

Contemporary Essays

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ACADEMIC (INDIA) PUBLISHERS

508, Rattan Jyoti Building, 18, Rajendra Place
New Delhi-110008 (India)

Published by :
ACADEMIC (INDIA) PUBLISHERS

508, Rattan Jyoti Building,

18, Rajendra Place

New Delhi-110008

Ph. : 25742171, 25812181

E-mail : specialitybook@gmail.com

Revised Edition : 2015

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Price : Rs. 195.00

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Current Issues: National

1. Indian Secularism

Abstract : India has never been a communal and theocratic country. Unity in cultural and religious diversity has been the essence of Indianness. Followers of different and alien faiths came to India and became an integral part of it. India has been a meeting point and melting pot of various faiths and cultures. India is one of the largest Muslim countries. Communal tensions and conflicts are relatively of recent origin and can be attributed to the British who practiced the policy of “divide and rule”. They caused the partition of the country on communal basis. Jinnah’s over-ambition and egoism overpowered his better nature and judgement and got him his ‘moth-eaten’ Pakistan. Indian Constitution guarantees religious freedom and equality to all its citizens. There cannot be any discrimination on the basis of religion, caste or creed. India is fundamentally and generally secular which means equal respect for all faiths and religions. There are clashes and conflicts between communities but every clash is not communal. Many of the tensions and conflicts between communities have their source in economic and cultural backwardness or they are foreign-sponsored. We should always be guided by such leading lights as Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Atal Bihari Vajpayee whose commitment to secularism has been well known, firm and practical.

India, as a country and nation, has always been secular. It has never been a theoretic, sectarian and communal state. In spite of the fact that Indian masses have ever been deeply religious-intolerance, hatred, fundamentalism etc. have never been part of their ethos. Respect for one another’s faith, religious practice and peaceful preaching have been the hallmark of Indian culture and civilization. Unity in cultural and religious diversity is one of the unique features of Indianness. Live and let live, compassion, tolerance, non-violence, accommodation etc. have always been the essence of Indian religious preaching and practice. It is inhabited by the followers of many different religions, faiths, sects, way of living and thinking. There are the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Jainis, the Buddhists, the Christians, the Zoroastrians and many others. The Hindus have always been a majority community but their religious outlook and practice have never been narrow, sectarian, obscurantist and fundamentalist. They never believed in conversion, coercion, intolerance, jihad or religious persecution. India is the only country where civilization and culture have been like a

ceaseless and continuous flow since times immemorial only because of its deep-rooted faith in religious tolerance, co-existence and non-interference in one another's personal and religious affairs.

Followers of different and alien faiths came to India as invaders, refugees seeking shelter from religious persecution in their own countries or as preachers of their faith and became an integral part of its unique unity in staggering diversity. The Christian Church in India is much older than coming of Islam. St. Thomas was one of the 12 disciples of Christ and contemporary of St. Peter in Rome. He was the first preacher of Christianity in India. The Parsis came in the 8th century seeking refuge from religious persecution in Iran and brought Zoroastrianism. The Jews came quite early about 2000 years ago and settled down chiefly in Bombay, Pune, Cochin and Delhi. Islam came to India through with business invasions and conquests. The decadal rate of increase of the Hindus has been 22.78 percent and that of Muslims 32.76 percent and 16.89 percent that of the Christians. Thus, India has been a melting pot of various religions, cultural currents and cross currents. Besides these major religions, there are about 183 other religious sects and persuasions. In Hinduism itself there are hundreds of sects following different religious practices, rites, rituals and ways of worship and prayer. All these sects and religions and atheists as well, represent a complete and wonderful pattern of unity, integrity and wholeness.

Communal tensions, conflicts and frictions have been relatively of recent origin and can be traced back to the British rule. They always followed the policy of "divide and rule". The partition of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan was clearly a legacy of the British rule. They had divided the people on communal lines; introduced separate electorates to serve their own narrow interests. They were successful to a large extent in sowing the seeds of communal disharmony, tension and conflict. This resulted in the partition and Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. In spite of all these tragic events of epic dimensions, India's commitment to secularism has never been in doubt. Even the father of Pakistan Jinnah was originally a secular political leader. But gradually he felt sidelined on the pre-independence political scene and used religion as a trump-card to satisfy his ego and ambition. Ultimately the partition was agreed and Jinnah had his "mouth eaten" Pakistan.

Time and again and in no uncertain terms in the Parliament and outside it, the Indian leaders like Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur

Shastri, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and others have declared that India is fundamentally a secular country. All are first and last the Indians in the political and national sense, their different religions and faiths notwithstanding. India is a **Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic**. The Indian Constitution guarantees its citizens full freedom in matters of religion, faith and its practice. One of the fundamental rights and freedoms granted to all citizens individually and collectively is the “right to freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion”. Moreover, each and every section of citizens have “right to conserve its culture, language or script and right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.”

This freedom of culture, conscience and faith, has been one of the corner stones of Indian social fabric and democracy. There is no discrimination on the basis of religion and caste, among other things. There is no favour to any particular religion and its followers. All religions, sects and their followers are equal before the law. There is complete religious freedom unless it does interfere in the freedom of other religions. Here in India religion and its practice has been recognized as a personal and private affair. It means that there is no mixing up of religion with politics.

The Indian constitution puts stress on country's secular identity. Since every election whether assembly or parliamentary arrives with certain political issues. One of them is 'Freedom of Speech'. 2004 Parliamentary election was not an exception. In a significant ruling ahead of elections the apex court held that no person, irrespective of the position he/she holds in public life, should be allowed to act in a manner or make speeches that would destroy secularism.

Secularism is often defined as neutrality and detachment or indifference to religion without being anti-religious or discriminating among citizens on grounds of religion, caste, creed etc. Now, this is a negative and narrow definition of secularism and does not suit the Indian context. This gives the detractors of secularism an opportunity to call it anti-religious approach to the policy. They call the whole concept as borrowed, alien, atheist and godless. Therefore, secularism needs to be redefined to suit Indian psyche. Some thinkers suggest that secularism means “*Sarvadharmā sambhava*”, that is, equal respect for all religions. This is certainly better and positive interpretation of secularism and should be preached and propagated. Really this is the essence of secularism and Gandhi's secular vision was very much close to it. Pt.

Nehru and other great leaders were also inspired and guided by this same vision.

India is a very big and great country populated by many communities. It is the second largest country in the world after China in population. There are conflicts, tensions and frictions among the people and between different communities because of various pressures and clash of interests. Therefore, every clash cannot be termed as communal. There have been communal clashes, conflicts, religious riots, conflagrations and massacres since independence. There are certain vested interests who under the influence of foreign powers, across our borders, want to weaken the country. They are always trying to disturb India's social fabric and communal harmony. They often succeed in engineering communal conflicts and clashes here and there. We should be vigilant and guard ourselves against such vicious elements. Then there are certain political leaders and parties who to serve their own narrow interests indulge in communal politics. They use different communities, particularly the minorities as their vote banks and manipulate things on caste and communal lines. The politics of vote banks originates from lack of genuine commitment to the cause of secularism and social harmony. They now and then practice appeasement of minority community and thus give opportunity to the detractors of secularism in mudslinging.

Many of the clashes and conflicts between communities are because of economic and educational backwardness. They are not actually communal in nature and origin but are construed as such. The economic and cultural backwardness of communities should be removed. They should be enlightened and brought into the national mainstream so as to eliminate their self-inspired isolation, alienation and educational backwardness. It is not unnatural that the economically weak and vulnerable communities should succumb to narrow sectarian and communal pressures and rise in revolt in the name of religion against those who are better off and belong to other community and faith. Removal of unemployment, backwardness, more equal distribution of national wealth and removal of imbalances in economical development of various communities only can ensure real and lasting secularism. In poverty, economic slavery, backwardness and widespread unemployment, secularism can never survive, let alone its prosperity. The poor and the weak become an easy prey to priests, mullahs, fundamentalists and reactionary forces having their roots overseas.

The communal and obscurantist forces should not be allowed at all to undermine our secular spirit, religious tolerance, peace, harmony and co-existence. No political leader or party should be allowed to raise the bogey of religion or community. In our public and social life we should be guided only by our national interests and such giants as Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru or Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

How do religious sentiments influence secularism? Or does secularism hinder religious practices? It is needless to say that in a free country like India where cultural diversity for centuries has been a unique feature and identity; it is a binding force which strengthens secularism. In reality, secularism is not an irreligious concept, neither is it a religious concept. It simply considers government heads, bureaucrats and ministers not to make the best theologians, neither can their functions be supplanted by theologians, as in the case in, for example, Iran.

In the Indian context secularism is the battle to rescue India's religious traditions, teachings and practices from the forces of bigotry and hate. In fact a classical example of secularism on the part of government would be to crack India's two worst problems—communalism and chronic poverty. The rest is voodooism.



2. Electoral Reforms

Abstract : India is the biggest democracy in the world. Since independence there have been 15 Lok Sabha and 16 elections to the State Assemblies. Elections are controlled and supervised by the Election Commission. But there are many ills and distortions in the process of election and they need immediate remedy. Because of lack of political consensus, a wide package of reforms has been pending. The misuse of money power and criminalization are two major evils from which our elections suffer. State funding of elections has been suggested to eradicate the use of money power and its evil influences. The large number of political parties has further increased the confusion. Besides electoral reforms what is most needed is a political culture, ethos and change of the hearts of the leaders of the parties.

India is the biggest democracy in the world and has completed 68 years of independence. Free, fair, peaceful and regular elections based on universal adult franchise is the main foundation of a democracy. The first general election in the country was held in 1952. Since then there

have been 16 general elections to the Lok Sabha and 16 elections to the Legislative Assemblies of the States. Before independence elections were held on the basis of limited electorate in constituencies formed chiefly on communal basis. Since the adoption of the Indian Constitution on 26th January, 1950, elections are being held on the basis of universal adult suffrage. General Elections are normally held every 5 years but mid term elections are often held as the circumstances demand. Elections are controlled and supervised by the Election Commission. The main duties of the Election Commission include to superintend, direct, control and conduct elections; to lay down general rules for elections; to determine constituencies and to prepare electoral rolls; to give recognition to political parties and give them election symbols and to appoint election tribunals to decide disputes related with elections to Parliament and State Legislatures.

Every adult citizen of the country who has attained the age of 18 years is eligible to cast a vote in election irrespective of one's race, sex, religion, caste or social status. In the General Election to the 16th Parliament in April-May 2014, the average election turnout over all nine phases was around 66.38%, the highest ever in the history of Indian General Elections. The main ills from which our elections suffer are the use of money and muscle power to effect the election results, criminalization of politics, misuse of government machinery by the political parties in power, rigging, booth capturing, etc.

Electoral and poll reforms have been in the air for a long time and a few positive steps have also been taken but the full and desired reforms have not been effected for want of political will and consensus. The various political parties have failed time and again to agree on a package of wide-ranging poll reforms. They have failed to evolve a broad and effective consensus on various reform proposals. However, the first positive step towards electoral reform was taken in 1985 when anti-defection law was passed. The anti-defection law imposes a ban on legislators and MPs defecting from one party to another. Thus, it eliminates the evil of political defections after elections, but there are no disqualifications after splits and mergers. If there is a dispute as to whether an MLA or MP has become subject to disqualification, the matter is to be referred to the Chairman or Speaker of the House as the case may be and his decision would be final. Another major step taken towards electoral reform was when two bills were passed in Parliament in 1988. One lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 years and the other

provided for deterrent penal punishment for booth- capturing and rigging along with the provision for debarring an offender from contesting elections. The offenders include smugglers, persons convicted of crime against women and terrorists.

The misuse of money power in elections is an established fact. The legislative changes effected in 1956 and 1974 in relation to election expenses have further aggravated the situation. Now the period of accounting of election expenses has been limited between the date of filing nomination paper and the date of declaration of results as against the earlier unlimited period when expenses incurred on elections had to be accounted for. Moreover, the sworn affidavit accompanying the return of election expenses has been done away with. The candidates are not required to account for expenses incurred by their political parties, friends, relatives or well-wishers. These amendments have made the law relating to election expenses farcical. However, the Supreme Court, in a landmark judgement in 1996, took note of these changes and has tried to eradicate this evil.

Contributions by corporate houses, firms, business groups, multinational companies, contractors and such other persons and agencies also affect the free and fair elections. The party in power can manipulate things in favour of the big donors to have access to large election funds from such sources. There should be specific limits to such donations but the law allows them to contribute on the percentage basis of the profits of a company which may run to a very huge amount in cases of large profit making companies. Much of such contribution reaches the personal pockets of political leaders. It is proposed that there should be State funding and assistance should be only to recognized political parties and that too in kind and not in cash. It would also attract more good and honest people who are now averse to contesting elections in such a corrupt and foul political atmosphere.

It is statutory obligation for all political parties to file a return of income in regard to each assessment year but they do not file such returns for years together in violation of the statutory provision. And yet there is no action against these parties. These regulations should be strictly enforced and action taken against defaulting political parties. If a political party does not maintain audited and authenticated accounts and fails to file return should be de-recognized. It is very essential that some urgent and effective steps are taken to check the role of money power in elections. Until it is done there cannot be any fair, free and

impartial elections. The political parties show themselves as the champion of democracy but do not practice it as far as their internal matters are concerned. They do not follow their party constitutions and do not hold organizational elections in time. Here too, money and muscle power play their dirty role.

There are a large number of political parties which include national, regional and other parties. This further adds to the confusion and chaos. The number of parties should be limited and recognition should not be given indiscriminately. The Election Commission should see that only genuine parties with good following and members are recognized. It is suggested that every income tax payer, above certain level, should indicate in his income tax returns the contribution, he intends to make in the case of elections to the Lok Sabha and in the case of elections to the State Assembly. The amount thus collected should be under the control and disposal of the Election Commission for distribution to recognize national and regional parties. The K. Santhanam Committee favoured contributions from the public. It observed that if one out of every three persons in the country contributed for the political purpose one rupee only every year, the amount collected would be sufficient for distribution among the recognized parties.

There are laws and regulations to curb the money power and corrupt practices during the elections but unfortunately they are not strictly observed and enforced. Consequently, there are bribes, illegal gratification, undue influence, intimidation and such other illegal activities during the elections. Parties indulge in communalism, caste theories, regionalism or appeal the voters on religious grounds. Attacks and character assassination of rival candidates have become a common feature of Indian elections. There are several deaths at the time of elections because of violence and shooting. In rural and far-flung areas, booth-capturing is also not uncommon. The Election Commission should be made more powerful and effective to check these election-ills. The status of the Election Commission should be improved. Provision should also be made following which the process of removal of CEC and the two election commissioners becomes similar. At present an Election Commissioner can be removed on recommendation of CEC whereas the grounds for removal of CEC are similar to those of a Supreme Court judge. There should be an independent secretariat for the Commission on the lines of the secretariat for the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha and the Registrars of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Criminalization of politics and influence of money power are the two main evils to be tackled immediately to make elections fairly free and fair. The expenditure incurred by political parties should be included in the account of election expenses of the candidates. It should be made obligatory on the part of public undertakings of the Central and State governments, statutory bodies and government agencies to make available staff for election duty. The question of delimitation of constituencies and the system of rotation of constituencies for reserved seats also deserve consideration. The elimination of non-serious candidates by further increasing the security deposits is another point which deserves serious consideration. The use of electronic voting machines (EVM) instead of ballot papers and issue of photo identity cards are useful suggestions. Switching over to proportional representation or list system from the present electoral system should also be given due consideration as is the practice in many European countries.

How to hold free and fair elections has always been a great concern of the Election Commission. It is one of the greatest constitutional responsibilities. Indian governance thrives on the basic principle: "Break all rules if you can get away with it". Unfortunately, the elections of 2004 threaten to follow this principle. 'India's 'election code' prohibits corrupt practices, punishes electoral offences, mandates the disclosure of information about financial, criminal and educational status of candidates, restrains the use of excessive money on muscle during the elections and requires that the candidates follow the Model Code of Conduct and other related laws.

There was an increase in the election cost by 17.53% from 1999 general elections, despite the fact that there was reduction in number of polling stations by 11.26%. The 16th Lok Sabha election was the most expensive election.

Besides these electoral reforms, we need to develop a political culture and ethos which believes in honesty, integrity and social obligations and not personal and party gains. There should be internal as well as external discipline among the parties so that democratic norms are followed both in letter and spirit. No law or reform, however, judiciously enacted will be fruitful and effective unless there is healthy attitude and feelings for the nation.

3. Unemployment Problem In India

Abstract: Unemployment is found worldwide but it is more pronounced in developing countries like India. The problem is chronic, serious and multi-dimensional. Population boom and defective education system are the two major causes of unemployment in India. In India there is 16 percent of the total world population which has been now increasing at the rate of 2 percent per year. Every year there is an addition of 16 million more people. It is planned to reduce the unemployment to the negligible levels by the turn of the century. But the target seems too optimistic to be achieved by the present standards of creation of employment opportunities. Our education system suffers from ad hocism, tokenism and half-hearted policies and programmes while there is urgent need of structural changes. There is no quality education. Market friendly, vocational and competitive education is the need of the hour. Education should be job-oriented and more attention should be paid to elementary and secondary education instead of higher education. Industries and corporate sectors should enter the field of vocational education and training in a big way. Total government and bureaucratic control of education has not been productive in terms of quality, growth and expansion.

The problem of unemployment, on a vast scale, is a world phenomenon. It is not confined to India or developing countries alone, but certainly it is more serious and pronounced in developing and underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, South and Latin America etc. India is the second largest country in the world in terms of population and manpower, but because of the lack of proper opportunities for employment there is a huge waste of manpower. There are skilled, intelligent, willing and trained hands but there are no suitable jobs for them. Unemployment causes frustration, alienation, indiscipline and crimes among the people, especially among the educated young men and women.

Because of increasing unemployment, there is appalling poverty, backwardness, social evils and crimes. The number of the unemployed men and women registered with the hundreds of employment exchanges is ever on the increase. These numbers just give a rough idea of the problem because all the unemployed men and women do not get themselves registered with these exchanges. Moreover, there are many rural and far flung areas of the country which are not covered by these exchanges.

The chronic problems of unemployment is widespread. There are thousands and thousand of men and women waiting for employment

in villages, towns and cities. There is huge unemployment among educated, trained, skilled and semi-skilled people. It is also there among labourers, marginal farmers and workers. There is under-employment also. For a major part of the year they remain unemployed. The jobs being created are miserably insufficient to satisfy the ever increasing demand for jobs. Idle hands and minds of millions and millions of people pose a great challenge to our leaders, planners and administrators.

The two main reasons of this chronic and unmanageable problem is rapidly ever increasing population and defective education system. Such a huge population, India finds it difficult to make any significant success in the areas of employment, alleviation of poverty and backwardness. Every sixth person in the world is an Indian. In other words, we are adding an Australia to our population every year or to Japan every ten years. There are about 31 new babies every minute or 45,000 new people daily. Thus, every year there are about 16 million more people to feed, cloth, educate and give employment. This prevailing trend of population growth is quite disturbing.

Unemployment rate in India is showing an increasing trend since 2011 when it was 3.5%. The same rose to 3.6% in 2012 and climbed to 3.7% last year. This year jobless rate is expected to rise to 3.8%, according to the report (Global Employment Trends 2014). In 2000 there were 958 employment exchanges and 83 university employment information and guidance bureaus. There were about 47 special exchanges for physically handicapped and 17 vocational rehabilitation centers.

In the Twelfth-Plan, it is aimed to reduce the unemployment to negligible levels. In 2012, there were around 487 million workers. The unemployment rate in the year 2009-10 in all the sectors was 2%. The 12th five year plan would create 10 million additional jobs. In 12th five year plan, 9% GDP growth is expected.

The parents spend huge sums of money on education and training of their children. The students spare no efforts in successful completion of their courses and trainings and yet the jobs prove elusive because of our defective education system. According to a recent write-up on the matter we have vocational training for two hours a week in secondary schools and that too given in a casual manner. We have “job-oriented courses” in higher education which are neither higher nor educative, neither liberal nor vocational, neither fish nor fowl. The write-up further says that the proliferation of training and job connected and vocational

courses without standards and without making adequate demands on the students is producing an underclass that would permanently damage India's competitive strength in the world. It is true that a large number of our students do extremely well abroad. This has more to do with the values of their upbringing, their ability to work hard and combine it with simple living. There has been no particular contribution from our schooling or training stems.

This is a factual but sad commentary on our present education and training system and institutions. We need urgently a system of vocational education which is both competitive and job oriented. The schools, training institutions and universities should provide quality training and education and not just produce degree and diploma holders in droves. There are ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, IITs, the plus 2 level schools where vocational training is given twice or more per week, but we need more such institutions where employment-oriented education is imparted. It underlines the need of industry and corporate sector participation in education and training. About 80 percent of educational institutions are under the government. The expenditure on education, at 3.5 percent of GDP, is also comparatively better than in other developing countries but the quality and standard are not up to desired levels. Our schools and technical institutes do not equip the students properly to suit the market demands. The curricular is outdated and sometimes even irrelevant. Our schools suffer from too much bureaucratic approach and interference. In this age of globalization, we need fundamental structural changes in our entire education system so as to make it more practical and vocational oriented in place of theoretical.

There is much pressure at the higher level of education because a lack of proper vocational training and training facilities at lower levels. Consequently, students go for post-graduation after obtaining degrees. Recently, some useful steps have been taken to reverse the trend. The UGC has introduced such vocational subjects like advertising, marketing, travel and tourism, tax-procedures, instrumentation and industrial chemistry etc. along with regular courses at the graduation. This will result in reducing the gap between education and industry and also remove unemployment to some extent.

What is special about these courses is that the basic courses are funded by the UGC in consultation and co-ordination with industry. Thus, industry has been involved from the very beginning. The

undergraduates have to undergo a lot of practical training through workshops, guest lectures and industry participation. There is on-the-job-training of four weeks after the first and second year of college.

Education for its own sake is not desirable. It should be for employment and earning. As such, higher education in many cases is simply a waste of valuable resources which a developing country like India can hardly afford. The indiscriminate expansion of education at college and higher levels should be discouraged. More attention should be paid to elementary and secondary education along with vocational education. We need more of technical education than liberal and theoretical education.



4. The Second Freedom Struggle

Abstract : India is a free country and yet its people are in the bondage of rampant corruption, appalling poverty, degrading illiteracy and deprivation. Indian democracy has turned into a mockery and the common men are being exploited. Majority of the people are still deprived of basic minimum needs of living. The urgent need to wage another struggle of freedom can hardly be over-emphasized. The first fight was against our colonial masters and the second one is to be fought against corruption, poverty, criminalization etc. A larger number of MPs and leaders took active part in the marathon debate and discussed the current issues and problems to take stock of the situation and plan a future course of action. They were unanimous in condemning corruption, criminalization; blatant use of money and muscle power in elections. The Prime Minister urged the people to defy corruption and start a satyagraha against it. Atal Bihari Vajpayee stressed the need of stringent action against corruption and criminalization of politics. Some are sceptic about this whole exercise and term it as another futile rhetoric. But let us hope that this historic session of the Parliament yields dividends and something concrete and positive would result soon.

India is free but yet in bondage. The chains of corruption, exploitation, ill-health, disease, hunger, starvation, poverty and illiteracy are too strong and subtle to cut and break as under. Rather they have become more strong, since independence. The disruptive and divisive forces are at work and the freedom is in danger. The politicians with criminal records have usurped the position of law-makers and executives. They have entered the Parliament and the legislatures with a bang and

some of them cannot even read or write. Merit, character, sense of service and sacrifice have been badly marginalized. The corrupt politicians have become law unto themselves. They have taken the entire nation to ransom. Justice, fair-play, integrity, honesty, accountability and character have become casualties and victims of unscrupulous and unprincipled leaders, politicians, bureaucrats and middlemen. Even 15 percent of the huge money spent on welfare schemes does not reach the target and is being used to line the pockets of agents, middlemen contractors and politicians.

These undesirable trends and underhand practices make democracy a mockery, a meaningless exercise. In pre-independence era, the British were the oppressors and exploiters. A majority of the population is living under the poverty line. They are deprived of the basic minimum needs of life. Unemployment is rampant. Black money, parallel economy and corruption have become a way of life. Is this the dream the freedom fighters, revolutionaries and visionaries had seen who sacrificed themselves at the altar of freedom and independence?

The freedom struggle against the colonialism and chains of slavery was fought with great determination, sense of purpose, togetherness and no sacrifice was spared under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, to name just a few. But now there is an urgent need to wage another crusade for freedom, a second freedom struggle against corruption, poverty, illiteracy, ill health and hunger. But unfortunately there are no genuine leaders, guides, revolutionaries and visionaries of the stature of Jai Prakash Narain, Chittaranjan Das, Lala Lajpat Rai and others. The situation looks hopeless and quite desperate and yet there is hope for the people of India are matured enough in all these years to safeguard democracy, equality and justice. They are sure to rise to the occasion phoenix-like and fight the ills and evils now spread in our body politic. Their inherent strength, vitality cannot be overlooked. Every dark cloud has a silver lining and so ultimately some lasting solutions to these problems would emerge; some genuine leadership will be born after these travails. If winter comes can spring be far behind?

It is in this background that we should look and appreciate the clarion call given to the nation for a second freedom struggle by some of our leaders and parliamentarians on the occasion of 50th birth anniversary of India's freedom and independence. It is for the first time that in the history of our Parliament the Speaker addressed the full

House on the current problems, burning issues and concerns being faced by the country and its people. A special session of both the Houses of Parliament was called by the former Speaker of Lok Sabha, P.A. Sangma, to take stock of the situation and plan a future course of action to wage another freedom struggle against corruption, poverty, illiteracy, criminalization of politics, hunger and starvation. The members deliberated for full 6 days, expressed their views and opinions frankly and fearlessly in regard to what has been our failures during the last 50 years and what needs to be done in the coming years to preserve our democracy, freedom, integrity and unity by fighting a relentless battle against the evils of corruption, poverty, ignorance, unemployment etc.

P.A. Sangma was frank, forthright, bold and above party politics to have joined hands with other leaders and parliamentarians in condemning the corruption and betrayal of the country by the politicians, bureaucrats and self-seeking leaders. He urged the leaders and the people to initiate yet another freedom struggle. The speeches reflected the deep concern of the speakers about mixing up of crime and politics inextricably and its nasty effects. There was a unanimity among the MPs that criminalization of politics was one of the greatest threats to Indian freedom and democracy. The open and blatant use of money and muscle power in elections is now an open secret. The figures and facts are quite startling which reveal that as many as 1,500 candidates out of 14,000 who contested the general elections few years back had criminal antecedents and records and 40 of them had managed to enter the portals of the Parliament. In other words, one out of every 14 sitting MPs has dubious antecedents. These facts confirm in no certain terms the shocking findings of Vohra Committee Report of 1993, the conclusions of the Election Commission, the judicial verdicts and reports of the independent social groups and agencies.

The sprawling slums in the cities, appalling poverty, suicidal environmental pollution, exploitation of women, children and other weaker sections of the society, unchecked baby boom, lack of health and medical facilities, illiteracy, high rate of dropouts, schools without even chalks and blackboards, dowry deaths, murders, rapes, kidnappings, female infanticide, ill treatment and elimination of the girl child, communalism, caste theory, lack of responsibility and accountability, hunger, deprivation and destitution are a very sad commentary on our functioning, planning and decision-making. There is no safety, security and hope for the future. The roads and railway

tracks are red with human blood. The extremism, terrorism and goonda raj have been let loose and there prevails terror, fear and frustration. There is ad hoc care and tokenism in tackling the burning problems and issues. There is a big crisis of character and leadership. There are no role models to follow, no kindly light to lead and inspire either on national or regional level. There is no political will to stem the rot and bring the affairs on the right track. There are unholy alliances, political groupings and marriages of convenience to grab the power and thereby make a fast buck. National ethos, moral fabric and human values are no more and selfish interests and greed reign supreme. In such chaotic conditions and social disorder there are chances of social disintegration, economic debacle and political degradation of the worst kind.

But India is a great and ancient nation and can easily take these problems in its strides if it rises to this occasion as a one man. We can get over these seemingly colossal problems provided if we have will and determination and start a second struggle for freedom, another crusade and renaissance to purge the society of all its dross and corruption. The special session of Parliament and its adoption of the 14-point agenda for action on basic and burning issues raises hopes and inspires confidence. The MPs in one voice have called for probity and accountability in public life and eradication of corruption, poverty and illiteracy. The former Prime Minister's stand was remarkable as to root out this curse and urged the public to start Satyagraha and defy the corrupt, be they ministers, bureaucrats or anyone else for that matter. He promised the long-awaited Lok Pal Bill to be introduced. He also assured that electoral reforms bill would also be introduced after arriving at a consensus with various political parties. There was also a promise about the right to information bill in the same session. He informed the House that out of 157 corruption cases relating to Central and State Governments. He maintained that the spirit of accommodation, tolerance and respect for diversities of every kind would help meet the challenges to a united and unified India. He emphasized on a collective vision for the future of the nation. He said that the basic issue was the removal of social and technological backwardness in every sphere.

Then the leader of the opposition, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had earlier moved the motion for adoption by House at the beginning of the session, stressed the need for stringent action in the twin sectors of criminalization of politics and rampant corruption. "It is necessary to get back the people's confidence," he said and urged all the leaders and

their political parties to ponder over the recommendations of the Election Commission in regard to electoral reforms and purge the politics of its criminals.

About 550 MPs out of the 780 odd members of both the Houses took part in the marathon debate on burning issues and current national problems. The session lasted for 6 days instead of scheduled 4 days spreading over 65 hours in the Lok Sabha. But there are many who are skeptic about the whole exercise and its utility and see it as another bout of rhetoric and empty words. In one of the popular English national dailies the brilliant editorial read, "Instead of wasting all those thousands of words, these leaders could have asked themselves what their own role had been in promoting, or, at any rate, not preventing, the process of decay and degradation. the diseases have been more or less diagnosed. For instance, there is rampant corruption; but those with power vested in them to deal with it are either "helpless" or their actions are in the wrong direction. There are regional imbalances and absence of true federalism. But parliamentarians would invoke Article 350 at the drop of a hat but would not care to dust up the Sarkaria report and implement remedial measures suggested there. They talk of the nexus between crime and politics but the Vohra Report is doomed to be a subject for seminar discussions rather than a document for concerted national action. The catalogue of defaults is indeed longer than even the speeches of parliamentarians."

However, let us hope and believe this historic session was not just another futile and costly exercise of ₹ 7,000 per minute. Though public memory might be short but its wrath and dispensation is like that of destiny, which should keep the speakers well aware of their words and oblige them to translate their speeches into practice.



5. Minority or Majority—A Political Analysis

Abstract : Multiculturalism is a powerful means to achieve nationally important political goals. Liberalism and liberal theory have provided the framework within which much of discussion about minority rights and multiculturalism has taken place. Liberalism allows individuals to pursue their own vision of the good life within the framework of state laws. It is quite remarkable that British India considered religion to be the primary marker of difference in Indian society.

Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara... (India or Bharat is better than anything...) perhaps the most powerful expression of love for the mother-land—Hindustan, a citadel of peace and beauty; a symphony of communal harmony and communal co-existence. Multiculturalism, ethnic variety, religious and other diversities are some of the major national issues which are as of now, on national, political agenda. Influx of immigrants and the movement of refugees have now taken refuge into the country's politics.

What is multiculturalism? Western societies are of the view that diverse minorities on terms of equality, degree of consensus regarding basic liberal values and national identity should not be politically overlooked. Thus, multiculturalism embodies diverse possibilities. It promises a deeper understanding of equality and self-determination. But at the same time, what is on the other side is that it opens up the possibility for conservative interpretations of restrictive identities and identity based politics. And, therefore, in the Indian context, concepts like multiculturalism are appropriated by societies, the ambiguities in the concept generate a variety of possibility which need to be examined in relation to our recent political history and aspirations.

The framework of liberalism and the liberal theory have provided enough discussions about minority rights and multiculturalism. Celebrating social and cultural diversity has always been a liberal social phenomenon. While the irony is that liberalism has been notoriously ambiguous about how to reconcile values like equality and individualism with respect for diversity. J.M Mil, liberal theorist, in one of his essay 'On Liberty' gives a classic humanist statement about the need to protect individual rights of expression for the development of individuals as well as the enrichment of social life. Fact, however, remains to be that the notion of the autonomous individual as the primary unit of social life has come under attack in recent years. Will Kymlicka, a contemporary liberal theorist argues that liberalism is not intrinsically antagonistic to the concept of the individual who is embedded in socio-cultured communities. He is of the view that state protection for community identities and a concept of justice which would take into consideration individuals as well as the communities with which they might identify. Thus, belief lies in the importance of equal rights and individual freedom which remains at the care of Kymlicka's liberal theory. It simply means that social pluralism should

find its expression in civil society; equal citizenship and uniform laws and neutral procedures should prevail in the public sphere.

Why is BJP on the horns of dilemma? The RSS belief is that politics alone is not enough to transform society. Ideology and individuals also play important roles. And RSS wants a return to the Guru Golwarkar school of thoughts.

As of 2014, BJP is India's largest political party in terms of representation in the national parliament. It is a right wing party, with close ideological and organisational links to the Hindu Nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. In the 2004, elections, the NDA suffered an unexpected defeat and for the next ten years, BJP was the principal opposition party in parliament. The party expresses a commitment to Hindutva and its policy has historically reflected Hindu Nationalist positions. In 2014 general elections, long time Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi led the NDA to a landslide victory and as of 2014, Leads the NDA government as Prime Minister.

Multiculturalism is now the preferred term to describe the policies of a nation, state in relation to its cultural minorities. The concept of nation—state implies that the state is held together not only by sovereignty and common laws and procedures but also by shared national identity and culture. Accommodation for individual rights as well as recognition of minority communities pave ways for the multicultural state.

Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor in his politics of Recognition (1992) maintains that contemporary societies can either take the form of securing equal rights and equal citizenship to all members or through a politics of difference. He associates the politics of equal rights with procedural liberalism which allows individuals to pursue their own vision of the good life within the framework of state laws. Taylor's equal dignity interprets here as giving importance to the similarities between individuals and promoting equal citizenship. However, politics of difference is based on the belief that each person has a unique nature and potential to which she/he should be true. It is harmful to deny public recognition. Politics of difference should try to provide the conditions in which people pursue authenticity and this would include granting public recognition to the groups with which they might identify. One global social issue appears to be identified i.e., societies of a consensus regarding basic rights for all and a national, political,

cultural which include respect for liberal values such as equality and justice and freedom.

The *preamble* of the Indian Constitution provides the people a powerful means to exercise public recognition and politics of equal rights. Multiculturalism, however, has not paid much attention to the general economical and socially disadvantaged position of minorities in a society. Distance amongst various castes, creed and culture (3cs) on such critical juncture prevails. The current decade of Indian polity has surfaced with such issues upcoming with coalition politics. General Lok Sabha elections (including 2004) or Assembly elections, absolute majority of a party is now rare. Even polarization of political ideologies was inevitable at the centre or the formation of state government at the harp of central government. Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra are the suitable examples. Cultural identity and self-expression have now become a national agenda of multiculturalism. Secularism, hereby, in the constitution of India Republic strongly preaches to strengthen cultural and social identity of the societies.

Thus, multicultural policies, therefore, usually address issues such as language preservation, right to adopt cultural practices, holidays for minority festivals and sometimes even quotas for representation in elected bodies or public employment. Whereas isolating purely a 'cultural' identity does not appear an easy task for the state. Indian society incorporates a bewildering number of minorities. So diverse in the society that it might be more difficult to characterize various 3cs. in terms of majority than minorities. A situation like this is not new; the concept of minorities and minority rights is not new to India. During British India the British considered religion to be the primary marker of difference in Indian society and they evolved an elaborate set of politics towards religious communities. Although over time they introduced some limited democratic institutions and a concept of civil society, community and caste identities were also granted recognition in a number of state institutions like the army, the law and the franchise. The British claimed to follow an over handed policy towards different religious communities by not conceding priority to any community, not even the majority religious community.

Today, India's multicultural society cannot accept or advocate ethnic and religious nationalism. The Constitution reflect in many places an uneasy compromise on issues like minority rights, a uniform civil code and social justice. If yes, they are just the focus of political controversy.

Whether BJP realizes it—the conflicts because of its allies, has surfaced and the road to success will quite be difficult. The Indian Constitution may justifiably be described as secular and multicultural but in specific way. Difference is recognized so are the values of equal citizenship and equal rights. The Indian Constitution gives recognition to religious, cultural and linguistic minorities. Equal respect, fairness and non-discrimination are the guiding principles towards minorities and no wall of separation is possible to envisage between state and religious activities. Even British India did not grant special privilege to any religious community, not even the majority community. And today, Indian Federal States deeply involve and manage the ‘secular’ affairs of religious communities. The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of belief and freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion to individual. Religious minorities enjoy a reasonable degree of freedom. Contrary to this, it cannot be taken for granted that the problems of minority protection and multiculturalism can be solved only by following a politics of difference and granting more minority rights. A politics of difference which is not backed up by a commitment to equal basic rights and citizenship could be used to repress, rather than protect, minorities.

Thus, Indian social scientists observe and describe that the serious threats to social tolerance and diversity in India today come either from an anti-democratic, majority based, nationalism or from a homogenizing and modernizing nation, state and the imposition of alien values such as secularism and individualism. Minorities could be protected by the tolerance and modes of co-existence which have evolved in the society over time rather than by a modernizing nation state and alien values. The state should be prepared to devolve some of its powers and functions on to communities. Societies can be multicultural if individuals are multicultural. Multicultural sense of identity should never be allowed to disintegrate.



6. Defence and Security Challenges

Abstract : The bitter memories of Indo-China war in 1962 are still fresh in our minds. There are still many gaps in our defence. In recent years, our defence budget has declined sharply in comparison to that of our neighbours. China has been

helping Pakistan militarily and it is a matter of great concern. There is undesirable pressure on India in the name of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty C.T.B.T. which should be resisted and nuclear options kept open. The Integrated Missile Development Programme (IMDP) should continue uninterrupted so that various missiles are inducted into our armed forces. In critical areas of defence, it is high time that we rapidly indigenise. People in the uniform should be looked after well and their interests taken care of. The induction of Sukhoi aircrafts in IAF is an encouraging development.

