's coffers, at the current rate of taxes is said to be to the tune of Rs 36 lakh crores/per annum, which means that after wiping out our fiscal deficit we would have had a surplus of Rs 30 lakh crores. Every year.<sup>5</sup>

*(To be concluded)*

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