“Let him who desires peace, prepare for war.” This seemingly contradictory statement is significant in the Indian context. It is imperative that to maintain peace and calm in this sub-continent, India is well prepared and ready to face any challenge of war from across its Himalayan and desert borders and the watery fronts. But according to analysts and experts there are many chinks in India’s defence armour and the bitter memories of Indo-China war in 1962 still weigh heavy on Indian minds. The gaps in our defence system and capabilities are a matter of great concern. Experts avert that it is high time that our ageing military hardware is replaced and indigenized. They are also of the opinion that our defence budget is quite inadequate to meet our defence needs. Given India’s size, vast borders and security requirements the outlay on defence continues to be one of the lowest among the neighbouring countries. The military budget set for 2014-15 is 2.29 trillion rupees. The corresponding figures of Pakistan and China are quite startling. While China has hiked its defence expenditure by 12.2% that is 132 billion. Pakistan’s military budget outlay has been consistently increased to \$3.4 billion.

India’s security has been threatened by both Beijing and Islamabad. It is a matter of great concern that China has been constantly supplying arms and ammunitions to Pakistan. China is strengthening its defence ties further with Pakistan by supplying it missiles, nuclear equipments and technology besides critical spare parts. China is also helping Pakistan to indigenizing its missile production with the intention to tilt the balance of power in Pakistan’s favour in the sub-continent to India’s anxiety and unhappiness. India can be the only potential rival of China in the South East Asia and Beijing would never like it to happen. Beijing is busy in exploiting the long and deep rooted hatred and mistrust between Delhi and Islamabad. The initiatives taken by Mr. I.K. Gujral as India’s Foreign Minister in the immediate past and those likely to

be taken in near future as the Prime Minister should be welcomed. These efforts now known as “Gujral Doctrine” may yield desired results. However, India cannot afford to be complacent in her defence preparedness and upgradation of military hardware.

India's security requirements cannot be taken lightly nor its defence imperatives ignored, any more. The developed and nuclear powers under the leadership of the U.S. have been unduly pressurizing India to compromise with its security challenges in the name of N.P.T and C.T.B.T. Nuclear tests by China and France just before signing C.T.B.T. and rejection of India's suggestion to destroy all nuclear weapons within a time-frame and banning computerised simulations of nuclear explosions make their intentions suspect. Moreover, Pakistan is busy acquiring M-11 missiles, P-3 Orion aircrafts etc. with the help of China and other friendly western countries.

India should not allow the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)** to cause impediments in the development of its military missiles like Prithvi, Agni, Akash, Nag, etc. It has already been considerably delayed because of MTCR and indigenisation problems of certain critical components and sub-systems needed for the mission. In order to ensure that Trishul, Akash and Nag missile systems are developed in shortest possible time, it is suggested that the existing linkage, with national science and technology resource should have been strengthened further and the projects being closely monitored. It deserves repetition that China has supplied Pakistan with M-11 missiles and aiding her with technology and manpower as well as the development of its indigenous missile programme. It is in response to these emerging security challenges that India should accelerate its missile development programme.

The **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)** achieved remarkable progress during 1996-97 with successful flight trials of 250 km range version of Prithvi surface to surface missile for the Air Force. Activities subsequent to successful completion of user trial phase are in progress in respect of 150 km range version of Prithvi for the Army. One development flight trial of medium range surface-to-air missile Akash has been successfully carried out. Desert trials of Akash, a self-propelled launcher, have been successfully completed. In a significant development, the **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL)** has indigenously developed a ship mounted launcher for firing surface-to-air Trishul missile. It was handed over to the Indian Navy and will

be used for shore tests of the missile at Cochin. The launcher has the capacity to store 22 missiles including 8 Trishuls loaded in 2 packs of 4 missiles.

The first lot of three Russian built Sukhoi MK-1 war-planes arrived in India in knocked down condition in March 1997 and another 5 were followed. The planes were assembled in India by Russian technicians and the maiden flight of top-of-the-line war planes was scheduled. The first Russian made Su-30MK1 variant was accepted into the Indian Air Force in 2002, while the first indigenously assembled Su-30 MK1 entered service with the IAF in 2004. Late last year, India had also signed a ₹ 6,300 crore contract with Russia, its biggest ever arms deal, for outright purchase of 40 top-of-the-range Sukhois. Similarly, the 8-tonne state-of-the-art multi role combat aircraft LCA is a feather in the cap of our defence capability. The aircraft has been designed to have considerable ability, rapid acceleration, good runway performance and a high weapons load. The state-of-the art Arjun Tank has been cleared for mass production. These are really very encouraging developments and yet the journey is long and arduous.

The security environment of India is unique. Geographically, India shares land borders with seven countries and maintain boundaries with seven. The length of the Indian borders with Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan is 3323, 3488, 4096.7, 1643, 1751, 699 and 106 kms. respectively. The total length of Indian border is accordingly 15,106.7 kms.

Because of the peninsular nature, India has two coastlines that are over 7,517 km. long with island territories on both sides. Therefore, India's defence preparedness and security challenges is the prime concern. On the other hand, the impact of technology on defence preparedness is the urgent call of the hour. The technology control regimes and denials have reinforced the emphasis on the indigenous development of defence related technology. Technological self-reliance in defence systems is a must to possess weapons of high performance. Realising this, the **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** has made effort to achieve technological self-reliance in critical technologies. As a result, several major systems have been indigenously developed. Surface-to-surface missile PRITHVI, **Pilotless Target Aircraft (PTA)**, EW Systems, 105 mm Field Gun, Composit Sonar PANCHENDRIYA, MBT ARJUN, Surveillance Radar INDIRA and many more including software for military operations such as silicon

and gallium arsenide based chips, 32 bit micro processor Anupam and Super Computer PACE have been designed and developed. Agni I, II and III solid fueled ballistic missiles are in service Agni IV underwent its third consecutive successful launch in January 2014 and is ready for induction into armed forces. The Agni V missile is capable of reaching most of Northern China. It was successfully flight tested for the first time in April 2012.

The induction of 'extra fast attack' craft into the eastern fleet, enhancing the quick reaction capabilities of the Indian Navy in the region is a great achievement of the year 2004. The T-84, produced with Israeli collaboration at the Goa shipyard, is the fastest surface ship in the Indian Navy's inventory. Warships under Project 17, the Navy's new series of stealthy multi-role surface combatants launched nearly a year back are under construction. The Vikrant class or Indigenous Aircraft carrier is a class of two air craft carriers being built for the Indian Navy by the Cochin Shipyard Limited. This is a remarkable Indian Navy's enhancement and quick reaction capabilities.

No doubt weapons, machines and military hardware are of great importance in any given defence system, but in the ultimate analysis it is the officers and jawans of our forces which matter the most.

They should be kept in very good mental and physical health. Their satisfaction, training and welfare should be given top most priority. The Sixth Pay Commission Report has tried to deal with the pay-problems of the armed forces. The service conditions of armed personnel are totally different from that of civilians. It is feared that recent Pay Commission recommendation in regard to armed forces would further make careers in armed forces less attractive and young entrants would prefer civilian careers when the country needs more efficient, intelligent, smart, dedicated and qualified officers and jawans. We cannot afford to turn our armed forces into the second best.

It is the need of the hour that all the gaps in our defence system are sealed, all our missiles are rapidly developed and deployed and there is no yielding to MTCR pressure. We should keep our nuclear options open and should not hesitate in taking hard decisions to meet the security challenges satisfactorily. We should develop our defence systems indigenously. We possess enough resources and intelligence to do it on our own. At the same time the morale of the armed forces should be kept high by paying them commensurate with their hard work,

dedication, sacrifices, very difficult service conditions and risks involved and their retirement at early age. They should have adequate promotional and career opportunities. Their emoluments should be determined on their own merits and should not be mixed up with those of civilians.



7. Child Labour

Abstract : About 70-90 million children are employed in various industries in very tiring conditions. Children are being exploited as labourers both by organized and unorganized sectors of industry. The rights of the children are being abused specially in developing countries. Child labour cannot be eliminated unless there is free, universal and compulsory primary education. Poor parents cannot afford to send their children to school. The problem is multidimensional and needs matching approach and solutions. Employment of child should be made a cognizable offence and there should be more deterrent and stringent penalties.

There is no social security for children belonging to the poor and weaker sections of the society. They are subject to various types of abuse and exploitation. Their parents cannot afford to send them to schools or allow them to play. They are forced to work in mills, factories, houses, fields and farms, in establishments and for long hours in tiring and unhealthy conditions. They work as labourers. They are engaged as bid rollers, brick kiln workers and domestic helps against their wishes and abilities. Between 70-90 million children in India are employed in various sectors of industry and labour. The Child Labour Act covers only the 15 percent of the employed children and the rest comprising 85 percent working in unorganized sector have been ignored. There is no social awareness, no social accountability. And in spite of the promulgation of Child Labour Act ten years back, no case has been ever registered against a factory, mill owner or a person employing children. Child labour is being exploited openly and blatantly in India and other Asian countries in industries and other sectors. There is no effective forum to protect their rights and expose their exploitation.

Obviously, the international code of conduct on minimum labour standards is not being implemented in the developing countries. In Pakistan Iqbal Masih, a very young person, was shot dead because he championed the cause of the children and campaigned against child

labour. Every human being under 18 years of age is a child. According to the convention of the Rights of the Child, 1990, every child has the right to an adequate standard of living and social security. He or she has the right to education. Primary education must be compulsory and free for them. Children have the right of protection from economic exploitation, with a minimum age for admission to employment. They are entitled to protection from involvement in the illicit production, trafficking and use of narcotic drugs, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. But these rights are only on paper and the reality is very shocking. They have no opportunity for going to school and develop their potentials. It is estimated that half the population of children in India is outside schools. Without provisions of universal, free and compulsory education, elimination of child labour is almost impossible. The emancipator value of education, specially primary education, is very significant as can be seen in the case of Kerala. Movements campaigning against child labour should direct their attention to the urgent need of free, compulsory and universal education for children. They should pressurize the Centre and State Governments to implement the scheme of universal, free and compulsory primary education at the earliest.

NGOs social groups, voluntary organizations should create a public awareness against child labour and motivate the masses demanding free primary education. The problem of child labour is directly linked with the problem of poverty. Unless there is significant improvement in the quality of life and living standards, the elimination of child labour will remain a pipe-dream. Poor families cannot afford to let their children not to work. It is a very disturbing situation. Children are the agents of transformation. Play, education and good health are of fundamental importance to their desired development. But the children are denied these facilities and they are made to work instead. Social boycott of goods produced with child labour can be one of the effective weapons to fight against this social evil.

Promotion of child-rights pre-supposes economic well-being of the people. Removal of children from employment means loss of jobs which may drive vulnerable children into more dangerous and degrading jobs. Thus, the problem is not so simple as it sometimes appears to be. Therefore, all its dimensions and implications should be taken into though consideration and only then remedial measures be taken. Children should be rescued, their rights promoted and their voice heard. But this cannot be done effectively unless there is economic freedom

and industrial growth. Child labour was a common thing a few decades ago in the nations that today are developed and advanced. During the Industrial Revolution of 18-19th centuries child labour was a common thing in Europe. Small children were often stolen, abducted and forced to become chimney sweeps. They eradicated the evil as soon as they grew rich and industrially powerful. For India also elimination of child labour is ultimately linked with economic development and growth in industrial and agricultural sectors. In India number of poor is now estimated at 269.3 million, of which 216.5 in rural India. In human development, India ranks 135 among 185 developing countries. In human poverty index (HPI) based on the percentage of people dying before the age of 40, adult illiteracy and percentage of people without access to potable water, health services and underweight children under five, India stands 136 among 187 developing nations of per HDL. As observed by the World Bank, more than half of world's poor is out of safety net coverage. According to a released report entitled "The State of Social Safety Net 2015", 773 million people (which constitutes 55 percent of world's poor population) are in acute need of social safety coverage. The three quarters of the poorest people in lower-middle countries, and more than one-third of the poorest people in middle-income countries lack safety net coverage and remain at risk. All five biggest social safety net programmes are in middle income countries, which include India, China, South Africa, and Ethiopia which covers 566 million poor people.

India's job guarantee programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Scheme, is the world's biggest social safety net programme. In low-income and lower-middle-income countries, social safety nets cover only 25 percent of the extreme poor, compared to 64 percent in upper-middle-income countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where most of the global poor live, social safety nets cover just one-tenth and one-fifth of the poorest 20 percent of the population, respectively. Untied grant of the 14th Finance Commission is also being proposed to be linked with the gram panchayats along with other programmes to build synergies between various sectoral interventions. Meanwhile, the socio-economic caste census (SECC) data will provide information to the government to assess the reasons for poverty in any household ranging from income, literacy, disease, social or gender inequality to indebtedness, exploitation or landless. The self-help groups

will undertake a house to house survey to verify this data and find if any household has been left out.

To eradicate poverty and the resultant child labour, India needs to invest on a massive scale in education adult employment and industrialization. It is imperative that there is free, compulsory and universal primary education in the country by the turn of the century. Till appalling poverty persists and social insecurity prevails, child labour cannot be checked. In May 1997, to mark the 50th year of Indian Independence, the Union Government decided to make elementary education to children in the 6-14 age group a fundamental right. If need be there should be a proposal to amend the constitution. This will be a step in right direction in respect of elimination of child labour. But it is to be seen when and how this scheme is implemented. The Government's ad holism and tokenism sometimes make people skeptic about its policies and programmes and their timely implementation. The scheme of Universal Education in the country has still miles to go. The problem is compounded by the high incidence of dropouts from school system. And one of the main reasons is Child labour. Children are required to work in fields and farms, on shops and in factories for living.

The liberalization of Indian economy will also go a long way in alleviating poverty by creating more job opportunities for the adults and thus the child labour will automatically get reduced. If poverty is reduced significantly, the problem of child labour may take care of itself. Liberalization creates opportunities at the bottom as well as near the top levels of the society. The recent World Bank report has said that since the process of liberalization in India began a few years ago, the wages of landless rural workers have improved remarkably. The reforms in India started in 1991 and hold the promise of considerable improvements in the living standards of the country's 300 million poor, the report declares.

International watch-dog agencies on child labour are taking stock of information. From November 2008 to February 2009 a lady from Netherlands, **Afke de Groot** studied children working in restaurants in Kathmandu. This lady also visited rural settlements from where many children migrate to urban areas in search of work. She talked to the families of these working children. **Anna Ensing** has completed her fieldwork in **Bangladesh**, where she studied the working conditions of children in the leather sector (June-September 2008) and the conditions of working girls in Dhaka (**January – April 2009**).

International organizations want to help India to solve the problem but their attempt to connect it to trade is undesirable. The problem cannot be solved overnight but concrete steps should be taken immediately. The provisions of the present Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act should also be suitably amended to bring about elimination of child labour. Employment of children should be made a cognizable offence. The penalty in such cases should be made more stringent and deterrent; burden of proof of age of the child should be on the employer and the names of the defaulting establishments should be furnished to law-courts and law-enforcement authorities. Central Government under its Common Minimum Programme (CMP) has been making announcement for taking steps time to time for CMP for total elimination of child labour in all industries, in all occupations and in all forms. But there is often found a big gap between good intentions and their timely implementation. The fact is nothing remarkable, that could be achieved.



8. Panchayati Raj

Abstract : Panchayat system is best suited to our rural needs and administration. It is a right step towards devaluation and decentralization of power. It deserves all help and encouragement as it is a truly representative and democratic system. As a fit and effective instrument of self-governance, it is matchless. Now, Panchayati Raj institutions are there in almost all the Indian states with three tier arrangement at village, block and district levels. There are nearly 253189 village panchayats, 6321 block panchayats and 592 district panchayats. They have helped a lot in removing socio-economic disparities among the rural masses. They have also helped in the empowerment of women, backward, poor and down-trodden classes of the rural society. Still these institutions need many reforms and more empowerment to be really effective. Panchayats assume a very vital role because about 80 percent of Indian population lives in villages.

Panchayati Raj institutions are democratic and so best suited to rural population in India to take care of their local problems. It is a system of local self-government run by a council or panchayat elected democratically by the local people. It provides the necessary administrative apparatus for the planning and execution of rural development schemes. It is very inexpensive system to identify and solve local problems of the rural

population. It provides a platform where people can assemble, identify problems and suggest their solutions. It is a right step in right direction and aims at decentralization of power. Decentralization and devolution of powers is at the root of Panchayati Raj.

Panchayati Raj is nothing new to India and its history dates back to hoary past. It was an integral part of self-contained and self-sufficient rural planning, execution and administration. A panchayat consisted of 5 or more public representatives selected or elected by the people. A panch or members of the council could be removed if people wanted it. The panchayat worked under a Sarpancha or a Chief Sarpancha who presided over its meetings and deliberations. They were fully responsible for the administration and development of a village or a group of villages. The panchayat administered justice, punished the offenders and decided the disputes and looked after the welfare of the people. The panchayat also looked after the rest-houses, temples, wells, ponds, irrigation system and schools.

The re-introduction of panchayat system is in perfect harmony with our spirit of democracy and the aspirations of the rural public. In order to strengthen democracy, it is imperative that panchayat system in the country is given all possible help and encouragement. It effectively checks authoritarianism centralisation of power and promotes participation, decentralisation, transparency, accountability and fairness in the affairs of the villages. The 64th Constitution Amendment Bill of May 15, 1989 gave a new lease of life to Panchayati Raj as a truly representative system in India. During the debate on the subject the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told the Lok Sabha, "Too often in past Panchayati Raj had functions without finances, responsibilities without authority, duties without the means for carrying them out. The Bill sought to remove these disparities and bottlenecks and to make these rural legislatures or councils a fit and effective instrument of self-government". The Bill also made it obligatory that elections be held regularly every five years, but the various states have failed to fulfill this obligation and so the Centre had to intervene.

Now, Panchayati Raj institutions are there in almost all states and union territories though with variations in structural pattern. It involves a three-tier arrangement—village level, block level and district level. The first tier is known as Gram Panchayat, the second tier as Panchayat Samiti and the third tier as Zila Parishad. The tenure of Panchayati Raj institutions ranges from 3 to 5 years. These institutions are generally

responsible for promotion of agriculture, rural industries, provision of medical relief, maternity, women and child welfare, maintaining common grazing grounds, village roads, tanks, wells, sanitation and execution of the other socio-economic programmes. In some places, they also provide primary education and collect land revenue. Today Gram panchayats are involved in identification of beneficiaries in anti-poverty programmes for IRDD (Integrated Rural Development Programme) and execution of other rural programmes like JRY (Jawahar Rojgar Yojana).

The 73rd Constitution Act, 1992 has further strengthened these institutions of democracy at village levels. Because of these institutions awareness about their rights and privileges among the poor, the scheduled castes and tribes has been building up and they are coming forward to challenge and remove existing socio-economic disparities and injustices. Many of the Gram panchayats have their Pradhans from scheduled castes, tribes and women-folk. These institutions have generated a fruitful interaction and co-operation between the people of the upper castes and the people of the backward and lower castes. Panchayat Raj institutions have definitely helped in the empowerment of women, the weak, the poor and the downtrodden to some extent. And in many cases the poor and socially weak candidates have successfully won against their rich, resourceful and influential candidates because of their integrity, character, dedication to service and commitment to genuine social and economic change. But it never means that panchayats are today totally free from the dominance of unholy, unscrupulous and selfish people. But it certainly marks a new beginning, an emergence of new awareness and leadership. However, the resistance to these changes is evident in the elections not being held in stipulated time in many states.

Panchayats must ensure transparency, fairness and accountability. They should aim at quick resolution of disputes and fair distribution of surplus land among the landless villagers. More and more persons like women, scheduled tribes and castes, marginal farmers and landless labourers should be involved in the process. The panchayats should be properly empowered to raise their funds to meet their development expenses. The 12th Finance Commission has separately earmarked over ₹ 870 crores for development programme through the panchayats. The Panchas and Sar-Panchas should be trained and their access to information be improved so that they can take firm, quick and right

decisions as to what was good for their villages. In order to reduce central control further, more emphasis should be laid on grass root initiatives. Both the centre and the states should ensure flow of proper funds to these institutions for their effective working and success. These institutions of democracy at grassroots levels cannot be economical, viable and self-sufficient unless adequate resources are at their disposal, and generous grants-in-aid are given.

The mandatory reforms and the 74th amendment and Article 243Q of the 74th Amendment whereby Municipalities shall be constituted at three levels all over India, namely, Nagar Panchayats in areas in transition from rural areas to urban areas; Municipal Councils in smaller urban areas, and, Municipal Corporations in larger urban areas.

The reservation of seats, for women, scheduled castes and tribes in panchayats is a welcome step for it will make them really democratic, representative and balanced. The Panchayati Raj institutions assume a very vital role because 80 percent of the country's population lives in villages spread over about 95 percent of its geographical area. It is cynical to think that panchayats cannot govern and administer. They should be given more powers and resources so that they can function more effectively. The Panchayats alone can introduce democracy at grass root levels in an appreciable and effective way. There is no other alternative. Only panchayats can fruitfully tackle the specific problems of the area but for this they need functional autonomy in the true sense of the term. It is wrong to think that panchayat institutions posed a threat to the power structure in the states. They would rather strengthen the state-structure and so there should be more and genuine devolvement and decentralization of powers and resources.

Panchayati Raj institutions have been given tremendous role to play through its rural development programmes. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is to provide additional employment in the rural areas. The programme is self-targeting in nature with special emphasis to provide wage employment to women, SCs, STs and parents of children withdrawn from hazardous occupations. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is to bring the assisted families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy. The families of below poverty line (BPL), including the artisans, identified through (BPL) census are eligible for assistance under the scheme. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak

Yojana (PMGSY) is another landmark towards the development of rural India through Panchayati Raj. PMGSY is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme. It provides connectivity to all unconnected habitations in the rural areas with a population of more than 500 persons through good all-weather roads by the end of the 10th plan. Under this programme, far off hill states and desert areas, with a population of 250 people and above would be connected.

Government of India has identified several housing development programmes. Some of them have already been launched and many more have been introduced under new schemes. Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) envisages allocation of Additional Central Assistance to the States/Uts for providing and improving the outlay of basic minimum services including “Rural Shelter” in the rural areas. Likewise, Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and Samagra Awas Yojana with objectives to provide assistance primarily to the BPL rural households belonging primarily to SCs/Sts and freed bonded labour categories. Samagra Awas Yojana (SAY) is a comprehensive housing scheme with a view to ensuing integrated provision of shelter, sanitation and drinking water.

The three tier arrangement viz village, block and districts (Zila Parishad) will be fully involved in the implementation of the scheme. Initiatives have been taken under a scheme called Innovative Scheme for Housing and Habitat Development and Rural Building centers. It is designed for standardizing and popularizing cost-effective, environment-friendly housing construction technologies, designs and materials. It evolves ideal types of sustainable rural human settlements consistent with agro-climate variations and natural disaster proneness.



9. Empowering The Indian Women

Abstract : Women in India are openly and at various levels discriminated against. Traditional mind-sets give preference to sons over daughters. Sex-determination and selection is practiced on large scale in Asian countries. Women are still in chains of traditional thinking and unaware of their rights. Women literacy is very low and they are subject to various types of insecurities. Women should be immediately brought into social and political mainstream for their empowerment. They should be made fully aware of their reproductive and conjugal rights as well. Sex-abuse and violence against women are still very common. Thousands of women die every year

because of rape, homicide, mental illness, un-wanted pregnancy, commercial exploitation etc. There has been some improvement in the status of women but it is not indicative of the general trend. There is still a wide gap between legal position and real attitudes and practice in regard to women.

Our society is still male-dominant and women are widely and openly discriminated against. They are denied their social and domestic rights because of gender bias. They are still illiterate, uneducated, exploited, underprivileged, sexually abused and assaulted and not treated fairly because of traditional mindsets. The sex ratio in India and in other countries is in favour of the male. There are 940 females per thousand males in India according to 2014 census. This reflects how society has been unjust and prejudiced against the feminine gender. The girls are allowed to die soon after their birth by neglect or infanticide. Preference of sons over daughters is a well-known fact. Sex-determination is often practiced and female fetuses are terminated. The middle and upper middle class people are the worst offenders. Sixty to ninety percent of them go for this determination at the second time of pregnancy in spite of the ban of sex determination in many states.

Sex-selection is not confined to India alone. It is prevalent in many other Asian countries as well. Even mothers themselves willingly go for abortion if the sex of the would be child is found not to be male. It is estimated that more than one million baby girls were killed in such sex determination and selection in India during 1981 to 1991. According to a research about 4 million girls disappeared during their first four to six years of life or about 36 girls for every 1000 born. The story is the same whether it is India, Pakistan, China or Taiwan. Women are not aware of their rights and privileges within their families. Even if they are not bold enough to exercise them. They cannot marry against the wishes of their parents. They cannot choose and pursue a career of their choice. They cannot inherit property because of age- old and useless traditional thinking and restrictive interpretation of religion.

There may be some enlightenment in regard to their public rights but in case of private rights, they have been still kept in darkness. The prevailing social, political and family status of women in Asia is a matter of great concern to all social reformers, right thinking leaders and thinkers. Women's lot is of most deprived, repressed, exploited and abused one. They make almost half the world but in their world there is hardly sunshine or spring. It is an endless world of tempestuous night.

Women have been chief executives and head of states in Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and even Great Britain. In Bangladesh there have been women Prime Ministers for a fairly long time. India and Pakistan too have been governed by women Prime Ministers. But yet only a third of the adult women in the South-Asian region have received some education and only half of the female population gets enrolled at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels. On an average they spend only 14 months in school.

Their health status is very insecure. Married women are burdened with unwanted and frequent pregnancies since their husbands and spouses do not use contraceptives. Same is their economic position. Only 36 percent are economically active as compared to 50 percent in the developing countries. Women earn only a fifth of the total income of the region. Only 3 percent of the women are administrators and managers in SAARC region, a ratio which is lower than 10 percent for sub-Sahara Africa, 13 percent for the Arab states and 27 percent for the industrialized countries.

South Asia is fast emerging as the poorest, the most illiterate, the most malnourished, the least gender sensitive and indeed the most deprived region in the world.

Empowerment of the women in the real sense is the need of the hour. It is high time that they are brought in the political mainstream. It would be a very positive and forward step benefitting all the people of the society, if the women are given their due status in personal, family and social circles. They should have reservation of seats in educational institutions, employment and services. In India an effort is being made to have 33 percent seats reserved for women in the Parliament and state legislatures, but this move is being frustrated by certain vested interests on one pretext or the other. Women's empowerment and real social development are inter-related. It is the mother who is the first school of a child. It is the hand that rocks the cradle also rules the world. Only an educated mother can successfully instruct and educate the children in the early stages of development. Only an educated girl child can successfully fight superstitions, male prejudices, sex-abuses and gender discrimination.

We have a glorious part on the dynamic role of Indian women in every walks of life. And, therefore it would be historically wrong to point out that the Indian women were least active even in the struggle for India's freedom. In ancient India, women enjoyed a much higher status than their descendents in the 18th and 19th centuries. With the passage

of time, the soil of India has produced a number of poets, scholars, capable administrators and leaders of religious movements. Today, women are active participants in judiciary, executive and legislation.

The Central Government of India is up with political will to empower Indian women regardless of caste, creed and culture (3cs). It is remarkable to note the First Commission was constituted on 31st January 1992 with Mrs. Jayanti Patnaik as the chairperson, the Second Commission was constituted in July 1995 with Dr. Mohini Giri as the chairperson. The third Commission was constituted in January 1999 with Mrs. Vibha Parthasarathy as the chairperson. The Fourth Commission was constituted in January 2002 and the government has nominated Dr. Poornima Advani as the chairperson. While the fifth commission was constituted in February 2005 with Dr. Girija Viyas as the chairperson. Women political participants is now no more far behind. Their agitation in a democratic fashion are quite obvious. Several women's groups appealed to women to vote for parties that supported "women's rights, economic justice and secular values". No doubt 14th Lok Sabha elections is going to be crucial. It would have impact on women's struggle for justice and advancement.

Several women organizations have expressed deep concern over the collapse of "The Women's Reservation Bill" in Parliament. The organizations include the **All India Democratic Women's Association**, the **Guild of Services**, the **Joint Women's Programme**, the **Mahila Dakshate Samiti**, the **Muslim Women's Forum**, the **National Federation of Indian Women**, the **National Alliance of Women's Organisations/SAMA**, the **YWCA of India**, and the **Forum Against Oppression of women**. It seems that political tides in respect of women empowerment in India is restless. There might be more or even less is unprecedented.

Women should be made fully aware of their reproductive and conjugal rights. According to 2013 World Population Report there were 28900 maternal deaths in 2013. This Report again says that violence against women is the most pervasive and least recognized human rights abuse in the world. Women's reproductive and sexual well-being, self-perception and self-esteem are affected by rape, homicide, incest, psychological abuse, trafficking of women and children and other kinds of violence including forced sterilization and forced abortion. In India alone there is a rape every 54 minutes, a molestation every 26 minutes,

a reported dowry death every hour and 42 minutes and act of cruelty every 33 minutes.

The data is really shocking. Women subjected to rape and assault face numerous health risks, including severe injuries, mental illness, unwanted pregnancy etc. The report says there are at least 75 million pregnancies each year that are unwanted. They result in 45 million abortions, 20 million of which are unsafe. Every year 70,000 women die as a result of unsafe abortions and unknown numbers of women suffer infections. Much of this could be avoided if effective means of contraception were available.

At least 60 million girls are missing from various populations as a result of sex selective abortions or neglect. The other startling statistic is that two million girls between the age of 5 and 15 are introduced into the commercial sex market every year.

Women's emancipation and empowerment is in the interest of all. In recent years, there have been some positive developments but they are not indicative of a general trend in the male attitude but signify a token transformation. This pace should be accelerated and made to cover wider areas of human activities all over the world. There is still a wide gap between legal rights and status of women and real attitudes, beliefs and practice.

Since independence, position of Indian women has much improved. The Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Men and women are equal before law. There is provision for equal pay for equal work. They are guaranteed equal opportunities in the field of education, employment and social, economical and political opportunities. Womenfolk in India now definitely enjoy better status and privileges. On 3rd June (1997) there was Cabinet expansion by Mr. I.K. Gujral, the then Prime Minister of India, particularly to give ministerial berths to women MPs. The Indian states where women are the Chief Ministers at present are (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Bihar and Delhi) proves that women are up with more participation in all works of Indian polity. It is certainly a healthy example of empowering women in India. These are steps in the right direction but they appear cosmetic before the enormous problems of real emancipation and empowerment of women. Really, the road is long, rough, bumpy and there are miles to go, before one can have some measure of satisfaction.

10. The Problem of Poverty

Abstract : The poverty in India is on increase, specially in the villages and countryside. In spite of 67 years of independence there is no perceptible improvement in the quality of life and living standards. Millions and millions suffer from starvation and malnutrition. Official figures about the people living below poverty line are not reliable as they are often manipulated. An objective and scientific methodology in this respect is the need of the hour. Poverty cannot be defined in absolute terms, but those without even basic minimum needs of life are really poor and their number in the country is shocking. Political independence is meaningless without freedom from hunger. Rapidly increasing population has aggravated the situation. India remains one of the top countries where children are malnourished. The green revolution has benefitted only the rich farmers and affluent people in the society. The poor have been further marginalized here too. Poverty is a curse and root cause of many evils and crimes. Poverty alleviation has been a mere voting-catching device with the political leaders. Poverty amidst plenty is the main problem. A proper balance should be maintained between industrial and agricultural growth and expansion. Many of the Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution need to be made fundamental rights. Fair distribution of national wealth among its citizens is another factor that should be taken care of.

The incidence of poverty in India is on increase in spite of recent opening up of the Indian economy, globalization and market oriented economy. The rich are becoming richer and the poor, more poor and deprived. The rural poverty has increased as nothing effective has been done to alleviate poverty and to bridge the gap between the well off and the needy and poor in the villages. Poverty can be seen at its worst in some of the Indian states like Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh etc. where millions and millions of people suffer from hunger, poverty, malnutrition, ill-health and destitution. Hundreds of them are dying regularly for want of basic minimum needs. There cannot be a more appalling and agonizing scene than this. In spite of our 67 years of independence, we have not been able to provide millions and millions of Indians with barest minimum food to keep their body and soul together, let alone the improvement in the quality of life.

It is estimated that 29.8% of the Indian population has been living below poverty line as of 20%.

On the other hand, every now and then poverty statistics are manipulated and new methodologies are evolved to calculate the number

of poor in the country. It is high time that such practices are stopped and a sound, foolproof and objective methodology, based on facts and technical data, is adopted.

Poverty cannot be defined exactly and in absolute terms. It may differ from country to country and even from one province to another in the same country. Similarly, a rural poor and an urban poor cannot be measured with the same yardstick because the cost of living in respect of these two are different. But all people whose calorie intake is very low or modest, those who do not have basic minimum needs of living are below poverty line. They are victims of hunger, starvation, ill health and malnutrition because their means of subsistence are abysmally low and negligible. They have been living in famine conditions. There are enough food-grains in the market but they have no money to buy it. Political freedom and independence is meaningless unless people are free from hunger and abject poverty. These people just exist and life has no joy, no significance for them.

The rural poor spent over 75 percent of their meagre income on food. In urban areas too, the very poor spend almost the same percentage of their wages on food items. Then there is hardly anything left for clothing, housing, education or health. These people have been victims of endemic hunger, poverty and destitution. Even the food-grains sold through the network of ration and fair price shops at subsidized rates have been beyond their purchasing power. The imbalance between population and food-production has further worsened the situation. Consequently, there are many starvation deaths, particularly in the remote and far-flung rural areas. According to decadal 2014 census, India's population is estimated to be 1.27 billion. India is the second most populous nation after China. Malnutrition is the result because food-production is hardly keeping pace with the rapidly increasing number of mouths in the country. According to a report, India is one of the three countries where 50 percent of the world's malnourished children are found. The other two countries are Pakistan and Bangladesh. About 53 percent of under-five children are malnourished in the country. Infants here are worst off than in any country of the world. Thus, the per capita availability of food grains is increased from 436 grams per day in 2008 to about 463 grams per day in 2011.

The target for food grain production by 2025 AD is going to be a challenging task. Having brought together the array of future challenges for increasing food grain production, it will be instructive to make a

reasonable estimate of the domestic grain demand in future, say by 2025 AD. Such a target is necessary to assess the magnitude of the task and formulate plans to realize it. This is attempted with the assumptions like: (a) India's population will be 1.392 billion by 2025 AD; (b) the livestock feed needed will be 50 mt of grains; (c) the present level of 35 percent of population below poverty line will be reduced to 10 percent; and (d) the present direct per capita grain consumption rate of 210 kg per year of those above poverty line will apply to the 90 percent in 2025 while for the remaining 10 percent below poverty line it will be 120-140 kg per year.

There has been green revolution and food-grain production has definitely increased but it has been in respect of fine and superior food grains like wheat and rice only. As far as the coarse food grains like bazra, jowar, barley etc. are concerned, the growth has been negligible. The poor masses cannot afford to buy superior quality of food grains. Thus, the much advertised green revolution has only served the interests of the relatively rich and prosperous sections of the society and the weaker and vulnerable sections have been left in the lurch. The marginal farmers have been further marginalized and it is the rich peasants and farmers who have benefitted the most from this agricultural revolution. There has been improvement in the quality of life and living-standards of the upper middle class but as far as the poor classes are concerned, they are just managing to survive and exist. For them radio, electronic gadgets etc. are still a luxury. They cannot dream of consumer durables. The small farmers, daily wage-earners, labourers, artisans etc. in the villages and small towns are still being exploited by the middle men and money-lenders. They are the worst victims of hoarders, black marketers and price-manipulators. The traders and shopkeepers fleece them as and when they will because they are poor, illiterate, superstitious and fatalistic.

Poverty is not a sin but it is definitely a curse which in its turn generates such social evils and crimes as theft, dacoits, kidnapping, murder, drug-trafficking, violence, prostitution, extremism, terrorism etc. A poor person, driven to extreme and desperation can stoop too low to commit any crime. Poor and unemployed young men in Jammu and Kashmir easily become an unwilling instrument of foreign-sponsored terrorism. Insurgency and terrorism in our north-eastern states are directly linked with poverty, unemployment and industrial backwardness prevailing there. The poor masses there feel alienated,

isolated and discriminated against and easily become tools in the hands of war-lords and terrorists. Naxalite and People's War Group movements thrive well in the regions where there is extreme poverty, illiteracy and economic backwardness. Many times extreme poverty pushes the people to suicide. For example, three brothers in Ludhiana (Punjab), all daily wage labourers and dalits committed suicide by consuming alphas poison on April 4, 1997. They could not afford the proper treatment of their ailing father because of extreme poverty who ultimately died for want of medication and care. Many unmarried girls hang, immolate or drink poison to commit suicide because their parents cannot afford dowry or decent marriage.

No sincere and determined efforts have been made to remove and check poverty. There is a clear lack of social and political will to alleviate poverty. With the political leaders "poverty alleviation" has been a mere vote-catching slogan. In spite of the 67 years of independence and political freedom the masses in India are living below the poverty line. They are not only poor but also illiterate, ignorant, gullible, superstitious, utterly vulnerable and backward. A hungry person is the most frustrated person. For him/her morality, conscience, social order, religion, patriotism etc. have no sense, no meaning. He or she can be driven to any crime or evil. The per capita availability of employment, land, water, food grain has been shrinking in the country. The natural resources are already under pressure resulting in adverse environmental consequences.

India is rich both in man and materials, but they have not been properly used and exploited. Poverty amidst plenty seems to be a major problem. Availability in plenty of cheap and skilled labour and natural resources is a great advantage, which can be very favourably utilized for rapid industrial growth and agricultural expansion. Actually there is no contradiction between industrialization, growth, globalization and opening up of the economy on the one hand and eradication of poverty and social justice on the other. Industrial and agricultural growth and development will go a long way in removing poverty, unemployment and in improving living standards of the people. For the empowerment of the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society, it is imperative that a proper balance is struck between the development of agriculture and industry. India means villages, agriculture and cottage industries. At the same time it also means globally competitive industrial growth and development. Both should go hand in hand to make India a strong,

poverty-free and a major economic power in the world.

India is basically a welfare state and it is the duty of the government to see that all its citizens lead a good, meaningful, satisfying and qualitative life. Some of the directive principles like “the right to adequate means to livelihood,” “right to work”, protection against “unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement,” “free and universal education up to the age of 14 years” should now become part of our fundamental rights and therefore, justifiable. The concentration of wealth in the hands of few should be prevented and there should be fair distribution of national wealth among all its citizens.



11. Power Famine in India

Abstract : India is passing through severe power crisis. Power-production, transmission and distribution needs to be streamlined. The wide gap between production of power and its demand is shocking and the whole system is under severe stress. India has failed miserably in achieving targetted power generation. The massive shortfall in power-production shows how defective has been our power planning. Many private power projects could not be implemented because of various reasons closely connected with wrong policies and decisions. Thermal power generation is the prime source of our energy but to our great concern expenditure on this sector has been drastically curtailed. Coal is the most popular fuel used in power generation but coal-production has failed to keep pace with the demand. There should be big addition to our power capacity generation and at the same time transmission and distribution losses should be minimized. Fast and genuine liberalization of this sector is the need of the hour. Hydro-power potential in India is huge and should be properly exploited and mini and micro hydroelectric power projects be given encouragement. Non-conventional and renewable sources of energy also need to be tapped on a larger and wider scale. Nuclear power is another area which holds great promise in power generation.

Power is basic infrastructure essential for industries, agriculture and domestic sectors. There are frequent power-failures, load shedding, blackouts and trepanning in national power grids. And it creates a situation of chaos and the whole of the industry comes to a grinding halt. It is a very sad comment on the power sector after 67 years of independence. There is something fundamentally wrong in our power policy, power generation and distribution. There are over 20 percent

losses in transmission and distribution of power which is very high compared to 8 percent in the developed countries. It seems the Power Grid Corporation of India and the other agencies connected with the transmission and distribution of electricity are not well geared and there is mismanagement and faulty planning. It is nothing short of a crisis.

There are massive power-shortages. The supply is not keeping pace with demand. Moreover, the quality and reliability of power-supply is in a very poor shape. There are frequent power failures, interruptions and low voltages which adversely affect the economy, industrial production, agricultural activities, domestic life and movement of the trains. The regional grid systems often operate at frequencies as low as 48 Hz. which reflects that there is no reserve power and the whole system is under great stress.

The planned additional thermal power generation capacity excluding renewable power during the remaining period of the 12th plan period (up to march 2017) is 90, 925 MW. The private sector power policy failed because of complicated procedures in establishing power plants, delayed completion of the projects, interference of vested interests in policy decisions and bureaucratic hindrances. Many independent power projects got caught in the maze of politics, negative and wrong publicity and litigations. Of the eight fast track private projects only two, GVK's Jegrupadu and Spectrum in Andhra have seen the light of the day. Thus, the private sector power policy has failed to take off. The projects in the public sector have also performed poorly.

The sixteenth report of Parliament's Standing Committee on Energy was very critical on cutting down expenditure on generation of thermal power, the nation's prime source of power production. The plant availability factor (PAF) of Indian thermal plants compares poorly with that of developed countries. Indian thermal units can achieve higher and better PAF but cannot because of non-availability of fuel, frequent tripping in transmissions and unplanned outages because of equipment failures at the plant. Of all the fuels used in power production, coal is the most popular and coal-production in the country has not kept pace with its demand. A total of 301.56 billion tonnes of coal reserves are estimated by GSI as on 1-4-2014 of which the "Prime" cooking coals 5.38 billion tonnes, medium and semi-cooking coal is 28.76 billion tonnes, non-cooking coal is 266.00 billion tones and terciary coal is 1.49 billion tonnes. A capacity of 79,200 MW would be required to be added in the country during 13th plan considering capacity addition

of about 80,000 MW during 13th plan. Besides poor coal-production, the non-availability of railway wagons and inability of many of the State Electricity Boards to pay their dues in time to the Coal India Limited have added to the woes of the power generation. Despite the shortage of coal, the government is not ready to import coal in required quantity because it means more foreign exchange outgo.

To improve the power situation there should be massive addition in power generation and also better grid management to prevent losses in transmission and distribution of the electricity. There should be proper voltage management and immediate steps be taken to bring our grid operation to internationally accepted standards. Besides adding to the capacity of power generation by setting up new mega plants, capacity utilization of the existing units should also be undertaken. Even one percent of improvement in the plant load factor (PLF) would mean availability of 800 MW additional power. There should be genuine and fast liberalization of the power sector and all our efforts should be made to remove the hindrances in the path of more and more private participation.

The development of power infrastructure is of vital importance to the country's rapid and sustained growth. Therefore, projects in this sector should be on turnkey basis to avoid cost and time over-runs and also to take care of many problems including those of pre-erection and post erection phases. Mini and micro hydroelectric power projects need to be given priority because there is vast scope for such projects in our north-east and north-west regions of the country. Such hydro electric power projects do not cause uprooting of population and inundation of forest, habited and agricultural land etc. It is estimated that India has a potential of 100,000 MW of hydro power but so far only about 15 percent of it has been used and another 5 percent is under various stages of completion.

Non-conventional sources of power generation should also be tapped on a bigger and wider scale. Renewable and non-conventional power sources include solar and wind power and biomass based power. The total capacity for renewable power capacity as for 1996 stood at about 800 MW of which wind power constituted about 70 percent. The use of wind power has received a tremendous boost on account of 100 percent depreciation, subsidies and other sops. These concessions and incentives should be extended to other renewable sources of power. More stress should be laid on renewable power sources, particularly in

the rural and hilly areas. India being an agricultural country, the biomass energy has a vast potential which can be utilized to a great advantage. Such biomass waste as municipal solid-waste, cane, wheat and paddy residues and animal wastes can be used to generate more power. The sugar mills and factories are scattered all over the country except the hilly and mountainous areas. The biogases produced in huge amount in these factories can be utilized for power production without much additional investment and cost.

Nuclear energy is another area which holds great promise in power production segment. As of 2013, India has 21 nuclear reactors in operation in 7 nuclear power plants, having an installed capacity of 5780 MW and producing a total of 30,292.91 Gwh of electricity. As far as safety point of view is concerned there is Atomic Energy Regulatory Body (AERB) which effectively monitors and reviews the safety of nuclear installations. It sees that the radioactive level is well below the permissible limit.



12. Primary Education in India

Abstract : Primary education in India is in a very bad shape and the literacy rate is just 74 percent and that of women merely 65.46 percent. Even after 67 years of independence India has failed to provide universal, free and compulsory primary education to its children. The quality of primary education in the country is the worst because of our ad hoc and casual approach to the issue. Then there are problems of dropouts, absenteeism etc. The mid-day meal schemes, giving free uniforms, textbooks, stationary and grant of liberal stipends and incentives can solve these problems to a great extent. Illiteracy and poverty are inter-related and a great obstacle in the socio-economic progress of the country. The infrastructure facilities for primary education need to be improved. The teachers should be well-trained and paid and made accountable. The recent decision of the Centre to make primary education a fundamental right is a welcome step. It was really overdue.

The rate of literacy in India is 74.04 percent—82.14 for males and 65.46 for females. The gender wise difference is a source of great concern and so are wide variations among states. Kerala stands on the top with about 93.91 percent literacy rate and Bihar at the bottom with 63.82 percent. India spends merely 3.5 percent of GDP on education and even less on primary education. And ninety-seven percent of it is spent

towards payment of salaries to the teachers and the staff. Consequently, the primary school infrastructure is in shambles. Most of the children are found engaged in one or another kind of manual labour and not in schools. More than a third of the children going to school dropout before completion of their primary education and another 15-20 percent do not attend the school regularly.

India's failure to achieve universal literacy even after 68 years of independence cannot be termed but shocking. The Article 45 of the Constitution which is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy, lays down that every child up to the age of 14 years shall receive free and compulsory education. The indirect adverse impact of illiteracy on social and economic growth and development are far-reaching. It impedes the industrial and economic growth and agriculture suffers the worst. Thus, illiteracy bodes ill for our food security and agricultural growth.

At the present rate of growth of literacy it would take another 50 years for the country to achieve total literacy. More than 50 percent of the villages in India still do not have a primary school and there are many schools without chalks, blackboards. Even today, single teacher schools exist in Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa which operate out of a single trunk. This single trunk is the whole school in itself—the playground, the teaching aids and material, the office etc. Thus, paucity of funds available for rural primary education is a great bottleneck in the spread of education and literacy. India spends merely 11.2 percent of its total public expenditure on education. It is much higher in other Asian countries like Korea (22.4), Thailand (20), Malaysia (19) and China (12.5).

The quality of primary education is still worse. The teachers lack proper motivation, dedication, quality and training. They do not go to schools regularly and punctually. They are often found engaged in running teaching shops or doing some other profitable business in the school hours. This reflects our casual attitude towards such an important issue. The large percentage of dropouts is directly linked with this phenomenon of teacher-absenteeism. There is no accountability, no proper governance and administration. Therefore, it is essential that allocation of funds for primary education is suitably increased. Higher education in India attracts far more allocation than primary education. And it is the students from well off families who ultimately benefit from

subsidized university and higher education. It shows not only paucity of funds but also lopsided policy and wrong priorities.

Teachers in primary schools work under bureaucrats who are often corrupt and least bothered about the quality of education and teaching. The remedy lies in transferring all the primary schools to local governments. It would go a long way to increase teachers accountability as has been in the case of West Bengal.

In Tamil Nadu, the mid-day meal scheme has been quite successful. It has ensured regular attendance and decreased the drop-out rate considerably. Similarly, the schemes of giving free uniforms, textbooks, stationary etc. and even attendance allowance to those from the weak and poor classes living below the poverty line, have yielded excellent results. These schemes should be implemented in other states as well. Kerala shows the way as how to achieve near total literacy even in the given conditions of low funds and lack of primary school infrastructure. What is needed is the right policy and thrust. Teachers should be given proper training in motivation and teaching-skills and made more accountable. Their pay-packets should also be made attractive. The schools should be provided with blackboards, chalk, teaching materials and buildings. The policies and programmes related to education and economic activities should not be decided in isolation. Literacy is essential for sustained productivity. Illiterate farmers, workers etc. cannot make proper use of the modern technologies essential for growth and development both in agriculture and industrial sectors. Illiteracy and poverty are two aspects of the same coin. Remove illiteracy and poverty will be removed automatically. The sooner we realise this fundamental principle, the better.

The number of primary schools in India are 1.3 million schools. There were 228, 994, 454 students enrolled in different recognised schools of the country with a 13.67% growth in students enrolment from class I and to class XII. A literacy drive called "Operation Blackboard" has been started to improve the primary school infrastructure. In 1988 the National Literacy Mission was set-up to impart functional literacy to about one hundred million adult illiterates in the age group of 9-35 by the end of 1997. The **countrywide classroom (CWCR)** programme telecast by the University Grants Commission through INSAT-ID is another welcome step in the direction of improving the rate of literacy in the country.

On 16 May 1997, the union cabinet decided to make elementary education to children in the age group of 6-14 a fundamental right. The statutory amendment will also make it a fundamental duty of every citizen, who is a parent or a guardian to provide the opportunity of education to children in the age group of 6-14. Government's commitment to make free and compulsory education a fundamental right would go a long way in increasing the rate of literacy in an appreciable manner. The Government has also announced that it will commit 6 percent of the GDP for education as against the present 3.7 percent. The number of primary schools had gone up to 5.90 lakh in 1995-96 as against 2.10 lakh in 1990-91. Now, 95 percent of the rural villages have a primary school within one km and 85 percent an upper primary school within a distance of 3 km.

Nevertheless, India has made a huge progress in terms of increasing Primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately two third of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. Much of the progress in education has been credited to various private institutions. The private education market in India is estimated to worth 40 billion pounds in 2008 and will increase to 68 billion pounds by 2012. However, India continues to face challenges. Despite growing investment in education, 40% of the population is illiterate and only 15% of the students reach high schools.

As of 2015, India has 45 central universities, 321 state universities, 129 deemed universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the State Act, and 13 institutes which are of national importance. Other institutions include 16000 colleges, including 1800 exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions. The emphasis in the tertiary level of education lies on science and technology.

Some institutions of India, such as an **Indian Institute of Technology (IITs)**, have been globally acclaimed for their standard of education. The IITs enroll about 4000 students annually and the alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector and the public sectors of India.

Children are an asset and essential and integral part of a national wealth. They are the future parents, leaders, scientists, engineers and makers of the history. In them lies hidden the future course and destiny of a country. If they remain illiterate and uneducated what good can

be expected. The children living in villages, amidst nature, possess higher general intelligence than their counterparts in cities and towns. They have a very close contact with nature and so have natural wisdom. Their neglect in respect of education, health and economic well-being is bound to prove disastrous in the long run. Therefore, it is imperative that primary education is made universal and compulsory for children in the age group of 6-14.



13. Feeding the Hungry Billions

Abstract : There is population boom worldwide and natural resources are decreasing fast. The total estimated population in India is 1.22 billion people. The present population trends indicate alarming food situation which is likely to grow worse by the passage of time. The gap between demand and supply of food grains is increasing fast. The developing countries are the worst affected. The consumption of food grains has out-paced the production. The availability of cultivated and irrigated land is also decreasing. The greater use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides etc. has destroyed the health of the land. Even if there is surplus food grain in a few countries the lack of entitlement because of appalling poverty in many other countries will make it difficult for them to have adequate food-supplies.

The world population growth shows an alarming trend in relation to world food production. About 250,000 new mouths to feed are being added every day while the agricultural production and natural resources required to feed them are decreasing fast. It is estimated that about 3,000 sq. meters of forest land and 1,000 tones of top soil are being lost every second. The arable land has been decreasing by 20,000 hectares every year. The **World Resources Institute (WRI)** has reported that since **World War II**, about 1.2 million hectares of agricultural land, equivalent to 10.5 percent of the world's total agricultural land or the combined area of India and China, have been made useless as a result of human activities. Soil erosion alone has caused immense damage as a billion of hectares of land has already become unsuitable for agricultural use.

The world population is rising and is likely to touch 8.4 billion in 2025. Thus, about 90 million new mouths are being added to the world population every year. 95 percent of the new born are in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and South America. Today, China is the most populous country but it is projected to be replaced by India in coming

years. All these trends indicate an alarming food situation and security. The effects of the green revolution have tapered off and there is recession in the productivity.

The food security is in danger and slums in cities and towns are increasing by leaps and bounds. The urban population has been increasing dangerously which will grow from present 1.6 billion to nearly 4 billion by the year 2025 the world-over. Now, today's 400 million or so subsistence farmers of the world find it difficult to feed the 1.6 billion of urban population. What shall happen in 2025 when the urban population will swell into 4 billion? How shall, then the 800 million farmers of the world cope with the situation? Only the time will tell. Will the Malthusian theory prove true or the technological advancement take the problem into its strides?

The yields in the 1970s and early 1980s increased per hectare dramatically but after that it tapered off and there is no sign of its picking up. Consequently the gap between demand and supply has been increasing. In 2014, world cereal production stands at a new record of nearly 2534 million tonnes.

Global cereal stocks by the close of seasons in 2015 are forecast at around 623 million tonnes, almost 6 million tonnes less than anticipated in December, but still 46 million tonne above the volume carried over the 2014.

The consumption of food-grains has out-paced the production for the third successive year and there has been extraordinary increase in demand for food-grains in countries like China etc. It is becoming difficult day by day to take the world stock of food-grains to a secure level. Moreover, in many countries the farmers are shifting to cash crops. Latest data from the agriculture ministry shows that as many as 20 states reported decrease in cultivable land to the extent of 790,000 hectares in four years from 2007-08 to 2010-2011. Even today, this trend is on rise in the states across the country.

The growing imbalance between food production and population is dangerous. There will be incidence of hunger and starvation in near future if adequate measures are not taken to address the problem of feeding hungry billions of the world. The diminishing water and land resources and increasing population make the situation hopeless. All these factors have compounded the problem and endangered the world food security.

The earlier increase in food-grain production in seventies and early eighties was on account of the expansion of the cultivated land, increased use of fertilizers, pesticides, biocides, the use of high yielding variety of seeds and increase in the irrigated area. But there is a limit to the use of all these. How long and to what extent can you flog the earth? The increased use of fertilizers, pesticides and biocides bring new problems along with them. The use of high yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds require high inputs of fertilizers and pesticides. Initially the output went up but later on more quantities of input were used to get the same results and output. And the greater use of these inputs has destroyed the health and quality of the land. The sooner this fact is realized the world-over, the better.

The solution of the problem seems to lie in an integrated approach based on better management of resources and increased use of technologies. For attaining sustainable food security it is imperative that multi-pronged strategies are adopted. New technologies should be developed and available technologies used extensively to bridge the gap between potential and actual yields. Soil-erosion and desertification should be effectively checked and the health of the land be improved. The vast wasteland should be changed into arable land by using modern farm and field technologies and researches. Vast areas of agricultural and forest land are being lost every year because of soil erosion. As a result of this nearly a billion hectares of land every year becomes unfit for agriculture. Even if there were surplus of food-grains in a few countries, the lack of entitlement because of poverty in other countries will make it difficult for them to have adequate supplies.



14. Population Trends in India

Abstract : Rapid rise in population is a major problem being faced by India. It negates all our growth and developments. Effective family planning and population stability are urgently needed. The present fertility rate is quite high and must be brought down drastically. Illiteracy and poverty are two great hindrances in family planning. The states with low literacy have the highest birth rates. Literate women make good use of family planning and birth-control devices. Two-children family norm should be enforced strictly. There should be more incentives and de-incentives to oblige people to take up family planning on a large scale to reverse the prevailing and alarming population trends in the country.

The prevailing population trends in India are quite disturbing as they show how fast the country is hurtling towards demographic disaster which in its turn is bound to generate other crisis. The problem of population explosion is one of the major problems being faced by the country. At the rate of 31 new babies every minute we are adding 45,000 persons daily to our population. Thus, every year we have nearly 16 million more people to feed, educate, shelter and find jobs. Obviously, the population bomb is ticking away and we are doing nothing serious and effective in the matter. It negates all our economical growth and development because sustained progress and development are impossible without stability in the rate of population growth. Today's growth rate in population is about 2 percent which will take India's population to 7,000 million mark soon.

There has been decline in India's population growth rate to 17.64% in the decade 2010-11. But this decline is not enough and demands some urgent and effective if not drastic measures in respect of family planning and population stability. The country's present **total fertility rate (TFR)** is 2.7. This reflects how miserably we have failed in family planning programmes and population-control. China's TFR in 2014 was 1.55 in comparison to India's 2.51. China has considerably brought down its TFR and population growth rate but India has been left far behind. China is today the most populous country but in coming years it would be replaced by India at the present rate of growth of 2 percent per annum or average of 3 children per woman. The fertility rate is even higher in U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhaya Pradesh and Punjab. The total fertility rate is the highest in UP at 3.3 percent.

The sex ratio (i.e., number of females per thousand males) of population is 943 females per 1000 males as of 2015.

Structure and dynamics of India's population and land distribution has always been a major subject matter. India occupies only 2.4% of the world's land area, supporting over 15% of the world's population. Almost 40% of Indians are younger than 15 years of age. About 70% of the people live in more than 5,50,000 villages and the remainder in more than 200 towns and cities. Religion, caste, and language are major determinants of social and political organization. 18 languages have been recognized as official languages as per the Constitution of India. Religion wise, the Indian population is unique. 83% of the people are Hindu, whereas 120 million Muslims makes India, one of the world's largest

Muslim country. The population also includes Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Parsis.

The 1991 census, which was carried out under the direction of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (Part of Ministry of Home Affairs), in keeping with the previous two census, used the term **urban agglomerations**. It forms a continuous urban spread and consists of a city or town and its urban outgrowth outside the statutory limits. A university campus on military base located on the outskirts of a city or town, which often increases the actual urban area of that city or town, is an example of an urban agglomeration. In India's urban agglomerations with a population of 1 million or more—there were twenty-four in 1991—are referred to as metropolitan areas. A population of 100,000 or more are termed “cities” as compared with “towns”, which have a population of less than 100,000. Including the metropolitan areas, the number of urban agglomerations were 299 in 1991. Such urban agglomerations are termed or designated as Class I urban units.

Literacy is one of the major factors that helps in stabilizing the growth rate of population. It has been opined that a 40 percent literacy rate is the minimum threshold level for an economic take off in a country. Illiteracy and lack of education is a great hindrance in family planning and welfare. Over 25 percent of Indian women do not have any idea of family planning and methods of birth-control. The literacy rate is highest in Kerala and lowest in Bihar. Rajasthan ranks second from the bottom and Uttar Pradesh fifth. The states with low literacy have the high fertility and birth rate. Educated women tend to marry later than illiterate and uneducated women. The former make good use of family planning and birth control devices. Literate and educated couples of rural areas show keen interest in family planning measures and willingly adopt them if made conveniently available. Employment of women also helps in stabilizing the population and education is the essential pre-requisite of employment. Literacy in the country means, completion of the primary education. The more educated a woman is, the better awareness she has about family planning, birth-control and family-welfare.

Literacy also reduces gender inequality and women become conscious of their conjugal rights and privileges. They can better resist their exploitation in matters of marriage, maternity, child-care and family planning. In our male dominated society it is very essential that

women are made educated and literate so that they too can have some say in deciding the size of family. It has been observed that where women are educated and empowered they often adopt a small family norm. The decline in population growth rate in Kerala can be sighted as an example. It was 4.91% in 2001-2011.

Poverty, backwardness, casteism and religious fundamentalism are other major factors of population explosion in India. The son-fixation and desire to have no daughter is also very unfortunate. Daughters are regarded as great liabilities and the sons the great assets and boons. This preference to sons over daughters is one of the major reasons of high fertility and birth rate. About 40 percent of Indian population has been living under poverty line. They find it difficult to keep their bodies and souls together. They do not have even the minimum and basic amenities of life. They have been struggling to survive somehow or other. They have children as often as nature allows them to have. It is too much to expect them to think about and adopt modern family planning methods. They work hard as landless farmers, daily labourers or as marginal farmers. As such, the more hands there are, the better. Therefore, the poor Indian villagers think in terms of a large family so that there are sufficient hands to earn out a living.

The population trends in India are certainly alarming. There is much pressure on our land and water resources. The urban population is increasing by leaps and bounds and vast new slums are being created in the cities. The increase in urban population has further compounded the problem. It is high time that our government takes some concrete and hard decisions to curb the rate of population growth. There would be nothing undemocratic or coercive if 2 children family norm is strictly enforced. There should be incentives and disincentives to adhere to 2 children family norm. China is the most populous country but now has achieved the low fertility rate. A certain discipline is a must to achieve family planning and population targets and the carrot and stick approach should not be ruled out. The International Conference on Population and Development, held in 1994 at Cairo, endorsed the voluntary approach and rejected the idea of nudging population towards specified family norms through officially-sponsored incentives, disincentives programmes. But in a country like India where there is rampant poverty, low literacy rate and other problems only voluntary approach cannot be depended upon. There should be a strong dose of

disincentives who opt for more than 2 children. Sometimes stick is as essential as the carrot, however, carrot should be used more frequently. The very future of our country is at stake and so there should be no hesitation in taking some harsh and strict measures of family planning.



15. Removal of Rural Poverty

Abstract: India is basically country of villages and agriculture. Over 70 percent of its population is rural poor. Poverty can be seen at its starkest among them. They lack even the bare minimum needs of life. Millions of them have been living under poverty line for generations. Unless their poverty is alleviated there cannot be real freedom and independence. Many schemes have been launched to remove rural poverty, they have also yielded results but it is like a drop in the ocean. Land reforms and their implementations have direct and close bearing on rural poverty removal and so needs to be expedited. The landless poor farmers, peasants and labourers should be given land and its ownership.

The real India can be found in the villages. In spite of rapid urbanization, industrial growth and migration to towns and cities, 83.3 crore population lives in villages. In contrast only 37.7 crore population lives in urban areas. India is an agricultural country and it lives in villages. But the villagers are still the poorest in spite of 68 years of independence, green revolution and industrial and technological advancements. Poverty can be seen among the Indian villagers—small landless farmers, labourers, artisans etc. in its starkest form. They are starved, ill-clad, without a roof over their heads and deprived. Thousands of these poor villagers die for want of nutrition, basic and minimum amenities of life. They hardly manage to exist amidst appalling poverty, ill health, exploitation and deprivation. Mahatma Gandhi said, “The villagers want bread—not butter—and disciplined work, some work that will supplement their agricultural vocations which do not go on for all the 12 months.”

This is still painfully true of the Indian villagers. They are without land, without employment, with no means of sustenance. They are deprived of the barest minimum desirable nutritional standards of calorie intake. Millions and millions of villagers are living below the poverty line. Sixty-one percent of the rural households live below poverty line. It is estimated that two-thirds of households in villages with

population below one thousand have a monthly income of less than ₹ 1000 as against 16.1 percent in the case of cities with population over 10 lakhs. The condition in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, etc. is the worst.

The earlier estimates of the Planning Commission of a significant reduction in rural poverty were exaggerated and unrealistic and so these were revised later. During the successive Plans various measures were taken to alleviate rural poverty, a number of specific as well as general schemes were implemented, however, the problem continues to defy solution. In IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programmes) is aimed at raising the level of living of the poorest of the poor families in the villages above the poverty line on a lasting basis by providing them with income generating assets and access to credit and other inputs. Under the scheme till 1996-97 50.99 million families were covered. National Scheme of Training of Rural Youth for self-employment (TRYSEM) was launched in 1979. Its main thrust was on equipping rural youth in the age group of 18-35 years with necessary skills and technology to take up vocations of self-employment in agriculture and allied activities, industry, services and business.

Rural unemployment and under-employment which particularly affect the poorest segment of the rural population have been major contributory factors of high incidence of poverty in the villages. Therefore, various projects were launched to step up rural employment. Programmes like crash scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) and Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREP) were launched during Fourth Plan. In 1980 was launched National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) which was followed by **Rural Landless Employment guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**. ₹ 2,66,000 crore was spent on NREP, for every ₹ 5 spent, the poor get ₹ 1.

Land reforms play a crucial role in rural poverty alleviation which involves distribution of land to the landless and nearly landless farmers. In the villages there are millions of people who depend on land for their livelihood but are without any land or any other source of income. They toil and sweat to grow grains, vegetables and other agriculture crops and yet they are the most starved and hungry. They are the poorest and the most neglected lot, need the urgent help on a war footing. Justice and equality demand that they are given the rights of the land they cultivate. Their entitlement to the land is far greater than that of those who are proxy farmers and landlords who have lucrative and secure

jobs in cities and towns and yet continue to have fat additional income from ownership of land in the villages. The landless farmers and peasants should be identified and given land on ownership basis. Land reforms should be expedited and anomalies removed and absentee land ownership be terminated.

Some legislative measures have been initiated for providing ownership rights to tenants/security of tenure to tenants/sub tenants/share-croppers. Provisions regarding fixation of rents payable by the tenant and prohibition of eviction except on specific grounds further strive to safeguard the interest of the tenants. Several states enacted land ceiling laws in the 50s and 60s. Consequently several lakh hectares of land were taken over and distributed to many landless poor. The land ceiling laws were subsequently re-enacted and more land declared surplus. Consequently the number of operational land holdings has increased from 97.2 million in 1985-86 to 105.3 million in 1991-92. The holdings operated by SCs increased both in number and area during this period. In the case of scheduled castes there has been an increase of over 9 percent in the number of holdings while the scheduled tribes holdings increased by 11.6 percent. The area operated by SC holdings accounted for 7.9 percent while that operated by STs accounted for 10.8 percent of the entire operated area. It shows that there has been improvement in the status of these social groups because of various land reform measures. But more needs to be done.

Where the land distributed under the ceiling laws and reform measures is of poor quality or without irrigation facilities, the assignees need to be provided generous financial assistance. And where there it is not enough land to distribute among the landless peasants and laborers, there should be given other resource base such as leases over ponds, tanks, quarries, forest areas, pastures etc. All other efforts like conservation of forests, drought relief programmes, rural employment programme etc. should be integrated and linked to the basic strategy of rural poverty alleviation and improvement of quality of life. The panchayat raj system should also be given more powers and resources to enable them generate more work and employment opportunities. Panchayat raj institutions are the only democratic agencies on the grass root levels which can really help so much in the improvement of the quality of rural living if genuinely empowered. Cottage industries should

also be encouraged and helped. The village artisans and crafts persons should not be allowed to remain idle or to fall in disuse. Their skills should be fully utilized.



16. Use of Technology in Education

Abstract: With Internet and computers becoming more and more widespread, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also assuming a more and more important role. The role of Internet and technology has been realized the world over and changes are being made to implement and incorporate this technology in the field of education. This essay will explore the use and the implementation of technology in education and how the use of technology has changed the equations of education.

In 2004, Uttarakhand state government was the first Indian state to award a project to develop e-learning SCORM based modules for implementation in 1100 government schools. This was a gigantic step towards recognizing and taking steps to implement technology in the field of education. In other words, it was an attempt to modernize education by integrating the latest trends in education from the world.

As early as in 1999, 99%- of teachers in the United States had access to a computer in their schools and 84%- had either one or more computers in their classrooms. Along with this, Internet was also being made available in almost all the schools. This made the incorporation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) a necessity for education.

As the developing countries are also catching up, they realized that the future of education relies on the incorporation of technology in education. Based on this, many developing countries like India and some states in Africa have taken the step to do exactly that. They are now coming up with newer and better ideas on how to integrate technology into learning environments.

The integration of technology in education depends on the teachers' instructional goals and strategies. In the early 1970's and 1980's, teachers asked the students to memorize from notes and textbooks. Education was primarily teacher led and examination followed the concept of answering worksheets and questionnaires designed by

teachers. The emphasis was laid on individual study and the only help that was available outside the school was from parents, siblings and friends. Technology was not used and the learning was limited to one facet only.

During the following years, the goals of education changed. Now, education was looking at comprehensive all-round growth of the students and it needed to evolve itself to achieve that goal. This also changed the way teachers had to teach the students. They had to now be technology savvy and had to keep themselves up-to-date with the latest. This was a direct contrast with the teachers of yester years, who needed to have only in depth knowledge of the subject being taught as well as teaching techniques.

When the importance of all around development was realized, researches started being conducted to find ways to improve education and the method of teaching. Various studies showed that book-based learning had its faults. Students forgot memorized information or they never understood the application of the information being taught. This made education come across as extremely bookish and useless.

Then in the 1950's came the information revolution. This changed the perspective of education. As a lot of information was available, education now needed to help students to differentiate between information and select information on the basis of need. Now, in addition to the perspective provided by the textbooks, students had access to multiple view points and thus more information. Education needs to assist students in learning how to amalgamate information, use it to resolve issues and at the same time present it to their teachers in a meaningful and effective manner. Education now also needs to assist the students so that they learn how to apply the information that they have got. The students need to learn how to connect information and use it to solve newer and more complex problems.

A recent research was conducted on teachers with the intention of finding out which form of teaching was more useful – the traditional method or the new integrated learning method. The results of the research showed that the present integrated method is preferred by even the teachers. They feel that this method helps them to meet the demands of the students. The integrated learning system pushes the students on a path of guided self discovery. This piques the interest of the students and they tend to not only remember the information discovered, but also use it.

The results of this research also showed that using the new integrated system even the teachers find the process of finding challenging problems for children a fun activity to do. This method of learning also helps the teachers to find new and exciting ways to teach students which proves to be an enriching and stimulating experience for both.

Today, physical distances have no meaning. Using video conferencing, students from all over the world have access to teachers from all over the world. Students and teachers can now participate in projects that are sponsored by major researches all over the world. Video conferencing uses satellite and Internet to connect people staying in different parts of the world. An example of such video conferencing and projects based on it is that of Jason Project. Each year, this project explores a different location in order to assist the students to learn about the Earth's biological and geological development. Past projects studied deep sea-archaeology, deep ocean habitats, volcanoes and plate tectonics.

Acquiring degrees from international universities no longer requires a student to be personally present in that university. Using the concept of virtual classrooms, students from all over the world can attend a classroom being taken in any part of the world in real-time. This has changed the entire equation of distance learning and correspondence. The concept of virtual classrooms is also beneficial for those who have personal schedules that do not allow them to attend real time classrooms. Virtual classrooms have also made interactions between student and teachers very easy. Students can leave their queries with the teachers and the teachers can answer them whenever they log in. Alternatively, both of them can log in at a pre-decided time and then interact to solve their problems.

Teachers and students alike can now use technology to find more stimulating problems to solve and apply their knowledge to. Teachers look for problems that are relevant and appropriate for the students. Teachers look for problems that encourage sustained exploration and collaboration. The problems should have multiple interrelated parts so that the students' ability to break problems and organize their solutions is developed. Representing and communicating such complex problem situations is an important function of technology. Unlike conditions and problems that occur in the real world, technology can be used to incorporate graphics, video, animation and other tools to

create problems that can be explored repeatedly and from different angles.

An example of such a use of technology is the mathematical problem-solving series, *The Adventures of Jasper Woodbury*. Each problem presented in this series ends with the main character facing a problem that can be solved only by using math. The use of technology in this condition helps the students to look at the problem repeatedly to search for clues to help solve the problem. In one such problem, the students investigate a variety of transportation methods and routes to rescue a wounded bald eagle. They compare their solution plans and develop ways to determine which plan is best.

Along with finding problems, Internet can also be used for finding educational resources and summarizing and presenting findings. Teachers are increasingly giving students at least one project each year that is based on internet research.

With advancement in hardware and software technology, fundamental changes are expected to take place in education and the way it is integrated with technology. Wireless laptops and palmtops will give the freedom to students and teachers alike to explore their respective fields as well as find problems related to the field. This also gives the opportunity to students to collect, share and graph data on field trips and at the same time communicate their whereabouts and progress to teachers and parents. Along with this, improvement in technology has also opened new ideas of assessments.

Though technology has a huge role in education, we are still a long way from harnessing its full potential. We need to find newer and better ideas to implement these technologies and use them judiciously.



17. Universal Elementary Education

Abstract: All the nations across the world would want all their citizens to be literate so that the standard of the nation could be raised. The constitution makers of India also had the same thought in their mind when they made elementary education free for all till the age of 14. However, even after six decades of independence, we have not been able to fulfill the dreams of our nation-makers. This essay is an attempt to understand the concept of universal elementary education, its implementation and the hindrances that it faced in its path of implementation.

Education lays the foundation of a person. It is what makes a person and also ultimately the nation. It is therefore, the responsibility of the nation to make sure that the people under its governance are educated. Keeping this in mind, the government of India also launched a programme called the Universal Elementary Education (UEE) or the *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* (SSA). This programme was launched under the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources and Development in 2001.

The government of India has planned SSA taking into consideration the need for quality basic education all over the country. When the government planned this programme, it had also planned a clear time line for the same. Though, this particular point has been in India's five year plans since the eighth five year plan, the present plan is till 2010. Through the SSA programme, the government of India also plans to promote the concept of social justice amongst its citizens.

The SSA programme has a two-pronged approach where it aims at developing education not only for the students but also provide an opportunity to the states to develop their vision of elementary education and implement it. Through the SSA, the central government wants to establish an effective partnership between the central, state and the local governments. This partnership can be established with the involvement of the panchayati raj institutions, where they would also actively accept the responsibility of educating the children of the villages under their control. Other institutions that would help in the success of the scheme are the School Management Committees, Mother Teacher Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils, Village and Urban Slum Level Education Committees and other grass root level structures. These would be involved in the management of elementary schools.

SSA aims at providing useful and relevant education for all children that belong to the age group of 6 to 14. SSA aims at making elementary education universal through community-ownership of the school system. This programme also aims at providing an opportunity for improving human and technical skills for all children. Another target that SSA wants to achieve is to bridge the social, regional and gender gaps in the society. This can be achieved with the active participation of the community in the management of schools.

Useful and relevant information is defined as an education that helps a child to draw on the community. It also aims to encourage children to learn about and deal with their natural environment. This would

enable them to utilize their potential both spiritually and materially. SSA also aims to sensitize children towards each other so that they learn to work for each other's well being. This way, the children would also learn to live in a community.

The targets set by the SSA can be summed up as follows:

- All children should complete at least five years of primary schooling
- All children should complete elementary schooling
- The focus of SSA would be on quality of elementary education
- SSA would emphasize on education for life
- SSA would insist in bridging all gender and social category gaps

The SSA aims to achieve its goal by improving the student teacher ratio, providing teachers with effective and relevant training, providing academic support to the grass root schools, assisting in procurement and development of teaching aids and materials, providing textbooks to children, especially to those who cannot afford the same and other such steps.

The SSA has a bilateral strategy. In the first part of the strategy, SSA will provide a wide framework for the implementation of universal elementary education and in the second part of the strategy it will provide budgets to help strengthen vital areas so that the concept of universal education can be achieved. This budgetary provision will be used from the coffers of the central government.

Though the Indian government had a noble dream, it has been unable to achieve it. The reasons for this can be many including poverty, prejudices in the Indian society, access to education system and the likes. Let us take a quick look at the reasons why the SSA did not achieve the goals that were set for it.

The first and the foremost reason for the SSA to be unable to achieve its goal is access. Generally, universal elementary education would mean the provision of schools so that the goal of universal elementary education can be achieved. But, the idea of physically providing schools for the purpose of education is far from the reality of physical access to these schools. This is because the Indian society is still plagued with taboos related to education. Rural India till date does not believe in educating its girl child and even the male child are educated only till

the time their working hands are not needed. Secondly, the education of the male children is not taken seriously. If they are not serious about their education, the parents would prefer asking them to leave their education rather than motivating them to continue it.

Another reason for the lack of success of the SSA programme is the universal provision of physical facilities for the purpose of education. When we talk about universal provision of facilities, it entails the task of proper mobilization of resources and a well structured management system and administration. Resources, in this case, refer to not only the physical building of schools, but also the availability of teachers, learning and teaching aids, proper teacher training and a proper curriculum for the school.

The third factor is awareness. Though the government has done a lot of things to establish the infrastructure for the implementation of universal education, the lack of awareness about these efforts have proved to be a hindrance in the implementation of these efforts. For example, there are still a number of villagers who do not know that education up to 14 years of age is free for all as per the Indian constitution. To increase the success and access of the SSA programme, the government needs to direct its efforts towards spreading awareness for the same.

The gap between the female and male literacy rates is proving to be another major hindrance for the implementation of the SSA programme. This is because the gap between the female and male literacy rates is huge even though the growth in female literacy is increasing at quite a fast rate. According to the 2001 census, the total literacy rate in India is 65.38%, whereas the female literacy rate is 54.16 %. Another statistic that needs attention is that of urban and rural literacy. While the literacy rate in urban India is 80.3%, the literacy rate in rural India is still only 59.4%.

The country's population at present is 1.21 billion, an increase of 181.96 million since 2001. What is even more comforting for the country's planners is the fact that female growth rate has been better than male growth rate. The male population has gone up by 90.97 million, against a rise of 90.99 in the population of females over the last 10 years. Among the major states, Bihar has recorded the highest decadal growth in population (25.4 percent), surpassing West Bengal, which occupied the first position in 1991-2001. More than two-third of the country's population lives in rural areas.

As per census 2011, 833.5 million people live in rural areas, while 377.1 million people live in urban centres. Delhi has the highest proportion of urban population at 97.5 percent.

In order to make the SSA programme a success, the government needs to look at reduction in poverty, emphasis on rural education and promotion of female education. The government also needs to develop a better infrastructure in soft skills in terms of teacher training, teaching and learning aids and also proper management of these schools. For this purpose, a better public distribution system and better resource mobilization is needed. All these developments would have to go hand in hand so that it can achieve the goal set by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and also the Millennium Development goal set by the UNESCO to be achieved by 2015.

To conclude, one can say that though the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan did achieve some success, on the whole it still cannot be called successful. The government still has a long way to go in implementing the universal education programme and achieving the dream of 100% literacy rate in India.



18. Higher Education in India and Abroad

Abstract: Is Indian higher education being threatened by foreign universities/institutions? The Radhakrishnan Commission says that universities are the homes of intellectual adventure. It clearly implies that the universities should seek and cultivate new knowledge, engage vigorously in the pursuit of truth and interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new needs and discoveries.

Multinational universities are now available in India. As a result, these days the hunt for a foreign degree is not beyond one's reach. And there is certainly an unprecedented for foreign degrees. Countries like U.K, U.S.A. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Singapore and Switzerland are wooing Indian students. Is globalization a boon or a bane vis-à-vis Indian society seems to go on and on, one of its greatest beneficiaries is the student community. Open advertisements in The National dailies are getting colourful space, smart enough to sensitize students in and around the country. In the past decade more and more countries have been inviting. Today an international degree does not necessary the physical presence of a student in a foreign country. This

is in fact the liberalization by virtue of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) and strategic partnership between foreign institutions and the Indian institutions. An Indian has an easy access to acquire a foreign qualification without going abroad.

Oxford and Harvard degrees are no doubt great educational achievements, but it does not mean studying abroad is no longer the prerogative of the best and the brightest. Schools in Germany and France have begun offering courses in English to attract students from all over the globe, India being one of the major markets. As a result, Indian students have keenly and overwhelmingly responded to them. Such growing trend of studying abroad amongst students has set forth to the changing cultural scenario. This, today's education leans up towards application-oriented knowledge. Earlier it was not so. It was a tool to enhance one's knowledge and mould one's character. Higher education in India especially at the premier institutions is not easily accessible due to stiff competitions. Instead, they find it (education) more viable by spending extra money to pursue a course abroad. Perhaps less-known institutions in India are not preferable. And why not : they can spend more extra money but more popular foreign institutions.

Education fairs have made studying abroad easier. Such fairs take place every year. Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada are the major participants. Educational agents are available to make student's life hassle free. Students' dreams are endless. Such opportunity indeed provides wings to the imagination of the Indian students so as to enable them to reach their dream destinations. Nevertheless, the crucial question remains unanswered and is not free from criticism: "A foreign degree is nothing but a manifestation of the colonial hangover";... a degree is measured by the market value and the advent of brand names in education have further fuelled the need to acquire a foreign degree"... and so forth. While the United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) is up with a different opinion. It says that one of the greatest assets of a foreign degree is the international experience a student gains during his/her course of study. Such experience plays a crucial role in augmenting his/her maturity and understanding as a future professional.

Today, the ultimate buyer of an education is nobody else, but the students. Today's education above all is a commodity, side by side education is not just instrument to develop a student's awareness of study options in a particular country, but open markets for institutions

and agents to congregate and sell their degrees worth. Educational agents in their role of intermediaries perform the task of bridging the gulf between the students and the institutions. Thus, an international education has become the preserve of either the most meritorious, or the best-heeled, who would not mind bearing the exorbitant costs of studying and living in a foreign country.

After all, is higher education in India a mess? There isn't a short-cut answer. It needs to be brain stormed. Higher education in India should be reformed. Indian universities can be given more autonomy to handle their academic policies. It is the universities role to decide the criteria for admission, examinations, and curriculum. At the best of American universities, more than half the students are given scholarships and grants to some kind, but even this is decided by the college and not some minister or official. Opinions are that Indian higher education needs a large dose of American-style privatization. Poor students should be taken care of by the universities themselves as happens in America. Indian universities and colleges may be allowed to charge halfway reasonable fees for the better education they provide, they will have more than enough money to subsidize the education of students who cannot afford to pay.

The decision to study abroad is not so easy. Having to stay away from home, family and friends is an experience that could be in the beginning painful, but ultimately rewarding. Nearly, according to a reliable sources, 1,39,292 Indian students were enrolled in the US universities in 2014 and about 10,235 went to UK. The range of international education is rapidly expanding and nearly, in the same proportion, the influx of Indian students will be heading towards them.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam wishes to transform the country into a "knowledge society". No doubt, this is a timely proposal in the age of liberalization, privatization and globalization where knowledge is the key. The world is now a global village and continuous international interaction has become an essential component for human survival. This is the reason that the globalization of the economy has led to internationalization of higher education, not only for economic benefits but for enhanced social interaction and promotion of international understanding. Global markets are of fierce competition, unbridled imports, pressure to change from indigenous technology to borrowed technology. The use of such technology is dependent on the quality of knowledge generated at higher education institutions. The emerging

“knowledge industry” will need knowledge workers and good knowledge workers are the products of higher education.

In order to make higher education more effective and responsive, there should be a focus on transforming it into a dynamic, flexible and diversified system having proper linkages with social demands. Here, DELORS COMMISSION (1996) is very remarkable to quote : “...spending on education has more than just a social dimension; it is also an economic and political investment yielding long-term benefits.” The conclusion is that Indian universities should be prepared for the challenges of global market where use of technology depends on the quality of education received at higher education institutions.



19. Status of Women

Abstract : Is status of women a subject-matter? And if yes, then, why not men! Women are the incarnation of goddesses; resemblance of worldly blessings, arts and letter, Annapurna and even destroyer of evil forces. The spectrum of discussion are worthy of many core issues related to women, today in the modern society. The Royal ladies: Sita and Draupadi still challenge men's moral strength.

Indian tradition has been hard towards the position of women in India. More than that, they have been taken as a subject of controversy. Indian scholars, on the other hand believe that the respect and honour that India gave to women in the past, was not enjoyed by them in any other part of the world. Also, a general opinion, if we go through the pages of history of Indian women—they (the women) never shared right with on basis of equality. If has been a popular temperament of male dominant Indian society to show respect to women and even worship them but the irony of the fact is they never allowed them equality of status with men, as we understand it today. Such expression about the position of women in Indian tradition are no doubt, at variance with each other, but an analysis of the situation in it's historical perspective would reveal that there is an element of truth in all of them. India is an ancient country and it has a very long history. The politician and economic conditions in the country have been changing with the passage of time and so has been the social status of women. In a vast country like India—the multiplicity of religions and communities has lent a peculiar diversity to its life and living conditions. Anywhere in the

country, the position of women has been affected differently by the economic status, religious traditions and of course the thinking patterns of the people living in those particular religions.

Are women biologically weak sex? During primitive age, the human instinct for self-preservation provided man to be ever ready for defending himself and protecting his property from beasts, birds and even other men. Man's superior physical strength must naturally have been of tremendous importance during the pre-historic age. Women on the other hand, could not protect from such untoward incidents. They were handicapped in the struggle against hostile elements specifically due to the bondage of reproduction. Natural of biological phenomenon like pregnancy, child birth and menstruation reduced women's physical capacity or strength for active outdoor work and at times they found themselves wholly dependent on man for food and protection. Thus, nature provided men physical strength giving opportunity to attain a position of superiority in the family or outside family. Man relegated women to an inferior position and obliged them to play a second fiddle to them. And this crystal fact is not applicable in the Indian context only. It is almost in every part of the world.

In early vedic period—women, however, were treated with great respect. During the pre-Aryan period, the Dravidians, the earliest known inhabitants of India, by and large, lived in *matriarchal* society. The archaeological findings and other sources have *unveiled* that a woman enjoyed a respectable position in society. She was revered and even raised to a divine pedestal. She was an important limb of the society in her own right and enjoyed a social position almost at par with men. This position lasted for quite a longer period of time after the advent of Aryans. Man and women were popularly addressed as “two wheels of the same chariot.” No social restraint, but relatively free, a woman as a wife, played great role in all religious rituals. Women got the opportunity to receive education and were encouraged to engage themselves in intellectual pursuits. There are evidences showing women scholarly person. They successfully challenged men in literary duals. Gargi and Maitreyi are the popular names to quote. Girls married *only* after attaining puberty and were allowed freedom to choose their marriage partners. Rough and tough social regulations were not obstructing girls to marry a man out of religion. Inter-caste marriages were permissible. Even a widow allowed to re-marriage. In the absence of a son, a daughter affectionately addressed as PUTRIKA was allowed to perform all

religious functions, which were otherwise performed by sons. Veil system was unknown to Aryans and women had no inhibitions in interacting or discoursing with men in social gatherings.

Mythology of Indian provides a wide range of evidence showing and projecting women as goddesses. Upper class people particularly worshipped the feminine divinities, connected with the gods as their spouses. Some most important among them were the wife of Lord Shiva, known by various names as PARVATI, GAURI, ANNAPURNA, JAGDAMBA, LAKSHMI the spouse of Lord Vishnu; SARASWATI the consort of Lord Brahma. Majority of Hindu society even today worship them. Parvati, in her benevolent aspect has been referred to as Durga, Chandi and Kali as destroyer of evil forces. Laskhmi as goddess of worldly blessings, and Saraswati worshipped as goddess of arts and letters. A large number of people are great devotees to these goddesses. Godess Durga inspires far more respect and awe them any male gods, particularly among the eastern parts of the country (India).

Unfortunately man's disbelief has declined women-status over a period of time. A son alone could perpetuate the family line, perform last rites of the parents etc. confused the male dominated society. The importance of sons has adversely affected and brought women lower. This is erosion in the status of women during the succeeding centuries. Though not much, but certainly some parts of the country have some under the spell of such misfortune. But undeniably, the paradox is that the two great epic wars took place because of two royal ladies—Sita and Draupadi. And the only reason behind the wars was to avenge the insult perpetrated on them (the royal ladies). Buddhist period of Indian history reveals that many women were assigned to take various tasks of propagating and advocating Buddhism. Indian scriptures mention: "Gods rejoice where women are worshipped." After all, it is also not possible to reject the fact that the position of women had started deteriorating during the Aryan period itself. Greater importance of a son, the superiority and the physical strength of men were major contributing factors which added to the deplorable situation of the status of women. Manu's law : "The nature of women is to seduce men", is now seen as a catalyst to accelerate the feelings of the male dominated society. Somewhere, in one Buddhist Jatak story, a woman has been described as "unreliable, ungrateful and source of all evils." The Jainist verdict is : "Do not desire women. They constantly change their mind, entice men and make sport of them as slaves."

Downfall of the status of women takes us into a never ending discourse. We just take some of the glimpses which have been associated with our society. Lower caste women were debarred from the study of the Vedas and in due course did not get right to education. After marriage—domestic chores and rearing of children, even today, are among the sole responsibilities. And much more is her economic dependence on husband. Paraya Dhan (other's property), Kanya Daan (the donation of a daughter), and the husband known as Swami (Master)—such is the terminology which gives the impression that women have been treated as a commodity. After marriage, at the time of her departure to her husband's house/place, her parents use to advise her, "Now the husband's house is your home for ever, only your dead body will come out of those doors."



20. Learning English through Distance Mode

Abstract: Today mass media and communication is of immense help. Especially when someone at distance wants to improve a particular language. So, why not English? A major part of all types of TV or Radio Programmes are available in English. They are on the air and not all beyond the reach of a common man, woman or children. Listening habits improve listening skill and through listening, learning a language can be improved at a very low price.

English is a mishmash of influences : Germanic grammar, Danish and French vocabulary, renaissance borrowings from Greek and Latin, later imperial borrowings and Americanism. The relative simplicity of the structure of English, for example it's lack of inflections and of gender, may not always be obvious to a *learner* struggling with the vagaries of the written form. To take an extreme example : a student who hears the sound /s/ during a dictation can write s, ss, se, s, c, ce, sc, st, sw, ps, sce, sse, sch, sth, or even tz depending on the word and still get it right.

Chapter 3, 'Test date interpretation and presentation will prove to be self explanatory.' A small question : Why mass media and communication? In distance and open learning system different types of media are used to impart education to the learners. Alongwith the materials, different types of audiovisual support are provided to meet the dearness need. Audio programmes may be treated as a substitute

for the personal touch of the teacher. Specially audio-media—the distance learners can listen to the *talks* of the course experts. After all—electronic media here the main concern (the radio) appears to be the most common and popular one for the distance students to learn from and for the distance educators to impart education from a distance. In terms of need of this audio-programme, Jamison and Mc Anany (1978) is worth noting. They reviewed research *literature* and concluded that radio, properly used, can teach as well as /or, in some cases, better than the traditional instruction. Considering the effectiveness, the costs and the access to technology, they further stated that the radio is more suitable medium for the third world countries.

Distance learning, by combining the radio with other media, attempts to replace both the teacher and the institution. The developed countries like the UK, Australia, Canada and Japan make the extensive use of the radio for teaching at a distance. China, *Thailand* and Kenya have many years of experience with the radio correspondence approach to learning. Radio Santa Maria is a successful example of home study with the help of radio by individuals who failed to attend school-based education.

Since, audio-programme basically improves *listening* skills so as to improve *phono-phonological* aspect of English language. Distance learners, *therefore* can have a better access to the learning and developing such skill of English language. It is a programme suitable for radio broadcast. Bangladesh Open University (BOU), for example is engaged in planning, producing and evaluating both radio broadcasts and audio cassettes for its students. From the very beginning, audio tapes and radio broadcasts have formed part of the *BOU* course materials. Audio-tapes programmes are comparatively cheaper to produce, we need not worry about allocation of time for educational radio broadcasts, if we have *access to audio-taped lessons*.

The widespread use of computers and the internet have made distance learning easier and faster, and today virtual schools and virtual universities deliver full curricula online.

Right from childhood one has been listening to “speakers” of various kinds, heard stores, lectures and discussions. Although we communicate every day in a hundred and one different ways. We remember some and forget others. It seems as though some have acquired the art of conversational skills naturally, by *listening to other*, through exposure; and some have developed it through practice and *perseverance*.

The smallest unit of the speech form of English language is *phoneme*. Combination of phonemes makes *syllables* and *syllables* make word(s). Learning of a language skill has their main aspects : Learners have to become aware of the key features of the target performance, so that they can create mental plans which are necessary for producing it themselves. They need to practice converting these plans into actual and correct behaviour these two aspects of learning develop the cognitive and behavioural dimensions necessary for individual components. The particular skills of communication that learners might include : programming sounds correctly, Expressing specified communicative functions and using devices for managing conversations.

Foundation of oral communication is speech. And one has to expose through *clearer pronunciation slower pace, simple structures and common vocabulary*. If not so, the need to use the language (English) for communication will be a crucial task. Communication is a fundamental need. This urge for communication is a primal one and, in our contemporary civilization, a necessity for survival. It is an art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another. And one can have optimum benefits even for learning a language like English.



21. UGC—Higher Education—Employability

Abstract: Call of the day is skilled-based knowledge. Our complex society needs more and more training and vocational institutions. Foreign universities have taken entrance into our educational arena. On the other hand Indian educational agencies vis-à-vis employability rate are facing crucial tasks ahead in terms of well equipped human resources in the country.

Education is ‘an urgent imperative’, but what about the financial allocation? Changing the nomenclature of the UGC will not fetch good results of much use and productivity. Instead, adoption of innovative financing models should be given priority. UGC and higher education are twin nationally important issues in terms of changing culture of educational issue.

Strangely enough, we often harp on the key role of education in development but fail to provide adequate funds to the sector. Although

education is on the concurrent list. From elementary schools to elite business schools, Arun Jaitly's maiden budget covered the whole education sector from end to end. Over all, the sector received an allocation of ₹ 68,728 crore for 2014-15, up from a revised budget estimate of ₹ 61,857 crore in 2013-14. That amounts to an increase of 11.1%.

Teaching posts are kept vacant in higher education institutions in order to save money. Teachers are working on reduced emoluments, how then the question of motivating the teachers will arise. And how ridiculous to invite managers and qualified professionals outside the formal academic system to work as part-time teachers! Can it be put into practice? There are nearly 77.34 lakh students, studying in more than 237 universities and 11,823 colleges in every nook and corner of the country. Will such teaching experts be available to teach those students of various regions? It will not be an easy task for UGC.

Formal agencies of Government have not yet come up with required changes. The National policy of Education, 1986, was modified in 1992 by P.V. Narsimha Rao government. In 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a New policy based on the "common minimum programme" of his UPA government. So is the case of bodies like State Councils of Higher Education and State Advisory Board of Education. University and School Education Board Acts have not been revised for a long time. Resources are limited while new colleges and universities are being opened; activities are expanding at great speed.

The entrance of multinationals in Indian higher education; every year names of fake universities or colleges are circulated, which are like NAAC, NCTE, not up to the expectations of the people. These are some of the prime factors affecting higher education culture in the country vis-à-vis UGC's role. Almost everywhere, examination, evaluation, and paper leakage scandals have become common. The darker side of the picture is that nothing concrete has been done to set things right.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up in 1953, and the problems were almost the same what it faces today : how to cope with the growing numbers and how to maintain high academic standards. Lower the number, higher the standard or higher the number, lower the standard this stunning fact is undeniable. But what will happen to the democratic nature of higher education? What should be done to reverse the situation—is a major task ahead. However, one thing

is clear that higher secondary education needs planner's prime attention so as to avoid lacunas at higher education level. All issues at higher secondary level are unavoidable. Because had things improved at the higher secondary level the quality of those joining college/universities would have become better. A large number of students aimlessly pursue higher education because they have nothing else to do. Employment opportunities are not much available. They are not interested either in acquiring knowledge in undertaking any training at the level of a particular skill.

Undergraduate have not profited much from college education as they could have done. Three years college education lock improved input of knowledge and better skills. As a result it is a colossal waste of manpower and also a considerable waste of resources. What urgently seems to be done is to remodel undergraduate education. Since UGC spends nearly one-third of its budget on college so why not remodelling. Some efforts have been made, but non of them has led to a satisfactory outcome.

Work demand in the market has influenced undergraduate education in one sense or the other. Information technology and the burst of computer education have come up with tremendous change both: social and educational. Such is the creation of a different kind of skill-based educational atmosphere which has now metamorphosed into private institutions. And simultaneously the arrival of foreign educational institutions/universities. UGC here must accept this changing situation. Commission should bet set up to study the problems. Members of the committee should work out a new plan of action. Secretaries of education, Vice-chancellors, Principals of the schools and retired teachers are capable enough to meet the requirements of the committee. Representatives from the states can present their point of view. Modest plans should be given more importance than before

Quality of performance at the post graduate and research level needs to be recognized. Since the rest of the world is advancing while the situation in India has been close to stagnation during the last few decades. It's good that UGC has now embarked on a new plan to identify certain universities with the potential for excellence. And certainty, at least a few universities have something to boast of.

In respect of post-graduate and research level the situations get complicated when confrontation comes between UGC and the state.

Limitations are there at both levels—The UGC and the state. Quantum of financial assistance and the policy of a particular state university (and its autonomy) are usual subject matter for debate. Here, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) rather than UGC is responsible. Political will can revamp such issues candidly and established good atmosphere between the two. Because such confrontations cannot be taken meanly if arise.

Undeniably the functioning of UGC is guided by the Union Government at the Centre. Ruling party got to play its role. Meaning policies come and go. The physical look of the institutions is there, but they experience a certain blow in terms of change in policies. In 2003, the former HRD Minister Murli Manohar Joshi had made it mandatory for all universities to seek government approval entering into collaboration with foreign universities or institutions. The first rule required all MOUs to be cleared by the HRD ministry in advance. And the second : all the state universities were to seek permission from the state government, while deemed universities were required to get UGC clearances. All these rules as of now are no more.

Result? Confrontations breed confrontation. Democratization of education however is the spirit behind all educational policies of secondary or higher education. Agencies of Indian education on all fronts must exercise their autonomy towards growth and development of the country. Red-tapes or interferences in the working educational organizations will prove to be a serious drawback.



22. Terrorism in India

Abstract : Terrorism has become a worldwide phenomenon with its many faces and manifestations. State-sponsored terrorism presents its worst form. Pol Pot in Cambodia let loose such a terrorism which killed millions of Cambodians. In India terrorism has been there in many states. Terrorists do not hesitate in using even the most cruel methods of violence and do not spare even women and children. In Punjab it has been Pakistan sponsored terrorism. It has been in control in Punjab but still not eliminated. Poverty, unemployment, deprivation and illiteracy make a good breeding ground for militancy extremism. In north-eastern states of India the terrorism has been on the rise and nothing effective has been done to check it. The tribal of these states have been victims of long neglect, deprivation, economic backwardness and

alienation. Similarly People's War Group (PWG) has been very active in Andhra Pradesh and has won support, sympathy and participation of the rural public in Telengana. The problem of terrorism need to be tackled on many fronts. It is a global menace and requires global co-operation between powers of the world to check and eradicate so devastating a phenomenon as terrorism.

The biggest threat that the nation-state faces today emanates from terrorism which is widespread geographically and diverse ideologically. Modern terrorism thrives on its ability to hit where it hurts the most. The practitioners of modern terrorism believe the world is beyond redemption. Irish terrorists, the Italian and Japanese Red Brigades, the Baader-Meinhoff gang in Germany, Islamic and Jewish fundamentalists have all sought to spread their ideology by the sword. Terrorist's use of explosives, machine-gun fire or other sophisticated use of arms has interrupted the prayers of dozens of worshippers of all religions and cut short the journey of bus, rail and air passengers.

Terrorism has many faces, forms and dimensions. It may be regional, national or global and international in scale. Then it may be regional, communal, political, state-sponsored or foreign in origin. It is found worldwide in one form or the other. The development of very fast means of transport, communication and very sophisticated automatic weapons, has given terrorism new dimensions, depth and immensity. With the globalization, economic integration and co-operation of the nations, the terrorism too has become unlimited and can be transported and transplanted to any part of the world easily.

It is a cult of violence, killings, murders, arson and destruction to perpetrate terror, fear and demoralization among the masses. It is in its worst form when it is state-sponsored. Then dictatorial and military rulers resort to violence, killings and shootings of people on suspicion or any other pretext and suppress human rights to make the public obey their unjust, discriminating dictates and administration. For example, Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, let loose the reign of terror in Cambodia between 1970 and 1975 and millions of its citizens were killed by its trigger-happy troops in uniform. Similarly, the Communist Government in China suppressed and killed people in thousands when they demanded political reforms, liberalization and freedom from tyranny in 1989. In Tiananmen Square alone outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, the main place of students demonstration, about 5,000 young students were shot dead and another 10,000 injured. In

Tibet as well, the followers of Dalai Lama and Buddhism are tortured and prosecuted by the government troops and administrators. The people there are being forcibly sterilized and their brains are being systematically washed. Dalai Lama himself fled Tibet and sought refuge in India to escape state-sponsored terrorism, violence and persecution. Now, he has his Government-in-exile at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh.

Terrorism in India is widespread and there seems no end to it, at least for the present. The way it has been spreading in states like Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, etc. and spilling-over other states alarmingly, is a matter of great concern. The trigger-happy terrorists and extremists have been using all kinds of violence and automatic weapons and bombs to terrorize people and the administration. Their strategies include killings, murders, bomb-explosions, destruction of houses, looting of banks, disruption of road, and rail transportation and other means of communication, desecration of religious places, hijacking and kidnapping, arson and looting. They rape women and do not even spare innocent children. In retaliation, sometimes there is more terrorism, bloodshed, violence and destruction. In the cross-fire between terrorists and the government, the innocent citizens suffer the most because then the opponent forces become totally blind and lose discrimination.

The militancy and terrorism in Punjab has been sponsored by neighbour Pakistan. The Pakistan's ISI has been supervising and financing the terrorists in the Punjab and adjoining States of Haryana and Rajasthan. It has misled the many young people in the name of religion and separate and independent state of Khalistan. The extremists are trained and armed in Pakistani camps and then smuggled across the border into India. They explode bombs, loot banks, ransack homes, hijack, buses and planes and kidnap people. The militancy and terrorism in Punjab has been curbed and controlled to a large extent but it has not been eliminated. The series of bomb blasts in Mumbai and other cities of India were planned in Pakistan and executed with their financial help. Mumbai has been the most preferred target for most terrorist organisation. Many operating with a base from Pakistan. Over the past few years, there have been series of attacks, including explosions in local trains in July 2006 and attack of 26 November 2008.

Again, terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has been Pakistan-sponsored. A number of terrorist outfits have been active there

supported, trained, armed and sneaked into the state by Pakistan. The extremists have given a communal colour to the violence and militancy and thousands of Kashmiri Hindus and Pundits have fled the state. The seeds of communal violence and extremism were really sown during the partition of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. The terrorists groups in Kashmir mainly consist of some politically frustrated groups, religious fundamentalists and mislead youth of the society. Poverty, unemployment, deprivation and illiteracy have made the region a good breeding ground for militancy. The terrorists indulge in all sorts of anti-social and anti-government activities to achieve their narrow, sectarian, political and unholy aims but they are unlikely to succeed in spite of massive financial and other support from Pakistan.

2004 Lok Sabha campaign in J&K—the Jaish-e-Mohammed leaflet in Mitari village, lays out a seven-point code of conduct for local residents. People’s Democratic party workers are “not to participate in the elections, or else face the consequences—which they understand”. Not only this—there has been scores of events of this nature in J&K. During the 2002 Assembly elections, 250 companies of the police and paramilitary forces had been pressed into service to hold the ground. Likewise, contrary to that what may happen this time (2004), and how many companies would be needed is a matter of great concern for the Election Commission.

The rise of terrorism and extremism in our north-eastern States of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur etc. is part of our colonial legacy. The long British rule never attempted to bring the tribal of these states into the main stream of the nation. Rather a feeling of separation, hatred, alienation and disharmony was created. Unfortunately even after 68 years of independence, our leaders and governments have failed to change the equation for better. Consequently, misled by a false sense of losing their ethnic identity and independence, they have taken to arms and extremism. Besides social-political and economic aspects there are some such other aspects as psychological, emotional and religious. As a result there has been no participation of the people of these states in the process of democracy and independence. They have been haunted by insecurity, neglect and alienation and want separate and independent states. To achieve their ends they commit heinous crimes like burning, looting and destroying of the homes and houses of other ethnic groups, killing government security personnel and soldiers. They explode bombs at public places and kill innocent

people. They also resort to abduction and kidnappings.

The **People's War Group (PWG)** has been quite active for a long time in Andhra Pradesh and now exercises control on a big part of the Telengana region. The poverty and unemployment coupled with illiteracy and exploitation of the weak and vulnerable sections of the society have made these parts of the state fertile ground for insurrection and terrorism. No effective steps were taken to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people and they were demoralized. In sheer desperation and misery they saw a ray of hope in the PWG movement and if the information is to be believed the militants have been delivering goods. The militant Naxalite outfits have been successful in winning the sympathy, favour and patronage of the down-trodden and long exploited masses who have always been at a receiving and at the hands of the corrupt government officials for many generations. Large parts of Telengana are now under effective control and administration of the PWG. Simply banning an extremist group is not enough, the genuine grievances of the public needs to be redressed at the same time. They need a healing touch besides social and economical developments and empowerment. Devaluation and decentralization of powers and economic resources at the grass root levels to the panchayat raj institutions is the need of the hour. Militancy and terrorism can be checked and eradicated only with the support and active participation of the people of the area.

The menace of terrorism needs to be tackled on many fronts. The cause of militancy and terrorism should be clearly and precisely identified and remedial steps taken. There should be clear understanding and cooperation between neighbouring countries on the matter to check terrorism. Moreover, national security and intelligence needs to be kept quite fit and updated. In the ultimate analysis terrorism achieves nothing, solves nothing. It is sheer madness to take to arms when there are many other democratic and constitutional means available to solve problems in a democratic country like India. Pakistan should also understand that its militant activities and terrorism in India will not succeed. They have already started boomeranging and Pakistan itself is in the worst conflagration of communal violence, frenzy, terrorism and bloodshed. Terrorism and its sponsors commit a crime against humanity at large and must be dealt with accordingly. It is a global danger and can be eliminated only by close co-operation between various communities and nations of the world.

All terrorist groups are criminals including even those who start with good intentions and objectives because sooner or later they degenerate into corrupt, criminal and anti-social groups. They become so blind in their over-ambition and misguided enthusiasm that they soon lose sense of balance and discrimination between good and evil. Most of the militant outfits have their origin in evil and sin. They are ruthless, rapacious and greedy and do not spare even children, women, old and weak people. They do not hesitate even to abduct and kill foreign tourists and visitors. It creates an endless vicious circle.

Terrorists become indiscriminate in their killings, shootings and violence. They have no religion, ethics, fellow-feelings and code of conduct. Terrorism drains a country of its valuable resources and enormous funds are spent in facing and checking it. It is said not in vain that prevention is better than cure. Our political leaders are mainly responsible for the origin and growth of terrorism in India in most of the cases. There is still time that they realize that national interest is above everything else and that unity and integrity of the nation is the hallmark of patriotism. Only patriotic feelings coupled with efforts in reduction of poverty, illiteracy, regional imbalances, and inequality among people can successfully face and fight the menace of terrorism.



23. Road Accidents

Abstract : Road transport in India is very popular for various reasons, but the condition of Indian roads is very poor and deplorable. The rate of road-accidents and fatality in the country is very high. Pressure on roads has been on increase and the number of vehicles is increasing by leaps and bounds. Lack of road-sense has further complicated the matters. Driving licenses are given on illegal gratifications to the authorities and traffic rules and regulations are thrown to the winds. Overloading is one of the major factors of road-accidents and deaths. The condition of the vehicles is hardly found road-worthy. The unmanned railway level-crossings further add to the chaos and confusion. The multiplicity of authorities and utter lack of co-ordination among them is another great source of worry. Drug-abuse and addiction by drivers is another major cause of accidents. The ever increasing use of mobile phones has posed a new challenge to road-safety. Immediate and effective steps should be taken to check the ever increasing number of road-accidents and deaths. Some very hard decisions in the matter is the need of the hour.

Roads in India are a popular means of both passenger and goods movement. Travel by road provides a lot of flexibility, convenience, speed and reliability, particularly at short distances in cities and towns. Therefore, it is the most preferred medium of transport. But Indian roads in cities, towns and those connecting them, has in a very poor condition. Their development and maintenance have not kept pace with the growth in vehicular population. Consequently, there are accidents, serious injuries and deaths all around. Indian roads are red with human blood.

The neglect of Indian roads is pathetic. In the 12th five year plan, ₹ 9,69,406 is decided to be spent on roads. The neglect and poor maintenance of Indian roads have made the road-travel very hazardous. About 60,000 lives are lost every year in road accidents. This fatality rate is 25 times that of the U.S.A. The pressure on roads is increasing abnormally and nothing effective and urgent is being done by the concerned authorities. The sale of passenger vehicles have increased from 15% to 3.5 million and the sale of commercial vehicles has increased from 13.5% to 8,52,000 during 2014. The number of vehicles in Delhi alone was 74.83 lakh in 2012. The sale of passenger vehicles have increased from 15% to 3.5 million and the sale of commercial vehicles has increased from 13.5% to 8,532,000 during 2014. It is more than the combined vehicle strength of three other metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The road length in Delhi during this period increased only to 27,000 km. from 10,000 km. The situation in other cities and towns is no better, in some cases still worse.

The writing on the wall is in bold and clear letters. The lack of road sense by the drivers and other users of the road has further complicated the matters. It is an open secret that people get driving licenses without knowing proper driving or the knowledge of the traffic rules. Lane-discipline is missing; road-safety measures are thrown to the winds; drivers, particularly the youth zigzag on the roads and the traffic police remains a silent spectator. Red-lights are often jumped, particularly in the early and late hours of the day. Over-speeding and violating the prescribed limit are also there in abundance. There is hardly any round-about discipline. The motorists often do not acknowledge that the vehicles on the right should be allowed to move first. The tendency to overtake is also responsible for many road accidents. Moreover, there are about 40 vehicles of different styles, both slow and fast moving which hamper the smooth flow of traffic.

Over-loading of passengers and goods is very common which is one of the main factors of accidents and deaths on the road. City buses are the worst offenders in this respect. They are always overcrowded and overloaded. In towns and villages also people can be seen sitting on the roof-tops of the buses. A family of wife and husband with their 2-3 children riding a two-wheeler is not an uncommon scene in towns and cities is utter disregard of the rules of road-safety. Consequently, there are heavy casualties and the authorities are sleeping over the problem oblivious of the urgency of the matter.

Like the roads, the condition of the vehicles is also a source of great worry. They are very old, rickety and unworthy of use and still they are running on the Indian roads to the great danger of users and others. It is estimated that 50 percent or more of the vehicles on the roads are not road-worthy. Indian tendency to flog the dead horse is quite obvious. Overloading and plying of substandard vehicles cause the rapid deterioration of roads besides accidents which may prove fatal. Then there are unmanned level crossings across the railway lines. Hundreds of people in India die in such accidents.

All these factors have made driving on Indian roads a nightmare. Newspapers are red with the daily reports of fatal road accidents. There is no co-operation and co-ordination between various agencies and authorities concerned with the control and regulation of road traffic, construction and maintenance of roads and those granting licenses to the drivers and registration to the vehicles. The roads in the cities are often owned and looked after by multiple agencies, that makes the confusion worse confounded. For example in Delhi, besides Transport Authority and traffic police there are Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), Public Works Department (PWD) and the National Highway Organization (NHO).

The latter four are mainly responsible for the construction of the roads and their proper maintenance. The quality of the roads is substandard. They are often full of potholes, rough and uneven stretches. In rainy season their condition becomes the worst. The lack of proper road-lights, signs etc. also contribute their portion of the road hazard. The pavements on both sides of the road are not free from encroachments. There are shops, khokas, dhabas, workshops etc. on the pavements meant for pedestrians. The repair shops park their vehicles right on the road and thus cause congestion and reduce the valuable

road space. Poor road and street-drainage further add to the problem of accident.

Addiction and drug-abuse is another area of concern. Many times an accident takes place because the driver is a drug addict. The drivers of many types of vehicles are found driving after taking drugs or alcohol. These drivers can be addicted to one or more drugs. They are in a state of intoxication while driving. Most of the drivers belong to poor middle class or lower sections of the society. They are engaged in driving trucks, buses, three-wheelers, tempos etc. and are often overworked. To overcome their fatigue they often take intoxicants and then drive and cause accidents. Intoxication leads to the clouding of perception and errors in judgement. This leads to overtaking, reckless driving etc. and then to ultimate accidents. There are accidents, road-accidents, hit and run cases because of the abuse of drugs. In many cases public transport drivers are found regular users of drugs. They drive buses and lorries and are drug addicts or alcoholics at the same time. They turn public transport system in the cities into a definite killer-trap. Drivers often have ready cash as they are paid on daily basis and so it makes far easier to have access to alcohol or drugs.

The increased use of mobile phones is also a factor which poses a challenge to road safety. The elite and rich drivers often use their mobile phones while being on the move in their cars. This results in accidents and crashes. These phones have added further to the already worsening situation of road deaths and accidents. Driving and using the mobile phone simultaneously may cause loss of control of the vehicle or concentration needed in safe and sane driving.

To prevent these accidents, it is imperative that effective long and short term measures are immediately taken. Road safety should be a compulsory school subject. Roads should be properly maintained any looked after. There should be multi-lane roads wherever necessary. There should be separate tracks for slow moving vehicles from those of fast and very fast moving vehicles. There should be an effective check on speed of the vehicles. Radar guns can be used to check the speed. Violation of traffic rules should be strictly dealt with. Grant of driving licenses and permits to vehicles should be properly streamlined. Those driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol should be given exemplary punishment and their licenses cancelled. There should be heavy fines as well besides imprisonment. Road tax should be increased as a measure to reduce vehicle population on the roads. People should

be encouraged to use public transport system instead of their own cars etc. particularly when they are single. They can also pool cars so as to avoid road congestion. There should be very strict rules in regard to issue of driving licenses and registration of vehicles. Above all, there should be proper awareness among the masses about road safety, observation of traffic rules and the proper use of the roads and national highways.



24. The Problem of Insurgency

Abstract: The graph of insurgency and organized violence is on increase in India. The poor and backward states are the worst victims of it. The naxalites, ethnic extremist groups, senas etc. have let lose a reign of terror in many parts of the country. The private mercenary armies in Bihar have created a virtual chaos. In many violent cases there has been police and insurgent nexus. Appalling poverty and illiteracy are the two major causes that give rise to insurgency. In north-eastern states, the situation is becoming worse day by day. Insurgency has become a cottage industry in these parts of the country. Some quick and effective socio-economic measures, poverty alleviation, removal of illiteracy are the needs of the hour.

The graph of organized crimes and violence shows rapid upward trend. Left activists, naxalites, ethnic groups, mafias and various types of Senas have become quite active in various parts of the country of late. In the backward and least developed states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura etc. the organized violence and killings are on the increase. The more backward and poor rise in the region, the greater the insurgent activities. In the poor rural areas of Andhra Pradesh, the naxalite violence has increased sharply in the recent years. Thousands of men, women and children become victims of senseless violence and organized killings every year. In December 2014, a series of attacks by militants resulted in deaths of more than 76 in India.

Bihar is equally bad as far as violence, killings, and terrorism, in an organized way, is concerned. Naxalites of various shades and Senas—the private mercenary armies have let loose an era of terror there. And the state government is looking on helplessly. The police and security system seems to have failed completely. The political leaders and parties lack the required will to tackle the menace. Violence and killings have

become an industry in Bihar. The police-politician-criminal nexus in Bihar is an open secret. Bihar has earned the dubious distinction of being the most violent and corrupt state. Killings, kidnapping, loot and violence have become the order of the day. Cases of kidnapping and cases of kidnapping for ransom are on rise. The banned outfits are richly armed with modern sophisticated weapons. The private armies and senas have a huge quantity of licensed and unlicensed arms and ammunition. The trigger-happy anti-social elements are having a roaring success and business. There has been sudden spurt in dacoities and incidents of train robberies. And the common man is the worst affected.

Most of the killings and violence in Bihar are planned and organized. The problem demands a well coordinated action comprising rapid improvement in roads, communication and implementation of land reforms besides strict enforcement of law. Special developmental and employment projects needs to be taken immediately to tackle with the rapidly deteriorating law and order situation. Poverty alleviation, elementary education, employment and welfare schemes should be given the highest priority.

Poverty-stricken and undeveloped rural regions of the country are virtual breeding grounds for such organized violence, killings, crimes and insurgency. Those militant outfits succeed to win the sympathy and support of the unemployed youth, suppressed and weak sections of the society and labourers and marginal farmers who have always been at the receiving end at the hands of the administration, law and justice, landlords and money lenders. For example, the People's War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh has been quite successful in its aim of liberating a part of the state from the so-called bourgeoisie rule with the popular support of the rural public. Large tracts of Telengana are now under PWG's effective rule and administration and the government has no say. The outfit receives taxes and levies from the people. It has also taken up developmental activities with the active participation and consultation with the people. Behind this dramatic success of PWG lies people's popular support and sympathy.

Banning of extremist outfits and insurgent groups does not provide the remedy as we have seen in many cases. In our north-eastern states the situation is deteriorating in spite of many administrative decisions and actions to check the violence. With the strict law enforcement, special development schemes to alleviate poverty and suffering of the people should also be taken. It is this double pronged strategy that can

work wonders. For example, Tripura has been on the boil and the tribal versus non-tribal conflict has achieved new heights and proportions because of half-hearted decisions and wrong policies. The All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) and other extreme outfits have constantly been demanding deportation of all foreigners from the state. If one group surrenders there, then another takes its place with more vigour and vengeance. It seems insurgency has become a cottage industry in the province. And the political parties are busy exploiting the situation for their petty party ends.

Firm and strict enforcement of laws coupled with meaningful and timely socio-economic measures is the only remedy. Socio-economic measures including the reconstitution of the **North-Eastern Council (NEC)** and setting up a central university in Mizoram and unconditional talks with insurgent groups are now Centres main concern which will certainly improve the situation in the north-east regions.

Undoubtedly, there cannot be any peace without proper, employment opportunities, food, shelter, clothing and economic development of the region. The economic schemes so far implemented have been quite inadequate and so have failed miserably to fulfil the expectations of the local people. The corruption in administration has been widespread and people are a frustrated lot. The great portion of vast funds allotted for various schemes has reached the pockets of the bureaucrats, contractors and the middlemen. The entire population of these states suffers from a deep sense of neglect, frustration and exploitation. They desperately need a healing touch besides economical package.



25. Unity in Diversity

Abstract : India has been culturally one country and nation since time immemorial with its many diversities notwithstanding. Geographically also it has been one country with its boundaries well-defined. Indian geography and cultures have been great unifying factors. Tolerance has been a hallmark of Indian thought and culture. Consequently, there has flourished many religions and innumerable sects, co-existing and living in peace with one another. The communal violence over the years is an aberration and legacy of the British rule. During the course of its long history many other cultures have been absorbed and assimilated here making Indian culture a

composite one without losing its Indian mould and traits. It is because of these qualities of tolerance and assimilation that it has never stagnated or ceased to evolve. It also signifies wisdom and inner growth of man. Modern economic, political and scientific changes and common interests and attitudes have further strengthened these bonds of unity and integrity amidst diversity.

India, with the second largest population in the world, scores of languages and dialects, many religions and innumerable sects, different styles of living and varied cultures, one of the most ancient and continuous civilizations of the world etc. presents the best example of unity in diversity. India has been a melting pot of various civilizations, cultures, religions and philosophies since hoary past. Unity and synthesis run through the entire fabric of the Indian society.

Besides cultural unity, there is geographical unity with its well defined political and physical boundaries. India is the largest democracy in the world with 55-years of modern democratic history behind it. It is so fascinating and fantastic with all its variety of colours, climates, regions, dresses, diets, races, customs, rites, rituals and cults. All these varieties and diversities notwithstanding, India has always been one integrated whole as a nation from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Dibrugarh (Assam) to Dwarka (Uttaranchal).

When we think and talk of India, we think of one great ancient country, culturally, politically and geographically well-knit as a nation. Indian culture and civilization has been a great unifying factor. The many diversities of faith, manners, life-style, food-habits etc. may confound a stranger but in essence they represent the different patterns, colours and designs of the same fabric. They look many and separate but collectively derive their strength and life from the same one eternal source. This spirit of unity in diversity is well enshrined in our Constitution which says that it is the primary duty of every citizen to “promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India, transcending religions, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities.”

Indian unity in diversity has been an unbroken tradition, faith and conviction since time immemorial. All the citizens of the country are like millions and millions of leaves of one majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots, because they are deep down in the bowels of history, tradition and civilization. At heart all Indians are one as a nation and civilization. Unity among different religions, races, castes,

communities, philosophies and styles of living in India has been at the root of its nationalism and common bonds since the dawn of civilization. There has been a kind of divine unity of purpose and togetherness behind so many apparent diversities. Truth is one but the sages call it by many different names. Similarly, India has always been one as a country and nation in spite of numberless diversities and varieties.

Tolerance and respect for all faiths and religions has been the hallmark of Indian philosophy and practice. The religious life of India makes a complex but a wonderful pattern. This tolerance is the only thing that makes persons belonging to different faiths to live like fellow citizens, good neighbours and friends. Hinduism has the largest following. Nearly 80.5 percent of the population are Hindus. Then there are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs etc. Muslims in India form the largest religious minority and that makes India one of the largest Islamic nations. Christianity in India is very old. St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Christ, was the first to preach Christianity in India. The Parsis came to India seeking refuge from religious persecution in Iran. The Jews came quite early, nearly 2000 years ago. All these faiths, philosophies and religions have been here all these centuries in harmony, peace and tolerance and the communal clashes and violence in recent decades may be regarded as an aberration and legacy of the British rule. Fundamentally, India is a secular country and yet profoundly spiritual and religious. India has always believed in freedom of thought, expression, faith and worship. The people of this ancient and holy land have always been at liberty to pursue cultural, religious, spiritual and material goals of their own selection and choice. They have varied views and opinions on religion, political systems, economic order, social problems etc. and yet they belong to one nation. This variety of thoughts and life-styles springs from one common root of its cultural unity. In the course of history many diverse cultures and traditions have fused into one pattern. First there was fusion of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures and then there was that of many other races, cultures and faiths. There has been fission as well within larger social and ethnic groups but without any harm to national unity and integrity. Indian rituals, traditions, social systems, literary and artistic achievements have always been the same. The institutions like family, marriage etc. are the same throughout the country. Most of Indian festivals are observed with great enthusiasm by all the sections and castes of the society.

The cultural and emotional bonds in Indians are very strong. They are equally strong among non-resident Indians (NRIs) spread all over the world. They find their best manifestation during cultural events, festivals, fairs, celebrations and national crisis. Indian culture has its roots in generations thousands of years ago reaching to Indus Valley Civilization and beyond. It has an immense power and capacity to imbibe and absorb all good alien influences. Had it not been this tolerance and power to assimilate foreign cultural influences, Indian culture, thought, philosophy and civilization would now have been extinct as has been in the case of many ancient civilizations of the world. There has been useful interaction between the culture of India and that of other countries for the last several millennia and in the process the Indian mind has assimilated much of the useful thoughts and concepts of the cultures of other nations and yet the basic element of Indian ness remains. Thus, Indian culture has never stagnated because of its great powers of tolerance, assimilation, dynamism and depth. Indian culture has had enormous effect on the cultures of the world. Indian culture also means wisdom and inner growth of the people of India who have great capacity and power to understand and appreciate the other people and nations.

Under the influence of this one common culture, the different races, communities, religions and sects have come together blending into one organic national whole. The impact of modern science, technology, economy and unity of interests and attitudes has further strengthened these bonds of unity, fraternity and nationalism. Our common values, traditions, customs, art forms etc. constitute what may be called national culture and civilization. In India there has been a great cultural unity. Our arts, crafts, way of living and thinking, customs and traditions have been basically the same.

The cultural unity and integrity of India has never been in doubt. India has always been invincible culturally and historically. The invaders came and conquered India geographically but its spirit and essence remained unconquerable. The conquerors then settled down and were finally assimilated and conquered by the culture of India. India's integration and unity in diversity is based on its rock foundation of centuries old culture. Human values, traditions and the way of living, which constitute culture, have been common to all the people of India.



26. 67 Years of Indian Independence

Abstract: Freedom came to India accompanied by accursed partition. Soon after partition another great shock awaited India in the form of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. During these years of independence, India has failed on many fronts like food security, health, literacy, sanitation etc. and the quality of life has been very poor. The literacy rate among women is just 40 percent and as low as 20 percent in some states. Selfish, corrupt and power-seeking politicians have been a great bane and they have criminalized Indian politics. In the fields of poverty alleviation, law and order, justice, employment, the scene before us is not a happy one. The strengthening of democracy coupled with advancement in science and technology has been the only saving grace. In the matter of national security too, our policy has been weakened. But India is a big country and the largest democracy. The supreme power rests with the people who have grown wise and politically mature. They are strongly united in bonds of nationality and brotherhood.

67 years ago at midnight of 15th August, 1947 India became a free, independent, democratic and sovereign country after a long colonial rule of 200 years. The freedom was ushered in with the famous words of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who proclaimed, "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. At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom." But it was a mixed blessing because freedom came accompanied by so painful and traumatic partition of the sub-continent into two nations : India and Pakistan on the basis of which the subsequent years and events have proved totally false and baseless.

Partition brought unparalleled misery, pain, suffering and killings. The price of freedom paid in terms of human misery, suffering, anguish, shame, bloodshed and massive migration of people was too much and too traumatic. Even today its memory sends shivers down the spine. It was the greatest human migration that history has ever experienced. India won freedom from the colonial rule without violence, without bloodshed under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and his most trusted companions but then it ended in unprecedented massacre, violence and pools of blood of innocent men, women and children. And then finally, the priest and incarnation of non-violence himself was brutally sacrificed when a fanatic pumped three bullets in Mahatma's

chest. It was the greatest shock that India had ever known and experienced. Soon after the golden dawn of freedom, the skies of India were overcast with the darkest possible clouds of gloom, despair and madness.

Indian history and civilization goes back to over 5,000 years and as such the time span of 62 years looks too short to be counted and yet it is big enough for an individual Indian citizen with a life-expectancy of 63 years for man and 67 for women. India has failed miserably to ensure health, sanitation and good living. In these matters India is near the bottom of the list of major countries of the world. The scene in respect of food and literacy is equally bleak. Half of India's population still lives on the frontier of existence. Nearly 40 percent of the country's population is victim of destitution, hunger and malnourishment. Starvation deaths and repetition of Kalahandi (Orissa) are still there in spite of green revolution. We claim to have achieved food sufficiency but it is seemingly so because of 7-8 successive good monsoons. It is also because the majority of the people lack the purchasing power and, therefore, there are enough food-stocks.

We have not been able to make any appreciable progress in literacy. The female literacy is 52.1 percent in Rajasthan. The rate of dropout at elementary level is very high.

The dedicated and committed leaders of 1940s and 1950s were replaced by power-seeking and selfish politicians who made false promises at the time of elections to win the support of the electorate. They indulge in all sorts of corrupt practices and have had nexus with criminals. Scams and scandals involving billions of rupees are galore and there is no end to the dark tunnel. There is clear divorce between politics and ethics. Corruption, red-tapes and nepotism have grown by leaps and bounds and the whole administration and machinery of state is bubbling and boiling over with corruption. Not even the one-fifth of the money allocated to a public project reaches the target. Communalism, caste theory, regionalism and parochialism is gaining more and more ground. On pollution and population fronts, the situation is equally grim. The rich are becoming richer and the poor still poorer.

The economic liberalization and opening up of the country's economy have started yielding dividends but the benefits so far have been confined to the upper middle class only. The reform process needs

to be expedited and the circle of its beneficiaries widened. The country has yet to redeem its tryst with destiny in respect of the poor, the deprived, the downtrodden, the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society. The picture before us is that of wasted years with some rays of light and hope here and there. There has been steady deterioration in law and order situation and murders shoot outs, killings, rapes, kidnappings, police atrocities have become very common. Daily newspapers are red with the news of such terrible happenings. The mills of justice take too long to grind and the end result is far from fine and just. The generation of productive employment opportunities too has been very poor. It inched up to 37.5 percent of the total population in 1991 from 36.7 percent in 1981. There were estimated 64 million unemployed people in 1991.

What inspires hope and confidence is the fact that democracy has further been strengthened and the public has grown in political maturity and understanding. The ballot boxes have prevailed and there have been smooth transition from one government to another. The judiciary at higher levels has played more active role to safeguard the interests of the public at large. In the field of science and technology also we have made good progress particularly in the areas of space technology, communication, computer application and missile technology.

India has seen four wars since independence; three with Pakistan and one with China. As far as wars with Pakistan are concerned, India has inflicted a humiliating defeat each and every time. The last war with Pakistan saw the birth and liberation of Bangladesh and India played the leading role as its saviour. But the war with China in 1962 was a bitter experience because of complacency and fond hope that China was our true friend and a peace-loving country having firm faith in the principles of Panch Sheel. Since then China has taken long strides in nuclear weaponry and missile technology and is fast emerging as a super power but India has not learnt anything from the past history and experience. There are many loose ends and wide gaps in our defence system and we are surrounded by hostile and powerful neighbours. We have kept the nuclear option open but not exercised it so far under the pressure from the western nuclear powers. It is the need of the hour, that we immediately transform our 'deployable' capabilities into 'deployed' capabilities and have effective and powerful nuclear deterrents and their delivery system. In defence, technologies soon become obsolete

if they are not continuously upgraded, revised and updated. Time is the essence in such matters.

India is a big country and the biggest democracy. Democracy and democratic institution have thrived here well all these 55 years since independence. In spite of many dilemmas and drawbacks, India will emerge, in near future, as a great economic and political power. The present turmoil, chaos and crisis are a passing phase; travails of an imminent golden dawn full of hope, confidence, peace, stability and more resilience, because the ultimate power rests with the people and they have grown in wisdom, maturity and discretion during all these 67 years of independence. There may not be much to celebrate and the blessings are too few to be counted, but at the same time there is no room for despondency, gloom and pessimism. If winter comes, can spring be far behind. India is a big and united country. It represents a unique example of unity in diversity. A deep historical and cultural sense of unity pervades its whole fabric. Brotherhood, tolerance, mutual respect and goodwill are the foundation-stones of a united and great democracy and India has these in abundance.



27. World's Largest Democracy

Abstract: Democracy is a political set-up in which public is the ultimate power. India is a democratic country based on the system of adult franchise and indirect participation by the people in the government. All people are equal before law in India. It is a democratic ideal based on equality of opportunity. India is a democratic and welfare state which implies reasonably good quality of life to all its citizens. But in this respect India has failed. The economic and social contents have not been realized yet and there is a lot of poverty, illiteracy, hunger and deprivation. Elections in India are not as free, fair and fearless as they ought to be. There is an urgent need of electoral reforms. Defections, unholy alliances, criminalization of politics and nexus between political leaders and mafia dons and gangsters are some other dangers being faced by Indian democracy.

According to Abraham Lincoln democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. In other words the ultimate power rests with the people who form the electorate to elect their representatives. Thus, the sovereignty lies in the people and is manifested through their opinion and will. It is a political set-up by

consent of the voters. In a genuine democracy, the consent of the people is active and effective. People exercise this consent from time to time indirectly through their elected representatives. The consent given to the representatives to govern and make laws can be withdrawn by the people when they so desire.

India is a democratic country. Here the will and consent of the majority prevail. It is a government in which each and every individual has some participation, some share. Democracy provides for the expression and development of the individuals. Every individual here has the freedom to realize his intellectual, economical and spiritual potentials to the maximum. This means that Indian democracy is a political arrangement with particular economic, social and political approach. As a political arrangement and approach there is adult and universal suffrage. It means every individual who has attained the age of 18 years has a vote irrespective of his or her social status, religion, caste, qualifications, education etc. It follows the principle of one vote one person. Thus, all are equal and there is no distinction, no discrimination in the matter of casting votes. This political arrangement cuts across all the differences and establishes dignity and integrity of man as a man.

In India everybody is equal before law. Each and every human being is guaranteed freedom to develop himself to the fullest possible extent without any hindrance. Equality is the essence of democracy and all the citizens have equality of opportunity but it never means regimentation and rigid uniformity. And this lends variety, diversity and plurality in unity. As a nation India is one but as individuals the citizens are free to follow their own individual faith, religion, desires and ways of life. It means individual diversities and national unity and integrity are not incompatible but rather complementary. Unity never means equalization of abilities and skills. In the creation no two human beings are exactly alike, not even twins. All men and women cannot be equal in the sense that each and every person has his own characteristic traits, habits, skills, abilities, mental gravitation and attainments. Equality is a democratic ideal which means that all citizens must have the equal opportunities to realize their possibilities.

The economic aspect of democracy means that each and every citizen is made to live a good and meaningful life with at least minimum needs of life easily available. Democracy means bridging the gap between the rich and the poor and raising the standard of living of the masses. True

democracy implies that nobody goes to bed hungry, that he has at least simple roof over his head and clothes to cover his body. These are the ideals of democracy, challenges which should be faced and met. India is struggling hard to abolish poverty, illiteracy, ill health, malnutrition, hunger, starvation etc. These are some of the economic and social contents of democracy without which democracy loses much of its meaning. Political freedom becomes meaningless amidst appalling poverty, illiteracy, hunger, disease, suffering and miseries. In this sense India is lagging far behind in spite of 67 years of independence. The number of the deprived, downtrodden, unemployed and even without bare necessities of life is on the increase and the poor are becoming more poor and miserable.

The Indian Constitution grants and guarantees all the basic freedom and rights to its citizens. The fundamental rights are justifiable and non-violable but in practice there still prevail exploitation, inequality, sex-bias, caste-apartheid, injustice, gross neglect of the poor, hunger and deprivation. In these adverse circumstances how can one be expected to be proud of democracy. How can a man be expected to share in the process of democracy, cast his vote fearlessly when he happens to be illiterate and living below poverty line? Patriotism, civic-sense, national spirit etc. become empty and meaningless words for a hungry and suffering person. Unless there is security against ill health, unemployment, poverty and deprivation democracy cannot be there in the true sense of the term. Success of democracy depends on many factors including well educated and enlightened voters, well looked after citizens, free and fearless press, multiparty political system, peace, stability, a deep sense of belonging and genuine equality of opportunities and before law. Democracy is a faith, an emotional bond, a feeling of wellbeing and satisfaction. It implies tolerance, adjustment, devolution of powers and responsibilities and willing obedience to just laws. It is a great political, social and moral order and arrangement where human rights are held in high respect, where disputes are settled peacefully and governments are changed constitutionally through the might of ballot.

India is the largest democracy in the world and has completed 56 years of its existence. During the course of this period many general elections have been held and governments changed at the Centre and the States. But how fair and fearless these have been is a big question. Money and muscle power have been in use widely during elections.

Political leaders and parties use all corrupt means including criminals and gangsters to influence voting and election results in their favor. Fair is foul and foul fair for them. Money is extorted from corporate houses, business establishments and wealthy individuals in the name of election fund and political rallies. Caste-theory, communalism, regionalism etc. find their full expression in elections. Votes are bought en masse by the rich and influential candidates and politics has become a dirty game being played by dishonest, unscrupulous and immoral people. These are some of the great threats to our democracy and need to be addressed immediately. There is an urgent need of wide and fundamental electoral reforms.

Democracy is a great institution and so likely to be greatly abused in the absence of proper checks and balances. For want of enlightenment, literacy and education it can easily degenerate into mobs and the government of fools and utter selfish and ambitious people.

Defection and desertion is another great danger to Indian democracy. Political leaders without policies, programmes, principles and moral values often change their loyalties from one faction to another for petty personal and party gains and destabilize the governments and balance of power. Such unscrupulous leaders do not hesitate to cause split in their political parties to grab power with the help of other political factions with whom they have no harmony, understanding or policy-accord at all. Such unholy alliances and strange bed-fellowship have abnormally increased in recent years. There are anti-defection laws but they are full of loopholes which encourage manipulations. Moreover, it is not the law alone which makes democracy a success. Ultimately it is man and his spirit of democracy that matters the most.

Criminalization of politics poses a great danger to our democracy. Politicians in high places and positions have nexus with criminals, mafias, and antisocial elements and use them blatantly against their adversaries. Political murders, kidnappings, abductions and threats have become very common. They indulge in buying of the votes, threatening the voters, booth-capturing, violence, shooting and killing during the election and in such a situation democracy becomes a sheer mockery. Election Commission should be made autonomous and vested with more statutory powers to curb some of these evils effectively. There should be transparency in election-funding, electioneering and

expenditure of the candidates. Often the party in power misuses electronic media for its electioneering purpose. All these evils be checked and eliminated.



28. Global Currency

Abstract: Since the past many years, economists all over the world have been considering the idea of a global currency. Though, some economists have conceded to the idea saying that it will help the world by reducing inequalities, controlling competition, increasing investment, reducing the chances of war, controlling inflation and controlling fluctuations among others, there are several who have rejected the idea because of the problems that a global currency will bring forth. In this essay, we will look at both the sides of the coin and try to present a balanced approach to the problem of a world currency.

Imagine a world where, when you plan to travel, you do not need to acquire the currency of that country. What you have in your pocket is what would suffice. Alternatively, imagine a world where you are not looked down upon because you belong to a particular country and the economy of your country is not that strong. How would you feel if this happens? Now the next question that you would ask me is that is it possible? Yes. It is possible.

The possibility of the above lies in the introduction and successful use of a global currency. A global currency, also known as a world currency or a supranational currency, refers to a currency in which majority of the transactions the world over would be concluded. The concept of a global currency was first put forward by Keynes. This idea was backed by China and Russia even as late as in 2009 following the global economic crisis that they faced. Even a panel of UN economists supported this idea and suggested replacing the US-dollar by the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Wikipedia defines SDRs as international foreign exchange reserve assets. These can be used to represent a claim to foreign currencies for which it may be exchanged in times of need.

For many years, the US-Dollar enjoyed the status of a global currency. The currencies of a lot of countries are pegged against the dollar. In fact, some countries, like El Salvador, Panama and Ecuador

have totally forgone their currencies and adopted the US-Dollar as their currencies. Then in the 1980s, the importance of the US-Dollar was challenged by the Japanese Yen. But with Japan facing an economic crisis in the 1990, the US-Dollar gained back its supremacy. Today, the Euro is posing threats to the supremacy of the US-Dollar.

All said and done, we really need to look at the feasibility of adopting a single currency for the whole world.

A global currency would help control the trading costs to a large extent. Any kind of money circulation has a .33 % cost associated with it. This is why, as a cost of circulation for the 190 currencies in circulation, a lot of money is wasted. A global currency would eliminate this cost and a lot of money, time and inconvenience would be saved.

Currencies generally fluctuate because they are pegged with other currencies and because of the market forces. Speculation in the market also can force a currency to fluctuate and thus damage a country's economy. A single currency would help do away with these kinds of speculations, thus fluctuations and eventually the damage caused by this.

Another advantage of a single currency would be the elimination of the risk of a currency failure. As single currency would be dependent on the whole world, any single occurrence anywhere in the world would not be able to shake a currency. Even if it does, the advantages from the other part of the world would counter the effect and thus stabilize the currency. Secondly, the chances of the primary industry of the world failing or the global government falling are very low. Thus a global currency is a fool proof method to avoid currency failure.

A single currency would go a long way in aligning the value of assets of different countries. It would be particularly advantageous for those countries that are suffering from substantial country risk.

A single global currency would eradicate the need for a country to maintain reserves of international currencies. This eliminates the risk of losses caused due to the international currency suddenly losing its value.

A global currency would also help in reducing the world wide inflation rate. Using a global currency, the world wide inflation rate can be reduced and maintained at an acceptable 2 %. A controlled inflation rate would also ensure that the rate of interest for loans also stabilizes and do not rise.

When the risk of currency failure is totally eliminated in a country, financiers and investors tend to look at that country as an attractive place to invest in. The choice of investors to invest in the country then depends only on the product quality and cost of production of that country. This way, all the countries get an equal opportunity to attract investors and financiers.

An ideal view with respect to a global currency would also say that in a world where there is no competition on the basis of currencies, the bigger and better-off brothers and sisters would be expected to take care of the smaller and not-so-well-off brothers and sisters. But, would this be true. It would be quite difficult and as we do not live in an ideal society, a single currency is also bound to cause various disadvantages. Let us take a quick look at these disadvantages also.

The most primary concern of economists all over the world is that whichever country's currency would be selected to act as the global currency would enjoy a dominating status over the other countries. Countries that have a weak economy would be left at the mercy of those countries that have a stronger economy.

Accepting a single currency would force smaller and less powerful countries to forego their sovereignty to quite an extent. The hands of their governments would be tied and they would not be able to take a decision when faced with internal problems. They would feel handicapped as it would not be able to implement monetary policies independently.

Till the time a global currency is not in play, the internal markets are well protected with the help of tools like closed door policies and government protection. However, once a global currency is accepted, trade barriers would disappear and the weaker countries would have to face a major challenge trying to protect their markets. This could prove to be quite challenging and also controversial leading to irreparable damage.

When a global currency is implemented, the task of developing the world becomes quite difficult. This happens because any person would want to invest in a rich and thus, more stabilized economy rather than a poor and thus less stabilized economy. This would make the richer countries prosper more and create a striking contrast between the rich and the poor countries.

Apart from these direct disadvantages, practical problems will also arise in implementing a global currency. The first and the foremost

problem is that several of the countries all over the world are economically incompatible with each other. This brings us to a practical problem of making them compatible so that the global currency is acceptable to all the countries.

The second problem that arises is that of political beliefs. Each and every country has its own political barriers. No ruling party would accept losing its monetary sovereignty. Therefore, implementing a global currency would be quite difficult.

Advocates of a global currency would continually cite the example of the Euro that has managed to govern all the countries in the European Union (EU). We must not forget that even the implementation of this currency was not smooth. The weaker nations of the EU faced a lot of problems as their staples became extremely expensive. Though, there were some nations that gave up their economic sovereignty, there were others like the Great Britain, which refused to do so. They retained their own currency saying that they would like to tackle their own problems.

In spite of the advantages and the disadvantages, we cannot ignore that there are practical problems in implementing a global currency. Taking any drastic steps like this would require a deep and well thought of economics. And as economics is not an exact science, a global currency might prove to be a case where all of our eggs are placed in one basket.



29. India and the Global Economy

Abstract: India is a part of the global economy as it is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. Based on its development after the New Economic Reforms of 1991, India has earned the title, “Economic Powerhouse of India”. Studying the suitability of the title, it can be said that though India has progressed in certain fields earning itself this title, there is still a long way to go before India can become one of the leading economies of the world by 2020. India needs to look into its social setup and cultural values and then plan an economic venture that would make India a household name.

The global economy is dependent on the individual as well as the joint economies of all the countries. A lot of interest is being displayed in the economies of developing countries as these today form the foundation stone of the global economy. An important role in this

regard is played by the Indians and the Indian economy.

After the new economic reforms were brought into practice, India took rapid strides to achieve the status of a leader in some core important industries. Slowly, with the passage of time, India and Indians have managed to blend themselves in the world economy. In fact, the rapid pace of development set by the Indian economy has earned it the title of “Economic Powerhouse of Tomorrow”.

Delving the deeper into the origin of the title, it is believed that amongst the four important and emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China, India has the potential to grow the fastest. India and Indians all over the world are expected to register a growth rate of more than 5 percent even as late as in 2050. This expectation is based on the belief that India is a competitive and labour intensive country. Add to this the fact that India has a strong industrial and export oriented industrial framework and you have the future destination of extremely competitive and cost effective production.

Another factor, that has contributed in strengthening India's position in the global market is its confidence. The roots of this confidence lie in the history and the culture of India. It is recognised worldwide that some of the basic concepts like the zero, decimal system; and the likes emerged from India. In fact, Indians have established themselves all over the world as the movers and shakers by introducing novel concepts and going further than every conceivable limit. Even in contemporary India, it has reached benchmarks that were deemed impossible for a country that is still dependent on its agriculture. India has the second largest network of roadways in the world. Considering this, a growth rate as high as 6 percent, which is even higher than that of China, is no longer considered an unachievable feat for India.

In addition to the Indians working in India, there is a large number of Indians who are also generating income from working outside the Indian subcontinent. Indians today, are known for their hard work and consistency. They have slowly climbed the ladder to rule the different spheres of life be it economics, literature, music, science or sports. There is a long list of Indians that have worked to solidify their positions in their chosen fields. Some recognised names that have excelled include A.R. Rahman, M. F. Hussain, Sabeer Bhatia, Azim H. Premji, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, R. K. Narayan, Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Abdul Kalam Azad, Sachin Tendulkar, Pullela Gopichand, S. Ramanujan, Kalpana

Chawla, Rabindranath Tagore, Mother Teresa and many more.

According to a rough estimate, Indians alone are responsible for a little more than one percent of GDP of the United States. The enormity of this estimate can be grasped from the fact that India's share in the global GDP, as stated by the International Monetary Fund, has risen consistently from a mere 0.96 percent in 1981 – 1985 to an astounding 2.2 percent as on December 2009. This figure can be better understood when compared with the 8.3 percent share of China and the 25.7 percent share of the United States in the global GDP, by the same source.

Another parameter to understand India's share in the global GDP is the net increase in the share percentage of the GDP all over the world. India, though much behind China, in their increase in the share of global GDP, has performed remarkably. This is asserted as it was seen that during this period, the share in global GDP of many of the developed countries reduced rather than increasing. Taking this into account and also accepting that India is an emerging economy, whose third of the population is still under the poverty line, it is extremely laudable that India has managed not only to maintain its share in the global GDP, but has also increased it substantially. Being the eleventh largest economy of the world, in terms of GDP, nothing less was expected from India.

India has also managed to position itself extremely well in the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rankings. It is the fourth largest economy based on the PPP. In terms of PPP, India's share of global income is an amazing 5.5 percent as of 2010.

Another marker on which India's position in the global economy can be measured is its share in global trade. India is known for its agriculture as well as industrial products. Major products that are exported from India include gems and jewellery, petroleum products, drugs, pharmaceuticals, medical appliances, textile goods, information technology enabled services and machinery and equipment, among others.

India's position in the global economy is also reflected by the net inflow of money that the country receives. India has become the fourth largest economy in the world due to a strong economic growth. The government has worked continuously since the 1980s to set reforms in the country to make foreign direct investment (FDI) more attractive for investors. A major attraction for portfolio investment has been the young and optimistic equity market of India. The trust placed in this

market is so much that India ranks first as far as preferred destination for portfolio investments are concerned. India is expected to maintain this status because of its sturdy macroeconomic environment, raise in trade share, improvement in production and better technology upgradation.

The Indian stock market is also comparable to the international stock markets in terms of market trading and settlement system and turnover. India has the lowest transaction settlement cost in the world. This is because of its having the latest technology in the world which comprises of screen based transactions, paperless trading and a T-2 settlement cycle. Thanks to these features, India had more than 9000 companies listed in its stock exchange. This is the second largest listing of companies, after the US. Based on this, India also has the third largest investor base in the world.

While India has managed to gain a strong economic standing, economists at Bureau for Research in Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD) feel that if India wants to reach the list of top economies, it will also have to take a serious look into its cultural values and social setups. When an economic policy is formulated, even the social setup, the readiness of the country to accept the economic changes and the social stability are taken into account. If these are not considered, there are chances that the economic policy formulated would not be able to produce the expected results and thus get aborted midway. Examples of such unsuccessful steps include those taken by Russia, Tanzania, Venezuela, Indonesia and other developing countries.

Though, India has a relatively strong position in the world economy, it still has many challenges ahead of it. Meeting these challenges would require a well thought of and a well planned line of attack. These new strategies should set their focus on innovation, infrastructure, workforce development, education, health care and flexibility. Considering its present performance and the future opportunities, India is well set to become one of the leading economies by 2020.



30. Economic Reforms

Abstract : Economic reforms in India were initiated in 1991. These were essential for country's growth, openness and liberalisation of Indian economy. These reforms

have resulted in many socio-economic changes of great consequence. It is an ongoing process towards integration of Indian economy into world economy. As a result of these reforms, our growth rate has increased from 0.9 percent in 1991-92 to 6.6 percent in 1995-96. But there is still much left to be done. The road to growth and prosperity is long and full of bumps. Our infrastructure facilities are not of world standard yet and need massive domestic and foreign direct investments. The slow inflow of capital into India is an area of concern. In order to have sufficient foreign investment the reforms need to be speeded up. Genuine and timely reforms is another name of onward march and progress. To achieve economic growth—economic reforms were initiated in 1991. Those reforms were essential for liberalisation of Indian economy. As a result there came socio-economic changes. Growth rate increased from 0.9% in 1991-92 to 6.6% in 1995-96. Quite understandable, that the growth rate will decide country's prosperity. Then, the infrastructure of the country were not of world standard. To improve this, massive domestic and foreign direct investments is needed. The slow inflow of capital into India will fetch slow growth. And, this is an area of concern. This onward march for progress didn't stop. The official statistics indicates that the economy grew at a whopping 10.4% during October-December 2003.

Economic reforms in India began in 1993 when the country faced many harsh realities like fiscal and balance of payment deficits, constantly rising inflation. The crisis was of such a magnitude that the country had to pledge gold worth US \$ 400 million abroad and depreciate the rupee by 25 percent in two instalments. The reforms were initiated in order to reduce inflation, fiscal deficit, poverty and to increase industrial growth, productivity, employment, increase exports and foreign exchange reserves. The chief measures taken under the reforms were allowing **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** and foreign institutional investors (FII) in the corporate and stock market segments, reduction in customs and excise duties, reduction in tax rates, and permission to Indian companies to tap international markets for their capital needs. A policy of PSUs disinvestment and opening up of banking and mutual fund industry to the private sector are other steps taken towards liberalisation of the economy.

The erstwhile licence-raj has been demolished, Indian rupee has been made convertible on the current account and in near future it may be made convertible on the capital account also. The **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA)** has been replaced with **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**. And all these have resulted in corporatisation

of the society to a large extent and the beginning of a process of integration of Indian economy into global economy. These reforms have thrown open many new avenues and challenges simultaneously. Things have become more competitive, bigger and complex and only the finest will survive. Markets and investors have become more discerning and investors want good returns and the consumers value for their money spent. Now, the investors have greater choice and gone are the days when a few business houses dominated the corporate world.

India has been able to achieve reasonably good results of these reforms. The growth rate has gradually increased to 4.9 percent in 2013-14. The economic reform process has changed our economy into a developing one and today it is regarded as one the best economies in Asia. There have been better yields and profit margins in the corporate sector since then and the GDP growth has appreciably increased from 1.1 percent in 1990-91 to 6-7 percent in 1995-96. There has been growth in industrial production and inflation rate has come down to 6-7 percent from 17 percent. Reforms have also increased our foreign exchange reserves and market capitalisation of the companies has increased considerably. The foreign investment in the country through FDIs, FIIs, GDRs, Euro Issues etc. has been quite encouraging. But there is still much room for improvement and there cannot be any complacency. The road to growth and prosperity is long and full of bumps, barriers and blocks. The main objective of improving the quality of life and living standards of the people of the country is not yet in sight. The entry of multinational companies (MNCs) into consumer products sector on a big scale is also a source of anxiety. Instead they should invest massively in infrastructure sector and those in which huge capital and latest technology are involved.

Reforms and globalization of Indian economy has certainly started yielding results in terms of poverty alleviation to some extent. They have lent a helping hand in reducing poverty. According to the World Bank's latest report (1997) the economic reforms and liberalisation has done more to reduce poverty in India than government development programmes which have not benefited those they were meant for. According to the report entitled "India : Achievements and Challenges in Reducing Poverty" some of these government programmes have in fact largely missed their supported targets—the poor—and delivered

the bulk of their benefits or subsidies to the politically or economically more advantaged. The economic growth in India has widened opportunities at the bottom as well as near the top of the society, says the report and this has increased the wages of landless rural workers since liberalisation. These reforms hold the promise of considerable improvement in the living standards of the country's 300 million poor avers the report. Inward looking industrialisation strategies of the past could not achieve the rate of poverty alleviation possible with alternative policies, says the Bank.

With the help of the World Bank, Mumbai is revamping its transportation systems, embarking on one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in the world, resettling 100,000 residents, and building new roads and train tracks.

The Bank has praised the appreciable high growth rates in the past 5 years resulting from reforms, but the report cautions that there is much that remains to be done to sustain this growth. High fiscal deficits, tremendous infrastructure problems, inefficient financial systems and heavily subsidised segments are the problems facing the Indian Government, it says.

Reforms have opened new opportunities which should be exploited to the maximum. Reforms gradually reduce the role of the government. We need foreign investments on a large scale to improve our infrastructure facilities and accelerate growth but it is not flowing in the country to the extent and quantity we need. Perhaps it is because there are multiple authorities from whom sanctions are to be sought and, therefore, foreign investors shy away. During 1996 India could obtain only 2.8 percent of the total foreign investment. China tops the list with \$ 52 billion or 18 percent of the total investment followed by Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Argentina. The capital inflow to developing countries is in the form of foreign direct investment, bank loan and bonds and portfolio investment. This slow inflow of the capital into India is also because of India's competitive edge in the context of global economy has not shown any improvement this year compared to 1996 and yet India has emerged as the world's third most preferred destination for F.D.I. In order to attract foreign capital into the country in the required quantity it is imperative that reforms are speeded up. According to the global competitiveness report of the World

Economic Forum, India is still the least open economy behind only to Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

We have signed WTO accord but we need to open up and liberalise further to increase our share and gains in the world market. At present India's share is dismal 0.6 percent. We need a more open policy because by global standards, India is not competitive at all. It is high time that the maze of red tape and stifling regulations do not come in the way of the private sector initiatives. India needs to adopt such policies and programmes that attract foreign and domestic investments and encourage re-investment of profits. Genuine and timely reforms is another name of onward march, progress and development. but at the same time India has to watch its own interests and not to be swept away by the exhortations and preachings of the developed countries of the West. The euphoria of liberal economic reforms should not blind us to ground realities and national interests both in short and long terms. Global integration and globalisation are necessary and also inevitable but these should not lead to what is called local disintegration and social imbalances and disparities.

Talking of economic growth and economic development of the largest democratic country of the world will be a ground reality. Political rivals stake their claims for many good things they have achieved. But the people of the country take them with lot of criticism which is of course, a healthy sign of political awareness especially towards economic growth and development of the country which appears to be one of the most important issues of the 2004 General Lok Sabha election.

When the Bharat Uday Yatra entered Orissa through Naupada district, one of the poorest regions in the country, the Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani blamed the Congress for the country's backwardness in various fields. He pointed out that the Congress had failed to solve the problems facing the people living in the six lakh villages despite the party being in power for 48 years after independence. The fact is: what had so far been done for economic growth and development in these six lakh Indian villages? If "India Shining" slogan is a reality why then the people living in the villages have no access to education, drinking water, pucca roads, hospitals and water for irrigation purposes. Well, there is a dream—"the Vision 2020". Let it be a reality.

Bread and butter issues of development are remarkably absent from the election campaign of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). 'Economic governance' over the past five years did not fetch much. So-called achievements in accelerating economic growth does not seem to be real achievements. If we draw a line of comparison between the two, the present is poorer what it was in as per record in 1992-98. Even after 68 years of independence, a greater emphasis is not being given to livelihood issues. 'Great power', 'developed economy' and 'superpower' will not keep number one issue aside.

It is obvious that growth and development are two different things. The experience of the past half century around the world has shown that while rapid economic growth is necessary for a steady improvement in the quality of life, growth by itself does not automatically lead to a better life for the majority.

What Indonesia did in 1990s is the most recent example. According to a study made by United Nation human development that what a society does with its drawings is as important as the generation of higher and higher incomes.



31. Tourism in India

Abstract : Indian tourism industry holds excellent prospects both in terms of domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism is becoming more and more popular because of many modern developments. Tourism in India has developed many new dimensions and fascinations which need to be fully exploited to generate new employment opportunities and earn more foreign exchange. Tourism infrastructure should be developed fast. Many new and innovative measures are being taken to encourage tourism. In India, it occupies a strategic position which needs to be strengthened by liberal government help and private participation, both from India and abroad. In near future, India is likely to emerge both as a travel and tour destination.

Indian tourism is the third largest export industry after gem and jewellery and ready-made garments with an estimated earning of US \$ 26 billion in 2015 and employing nearly 212million people directly or indirectly. The Tourism Ministry is seeking an outlay of ₹ 20,000–22,000 crore for the 12th Plan which shows 12% growth in inbound tourist. Tourism today is world's one of the fastest growing industries

with a turnover of \$3.5 trillion per year. At present there are 500 million international travellers which would rise to 660 million by the turn of the century.

Domestic tourism is increasing appreciably as about 100 million Indians travel the length and breadth of the country annually to discover and re-discover India. Travel and tourism have received big boost as an industry in recent years and tour operators, travel agencies, airlines, tourist departments etc. are doing very well. The liberalisation and opening up of the Indian economy resulting in better income and salaries, have helped the growth of tourism in India. The spread of television and communication networks have further encouraged tourism among the people. There is now much greater awareness among the people to know more and more about Indian places, people, culture and geography. As Indians, they feel now more close to one another than ever before because of satellite television, communication and other mass media. As most of the urban families are double income families where both husband and wife earn, savings have grown and with them the thirst to travel and visit places within the country and outside in foreign lands. With the advancement of science and technology the people have more leisure and spare time and they want to use it in sight-seeing and visiting places of interest. Consequently, there has been tremendous increase in travel destinations. Many new and unknown destinations have come into existence and the old ones are being made more attractive, convenient and within easy reach. The wander-lust is spreading fast and people are turning into explorers and travellers.

The fascinations of travel are not new but they have more dimensions now than ever before. The tourists are travelling to such diverse and distant places as Andamans and Ladakh and yet the whole of the north-eastern region remains undiscovered and unexplored. The potential of domestic and foreign tourists in India is very vast and should be exploited and developed speedily. Tourism helps and strengthens the bonds of national unity, and integrity and brings people more close to one another culturally. Indian tourism industry has much capacity to generate employment opportunities even in remote and backward areas of the country. The direct employment in tourist industry in India is nearly 20 million people.

The foreign tourist inflow has been slow. Lack of tourism infrastructure and tourism friendly culture are the main reasons for this tardy foreign inflow. There has been significant increase in the travel

industry as the choice of destinations have become more wide, niche tourism which caters to the specialised needs of the tourists is becoming popular, the number of travel agents, agencies and facilitators have increased manifold. Many international leisure and travel groups have started their operations in India and yet the burgeoning industry has a very long way to travel. More hotels, motels and resorts are needed with international standards and facilities like golf course, swimming pools, amusement parks etc. The chain of five star hotels are confined to the major cities and a few tourist places. Then there is lack of four star and budget hotels. It is estimated that by the turn of the century there would be nearly 5 million foreign tourists and 90 million domestic tourists per year. It is really a big challenge to arrange for their accommodation and other facilities. Some concrete steps have been taken to meet this challenge. In Rajasthan a chain of heritage hotels has been established by turning its palaces, royal abodes, havelis and forts and castles into hotels.

States like Goa etc. are encouraging tourists to live with local families as paying guests. Kerala has taken up an innovative "Live in Rice boat" scheme on its picturesque backwaters.

To give a major lift to Indian travel and tourism industry the National Tourism Policy is being evolved. Under the policy, tourism is brought in the concurrent list, tax-structure is being rationalised and guidelines for eco-tourism being framed. The participation of panchayats is also envisaged. There is an urgent need to improve India's image as a leisure and business destination. Tourism infrastructure needs to be increased and improved. Hotel-capacity should be increased, new hotels with acceptable standards opened, air, train and luxury bus-services be increased, private investment in the industry be made attractive and more trains like the "Palace on Wheels" be introduced on popular travel circuits. To consolidate the gains and further develop the industry it is imperative that there is International Computerised Reservation System (CRS), Indian hotel and tourism industry has more and more joint partnerships with reputed international companies and agencies and that the services are of world standard. Taxi-drivers, bus-conductors, tourist guides etc. be given orientation courses. A comprehensive Tourism Act is also the need of the hour so as to make registration mandatory for travel agents and agencies catering to foreign tourists. India is full of colourful festivals and fairs. They occur round

the year. They too can be turned into major tourist attractions as has been done in some cases. What is needed is strong will, imagination, vision, drive, initiative and enterprise on the part of all those connected with the industry. Only then, tourism will be able to contribute significantly to the country's economic growth and industrial development. Tourism in India occupies a strategic position but this position need to be significantly strengthened by liberal government help and greater private participation both from India and abroad.



32. Indian Railways

Abstract : The history of Indian Railways goes back to 1853. Since then it has grown into a vast network. It is the single largest employer in the world. But there are many challenges before it including tough competition from private sector in transportation by roads. It has undertaken the 'Project Unigauge' on a large scale. Similarly, route-electrification has been undertaken. It has introduced many new, innovative and progressive schemes and yet it has to cover a long distance in the matters of safety, punctuality, sanitation, consumer satisfaction, reservations, behaviour of staff etc. Corruption is rampant in the railways and it needs to be checked immediately. It needs mass restructuring in many areas.

The history of Indian Railways goes back to the year 1853 when the first train steamed off from Bombay to Thane, a distance of 34 km. Since then Indian railways has grown into a vast network of 8,000 stations spread over a route length of 65,600 km. with a fleet of 9,013 locomotives, 62,924 coaches, 9,956 electric multiple units and 2,39,281 wagons. The growth of Indian railways during these years can be said to be really phenomenal. The network runs multi-gauge operations including Broad Gauge, Metre Gauge and Narrow Gauge. The railways in India provide the principal mode of transportation for freight and passengers. It brings people together from the farthest corner of the country and makes possible the conduct of business, sightseeing, pilgrimage and education. Indian railways have been a great integrating force during the last 100 years. It has integrated the economic life of the country and helped in accelerating the development of industry and agriculture.

Indian Railways is the single largest employer in the world with about 155 million people. It handles 70-75% of the bulk movement

and contributes about 2.6% of the G.D.P. and its sales revenue is equivalent of 8% of G.D.P. Its engine efficiency is 92% and it boasts the highest asset utilisation rate in the world. But on the minus side 40% of its wagons movement is empty. It offers over 104 types of concessions to its travellers—so much so that almost half the passengers on a train are discount passengers. It is divided into 9 zones and further sub-divided into 59 divisions. Divisions are the basic operating units.

The main objective of railway planning has been to develop the transport infrastructure to carry the projected quantum of traffic and meet the developmental needs of the economy. So far Indian railways have implemented Eight Five Year Plans, apart from Annual Plans in some years. With most of the hard-core routes nearly saturated, it is going to be the most challenging task to cope with this increase. It will be equally challenging to maintain viability in the face of rising costs and competition from the private sector in transportation by roads. To meet these challenges, it would be necessary to improve staff productivity, efficiency, reliability, safety etc. with adoption of appropriate technologies like more power and energy-efficient locomotives and also to make substantial investment for network development wherever the existing line capacity is under strain.

Project Unigaugage is an ongoing exercise by Indian Railways to standardise most of the rail gauges in India to 1.676 m (5 ft. 6 in) broad gauge.

Indian railways currently has significant lengths of four different gauges: the 1.676 m (5 ft 6 in), broad gauge, the 1,000 mm (3 ft 33/8 in) metre gauge and two narrow gauge 2 ft 6 in (762 mm) and 2 ft (610 mm). The total length of track used by Indian railways was about 115,000 km (71,000 m) while the total route length of the network was 65,000 km (40,000 m) in 2011.

The Indian Railways needs a massive restructuring and re-orientation to customise to the needs of the customers. The falling share of the railways traffic is another point of concern. In 1950s, it carried over 80% of both passenger and freight traffic. Today, its share of originating passenger traffic is just 20% and that of freight 35%. The plan support for the railways has also fallen from 80% to about 15% of the total capital expenses during the last 5 years. Yet the monolith Railways carries over 70-75% of the bulk traffic and 80% of the long distance passenger traffic.

The annual plan 2015-16 of Indian railways has been fixed at ₹ 8.5 crores through public private ownership (PPP). The enforcement of Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been geared up to take over the additional responsibility of train escorting and security of the passenger with effect from July, 2004. Technology Mission on railway safety has come up with its 14 projects approved as a joint effort among Ministry of Railways, Ministry of HRD and Ministry of Industries. Indian railways has enhanced the Train Enquiry System by developing a mobile App and a desktop application for windows 8 platform. It has now become easier to track the movement of passenger trains and arrival and departure timings for the benefit of passengers. The app connects to the Train Enquiry system at the back end. More facilities in respect of comfortable train journey have been introduced. It is being taken as class transport system in the world. Parallel decision in respect of socio-economic structure of the country have been taken viz: most of the trains announced in Budget 2003–2004 as well as 35 additional services including Jan Sadharan Express have been introduced. It shows an another expansion of railways network of the country which certainly will improve the quality of average rail passengers. Indian cosmopolitans have got access to e-ticketing. This facility has been made available from April 2004 for reservation in related Shatabdi trains. In addition to that reservations through mobile telephones has been introduced . The induction of “Sampark Karanti Express” which runs between Delhi and major cities, especially the capital cities of the provinces is a great achievement of Indian Railways. First of this series, viz., KARNATAKA SAMPARK KARANTI EXPRESS has started running from Delhi (Harzat Nizamuddin) to Banglore (Yashwantpur) from 8th February, 2004.

There are 10 new Garib Raths introduced; 53 pairs of new trains ; extension of 16 pairs of trains ; increase of in frequency of 11 pairs of trains ; 300 additional services in Mumbai suburban zone; special train from Anandpur Sahib and Patna Sahib to Gurudwara Sachkhand Sahib during tercentenary function of Shri Guru Granth Sahib of Gurta Gaddi.

Railway Budget 2015 has unfolded several dream projects and if implemented, they are giong to be a landmark achievements of the decade ever proposed in any of the previous railway budget.



33. Infrastructure in India

Abstract: Infrastructure facilities are of fundamental importance for growth. They require immediate huge investments and cannot be undertaken without large scale private participation. Our power sector is in bad shape and so is road-transportation. We have failed to achieve the envisaged power-production targets in our Five Year Plans, and it is a matter of great concern. Road-development and expansion too, is not as desired to match the rapidly increasing strength of the vehicles. Shipping plays a major role in overseas trade and is a significant foreign exchange earner, but here too the scene is dismal and gloomy. Coastal shipping is the most cost effective and also environ-friendly and so must be developed rapidly in view of the country's large coastline. Indian railways has played a significant role in the national growth and development but much needs to be done in respect of its expansion, up-gradation cost-effectiveness and maximum utilization. Tele-communication segment is also in need of urgent attention to fill the gap between demand and availability of telephone and telex services. All these infrastructure segments and services are capital intensive and need to be further opened and liberalized for private participation. The launch of INSAT series of satellites is likely to revolutionize Indian telecommunication system. Foreign direct investment (FDI) should also be encouraged in order to expedite the infrastructural development.

Over the years, Tata Steel has placed a continuous emphasis on improving processes, with a view to consistently enhancing efficiencies to achieve better performance benchmarks in all areas of operations. The Financial Year 2012-13 marked a major milestone in operating history of Tata Steel as the ongoing capacity expansion at Jamshedpur was completed with most of the facilities of 2.9 mtpa. The Brownfield expansion is being commissioned for production. Full ramp up of the capacity was achieved in March 2013.

Country's infrastructure has fetched double digit growth of the economy in the 3rd quarter of 2003-04. Heavy buying financial institutions and foreign institutional investors are the key achievements. Steel stocks such as TISCO and SAIL are in great demand. TISCO alone has crossed the four million tones mark in all categories of steel production during 2003-04. A very healthier aspect of infrastructure in the current decade is the country's infrastructure which is responsible for country's growth and development.

Infrastructure is of fundamental importance for industrial and agricultural growth of a nation. No country can think of development

in the absence of proper infrastructure facilities. It is a sector of top priority. Infrastructure includes power-generation, distribution, railways, transport, roads, shipping, communication, water supply, sewage disposal etc. India is in need of all these and needs them fast to sustain and further accelerate the industrial growth and development. The financial requirement in this regard is estimated about ₹ 7,000 billion. In terms of additional requirements in different sectors, additional funds are needed. For example, for power sector alone ₹ 250 billion investments are required. For making these huge funds available, the private participation in these sectors is a must.

The **Rakesh Mohan Committee Report** on this subject has recommended large scale privatization of infrastructure facilities and services. It has suggested creation of a transparent regulatory framework to set up foreign debt and equity finance in various sectors. It has recommended a number of tax concessions in order to give reasonable returns to the prospective investors. In order to sustain the present 7 percent growth it is essential that total investment in infrastructure is increased from present 5.5 percent of the GDP to about 7 percent of the GDP by 2001 and 8 percent by 2005-6. With the Indian economy poised for higher growth, the need for more investment in this sector is recognized by all concerned. For example, there is power famine in the country. This sector has not kept pace with the industrial development of the country. Frequent power-failures, load-shedding, tripping of the grids etc. have become a common feature.

India's economic growth is likely to accelerate 5.6 percent in 2014-15 from the projected growth of less than five percent in the current fiscal ending March, according to economic think-tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). For the current financial year the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is expected to remain in the range of 4.7 to 4.9 percent. Industry growth was likely to accelerate to 3.8 percent in the financial year beginning April 1, 2014 from the projected 1.6 percent expansion in 2013-14.

NCAER finds that services sector has not been immune from the overall slowdown. However, exports may prove an exception mainly due to expected growth in demand of IT services in the West. In 2014-15, the services sector growth is projected at 5.6 percent. The wholesale price index (WPI) inflation is expected to remain at 6.2 percent in the current fiscal and ease marginally to 6 percent next fiscal.

The transmission and distribution losses are also as high as 20 percent as compared to 8 percent in the developed countries. It has brought the functioning of the Power Grid of India under a cloud. The total installed capacity of various regional grids is 81,700 MW which is quite inadequate. In the 8th Plan, the Government wanted to have a capacity addition of 30,538 MW, but in the first 4 years of the Plan, only 14,799 MW could be added and another 2,868 MW was likely to be added. It means only 58 percent addition of the overall plan target. There was an outlay of ₹ 25,920 crore for this sector in the Eighth Plan. In the Ninth Plan the Central Government has proposed an outlay of ₹ 51,935.15 crore for the power sector. The Power Ministry has set a target of 424.5 billion units during the fiscal year (1997-98) against 394 billion units achieved in 1996-97. In the first year of the Ninth Plan itself the envisaged target would be achieved seems doubtful.

Indian roads are also in bad shape. They have not kept pace with the increase in vehicular population. Road-development in the country has been less than adequate. The private sector runs almost the entire trucking industry and 60 percent of the passenger services. It is preferred because of convenience, flexibility, speed, reliability, door-to-door service etc. Over the years the share of overall traffic has been on the rise. But the poor maintenance of roads and highways, presence of substandard vehicles on the road, inadequate expansion of the road etc. have added to the woes of this sector. Of the total network of roads only 1.7 percent is highways and carry 44 percent of the total road traffic. And only 34% of it is double lane. On Indian roads the commercial vehicles can run only 200-250 km. per day as compared to 500-600 km. per day in developed countries. This results in heavy losses in terms of fuel consumption, time costs and competitiveness. The economic losses because of bad roads in India are estimated to the tune of ₹ 20,000 to 30,000 crore yearly. It has also increased safety hazards. About 60,000 lives are lost in road-accidents in India which is about 25 times of America. The inadequate and bad roads result in very adverse effect on automobile industry, fuel consumption, environment and the industrial growth of the country.

India needs roads to keep pace with the rapid growth of vehicle strength which was 253 lakh in 1994. Sensing the urgency in this sector, the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) was approved on 4 June, 1997, a series of incentives for investments in road sector, which

included removal of customs duty on equipment for road construction and granting of ownership rights of townships to road developers.

Shipping accounts for 85 percent of the total overseas trade of India. It is also a significant foreign exchange earner. It's a capital-intensive industry and is prone to cyclical fluctuations. Large funds are needed to be pumped in to improve the Indian shipping but the government does not have funds. Coastal shipping is the most cost-effective and environ-friendly but this segment of the sector is the most underdeveloped in the country and only 8 to 10 percent of the total tonnage is dedicated to coastal shipping. It caters only to cities and towns that are very close to ports although India has the largest coastlines in all of Asia. There is an urgent need to capitalize on this fact. It has also cheap labour in abundance which can be well exploited in the development of shipbuilding and breaking industry. There are 11 major ports apart from 139 minor ports along the long coastline of 5,560 km. The overseas and coastal shipping are full of great potentialities but they have not been fully used. Our revering system and national waterways are also vast but again it has not been taken proper care of. This system is not only cheap but also pollution-free.

India has a vast network of railway of 115,000 km. route length with 7,172 stations and a fleet of 7,806 locomotives and 39,929 coaches. Indian railways is the largest undertaking employing more than 1.6

million workers. It is a chief mode of passenger traveling and movement of goods. It has played a significant role in the economic, social and industrial development of the country. But still there is much to be done in respect of up gradation, expansion, costs and profit earning. Proper and maximum utilization of the locomotives, coaches and wagons in a cost-effective way is the need of the hour. During 1995-96 the Indian Railways incurred a loss of ₹ 12.16 billion. Gauge conversion, electrification, computerized reservation, passenger insurance, increase in efficiency, loss-management , container service are some of the key areas in which Indian Railways will have to pull up its socks at the earliest. Proper use of railway land lying idle for many decades is another critical area which needs to be taken care of.

Telecommunication is another segment of infrastructure which plays a vital role in the economic, industrial and social development of a country. Of late, there has been a great awakening in regard to its crucial role in the national development and attention is being focused

on expansion, modernization and up gradation of the telecommunication network. But there exists a wide gap between demand and availability of the telephone and telex service. However, information technology and sophisticated telecom system are appearing to be a harbinger of social and developmental changes.

Radio and TV are very popular means of mass communication. At present there are broadcast stations, transmitters on commercial centers of Vivid Bharati. The present radio coverage is 90.6 percent by area and 97.3 percent by population. In the year 2003-2004 Doordarshan could cover 68.4 percent area of the country. There is good number of transmitters and programme production centers. The number of private channels has also increased rapidly. The demand of telephones had gone up by 50 percent during 1991-94. The demand for telephones is increasing rapidly and the capacity increase is not keeping pace with it. It is capital intensive industry and requires huge investments and therefore quick, transparent and effective privatization is a must. The target of having the phone density of 2-3 telephones per 100 persons from the present one per 100 persons by the turn of the century doesn't seem be achieved without privatization. The government decided to liberalize and privatize telecom services way back in 1994 but the massive telecom scam is a sad commentary on the state of affairs.

Introduction of mobile phones has been a shot in the arm of telecommunication. The launch of the INSAT series of satellites have revolutionized Indian telecommunication system. The launch of INSAT-2D on June 4, 1997 from Kourou in French Guyana brought India closer to attaining self-sufficiency in telecommunication services. It carries 23 transponders to provide television services. Together with the four earlier INSAT satellites already in orbit, INSAT-2D and INSAT-2E will provide the country with enough transponders for lease to Government and private agencies in the coming years.

The market-friendly economy and globalization offers the best potential for the infrastructure development in the country. Further rapid liberalization and efficient capital markets are also essential. Poverty alleviation and improvement in the quality of life of the masses are also closely linked with the development of infrastructure facilities and services. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and funding of these projects by international leading agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank need to be encouraged. But development

cannot be at the cost of environment. A proper balance between the two is to be maintained. It is a real challenge to be faced by the Government, corporate giants, financial institutions, scientists, industrialists and foreign funding agencies. Infrastructure projects need to be implemented and completed in time and without cost-over-run. It is essential that they are executed on turnkey basis. The post-project activities also need to be well-planned for optimum results and the desired quality.



34. Food Grain Production in India

Abstract : Freedom from hunger and malnutrition presupposes availability of food-grains at reasonable rates all over the country. The present availability of food grain in the country is 38 gms per person per day, which is very low. India is an agricultural country and the monsoon plays a very vital role here. We had nine successive good monsoons over the past years. India is still a country of malnourished people and self-sufficiency in food-grains is still a far cry. The rapid increase in population has outpaced our food-production growth and there is an urgent need of a new thrust of food production. We need more and more technology and research in agriculture. Besides food-production, there are other problems like distribution, storage, subsidies etc. to be tackled.

Food is one of the basic human needs. It is the chief means of subsistence. Therefore, agricultural development is as important as industrial development. They are interrelated and interdependent. Development means providing means of sustenance to the people. Adequate availability of food-grains at reasonable prices ensures freedom from hunger and malnutrition. Availability and entitlement of food both are important. Food should be within the easy reach of the masses. India's population is increasing at the rate of over 2 percent per annum. Therefore, the production of food-grains, procurement, storage, distribution and timely movement to the deficient regions are to be given top priority. The per capita availability of food-grains in India is nearly 463 grams per day.

India is basically an agricultural country and in this sector monsoon plays an important role. The south-west monsoon starts in June and lasts till October and causes rains in various parts of the country in various degrees. Rains play a vital role in agriculture. The kharif crop

depends chiefly on the south-west monsoon and the rabi crop on north-east monsoon which blows from November to May. It brings rain mainly to the peninsular India and here the main crop is paddy.

India had good monsoon for successive nine years since 1989 and is now poised to have the tenth successive good monsoon. It is expected that this year's food production will be much more million tones which had declined in 1996. In the expectation of good and normal monsoon, the target of food production was fixed at 193 MT for 1997-98. But in spite of good monsoon last year, food-grain production slumped to 185 MT against the target of 190.36 MT. This drop was attributed to delayed coming of the monsoon and unfavorable weather conditions at the procurement time of rabi crops.

When in 1994-95 India's food grain production went up to 191 MT from 181 MT for 1993-94, this was widely publicized and it was stressed that the country had not only achieved self-sufficiency but also gained export capability. But the following year it came down to 185 MT. The food-grain production in 1994-95 was the highest India ever achieved. It meant 210 kg per person per year. China produces 300-370 kg. per person per year and still they find it insufficient and so import food-grains. It shows how underfed are people in India. As per the standard of nutrition norm, there should be 300 kg. food-grain per person per year.

According to official estimates, food grain production is fixed at 261 million tonnes for 2014-15, marginally higher than 259 million tonnes (MT) in the year 2013-14.

Obviously, our present food-grain production is much less than our needs and so the fact is India is a malnourished nation and about 30 crore Indians suffer from starvation and hunger. The present rate of increase in food production is 4 MT per year but we need it to be 5.4 MT. This increase is essential to achieve self-sufficiency in this sector. India's population has been increasing at the rate of 2 percent per year. India's population in 2006-7 was nearly 1,100 million which requires 330 MT of food-grain but the Union Agriculture Minister has targeted the food-grain production at 285 MT by the year 2006-7, and it is still far short of the norm of 300 kg per capita per year. Moreover, it is doubtful if even this target of 285 MT will be achieved. Fortunately we have had good monsoons for the last ten years, but if the monsoon fails, it will be really disastrous because only 27 percent of our cultivated land is irrigated. As such, there is hardly any scope for complacency.

Unless there is new thrust to increase the productivity of food-grains, the gap between the requirement and availability cannot be bridged.

The demand of food-grains in India is far less than the actual need because the people are poor and their purchasing power is absolutely low. Therefore, the air of self-sufficiency is artificial and false in regard to food-grain production. Actually we will need about 300 MT of food-grains by the turn of the century itself which is just 3 years away. Unless we adopt a strategy of higher production and target 300 MT by the year 2000, we shall be left far behind and this is not an unrealistic target if we tighten our belt and take appropriate measures to improve the irrigation facilities, check the soil degradation, which is over a million hectares per year, and have definite programme and policy in the sphere of biological production. We need more and more technology in agriculture based on sound and fundamental research of our scientists.

The growth rate of population in the country has declined and yet India will take over China's position as the most populous country. There is addition of 45,000 new mouths to feed every day. It means there is increase of 31 persons every minute in our population. Thus, every year we will have 16 million more to feed, shelter, educate, clothe and find employment. Consequently, population growth is bound to outpace our food-production. India has a large population of undernourished people and the situation may worsen if appropriate steps are not taken to increase the food-production. Besides food production, there are other problems like distribution, marketing and storage. The problem of subsidy is also there. There are increased subsidies every year but then they don't reach the poor for whom they are meant. They are grabbed by the rich farmers, middlemen and bureaucrats who hardly need them.



35. Advertisement

Abstract : Advertisement is indispensable for business and marketing. It is essential to promote sales and achieve growth. Advertisements help the buyers to take good and immediate buying decisions. Popularity of television has added new dimensions to advertising. Children and young men and women are often the targets of the alluring and enticing ads because they play a crucial role in making buying decision although they themselves have no control on the purses. Celebrities—film and sports

stars—are featured in commercial ads to promote sales and build brand image and often the efforts succeed a lot. Ads offer a wide choice and competitive prices. Advertisements have certain adverse effects on children. In a number of cases children have died while imitating the dangerous ads. Advertisements make consumer protection and education a must. Consumer education can be made a part of school education. A very unique thing has come now in the world of ads is the political ads.

Advertisement works move that anything in world of sales and marketing. Therefore, millions and millions of rupees are spent on advertisement blitz and advertising agencies, agents and sales persons are having a roaring business. Advertisement of products and services dominate newspapers, magazines, television, radio, internet and such other media. They have become indispensable to promote current sales, to update offers and to increase the potential for both future and short term actual sales. Continuity in advertising over a long period of time has become crucial because of its cumulative effect.

Advertising makes it difficult for the consumers to postpone buying decisions for long. Ads constantly appeal and entice the potential buyers to go for the products with their catchy jingles, attractive visuals, alluring incentives and prizes. Consumers often like to be helped to make buying decisions and advertisements help them a lot in the matter. In the absence of repeated and alluring advertisements they will procrastinate and delay in buying. Advertisements motivate people to buy goods even when they actually do not need them. They appeal to the consumer's psychology and convince them to make a buying decision. Children and women become more easy targets of the commercial assault through enticing advertisements. The popularity of television has made it all the more easy as the small screen has its reach almost in all the homes and passive viewers offer a huge market for products and services.

Companies formulate their marketing and advertising strategies very carefully and patiently keeping in view what their campaign should really achieve and who should be their immediate and direct target. They try to capture the attention and imagination of children and women because they play a significant role by pressurizing their parents or male elders regarding choice of brands etc. Strategically planned and executed ads make the cash registers jingle while others not planned so well may get bombed. For example, Dimple's famous dive in the swimming pool for crowning glory was a roaring success.

Children, young men and women and ladies are the main target of ads because they make the most impressionable segment of the viewers. And they can exert the utmost pressure in making buying decisions on the elders who control the strings of the family purses. Many ads of consumer products imply that the purchase of those particular brands make the buyers special in the eyes of others. Film and sports stars are engaged to draw the attention of the audience. They are great hope for the companies and their sales promotion. They believe the more famous the star in the commercial, the better the chances of their success. Amitabh, Shahrukh Khan, Kapil Dev, Leander Peas, Mona Bhattacharya and many other celebrities have been hired by the various companies to promote the sale of their various products, like spices, noodles, refrigerators, television sets, shampoos, cycles, cold drinks, scooters, cars, hair oils, toiletries, electric appliances, suiting, chappals, shoes, detergents, cookers, etc. For example, Sri Devi featured in commercials of Nescafe, Lux and Cema bulbs; Manisha Koirala in Nirma and Ortem, Hema Malini in Casper mosquito mats and Khaitan fans, Neena Gupta in Hawkins cooker and MDH spices. There is a long list of film and sports stars who have featured in such commercials. Dharmendra boosted the sales of Rajdoot Moterbike and Vinod Khanna that of Cinthol Soap. Similarly, Shahrukh Khan's "Pepsi to main pee kar rahoonga," has done a lot of good for the cold drink. Young men and women and even children, among middle class and upper middle class families, have their role models in these film and sports heroes and heroines. When they see them featuring in a commercial for a particular product, they willingly go for it and by the passage of time become habitual buyers.

Fascinating advertisements try to reach the hearts and souls of the consumers and oblige them to make buying decisions. Obviously advertising works and delivers sales. For example, during winter when refrigerator brands engage themselves in off season discount wars, the volume of sales go higher than the peak season summer sales.

Ads are a very good means of brand communication and deliver expected results. The prospective and potential consumers are made to make immediate buying decisions on the basis of certificates and approvals given by celebrities — film or sports stars featuring in the commercials. The appearance of stars and celebrities in ads impress the receptive and sensitive minds of children and young men and women

who press their parents to buy that particular item or brand. Prolonged and persistent ads turn the passive television viewers into very active and credulous buyers.

Advertisements offer consumer a wide range of choice and competitive prices. In such a situation consumer becomes the king and he can have the better value for his money. Advertisements are essential for the growth of economy, industry and business because their growth depends on marketing, sales and advertisements. The advertisements and its quantum itself is an index of economic and industrial growth. They also ensure quality and reasonable prices as there is tough competition and only the fittest can hope to survive. And so ultimately the consumer is benefitted.

But the assault and tidal wave of advertisements make choice difficult and complex. The buyers often feel confused and may not take right buying decision. Women and children often become victims of constant and prolonged advertisements and commercials. There is a mad rush for gift hampers, coupons, caps, stickers, free tea-shirts, and other free gifts. Children pressurize their parents to buy items just because they look attractive, alluring and cheap in the advertisements or some celebrity features in an ad for a particular product. Children often imitate very dangerous feats shown in advertisements. A number of fatal cases have been reported in the newspapers in which children tried to imitate some dangerous cola ads. There is disharmony in the family when a product bought on the insistence of a child or the house wife turns out to be a substandard product. On many occasions, advertised goods turn out to be of very poor quality and the consumers feel cheated and befooled.

In such a scenario consumer education and protection becomes imperative. Buyers need to be made aware of their rights as consumers against the unscrupulous, restrictive and unfair trade practices indulged in by manufacturers, sellers, shopkeepers etc. The consumers should be taught how to discriminate between genuine and fake products and look through false promises and alluring invasion of advertisements. There is a suggestion that consumer education should be a part of school education so as to ensure better quality of life for the future citizens of the country. It also underlines the need for more and more consumer courts to settle the consumer disputes quickly and without many costs.

Commercial or political, even government agencies—advertisement has always been a subject matter of controversy. Far from reality or just a commercial or political benefits, advertisement plays very instrumental role in reaching out people across the country. Before 2004 Parliamentary elections campaign through advertisements on TV raised many questions. Section 7(3) of the Cable Television Network Rules that bans all political advertisements on TV while it permits in the print media. Section 23 talks of Freedom of Speech and Expression in the Indian Constitution and it affects the style of party's campaigning machinery. Article 19(2) of the constitution gives "reasonable restrictions" on political advertisements. The confrontation between the use of political advertisements and the constitutional provisions is going to be obvious in 2004 Parliamentary elections.

As a result, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee's concerns over constitutional obligations in respect of negative advertisement is remarkable. He summoned the BJP Party President Venkaiah Naidu, the I&B Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Attorney General of India Soli Sorabjee for discussion on the issue of advertisement.

Expenditure on political ads are expensive. As a result, the concerned party may be charged with profligacy. 2004 Lok Sabha elections has already put a certain party in the dock for the India Shinning and Bharat Uday campaign run by the government.

India'2014 elections were the world' biggest exercise in democracy with a price tag to match. Politicians were expected to spend around \$5 billion on their campaigns, which, in terms of expense, made these polls second only to the U.S. presidential elections (they hit the \$7 billion mark). According to the initial findings of an election expenditure tracker by the Centre for Media Studies, three times more were spent on the 2014 polls than than was spent in the last general elections in 2009. While part of this increase is because of significant inflation, much of it is a reflection of the changing expectations of a younger, increasingly demanding electorate.

The quantum of funds involved is said to be about Rs 5 crore for a single insertion to be released in all national and regional dailies. Though political ads cost double the normal and the money has to be paid in advance. 30 seconds ads on TV channels on Prime time will cost between 50–60 lakh.

36. Renewable Sources of Energy

Abstract : Conventional sources of energy like coal, petrol, lignite and natural gas are limited and may soon be exhausted. Moreover, their use is not environmental friendly. Their use causes lot of emission of carbon and change in global climate. The use of these fossil fuels be decreased and those of renewable sources of energy increased to protect our earth and the quality of life. The renewable sources of energy like wind, solar, tidal waves, biogas etc. holds a great potential. Renewable sources of energy are becoming more and more popular. For example, there has been increased use of wind power in Germany and India. Non-conventional sources of energy are cheap, clean and environment friendly and available locally in abundance in India. There is vast scope for the use of bio-gas in Indian villages. Solar energy generation also holds great promise as there is much bright sunshine during the greater part of the day throughout the year. The wind power generation is also increasing in the country and thousands of wind-pumps have been installed for irrigation and drinking water and more are being installed.

There is an ever increasing demand for energy and the non-renewable or conventional sources of energy are depleting fast. Energy is the motive power that keeps wheels of industry moving and other things live. Fossil fuel which includes coal, lignite, petroleum and natural gas is the non-renewable or conventional source of energy. Another source of traditional energy is fuel wood, animal waste and agricultural residues but these are non-economical fuels. These conventional sources of energy are not sufficient to meet our fast increasing demand of energy as they are limited and may soon get exhausted.

The use of conventional sources of energy creates environmental problems. The increased use of fossil fuels increases carbon emissions and quickens global climate change. The energy produced through these traditional fuels causes global warming, air pollution, depletion of forests and host of other ecological problems. The carbon dioxide emission in developing countries has jumped by about 30 percent in recent years. The pollution continues to worsen in many cities of the world with 1.3 billion persons affected by poisonous air and many species of plant and bird-life continued to be lost rapidly. Therefore, there is an urgent need to discourage the use of traditional sources of energy and rapid phase out of subsidies on these. The subsidies on fossil fuels have dropped by 50 percent since 1992, but still it stands at \$58 billion.

These subsidies harm the environment and hasten the depletion of these resources.

During 1995 there was oil production to the tune of 3,031 million tones, that of coal 2,109 million tones and that of natural gas 2,114 million tones. It shows an increase of about one percent over the year 1994. Even this marginal increase was enough to push carbon emission from fossil fuels to a new record. As we are approaching a new millennium, we must step up our efforts to reduce the use of these fossil fuels and protect the environment. It is essential that the use of renewable sources of energy are appreciably stepped up to protect the future of the planet earth and the quality of life here.

The renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, tidal waves, bio-gas etc. hold a great potential. There is a vast scope and many opportunities in this sector of power-generation. Their use so far has been limited to non-commercial and small domestic purposes in India and elsewhere. Modern science, technology, research and development have to play a significant role in popularizing the increased use of non-conventional sources of energy both in industrial and domestic sectors. These are bound to be used on a larger scale in a course of time but this 'course of time' should be curtailed and things expedited. There are really many very promising technologies and can very easily replace conventional ones. In the long term, they are likely to prove cost effective as well.

The facts and figures available in regard to the use of renewable sources of energy are really encouraging as they point towards greater and expanding role of their resources. Growth in wind generation was once confined to the US and Denmark but now it is becoming popular in other major countries like Germany and India. During 2011 Germany produced 29,075 MW of wind energy followed by India with 49,130 MW.

The conventional sources of energy in India provide over 95 percent of our required energy. The fast depletion and scarcity of fossil fuels in our country underline the urgent necessity for developing and exploiting these non-conventional and renewable sources of energy which are really clean, environment-friendly and in a sense unlimited. Local availability of the renewable sources of energy in abundance make them all the more significant for meeting our rural energy requirements. These hold out a major promise to overcome energy crisis in rural areas to a large extent. Since tidal waves resources are limited only to a few coastal regions, greater emphasis should be laid on harnessing wind

power, solar energy and development of biogas and biomass projects. Biogas can be increasingly used as a cooking fuel in towns and villages since it is cheap, clean and convenient. It can also be used for lighting and running small motors for providing power to cottage industries. The slurry from bio-gas is also an enriched manure. Family size bio-gas plants have picked up in many states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh etc. In India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh biogas produced from the anaerobic digestion of manure in small-scale digestion facilities is called gobar gas. It is estimated that such facilities exist in over 2 million house holds in India, 50,000 in Bangladesh and thousand in Pakistan, particularly North Pubjab, due to the thriving population of livestock.

Solar energy generation holds great promise in the country. It is estimated that total solar insolation or exposure to the rays of the sun per square meter surface is quite high in India. For greater part of the year during the day there is much bright sunshine throughout the country and it can be used to our great advantage to produce power for industrial and domestic use. During the Seventh Five Year Plan, manufacturing bases for thermal devices like solar cookers and solar heating systems have been largely developed. Preparatory plant work for a solar thermal power plant in Rajasthan was completed. During the Eighth Plan the use of solar Thermal Energy for industrial water heaters, solar cookers, solar timber kilns, solar desalination etc. were to be commercialized. Similarly, solar photovoltaic cells, indigenously produced at **BHEL** and **Central Electronics Ltd.** are being increasingly used under the **Rural Electrification Programme** in the remote villages where it is not possible to carry the electric lines. During the Eighth Plan, development of amorphous silicon cell was to be the main thrust area. Power generation system of 10 to 100 KW capacity area being undertaken wherever this renewable source of energy is available. During the 12th plan, the total installed capacity of solar power energy is 3,062,68 MW.

Steps have also been taken to harness the wind energy. Under a major demonstration programme on wind energy, 32 MW capacity wind farms were set up in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa. BHEL has already developed wind machines with 200 MW capacity. With the entrance of private sector in the field, the use of wind energy has got the tremendous boost in recent years. During the Seventh Plan itself 2,540 wind pumps were installed. The Eighth Plan had the

target of 100 MW wind power generation by using indigenous wind machines. The operational programme of wind pumps for drinking water and irrigation is expanded and modified.



37. Banking in India

Abstract : The history of modern banking in India can be traced back to 1881. 14 major banks were nationalized in 1969 followed by another 6 in 1980. The Reserve Bank of India was set up in 1934. The State Bank of India, with 7 associate banks is the largest bank in the country. There are 26 nationalised banks and 6 are State Bank of India and its associate banks. Then there are number of Regional Rural Banks numbering about 62. The number has significantly reduced due to amalgamation of several RRB's. The establishment of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in 1992 was another milestone in banking. The Export-Import Bank was set up in 1982 to look after the financial needs of the exporters and importers. In recent years there has been phenomenal growth in banking sector and continuing reforms have ensured their competitiveness, viability and profitability. CRR cuts have increased liquidity and now banks have enough land able resources and the banks have reduced their prime lending rates. The overall negative growth rate of public sector banks is a matter of concern. The total non-performing assets of the Indian banking system is the highest in the world, however, it is lower in private and foreign banks. So, some measures have been taken to tackle these problems.

Credentials to the banking in India are many and worthy of all praise. The nationalized banks have been credited by some over the time for their priceless service in banking including Home Minister P. Chidambaram, to have helped the Indian economy withstand the global financial crisis of 2007-2009.

The history of modern banking in India is about 100 years old. The first bank of limited liability managed by Indians was **Oudh Commercial Bank** established in 1881. Later **Punjab National Bank** was set up in 1894. *Swadeshi* movement which began in 1906 encouraged the formation of a number of commercial banks. Banking crisis in 1913-17 and failure of 588 banks in various states during the decade ending in 1949, underlined the need of regulating and controlling commercial banks. The Banking Companies (**Inspection Ordinance**) was passed in **January 1946** and the Banking Companies

(Restriction of Branches) Act was passed in February 1946. **The Banking Companies Act was passed in February 1949.** With a view of bringing commercial banks into the main stream of economic development with definite social obligations and objectives, Government issued an Ordinance on July 19, 1969 acquiring ownership and control of 14 major banks in the country with deposits exceeding ₹ 50 crore each. Another six commercial banks were nationalized in April 1980. But in September 1993, the New Bank of India was merged with the Punjab National Bank. These 19 nationalized banks along with the State Bank of India, which was nationalized in 1956, now constitute the public sector banks. The main objective of public sector banks have been to mobilize savings and utilize them for productive purposes, to serve larger social purpose under close public regulation, legitimize credit needs of private sector industry and trade, to ensure the needs of productive sectors of the economy and to curb the use of bank credit for speculative and other unproductive purposes.

The Reserve Bank of India was set up in 1934 and nationalized in 1949. The main objectives of the Bank are regulating issue of bank notes, keeping foreign exchange reserves of the country, operating currency and credit system and developing financial structure of the country on sound lines consistent with national socio-economic objectives and policies. The State Bank of India is the biggest commercial bank in the country with seven subsidiaries, and ranks as one of the 100 top most banks of the world. In these associated banks, SBI owns either the entire or the majority of share capital.

Besides the public sector banks which control over 90 percent of the banking activity, there are non-nationalized scheduled banks and non-scheduled banks. The number of reporting scheduled commercial banks, both nationalized is 26 and non-nationalized is 90. There were also 4 non-scheduled banks. Of the scheduled commercial banks 224 are in the public sector which account for about 85-90 percent of commercial banking system. Within the public sector banking system, 196 are regional and rural banks and 28 are regular commercial banks which transact all types of banking business.

In the early years of independence, the number of bank offices was very small. In June 1951, it stood at 5,115. It increased to 6,168 in June 1969. After the nationalization of banks in July 1969, there was appreciable increase in the number of banks. At the end of March 1995, there were 62,346 bank offices and branches including those of the

foreign banks. A number of Regional Rural Banks are also there catering to the credit requirements of the weaker sections small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, village artisans and small businessmen in the rural areas. There are now about 196 Regional Rural Banks in all states except Sikkim and Goa having a network of 14,542 branches and covering 408 districts. In August 1996 the lending rates of these Regional Rural Banks was deregulated by the RBI.

In July 1992 **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** was established with a view to facilitate rural credit and agricultural development. It has the overall responsibility of development, policy-planning and financial support for agriculture and rural development. The NABARD provides credit to rural sector through cooperative banks, commercial banks, regional rural banks and other financial institutions set up to finance rural development.

The Export-Import Bank of India was set up in January 1982 as a statutory corporation wholly owned by the Union Government. The main objectives of the Exim Banks are to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to solving the problems of exporters; providing special attention to capital goods exports and export technical services; and to tap domestic and overseas markets for resources, undertaking development and financing activities in the area of exports. It provides financial assistance to exporters and importers and acts as the principal financial institute for co-ordinating the working of other institutions engaged in financing exports and imports. It also provides refinance facilities to commercial banks and financial institutions against their export-import financing activities.

In recent years there has been phenomenal growth in banking services and activities. Reforms in the banking sector continues with a view to improving their financial strength and functional efficiency and bringing them up to international standards. In January 1997 the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) was reduced from 14 percent to 10 percent resulting in adequate liquidity. There were substantial deposit accretions and slow offtake of credit during 1996-97 in sharp contrast with the scenario in 1995-96 when banks faced difficulties in meeting credit demands. CRR cuts increased banks' lend able resources by about ₹ 18,000 crore between April 1996 and January 97. Consequently, the money market witnessed easy conditions and all money rates remained easy and the banks lowered their Prime Lending Rates (PLR). The banks also announced the maximum spreads over and above their PLRs. Other

important measures witnessed during the year were reduction in interest rates of deposits up to one year, near removal of selective credit controls, great autonomy in foreign exchange management and permission to banks to operate in the secondary market for equities. The income recognition asset classification norms were further improved.

The overall performance of public sector banks was negative which meant 0.07 percent return on assets. Low rates of return of many public sector banks, coupled with heavy losses of a few is a major source of concern. The total non-performing assets (NPAs) of the Indian banking system is the highest in the world. NPAs are lower in private and foreign banks because of a couple of reasons. The government has initiated some measures to correct and improve the situation which include focusing on a drastic reduction of NPAs, further recapitalization of banks, and Asset Reconstruction Fund (ARE) etc. Another important measure is to set up a **Settlement Advisory Committee (SAC)**, headed by a retired high court judge to advise on compromise of onetime settlement proposals.

A good deposit growth and sluggish off take of credit were other features of the banking scene during the period. The deposits of all scheduled commercial banks grew by 16.1 percent (12.1 percent last year); total credit rose by 8.9 percent (20% percent last year). Due to comfortable liquidity position, dependence of the banking system on high cost certificates of deposits for resource mobilization was substantially less. Another important feature of the year was the cross-border capital flows which led to a foreign exchange reserve growth with the attendant appreciation of rupee against dollar.



38. Railway Accidents: Causes and Remedies

Abstract : The safety standards of Indian Railways are too low and there are frequent accidents because of human and mechanical failures. Hundreds of train passengers die every year and thousands others are wounded, injured and maimed in train accidents. Paucity of funds is advanced as an argument for such low safety standards. But the argument hardly holds any water because Indian Railways is the biggest undertaking and should be run professionally and competitively to generate enough profits. The railway minister should never run the enterprise either as a charitable institute or a personal fiefdom and all wasteful expenditures be avoided.

Non-remunerative lines should not be introduced nor new Shatabdis and Rajdhani introduced indiscriminately without putting the infrastructure in place. The over-saturation of the trunk routes should be avoided. Over-bridges on all the railway crossings should be constructed without any more delay. There cannot be any compromise on safety.

India has the dubious distinction of the highest accidents both on roads and railway-tracks. Even over skies are not free from fatal accidents. Indian Air Force aircrafts, involvement in frequent accidents and air crashes is now a well-known fact. Travel in India has become very hazardous. About 60,000 lives are lost every year in road accidents. This fatality rate is 25 times that of USA. On an average 6 persons die every day on the roads of Delhi alone. Similarly, the railway tracks are virtually red with human blood. The number of deaths in railway tracks has been on the rise to 18,735 in the past few years. The number of those killed in train accidents is considerably more. The unmanned railway crossings also take their heavy tolls. Many people die while crossing the railway lines at such points. At least 22 people were killed when Gurakhdham Express rammed into a stationary freight train in Sant Kabir Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh on May 26, 2014. The marked rise in the number of train accidents in India is a matter of great concern and yet the concerned authorities have not done much to make the traveling by trains safe and secure. It has become a routine to order an enquiry after an accident, pay some compensation under the rules and then everything is forgotten till another tragedy strikes and passengers die while traveling.

The number of those injured, wounded and incapacitated for life is many times higher than those killed in railway accidents. It amounts to colossal losses in men and material and also a great national tragedy. It is a sad commentary on the poor management of our railways and continued apathy towards railway safety and maintenance. The Champa railway accident was the result of sheer negligence and casual approach to the safety measures. In this case all the mandatory safety rules were thrown to the winds. The track was under repair and yet no caution order was issued to the driver of the train from the control room nor were the red flags put up at the required place to warn the approaching train of the repairs going on the track. The flag was put up only 16 meters from the repair site instead of mandatory 1,200 meters away. Moreover, the repair work was being carried out even while the sun

was setting against the strict rule that no such work should be done while the train is running when the visibility is really poor. The driver of the ill-fated Ahmedabad-Howrah Express train had to apply emergency brakes just 16 meters away from the site of accident. Consequently the train derailed and five of the coaches rolled down into the river while the sixth one remained dangling in the air over the bridge and the seventh was only derailed but did not overturn. This is not a case of negligence and callousness in isolation. The tragic tale keeps on repeating itself. Just a few days after this accident another train Delhi-Ahmedabad Express derailed near Jaipur.

Indian Railways is the largest public sector undertaking which boasts of having 7,172 stations spread over route length of 65,436 km. Indian Railways holds over 239,281 freight wagon, 62,294 passenger coaches and 9013 locomotives (43, steam, 5245 diesel and 4568 electric locomotives) till 1993. It is also the largest employer in the world with about 1307 million employees. But as far as safety is concerned, it is far below the international standards. The poor and common passengers are the worst victims. There are too many mechanical and human failures resulting in frequent accidents. It is said that there is lack of funds which does not allow the required improvement in the safety standards.

Undoubtedly, there is no accountability and responsibility in the operation of Indian Railways. Take, for example, the construction of over bridges on railway crossings where innumerable accidents take place and poor people lose their lives. The Railway authorities say that the expenditure on the construction of the overhead bridges at railway crossings is to be shared 50:50 between the concerned State governments and the Railways, but the former in many a case do not pay their share and so the over bridges are not constructed. Similarly, in the case of bomb blasts in railways, and on its tracks, the minister concerned says that it is the responsibility of the State governments to ensure such safety and security in their respective territories and not that of the Railways. Bomb blasts and explosions in the trains are now on the increase. Scores of people die and many times over are injured and maimed in these blasts. Poor passengers travel at their own risk in the trains and are a worried lot till the journey is safely over.

The Railways complain of paucity of the funds while its assets utilization rate is not up to the standard. Most of its land lies unused

and unutilized which can yield very good dividends if put to proper and planned utilization. It is also reported that 40% of its goods wagon-movement is empty. Moreover, Indian Railways offers over 53 types of concessions to its travellers — so much so that almost half the passengers on a train are discount passengers. The Indian railways which is the third largest rail network in the world is currently facing a loss of nearly ₹ 900 crore per month and needs immediate attention. Safety of the passengers cannot be compromised because of lack of funds. It is the biggest public enterprise and must generate enough profits to fend for itself. But there is no professionalism and accountability and corruption is rampant.

Indian Railways have failed miserably in the matter of passenger safety and security. It has failed so far to provide walkie-talkies to the train drivers so that they can contact the control rooms in case of any emergency. Again the lack of funds is advanced as an argument. If the driver of the ill-fated Ahmedabad-Howrah Express had this facility of walkie-talkie he could have been informed of the impending danger and the tragedy averted. But it could not be done and again the problem of the funds was put forward as a lame excuse. On the other hand the political leaders are busy granting various railway favours to their own people, regions and states. On 2nd October (1997) a new high speed train Shatabdi to Amritsar was introduced without proper preparation in respect of infrastructure framework. It was done expressly to please the Prime Minister and his home State Punjab in spite of the opposition by railway officials. It is said that the infrastructure was unlikely to be in place in the immediate future. These are really disturbing trends. It has been reported that then the Railway Minister Ram Vilas Paswan introduced so far 200 new trains since he assumed office of the Railway Minister in May 1996. His predecessor Suresh Kalmadi started 67 new trains during his brief stint and Jaffer Sharief introduced over 300 new trains.

The cases of train loots, robberies, thefts etc. are also on the increase. The tendency of introducing new and high speed trains like Shatabdis, Rajdhani etc. without first increasing the necessary infrastructure and framework is also responsible for frequent accidents. In the opinion of the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety “in providing maintenance facilities to high speed trains, the upkeep of other passenger trains is in default. This is an unsafe practice.”

The authorities cannot escape the responsibility of introducing too many new trains without proper maintenance and operational facilities. On the one hand it is said there is paucity of funds, on the other it is alleged that the funds allocated for improvement of tracks, signaling, passenger amenities and other safety measures were returned unused. It reflects that there is no responsibility and accountability and a sort of chaos prevails. There is blatant favouritism in granting railway contracts and employment of personnel. There is no accord between the authorities on the top and the various railway officials and workers. To reduce the railway accidents and ensure greater safety and security effective and immediate remedial measures should be taken. There should be proper accountability and responsibility and railways should be managed and operated professionally and with commitment to earn enough profits commensurate with the huge investments. It should not be run either as a charitable institution or a personal field-test. However, as of now, modern advanced technologies and automatic signaling systems has been introduced in all sectors of the undertaking. Expert foreign advice and expertise are being sought to eliminate mechanical failures. Indiscriminate introduction of trains, specially high speed trains, should not be allowed without prior arrangement of infrastructure facilities. The saturated trunk routes between different big cities should be taken special care of in respect of maintenance of engines, rolling stocks, tracks, signaling equipments etc.

Proper regular inspection, repairs and up gradation of the tracks should be done. The guards and drivers of all the important trains should be provided with walkie-talkies initially and then the facility should be extended to all trains. Over-bridges on the railway crossings should be constructed or at least there should be no unmanned level crossing. Party and personal consideration should not be allowed to interfere in the policy, planning and operation of the trains. At least some of the operations of the railways can be privatized to generate additional profits and to ensure more efficiency. There are huge chunks of railway land which can be exploited commercially. In the rural areas they can be used for cultivation and plantation. Above all, the corruption should be dealt with an iron hand.

39. India's Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)

Abstract : No defence system can be dependable unless it is indigenous. Self-reliance in defence system and technology is of vital importance for India surrounded by belligerent and hostile neighbors. Development of Light Combat Aircraft indigenously in the country is a welcome step. LCA would be the state-of-the art combat aircraft much advanced and more sophisticated than any other modern existing such aircraft. It would replace the MIG series of aircrafts. It will be 5 times more agile than the MIG-21. This multipurpose fighter airplane will provide Indian Air Force the much needed cutting edge and capability to strike the enemy targets more accurately and efficiently. This fighter aircraft gives enough indications that our futuristic defence planning and policies are on the right track.

India cannot depend on other countries and imports for its defence requirements. Self-reliance is a crucial and principal element of any successful defence system.

LCA was officially known as "Tejas". It is an 8-tonne state-of-the-art multi-role aircraft being indigenously developed by India at Bangalore. It is a very significant milestone of our technological development.

The Tejas single-seat, single-engine, lightweight, high-agility supersonic fighter aircraft has been undergoing flight trials in preparation for operational clearance. As of January 2015 it had flown more than 2,800 test flights up to speeds of Mach 1.4. The aircraft's design and development programme is being led by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) of the Indian Department of Defence, with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as the prime industrial contractor. As of January 2015 it had flown more than 2,800 test flights up to speeds of Mach 1.4. The aircraft's design and development programme is being led by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) of the Indian Department of Defence, with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as the prime industrial contractor.

The first LCA Demonstrator I aircraft made a maiden flight in January 2001, with the LCA Demonstrator II flying in June 2002. In addition, a second prototype vehicle (PV-II) made its maiden flight in December 2005 and third in December 2006. In April 2006, the Indian Government approved limited series production of 20 Tejas for the air force.

First flight of the production aircraft was undertaken in April 2007, followed by the Tejas trainer variation's first flight in November 2009. The fourth and fifth limited series production aircraft (LSP-4) took their first flight in June and November 2010, respectively. Initial operational clearance (IOC) testing was completed in December 2010 and certification was approved in January 2011. The LSP-7 completed its maiden flight in March 2012 and the first flight of LSP-8 was made in March 2013. Tejas successfully fired an infrared seeking air-to-air missile during weapon release flight tests in December 2013. It achieved the IOC in December 2013. The first prototype vehicle has now completed its first flight with an advanced electronic warfare (EW) suite developed by DRDO. In October 2014, the first series production aircraft successfully completed its maiden flight and was handed over to the Indian Air Force in January 2015. Final operational clearance (FOC) is planned for 2015. HAL will produce six Tejas fighter aircraft between 2015 and 2016 and has plans to increase the production up to eight and 16 aircraft each year. The aircraft's naval prototype also completed its maiden flight in April 2012.

Tejas, the smallest, lightweight, multirole, single-engine tactical fighter aircraft in the world, is being developed as a single-seat fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and also as a two-seat training aircraft. In November 2008, the IAF confirmed a requirement for 140 Tejas aircraft for seven squadrons. The design of a carrier-borne Tejas in single-seat and two-seat versions, including a modified nose, strengthened landing gear and an arrestor hook, was granted approval in 1999. This has retractable canards and adjustable vortex control. A development programme for the carrier-borne versions was agreed by the Indian Government in 2002 and the first flights of two prototype aircraft were completed in 2009. The carrier variant could replace the fleet of Sea Harriers. The IAF started the second phase of hot weather flight trials on the Tejas aircraft in June 2010. The test was carried out at temperatures up to 45°C and examined the digital flight control computer, avionics systems, multimode radar, RWR and the electrical and environmental control systems. The ADA is carrying out a conceptual design study of the ADA medium combat aircraft, which will be an advanced, stealth version of the Tejas, and replace the IAF Jaguar and Mirage 2000 fleet. This version has two engines with fully vectoring nozzles and no vertical or horizontal tail. India has carried out initial flight tests on the fourth production version of the Tejas.

The aircraft has eight external hard points to carry stores, with three under each wing, one on the centre fuselage and one installed under the air intake on the port side. A 23mm twin-barrelled GSh-23 gun with a burst firing rate of 50 rounds a second and muzzle velocity of 715m a second is installed in a blister fairing under the starboard air intake.

Electronics Research and Development Establishment and HAL have jointly developed the aircraft's multimode radar. The radar has multiple target search and track-while-scan and ground-mapping modes of operation. It includes pulse Doppler radar with Doppler beam shaping, moving target indication and look-up/look-down capability. The radar is mounted in a Kevlar radome.

Development and induction of such a multipurpose and so efficient combat aircraft coupled with the development of a number of strategic and state-of-the-art missiles like Agni, Akash, Prithvi, Nag, Trishul etc. would prove a great deterrent to the hostile neighbors and they would not cast an evil eye on the county. As pointed out by the Prime Minister India has learnt two lessons in its 67 years of independence. First, if the country had ever lost it was because of lack of technology and not valor. The other was that technology becomes obsolete fast and research and development had to keep pace. LCA is one of our top priority projects and its successful completion would be certainly a new feather in our cap.

It is these schemes and programmes in space and defence related fields which ensure that our futuristic programmes and strategic planning are on track. Future wars will be fought and won only with such all encompassing and powerful tactical combat aircrafts and weapons.



40. India Goes Nuclear

Abstract : India's successful nuclear tests on May 11 and 13 of May, 1998 at Pokhran have catapulted her to one of the nuclear power states of the world. The tests were of the measured yields and there was no release of radio activity. The tests were prepared in perfect secrecy. India had conducted its first nuclear test at the same site in 1974. India's nuclear programme began in 1948 and since then it has covered a very long and significant ground. India's security concern and nuclear environment

compelled it to make these tests after a lapse of about a quarter century. Pakistan has had been exporting terrorism in India and developing missiles and nukes with China's help mainly targeted to be used against India. Besides Pakistan, China is also reported to have such collaboration with Myanmar. These attempts to encircle India strategically are of great concern and needed to be addressed. China and Pakistan are still in possession of a large chunks of Indian land. India as a nuclear power does not intend to threaten any country and it is a peace loving country committed to global disarmament. But as a Sovereign state India has every right to defend herself. Because of this threat perception India did not sign CTBT or NPT and kept its nuclear options open. By conducting these tests India has not violated any treaty or agreement. India needed a minimum deterrent and so these tests were a necessity. These were also essential to generate data for computer simulation and sub-critical testing. Pakistan has also done nuclear tests with the outside help. But India's nuclear capability is far superior to that of Pakistan. India needs to take these tests to their logical conclusion. It means weaponries in spite of its commitment to peace and global disarmament. Weaponries and development of effective delivery system of nukes involves huge sums of money but nothing should be spared for India's security and safety. Moreover, Indian scientists are highly talented to produce cost-effective nuclear weapons and delivery system as is evident from the upgradation of the unit-2 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station indigenously at a very reduced cost of ₹ 80 crore instead of ₹ 15,000 crore demanded by Canada.

May 11, 1998 became a momentous day of the Indian history when the country stormed into the exclusive elite club of nuclear power states and became one of the super powers on its own. It was Buddha Purnima day and Buddha smiled again for the second time after 1974. On this fateful day three nuclear tests were conducted with a fission device, a low yield device and a thermo nuclear device simultaneously at 3.45 p.m at Pokhran, in Rajasthan. These underground tests showed up as a single explosion on the Global Seismic Network and measured 4.7 on the Richter scale. It released the energy equivalent to 53 kilotons of TNT, over 5 times that of 1974 test. It was 2,048th test on the earth, and between 150 to 200 meters below the surface. The Prime Minister A.B. Yajpayee announced in a hurriedly convened news conference at 6 pm. that day that the measured yields were in line with the expected values and there was no release of radioactivity in the atmosphere.

Two more tests were conducted on 13 May, 1998 which were also sophisticated low-yield sub-kiloton tests. In the words of an expert these "micro and mini-nukes were the most sophisticated and the latest series

of nuclear tests in the world.” This significant Operation, code named “Shakti” was carried out under the over all supervision of DRDO Chief Dr. A. P.J. Abdul Kalam and Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Dr. R. Chidambaram. They were there at Pokhran and on the spot on that historic day.

It marked the logical culmination of long research, wait and planning. The news stunned the world and sent Indian people into ecstasy. The operation was carried out with such a perfect secrecy that it exposed one of America’s biggest intelligence failures. The American authorities felt let down and said this failure was because of misplaced trust, misjudgment by intelligence agencies and misdirection of the spy satellites. It is believed that India got the idea of keeping its tests preparations secret after its top scientists were shown in 1995 by the then US Ambassador to India Frank Wisner spy satellite photographs with clear signs of arrangements for a nuclear test to successfully persuade India from undertaking such a venture. This enabled Indian scientists to conceal the preparations this time. The US intelligence failure was further underlined by the subsequent Indian tests of two highly sophisticated devices with yields less than one kiloton on 13 May.

India conducted its first nuclear underground peaceful experiment on May 18, 1974 at Pokhran, Rajasthan, the same site where second tests were hold. At that time Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister. Pt. Nehru laid the foundation of India’s nuclear programme and Atomic Energy Commission was set up in 1948. India built Asia’s first atomic research reactor Apsara indigenously in 1956 followed by Cyrus in 1960. By 1964 India became the fifth plutonium producing country in the world. In 1964 China invaded India and the latter suffered a humiliating defeat which underlined India’s complacency in security matters. Pt. Nehru Passed away on 27 May, 1964 following the Chinese aggression. Soon after Nehru’s death China conducted its fist nuclear test in September, 1964. Homi J. Bhabha then said that India could manufacture a nuclear bomb within 18 months, but then he died in 1966 in a plane crash in mysterious circumstances. Had India manufactured a nuclear bomb and conducted nuclear test then, the situation would have been totally different and much in India’s favour. Why did Indira Gandhi not conduct another test after 1974 remains a mystery.

The annual Defence Ministry Report 1997-98, released recently, categorically accuses China of “extensive defence collaboration” with Pakistan, “assistance” to its nuclear programme, and sale of missiles and sophisticated weapon systems to Islamabad. The Report also takes note of military collaboration between China and Myanmar, including development of strategic lines of communication. It has come down heavily on Pakistan and its “involvement” in “operational planning and coordination of militant and terrorist activities in different parts of the country?”

On Pakistan’s nuclear tests, it said that they had confirmed the “unmistakable signals” leadership in recent years that its nuclear programme was a reality. It states that “Pakistan’s hostile and negative mind set against India and the manifestation of this mind set in the shape of fomenting and supporting terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country continued unabated.” “Pakistan has also been making claims about the development of increasingly longer range ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads.”

Chinese activities in Myanmar have increased considerably since 1989 when the military regime assumed power in Rangoon. With an aim of having a strategic outpost in the Indian ocean and to encircle India strategically, China is busy in spying on India from Great Coco Island of Myanmar, which is just 20 nautical miles from the northern tip of the Andamans. China also has radar bases at Man-Aung Island of Myanmar. China is also building road-links with Myanmar. The St. Matthews Island base is said to have direct satellite links with China. China regards India as her one of the most likely opponents in regional conflicts. There are also reports of increased and closer relationship between Pakistan and Myanmar. George Fernandes, the Defence Minister of India has drawn the attention to these facts and developments in his recent utterances. China and Pakistan are still in possession of large chunks of Indian territory.

India is a peace-loving country. It has never committed any aggression. Its commitment to world peace, nuclear disarmament, non-violence, the principles of the Panch Sheel are well-known. But unfortunately, there have been taken as its weakness. As a nuclear power India does not intend to use its weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country. India is a sovereign country and it has every right to defend its territorial integrity, sovereignty and honour. Indians

are masters of their own destiny and can shape it as they would. There cannot be any let up in its defence preparedness. It cannot take any chance in such a matter. It was only because of belligerent neighbors that India refused to sign CTBT or NPT. India is well aware of its international commitments and obligations. It has not violated any treaty or agreement and so need not be apologetic. India is fully committed to Chemical Weapons Treaty, Biological Weapons Convention etc. The double speak and arm-twisting tactics of the nuclear weapons states is on open secret. They have been practicing economic and nuclear apartheid for long.

When in 1974 India detonated its first nuclear device at Pokhran it shocked the world, the U.S was angry and felt caught unawares. Then Henry Kissinger told US congress, "We objected strongly, but since there was no violation of US agreements involved, we had no specific leverage on which to bring over objections to bear." The situation is not different now. India is not a signatory to NPT or CTBT. India has not violated any convention or agreement, but simply has exercised its sovereign right to continue the testing for self-defence. As a result of these tests Indians feel more secure, safe and proud. It has generated more confidence in our armed forces. It marks the end of a long inaction and indecision and down of a new era. Pokhran II should be taken to its logical and desired conclusion. In one go India has shown the nuclear capability of our scientists, engineers and others. It also reflects the strong determination and will of the people. The world is happy that India has broken the hegemony of a few. These tests were not for political reasons, or for stirring up a hysteria. They were a necessity from security point of view and also as a confidence-building measure. It was the need of the hour that India had at least minimum nuclear deterrent. Perhaps India had no option but to demonstrate its nuclear capability. India could no longer remain complacent about its defence preparedness. France conducted 5 tests and China 7 before they signed CTBT. India rejected the CTBT and kept its opinions open because the treaty was discriminatory, it hurted India's sovereignty, and it did not provide for time - bound nuclear disarmament. India is now in a better position to sign CTBT in its modified form. It was inevitable that India tested its nuclear capability and generated data essential for computer simulation and sub - critical testing. Better late those never. It has been said well and rightly that if you want peace, prepare for war. It is better

that we got ready ourselves for war in time of peace. Lasting and genuine friendship can only be among the equals. The strong recognizes the strong.

On 28 May, 1998 Pakistan also detonated five nuclear devices at Chagai Hills in Baluchistan using uranium 235. It did not surprise India. It was on the expected lines. Pakistan did it just 17 days after India went nuke at Pokhran on May 11, 1998. It was not a reaction to Indian tests. However, testing time might have been proponed in view of the India tests. According to a British nuclear expert even if the US with its advanced technology were to decide to test, it would have needed at least 2-months from start to finish. But there is a big difference between India and Pakistani tests. The latter have been termed simpler and less advanced. While Indian devices and expertise were totally indigenous, the Pakistanis nuclear devices were of Chinese origin and borrowed. Pakistan did obtain its nuclear technology clandestinely. Their chief nuclear scientist Abdul Quadeer Khan was sentenced in absentia to four year imprisonment in Amsterdam (Netherlands) in 1983 for trying to steal nuclear secrets; however, the appeals court set aside the order two years later. Certainly Pakistan could not have detonated without outside help. Reports say that China supplied Pakistan about 70,000 ring magnets for its nuclear programme. On the other band Indian scientists and engineers did it on their own. Moreover, India's potential nuclear arsenal has been rated bigger even than that of Britain and in the same league as the French and Chinese. Pakistan, however, exhausted a significant part of its meager arsenal in its nuclear tests and the poor performance of its weapons revealed the country's strategic nuclear weakness, said the UK's Jone's Intelligence Review.

India is now no more a threshold nuclear weapon state, but a real nuke power with credible deterrent. It ensures security and prevention of any foreign aggression and coercive diplomacy. But now the question arises what after the tests? Where do we go from here? Will Phokhran II go the way of Pokhran I? Were these tests only to create an illusion of grandeur, glory and super power? Do we stop here, or opt for weaponries? Were these detonations simply to show India's nuclear capability and nothing more? What after breaking the monopoly of the 5-nuclear weapon states? Should India now sign NPT and CTBT unconditionally? These are some of the important questions that remain to be answered.

India has already announced voluntarily its moratorium on further tests. We need not be defensive and apologetic about these tests and should take them to their desired and logical conclusion. Only this will make the super powers come to terms with India in the course of time. Weaponries also do not mean that India has given up its commitment to global disarmament. India should continue its efforts in this direction without compromising either its sovereignty or national security interests.

The next logical step would be the development and deployment of nuclear warheads and their delivery system. Unless it is done in near future, the whole exercise would turn into an exercise in futility. The Prithvi and Agni missiles should be transformed into deployed weapon systems. The nukes are deterrent only when they are deployable and ready to strike the aggressor. Deterrence means the ability to retaliate with full devastating might after surviving the first strike by the enemy. Only the operational deployment of nukes can ensure peace, stability and balance of power in the sub-continent. The serial production of the Army Version of the surface to surface Prithvi (P-I) missile has already begun. It has a range of 150 kms in the production phase. The second flight trial of the Air Force Version of the surface to surface "Prithvi" (P-II), with a range of 250 kms. has been successfully undertaken.

Effective weaponries mean colossal investment and expenditure. A credible deterrent would mean manufacturing of at least 50 Agni missiles with a range of 3500 kms, each with a capability to carry 10-tonne nuclear payload. It is estimated that each of such missiles would cost at least ₹ 5 crore. No doubt enormous funds would be needed to take India's nuclear programme beyond Pokhran. But no sacrifice is too great for the country's safety and security. Moreover, we can depend upon our scientists who can reduce the cost of weaponisation to a great extent. For example, the scientists and engineers of Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) have successfully upgraded the unit-2 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS) by replacing indigenously coolant channels, and thus saving an amount of ₹ 1,500 crore. The Canadians were demanding US \$ 350 million for doing this job whereas Indian scientists did it in Rs 80 crores. This positive out-come is another feather in the cap of India scientists. It mean Indian scientists are capable to accept any challenge and rise to the occasion. The replacement of coolant channels was a very difficult task as the danger of being affected by radioactivity loomed large. But our men handled the replacement and

disposal of the coolant tubes efficiently which ensured safety for every worker in the plant. It amply proves that India can competently undertake cost-effective weaponries and yet need not eat grass.



41. Internet Accessibility

Abstract: Internet users are gradually on rise. Traffic on line is badly congested. A long wait is evitable besides user's cost plan or capacity. Rather, they are frustrated at busy signals and slow speeds. America On-Line has recently been a prey to legal proceedings as the users were not satisfied. Confrontation between telephone lines and internet calls is not in good harmony. With hordes of people hogging the internet and the number growing by 200% annually, it certainly provides new challenges for the telephone companies.

Internet accessibility is available everywhere: media, educational organizations, government offices even homes where family members are using internet for all purposes. As of now, use of internet is common. It is as popular as daily meals. Information Superhighway provides a network of millions of computers around the globe. It is as fast as captivating Steven Spielberg. Users are on rise the date is changing surprisingly. They are logging on everyday and stay on for a longer period of time. The Information Superhighway could be referred as the clogged Highway, as quite obvious one can find it in a cosmopolitan city during peak hours.

Busy signals and slow speed no doubt frustrates the users of internet. America On-line, a corporate giant has recently been the target of several lawsuits because it changed it's pricing plan. A number of internet users logged on to its system who could not handle the overwhelming traffic. America in-line system above all, ran at very slow speed as it made it's effort to accommodate the increasing number of extra users who by one way or the other were lucky to have logged on to the internet. This event brought a different kind of problem as a result the users began staying on-line much longer, though they were not

literally doing anything worthwhile on the internet. As it was evident for the users that if they remained unlinked, it would be easy to log on easily, therefore, America On-line (ASL) was decisive enough to upgrade almost all its equipments, leased more telephone lines, and

made a formal apology to the users of internet. Not only that AOL reimbursed the amount to its users who were unable to log on during the peak hours.

Apprehensions of the technocrats are that owing to lengthy internet calls and the bandwidth these calls take up, a time will come in the near future that the entire telephone network will simply collapse and cease to function. Gridlock Theory seems to have a solution for the world of telecommunication systems which can stop this total collapse. Telecommunications giants proclaim that steps can be taken to avoid such disaster by upgrading telephone lines and limiting internet use.

Bob Metcalfe, maker of the *Ethernet* is of the view that the clogging of the internet will get worse as his company has problem of 'system shutdown' caused by hectic and heavy use. It didn't connect 4, 00,000 people to internet access for nearly 13 hours. Nearly 25-30 million people use internet. A recent study has shown that an average internet call lasts five times longer than the average telephone call. The study reveals that 10% of internet calls lasts at least six hours. This brings switches to overload, and in turn, causes telecommunication a failure or over shutdowns. Cosmopolitan cities consume internet services about 2.5% of the telephone lines, while such cities are using 20-30% of the total telephone network capacity. The remarkable point is that local telephone network is designed for short calls, while internet calls often occupy a line for hours. A flood of people logging the internet where the growing number is nearly 200% annually, certainly it poses new challenges for the telephone companies.

There was a time when internet was used for reading the texts. Later, during 1990's technological advancement facilitated multimedia programming for 'loading' pictures and sounds on to the internet. And what we see today the crore, is due to such technical advancement. Apart from certain facilities as above, today internet offers chat-rooms, voice communications, video conferencing and video games. Voice conversations over the internet allow users to talk to anyone, anywhere in the world virtually. Video conferencing provides added exciting dimensions where the users are able to see the persons with whom they are conferencing. A computer and a modem to the internet, one does not need hardware to surf the internet. Today devices are available such as Web TV which provides access to the internet via the TV and the latest third generation cellular phones with built-in modems allow dial-up access to the internet for E-mails and other information services.

A tireless journey to reach the far off destination in the world of telecommunication system is still on. K.Kao and G.Hockman are the first to come up with the idea of using fiber optic cable (in place of copper wire) to carry telephone signals. In place of sound waves, fiber optics uses pulses of light to transmit binary code, such as these used in computers and other electronic devices through the lines. Some more telecommunication based companies are trying to get a hit at solving the telecommunications crisis.

A surprise to none, cable TV companies are introducing internet access in some places. By accessing the internet through the coaxial cable that provides TV to houses, the speed can be increased a thousand times. Nevertheless, the setback is: the cable system was built to send information one way only. It means, these internet services can only be used to browse the web. It cannot be used to upload or send anything back. To catch on among users, the entire cable infrastructure has to be replaced to cater to dual carriage of signals. It is possible at the cost of billion of dollars.

Speedy internet access sounds like an easy and permanent solution, but let us think of this : how is that when new lanes are created to ease traffic congestion on busy roads? A fairly good answer—since new lanes attract more cars, a faster internet access, in the same way would attract more users and eventually more congestions and slowed-down access even worse than what we face presently.

Internet hogging is indeed a problem. Some internet service providers are trying hard to find out viable and economic solution. They are toying with new price plans. Fixed flat-rate for internet access will not suit much. Setting a maximum access time per month at flat rate and charging extra for the acceding hours on different price-scale will be profitable. On the other hand, service providers have started using a priority-based system where users in need of better and faster access would pay more than those who just want to check and send e-mails. However, much more and viable price-plans are available. Above all, the internet access remains in the hands of the users in terms of fair use of the telecommunication system. It is time to keep the personal usage on check rather than existing telephone lines and other technological solutions.



42. India's Missile Options

Abstract : The strategic position and situation demand that India develops and deploys its missiles at the earliest because time is the essence. The development and deployment of Prithvi is a right step but it is not enough. The Western Powers are never happy at the country's self-sufficiency in defence matters and have always been trying arm-twisting and are indulging in anti-India propaganda. India should never be pressurized and soon develop the strategic weapon Agni in the face of security dangers from missiles already deployed in Pakistan and China. Agni options need to be revived and the weapon be made operational. Such a deterrent is a must amidst missile proliferation in the sub-continent. India should also develop its own intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for future preparation weapons. India's deployable missile capabilities must be transformed into deployed capacities. India has a strong indigenous missile capability and it would be nothing short of a catastrophe if its Agni program is shelved or put on hold to be activated at some future date.

In view of its huge size, its very long international borders, coastline and strategic position in South Asia, India cannot afford to neglect, put on hold or abandon its missile development program. It should be continued and taken to its logical conclusion and missiles deployed. India has developed the Prithvi missiles which have a range of 150 km. to 250 km. This 8.5 metre short range surface-to-surface missile has now been inducted into the Indian army after its successful completion of trials in 1994. But there has been constant pressure on India from the West not to deploy it in spite of the fact that Pakistan has acquired Chinese M-11 missiles with matching capabilities.

The Western military powers have been deliberately creating tension in the sub-continent by spreading rumours from time to time. Recently, a selected western media falsely reported that India has deployed Prithvi missiles in Jalandhar, near Pakistani border. These "media missiles" being fired from the West are dangerous and create tension in the region. In this regard the Defence Minister had said on July 12, 1997 that the country had spent huge sums on the project. Scientists had been working for the last 14 years to make the nation self-reliant and independent, "Prithvi has not been prepared," he said, "to be kept in museums, we have not yet deployed it on the Pakistani border. We will decide where to deploy it and when." These words are really reassuring but in regard to Agni missile the Government has

created an impression that it is just a sleeping giant and will be awakened and activated when the need arises.

There should not be any laxity or complacency in defence matters. We should not forget the lessons of **Chinese aggression and our humiliating defeat in 1962**. In the face of Pakistan's flexing of its missile muscles, it becomes imperative that India expeditiously develops and deploys Agni missile, a medium range ballistic missile. Agni is an intermediate range ballistic surface-to-surface missile with a range capability up to 2,500 km. It was first test fired on **May 22, 1989**. Thus, India became the fifth nation in the world to have developed this type of missile after the US, Russia, France and China. New Delhi should wake up to the threat to our security and safety from across the borders. The Haft series of missiles have been developed with Chinese help and assistance. Pakistan has been working on these since 1980 and now she has successfully test fired Haft-3 missile, a long range ballistic missile.

India's defence preparedness seems to be in a sorry state. Defence budgetary allocations have not been adequate. The defence expenditure has actually decreased by 24 percent in the past 7-8 years while those of Pakistan and China have appreciably increased. The defence committee report feels sorry that Government has shelved the Agni program. Agni can be the only real deterrent in the Indian arsenal with long range capability going up to Tibet in China. It is imperative to maintain the strategic balance in the South East Asia. The Agni needs to be deployed and made operational soon. In the face of grave missile threat from Pakistan and China, India cannot afford to go slow or shelve the project. **Pakistan's Haft missiles**, named after the Prophet's sword, coupled with other M-15 missiles are far more advanced than our missile Prithivi. Pakistani missiles can hurl 500-kilo payload for up to 600 km. Obviously, Agni options need to be revived immediately.

India should not be pressurized by the western super-powers in this matter. India should remove the imbalance in the sub-continent by having a matching missile regime to that of Pakistan and China. Such a deterrent is necessary amidst missile proliferation in the sub-continent. Experts believe that India should not only develop and deploy Agni missiles, but also begin a meaningful program for developing its own **intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)**. Besides 5 nuclear powers, India is only one of the three countries who was in a position to develop and deploy ICBM in a reasonable time. The other

2 countries are Israel and Japan. It takes over 10-14 years to develop and deploy a missile like Agni for a country like India. India's space launch capabilities can be used for developing ICBMs but it requires strong determination and singleness of purpose besides huge funds.

China is busy upgrading its medium range missiles with newer mobile systems designed to hit targets in India, Russia, Taiwan, Japan and other parts of East Asia. "China's IRBM forces translate into overwhelming strategic leverage in Asia," said US defence specialist, Richard Fisher. According to him Chinese medium range missiles, including a future variant of CSS-5 called Mod-2, are designed to provide strategic dominance over East Asia. The CSS-2, a liquid fuel missile with a range of about 1,922 miles, is being replaced in some deployment areas with the mobile, solid-propellant CSS-5 Mod 1, with a range of about 1,333 miles. China could use these weapons to threaten nations in South-east Asia including India. China has not only been selling missiles to Pakistan but is also helping it in their manufacturing. That is why Pakistan could successfully test fire Haft 3 missile, a medium range weapon with a range up to 800 km. just in 6 years, while it took India 14 years to develop Prithvi. Pakistan's link with China on strategic weapons system has been many years old. China provided Pakistan with the design of its third nuclear test and in later years with short and medium range missiles.

It is high time that India is aware of these strategic developments and gives up to go slow on its integrated guided missile development program. India's 'deployable' rather than 'deployed' missile system capabilities are deplorable. Missile is the right weapon to defend and to attack and to work as an effective deterrent. India has a strong and indigenous missile capability and it should be suitably exploited. It would be regrettable if India succumbs to pressure from the U.S. or any other country and loses the advantage in terms of time, technology and know-how.

India's tireless efforts are on in order to strengthen its wide-ranging pursuit of ballistic and cruise missiles capability. The brave submarine-launched ballistic missiles in February 2008 is a witness to the world. Apart from its ballistic missile arsenal, India has inducted the **BrahMos** supersonic cruise missile, the product of an Indian-Russian joint venture, into its armed forces.

43. Indian Space Exploration

*Abstract : Indian space program was the vision of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai. He said: "...if we are to play a meaningful role nationally, we must be second to move in the application of advanced technologies to the real problems of man and society." In ancient India astronomical and mathematical knowledge was highly advanced. The world owes the invention of zero and decimal system to India. Vedic literature and Epics are full of significant space-references. The 17th century observatories in the country were equipped with highly accurate instruments which presuppose such observatories in the past as well. Modern Indian space research is late yet very significant. India has made rapid progress in the launch of satellites, space vehicles, etc. **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** has a very ambitious space program including development of **Geo Synchronous Launch Vehicles (GSLV)** engines. It is committed to application for peaceful purposes. India has been showing good results in the field of space research particularly in the field of telecommunications and remote sensing. , the Indian interest in exploration and human spaceflight is relatively new. In technological terms, the Indian space program is roughly comparable to China's program, except in human spaceflight and exploration. And while India spends a bit more than Russia does on its space program, the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) that India devotes to space is second only to the United States.*

With the arrival of new Indian launch vehicles, India has now become a new provider of low-cost launch services. It means India is rivaling current Russian and Chinese strengths in the international market. The relative comfort associated with technology exchange in India, as compared to Russia or China, may give low-cost Indian launchers better access to U.S. customers.

In ancient India, astronomy and mathematics were remarkably developed. It produced great astronomers and mathematicians like **Varahamihira, Aryabhatta, Bhaskara**, etc. They contributed a lot to our knowledge of heavenly bodies. Their calculations were accurate and reliable. They knew that the earth revolved round the sun on its axis. They could forecast eclipses with accuracy. Their astronomical knowledge was deep and of far-reaching consequences. The 17th century observatories of Jaipur, Delhi, etc, constructed on a big scale, were equipped with very accurate instruments. These suggest that there were their counterparts in ancient days as well. Zero and decimal system of numerals were invented by the ancient Indian scientists and mathematicians. Indians were the first to understand the mathematical implications of zero and infinity. These are the very foundations on which

modern space research and exploration is said to be based.

Vedic literature is full of significant references to 'Antariksha' and 'Akasha' the intermediate space between heaven and earth, the atmosphere, the sky, the open space, vacuity, etc. In the Ramayana, Rama travels in an aerial chariot called 'Pushpaka' from Lanka to Ayodhya. Ravana having abducted Sita travels through skies. Similarly, the Mahabharata is replete with space-stories and adventures. There is an interesting anecdote in the Mahabharata which wonderfully illustrates the concept of gravitation and planetary motion, though allegorically. Bhima, physically the most powerful of the 5 Pandava princes, caught hold of an elephant by one of its feet and swirling hurled it into the space and it never fell on the earth.

India's modern space research and exploration is somewhat belated and yet significant. India now ranks sixth after the U.S., Russia, France, Japan and China in the world, and second in the developing countries in the matter of satellite launching into low earth orbit. The Agni I, II, and III solid-fueled ballistic missiles are in service. Each variant underwent testing in 2013. The Agni-I is reported to have successfully undergone its first night-time test in April 2014 from Wheeler Island, one of India's main missile test sites. The Agni-IV underwent its third consecutive successful launch in January 2014, also from Wheeler Island. With this test, which was conducted jointly by the DRDO and the Strategic Forces Command, DRDO Director General Avinash Chander announced that the Agni-IV is ready for induction into the armed forces.

Indian scientists produced the world's most advanced remote sensing satellite IRS-1C which was successfully put into orbit afloat a Russian rocket on December 28, 1995. It is equipped with the panchromatic camera (PAN) which will send pictures of the earth with a resolution of 6 meters, the highest available today in the world. India's third indigenous satellite INSAT-2C was launched from Kourou, French Guyana by the Ariane rocket. It carries KU band transponders meant for telecommunication. Recently on March 21, 1996 the PSLV-D3 (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) successfully launched IRSP-3 (Indian Remote Sensing Satellite) from Sriharikota. The launch placed the 930 kg IRS-P3 into a near-polar sun-synchronous orbit. The 2nd Indian remote sensing satellite IRS-1A was launched in March 1988 and IRS-1B in August 1991. The first satellite in the IRS series IRS-1A, launched in March 1988 had successfully completed its designed life of 3 years

and continued to provide operational services even as it entered its 6th year of operation.

ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April in 1975. In 1980, Rohini became the first satellite to be placed in orbit by an Indian-made launch vehicle, SLV-3. ISRO subsequently developed two other rockets: the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) for launching satellites into polar orbits and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) for placing satellites into geostationary orbits. These rockets have launched numerous communications satellites and earth observation satellites. Satellite navigation systems like GAGAN and IRNSS have been deployed. In January 2014, ISRO successfully used an indigenous cryogenic engine in a GSL.V-D5 launch of the GSAT-14.

The Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) is a multipurpose operational satellite system for communications, meteorological observations and data relay, direct satellite TV broadcasting and radio program distribution. The INSAT system was set up in 1983 with the successful commissioning of INSAT-1B aboard the U.S. Space Shuttle Challenger on August 30, INSAT-1D, the last in the series of the first generation INSAT Satellites was sent into space by the U.S. Delta Rocket on June, 12, 1990. The indigenously built INSAT-2A was launched in July 1992 on board the European launch vehicle, Ariane and was commissioned in August 1992. INSAT-2 series of satellites are more advanced and have one and a half times the capacity of INSAT-1 satellites. INSAT-2B, the second indigenously built multipurpose satellite, was hurled into space by Ariane Vehicle from Kourou on 23 July, 1993. And then INSAT-2C was sent into space by Ariane rocket from Kourou, French Guyana in 1995.

Besides the last 2 satellites of the second generation series INSAT-2D, scheduled for launch on May 29 from Kourou and INSAT-2E, the ISRO has plans to launch four satellites of the third generation during the current five year period. Two of them will use procured launches and the remaining 2 the second generation Geo Synchronous Launch Vehicles (GSLV).

The second operational Indian Remote Sensing Satellite, IRS-IB was launched on 29 August, 1991. Before this IRS-IA was launched in March. On October 15, 1994, 870 kg remote sensing satellite IRSP-2 was launched from Sriharikota by PSLV-D2. IRS-IC was launched by Russian Molniya Vehicle in 1995. IRS-IC and IRS-ID are second

generation highly advanced satellites with much better spectral and spatial resolutions, more frequent revisits, stereo viewing and on board recording capabilities.

In spite of some setbacks the launch vehicle program in India has made significant strides. The maiden venture in developing a satellite launch vehicle proved a failure as SLV-3 failed in August 1979. The second attempt of SLV, however, proved successful and it placed a 35 kg Rohini satellite in orbit. SLV-3 launch in May 1981 was again a failure but again SLV-3 was successfully launched in 1983 and it transmitted more than 2,500 pictures home. The next 2 Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicles (ASLVs) sent into space in 1987 and 1988 also failed in their mission, but the launch of ASLV-D3 on 20 May, 1992 was a success which carried the stretched Rohini Satellite (SROSS-III). ASLV-D4 was successfully launched from Sriharikota placing into low earth orbit the SROSS-C2 satellite on May 4, 1994. PSLV-D2 was successfully launched on October 15, 1994 hurtling into polar synchronous orbit 870 kg remote sensing satellite IRS-P2. PSLV-D3 was launched successfully on March 21, 1996.

A major milestone targeted for the period is the operationalisation of the GSLV in launching communication satellites. According to the current program, the last 2 of the GSLV series would launch INSAT-3C and INSAT-3D. Though the ISRO's vision for the decade 2000 to 2010 lays stress on promotion and development of space technology for applications in socio-economic development, one of its important plan is to commercialize the technological capability and space application potential in the global market in an attempt to harness the benefits accruing from the national space efforts.

It is an ambitious program which the Western powers may not like to succeed. They are already at work through Missile Technology Control Regime (MCTR) to see Indian space development program of developing cryogenic engine derailed. But the Indian scientists and technologies at ISRO and other allied departments seem determined that the development is as scheduled. India is committed to peaceful application of space technology, but it can also be used in augmenting national security measures if there is any external threat from across the borders. This technology can help us in producing Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) for launching conventional as well as nuclear warheads—a rare capability which only a few countries in the world, possess.

ISRO was established in 1969 and is currently under the Department of Space. The workforce strength as of now is approximately 17,000. It is located in Bangalore, but activities related to satellites, launch vehicles, and applications are carried out at a number of centres throughout the country. There are some other organizations. Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) is the single largest facility near Trivandaram. Liquid Propulsion System Centre (LPSC), Bangalore, INSAT Master Control Facility MCF, Development of Educational Communications Unit (DECU) etc.

Indian space reserach organization (ISRO) is responsible for the planning execution and management of all space research and exploration activities.

On 22 October 2008, ISRO sent its first mission to the Moon, Chandrayaan-1. On 5 November 2013, ISRO launched its Mars Orbiter Mission, which successfully entered the Mars orbit on 24 September 2014, making India the first nation to succeed on its maiden attempt, and ISRO the first Asian space agency to reach Mars orbit. Future plans include development of GSLV Mk III (for launch of heavier satellites), development of a reusable launch vehicle, human spaceflight, further lunar exploration, interplanetary probes, a satellite to study the Sun, etc. ISRO has conducted a variety of operations for both Indian and foreign clients. It has several field installations as assets, and co-operates with the international community as a part of several bilateral and multilateral agreements. Several foreign satellites have been launched by ISRO's launch vehicles.

The successful launch of 10 satellites in **April 2008** breaking a world record made by Russia has shown India's landmark achievements in the world of space exploration. Apart from this, the next maiden flight place in 2010 which was another great achievement in our domestic space capability competing with other master space explorers. On 31st January 2015, India conducted a third flight of the Agni-V from the wheeler island off odisha coast. The flight duration was little over 20 minutes and hit the pre-designed target in the Indian ocean with an accuracy of a few meter. ISRO has also launched a set of experimental geostationary satellites known as GSAT series. Kalpana-I, ISRO's first dedicated meteorological satellite, was launched by the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle on September 12, 2002.**

44. India: The Emerging Power

Abstract: Since independence, India has made progress by leaps and bounds in every sector. Over the current decade especially state-of-the-art technology is harnessing to serve its purposes. India is now a nuclear state. Defense is competing with its all capabilities; the trio is ever ready to meet any time of emergency. Indigenous missiles technology is at par with its neighboring counterparts. India has test-fired successfully over the time and again and can face any challenge. Countries around are even envious of such missile capabilities.

The post-Cold War period, India is seen as a rising power for two important reasons. First, its hard power capabilities, while lagging behind those of the major powers, are appreciably higher than those of the other regional powers such as Brazil, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria and Egypt. The Indian middle class of 300 million is much larger the population of Indonesia (287 million) and Brazil (168 million) which are the largest regional powers. None of these regional powers hold aggregate raw military capabilities compared to India.

In the economic sphere, India has the largest economy except that of Brazil. Though in per capita dollar terms, all regional powers, with the exception of Nigeria and Pakistan, Brazil ranks above India. Secondly, India is changing rapidly and is strengthening its position in almost all indicators of hard power capabilities. Nevertheless, the level of improvement varies from one area to another.

The early 1990s, faced with liquidity crisis, India opened up its market and integrated with the world economy. Since then, its average annual growth rate has been over 6 percent. As its expanding market has become an attractive site for foreign investors and exporters, India has acquired a great degree of self confidence in emerging as a major economic player, at least in niche areas such as information technology, biotechnology and related area. India has already begun to see its large and expanding market as the foundation for encouraging regional economic cooperation in the subcontinent and beyond.

In the 1990s, in an effort to foster closer economic relationship within the South Asia region, India has replaced the concept of reciprocity in economic operation with its neighbors with 'more than reciprocity'. India's aspirations extended beyond the South Asia region, and it became an active promoter in 1997 of the *Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC)*. It also became a full

dialogue partner of the ASEAN regional Forum.

While these moves are primarily economic in orientation, they are likely to have strategic implications in the long run. In the military domain, India's power projection capabilities beyond the region are rapidly increasing as a result the consistent support lent by different governments to the Integrated Missile Development Program, which was launched in the early 1980s. This program has resulted in the development of a range of ballistic missiles, including the Agni I missile with a range of 1500 km in the 1990s.

The program has plans to develop longer range version of the Agni missile as well as an intercontinental ballistic missile. With these, India's military reach is set to increase to cover the Far East, West Asia, and Central Asia as well as Australia. India has already successfully produced a long range, cruise missiles in a co-production arrangement with Russia.

The most significant development that enhanced India's position in the global power structure is its decision to go nuclear in May 1998. India's defiance of major powers in its decision to conducted underground nuclear tests and emerge as a nuclear weapon state followed from its efforts to overcome the challenges in the strategic arena—the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the special Indo-Soviet relationship, the intensified efforts of the major powers to strengthen the non-proliferation regime to retain their monopoly over nuclear weapons and foreclose India exercising the nuclear option, and the US negligence of the Chinese transfer of nuclear and missile equipment and technology to Pakistan.

The major powers, rightly perceived in the nuclear tests, along with India's declaration that it now stood as a nuclear weapon state, a challenger to their hegemony. The first reaction of the major powers was to condemn the nuclear tests. Several of them sought to isolate India politically and to punish it economically through sanctions, suspension of economic aid, and denial of loans from international financial institutions. Confident that its economy had the resilience to withstand economic pressures, India remained unrelenting.

Soon differences surfaced among the major power as to how to deal with India. Russia and France left no doubt; by word and deed of their different approach through opposition to sanctions and political ostracism. Under these circumstances the US initiated strategic dialogue with India. The result was a tacit and partial accommodation on the part of the US to India as a de facto nuclear weapon state, even as the

US formally remained committed to its ultimate aim of nuclear non-proliferation. Other major powers, barring China, have initiated strategic dialogue with India.

China is most adversely affected by India's rise to a nuclear weapons power, as it could end China's unhindered hegemony over Asia. It was most critical of the Indian tests and irritated by the US dialogue with India, but it too has come round to establishing normal relations with India and even engaged in a security dialogue with it. Thus, within two years of the tests, there was a sea change in the treatment of India by major powers.

The nuclear tests have increased India's political and diplomatic bargaining power with the other major powers, as evident in the strategic dialogue that it has begun to engage in with all the major powers. India is now also taken seriously, even if not universally, as a candidate for the major power status.

Having repositioned itself from being a middle power in the international system to become a candidate major power, India has been working towards achieving permanent membership for itself in the restructured Security Council of the United Nations.

For quite some time now, there has been a demand to restructure the UN Security Council to reflect the changes in the global power structure. In this context, the acquisition of permanent membership in the Security Council will dramatically improve the Indian power position in the global power structure.

As we noted earlier, institutions have been a source of soft power capabilities. Established powers have often used institutions to legitimize their position. Rising powers such as China have also been increasingly using institutions in order of the power ambitions. India already exercises institutional power intermittently through its leadership in G-77, G-20 and the non-aligned group. Its contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations also provides India with some institutional influence.



45. Empowering Women

Abstract: Indian women have been given equal opportunities in today's world. They are treated on equal footing. It has been proved effectively that women can

carry out their duties well outside the four walls of their houses. Despite several bills passed in both the Houses for women empowerment there still exists some noticeable gap between the present miserable plight of women due to the socio-economic inequalities that have been persistent throughout the world and the new mandates that require a decisive role of womenfolk side by side with menfolk. Propositions like savings and insurance schemes announced from time to time by the central government and various state governments have helped women become economically stronger, resulting in their better social status. Empowerment of women is the key-device to enable them to resurrect their status multifariously in the society and reconcile them to share virilities of the fast developing world. It had come out of the consensus arrived at the 40th Session of the UN commission on status of women in New York on March 11, 1996.

This social device is significant that the women can more effectively play their role in all vital areas. The male factor alone is not capable of any effective and reliable performance in socio-economic spheres and a partnership is a must throughout the world between men and women to ensure the progress in the right direction. Noteworthy is the fact that there exists some gap between the present miserable plight of the women due to the socio-economic inequalities that have been persistent throughout the world and the new mandates that require a decisive role of women side by side with the men folk.

The commission has warned all the member states of the UNO that the women concerns are mainstreamed to with the impact of the economic and social changes on families. Eradication of poverty, elimination of gender prejudices, discriminations, and providing equal opportunities to women to expel their views, are essential to check further drift in the socio-economic situations in their respective countries. The commission has stressed this is not just a formality to oblige the women folk with a view of their morale or pacify them. But it is an integral part of empowerment of women that they participate in decision making at all levels are the critical concerns that were identified in the world women conference held in China in 1995.

By empowerment of women is meant that the conferment of power by means of law in all matters affecting gender interests related to family well-being and socio-economic national affairs, and providing participation in decision making in all such matters. All such matters that were categorically termed as 'critical concerns of the women in the World Women Conference in China in 1995, were required to be mainstreamed to deal with the impact of economic and social changes

on families. In eradication of poverty, counter sexism and violence in the global media.

It is not India alone where the plight of women is pitiable and status has been depleting and losing day by day, but it is an international phenomenon. Because exploitation of women in the forms of domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse, in one form or the other is equally found throughout the world including the advanced and developed countries of the west. This is the main reason that the status of women and their plight have grown into an international problem and is matter of concern for the Economic and Social Council of the UN. Experts of the economy have arrived at the consensus that so far as eradication of poverty is concerned, it requires full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels for which their empowerment and autonomy are essential prerequisites. It implies legislative and administrative measures to give right to women. It necessitates promoting women's participation in employment and ensuring economic and social protection in eradication of unemployment. Promotion of programs for the betterment in other areas of great importance like good health, maternity, child bearing, widowhood care, disability and old-age.

Meanwhile, in India, reservation of seats in parliament and legislatures for women is being actively pursued at the government to offer a political toast to entertain women. Many important court rulings relating to harassment of women at work, their maintenance including those who are not legally married, this way court rulings have made undoubtedly the womenfolk stronger. Many other schemes like savings and insurance schemes have been announced time to time by the central government and various state governments have helped women to become economically stronger. Results through court rulings are satisfactory in respect of women's better social status. Hinous 'Nirbhaya Case' of Delhi in December, 2013 was a shock for the entire country particularly the judiciary system. Harsh legislation are now in practice for the safety and security of the womenfolk.

The constitutional amendment regarding reservation of one-third seats for women at the level of Panchayat has enabled one million women to participate in the decision-making process, right from the grassroots upto district level.

At the international level, however, the initiatives to improve editions for the women have resulted in the creation of an international

legal framework to achieve legal equality. The UN bodies are also continually striving to bring about equality by raising public awareness and by a commitment to change long-ingrained traditions and attitudes. A woman is a female human, more specifically, an adult one, as defined in the dictionaries “the half-world”. This is the current sobriquet for women and the highly discussed one in various guilds of social importance ranging from local to international platforms. More or less, this is almost one of the highly expected topics in essay writing competitions or in some counterpart exams. Freelancers always feel comfortable in putting their contributions on this, because they are an expert now and have discovered some sprucing innovative words to write about women and their issues. It was always very easy to say or to write few words or few resplendent lines on women. An extempore question arises “why women are such a highly discussed one”. A philosophical inference to this curiosity points out that smoke is the result of fire. So, as women are guised as smoke, fire belongs to their plight. To elaborate this philosophical sentence a précis about the status of the women, since the inception of society up to date, is inevitable.

Status of women has undergone multidimensional changes with the passage of time, strikingly in an alternate fashion. They enjoyed a revered status in pre-Vedic period, as a pariah during post-vedic/medieval period and again emerged strongly in the twentieth century which is still on its journey to be completed.

Pre-Vedic period was the golden era for the women because at that time they were devoid of any sort of restrictions or benighted customs. They were scholars, diligent, politician, etc., without being discriminated on the gender basis, however, some non-social impediments started arousing by the end of pre-Vedic period and at the inception of post-Vedic period. The first-most accused has been claimed to be the doctrine of “Manusmriti” which advocated the deprived and jeopardized living for the women followed by invasion of Babur and the Mughal Empire who further added the suppression of women’s rights in the society. The benighted customs like sati, child marriage, ban on widow remarriage; Devdassis, purdah etc. were quite prevalent in the medieval period.

The deterioration of women’s status persisted and remained isolated for a long time when social reformers started campaigning for their social upliftment during the British Rule. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Jyotirao Phule, were the names of such social

reformers who made strong contributions in breaking the shackles of static and prevalent customs responsible for the deterioration of women's status in the society and further incepted the doctrine for their empowerment and reformation to set their status not less than any other human species.

Women in India now participate in all activities such as politics, sports, education, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc. Indira Gandhi who served as prime minister of India for an aggregate period of 15 years is the world's longest serving women prime minister and the influence of women in politics is at its apex in the present context strongly supported by the former president of India Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, Speaker of Lok-Sabha Mira Kumar, railway minister Mamta Banerji and the former leader of opposition Sushma Swaraj. Besides these names of women holding major authorities in the politics, the other fields also have women ascendants like Indira Nooyi CEO of Pepsico, Chanda Koochar, CEO of ICICI bank, and Shikha Sharma of Axis bank and so on.

The constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16) and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition it allows special provisions to be made by the state in favor of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A)(e)) and also allows for the provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42). In 1990s, grants from foreign donor agencies enabled the formation of new women oriented NGOs. Self-Help groups and NGOs such as *Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)* have played a major role in women's rights in India. Many women have emerged as leaders of local movements for example Medha Patkar of Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Government of India declared 2001 as year of women empowerment. National policy for the empowerment of women was also passed in 2001. In 2010 on March 9, one day after International Women's Day, Rajya Sabha passed Women's Reservation Bill, ensuring 33% reservation to women in parliament and state legislative bodies.

Besides all these beautiful data, the status of women is still not that to which it is meant for. There are still a lot to do for their empowerment. The cases of child marriage, deteriorating maternity rate, anemic pregnancies, eve teasing, molestation, harassment, rape, exploitation,

trafficking and so many more are such an inventory of non-social impediments which are still prevailing in an alarming rate.

The worst myth so far is that man is superior and woman is inferior in terms of physical power, more muscles, taller stature and broader shoulders. His prowess is proven in the brave progress he has made down the ages, hunting for food, cultivating for better living, conquering territories for more power. In short, pages of history remember him as the ruler, achiever, and savior with great physical and intellectual strength. He is seen to be born to govern, to protect and dominate. On the other hand, women seen as a lesser version with tender make-up of physique and delicate features have been allotted a shaded place in the back-ground, a safe shelter in home looking after the appetites and needs of the mighty man, delivering his pregnancy and bringing them up, has been her primary if not the only duty.

Man and woman being complimentary physically, emotionally and morally and there is no scope for comparison. One has no existence without the other. They are interdependent. Together, their life is whole and meaningful. Each has their own duties, roles and responsibilities.

Beautifully lyrical sloka from Atharvaveda clearly states that women leads the man – “The sun god follows the first illuminated and enlightened goddess Usha (dawn) in the same manner as men emulate and follow women.”



46. Globalization of the Indian Economy

Abstract: The word 'globalization' means that the commodity as well as factor market of an economy is working under the influence of market forces generated in the world economy without any barrier imposed by its nation. Globalization is taking place on firm level through national and international interdependence encouraged by technological developments. Globalization of the Indian economy meant that the industry had to face competition from outside, subject to some degree of protection. Despite all potentialities, Indian industries fail miserably to compete with their international counterparts with respect to cost and quality. The new economic policy aims at making the Indian economy competitive, and much better integrated with the world economy.

Globalization of an economy implies that its commodity as well as factor market is functioning under the influence of market forces

generated in the world economy without any barrier imposed by its nation-state. Under such a condition, production units of globalized economy gain efficiency and become competitive in the world market. Its export increases. Foreign exchange problems get solved through increased export and adequate availability of private foreign capital. As such, the country concerned achieves external equilibrium and can be hoped to move to higher growth path with stability. With this expectation, Indian economy is also being globalized to get rid of perennial Balance of Payments (BOP) disequilibrium which resulted into severe BOPs crisis time and again. Such crises distort our planning process creating tension over the economy and affect its smooth functioning.

If India is to become more competitive, we need first to create a competitive micro economy and a stable macro- economy with no vested interests. The liberalization efforts by way of reducing controls, removing license raj, partial convertibility of the rupee etc. have to be undertaken. Globalization is taking place on firm level through national and international interdependence encouraged by technological developments. Globalization of the Indian economy really meant that the industry had to face competition from outside; subject to some degree of protection. The argument in favor of integrating the Indian economy with the world economy has been put forth very strongly in the official circles. The IMF and the World Bank have also been advocating such a policy for India.

The recent worldwide interest in globalization has resulted from a large scale failure of the hitherto followed economic policies. The poor performances of the world economy and sluggish growth have compelled various thinkers to frame alternative models. Consequently there is a general agreement that the future growth of the world economy is largely dependent upon globalization of production as well as consumption.

Globalization is viewed as a two way action plan. First, it envisages free competition, high productivity and second selling in one single marketplace for the whole world. Our policy-makers believe that by exposing Indian industries to free competition and integrating Indian economy with the global mainstream, we can accelerate and boost the pace of economic development. It is said that competition from abroad would lead to improvement in quality, productivity, efficiency and cost effectiveness which would in turn, boost up exports and our foreign

exchange earnings and steer our economy out of the present crisis.

Independent India inherited an inward-oriented policy and in the early years of planning an import substitution regime with anti-export bias was considered to be quite appropriate. India's trade regime remained basically inward-looking until export incentives were introduced in the mid-60s. In the 70s many more export incentives were introduced but this did not help export promotion much. The 80s witnessed attempts towards export promotion and trade liberalization under the Sixth and Seventh 5 years Plans. Despite the efforts towards liberalization, India's trade regime remained more or less inward-looking.

Owing to greater reliance on the working of the closed economy, Indian economy has generated a high cost inefficient industry which has prohibited the optimum utilization of factors of production. Despite all potentialities Indian industries are not competing with the global industries with respect to cost and quality. Protection has always given an avenue to develop a high cost industry. Under the shadow of FERA and MRTP Act, monopolized houses have developed. It is the closeness of the Indian economy that prohibits introduction of the advanced technology of the developed nations. So the globalization of the economy is essentially needed. It will provide an opportunity for India to become an important production center of the world. It will also provide an opportunity to the Indian companies to become multinational concerns. At the same time it can attract foreign investors so as to make India a center of the world market. India can utilize these avenues very well on account of its competitive edge over other countries due to its large skilled labor.

The strategy adopted since July 1991 for further integration of the Indian economy with the world economy includes exchange rate adjustment to improve competitiveness of exports, reduction in tariffs and a more open policy towards direct foreign investment and technology. The new economic policy aims at making the Indian economy competitive and much better integrated with the world economy. We are now clearly in a new and different world. India cannot expect large inflow of external funds while there is an irrational exchange rate policy. India has no other alternative but to integrate its economy into the global mainstream to further boost its economic growth. As most of the countries in the world are steadily reorienting their economies to the market-friendly forces, it will be suicidal on the part

of India to remain in isolation. Competition from abroad would lead to improvement in quality, productivity, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. For integrating the Indian economy with the world economy not only faster export growth but also free access to imports is necessary and accordingly import duties have been brought down substantially. High tariffs have created a high cost industrial structure and Indian competitiveness had been affected by this. When many other countries had substantially reduced the tariffs, India's tariff structure also needed to be lowered.

Since globalization requires the creation of suitable environment for free flow of direct foreign investment, the new industrial policy of 1991 permits approval for foreign direct investment up to 51 percent foreign equity in the case of high priority industries and this obviously opens the door for multinationals in a big way. The foreign investment will bring in new technology and marketing expertise from which the country will benefit. The market-friendly approach of the new economic policy is expected to create suitable environment for the entry of foreign capital on a large scale.

An open policy towards technology transfer is also an important requirement for globalization of the Indian economy. One obstacle is too much needed inflow of technology which has been the cumbersome approval process involving delays and uncertainty. To overcome this problem, in the new industrial policy, automatic approval will be given by the government for technology agreements related to high priority industries and similar facility will be provided to non-priority industries also if expenditure in foreign exchange is not involved.

The new economic policy which advocates a market- friendly approach and removal of bureaucratic controls is expected to attract foreign capital and technology and also facilitate easy movement of goods through substantial reduction in tariffs and thus pave the way for further integrating the Indian economy with the global economy. External environment is going to be more dynamic and complex. There will be less social protection for inefficiency. There will be noticeable fights in the market place for innovation and competitiveness. Unless we increase our productivity and efficiency, we will not be able to go beyond "the Hindu rate of growth."

India's globalisation efforts are hindered by lack of favourable international environment. At a time when advanced countries, particularly the US, are adopting a protectionist policy with Super 301

threat, it is very difficult to accomplish the objective of globalisation of the Indian economy. Secondly, openness of the economy to the world competition is an invitation to the multinationals. The role of the multinationals is not salubrious for the poor countries. Thirdly, globalisation would imply certain consequences which may not be always beneficial to the developing countries. One major implication of globalisation is the internationalisation of prices. Globalisation would also imply the equalisation of domestic prices with international prices.

This would mean that the firms in the developing economies should enhance their competitive strength. If some of the commodities have relatively lower prices due to subsidisation, the policy prescription would be that subsidies should be withdrawn so that the prices would attain parity with prices prevailing in the international markets.

In recent times the fertiliser prices in India had been raised and the subsidies were withdrawn. The aftermath of the withdrawal of subsidies would be a hefty increase in the prices of agricultural commodities. This would mean that Indian prices must rise to US levels. Therefore, as a result of globalisation, inflationary tendencies would persist as prices are expected to rise by 15 to 20 percent.



47. Globalization vs. Indian Small-scale Industries

Abstract: Globalization is both a friend and foe of small-scale industries. It is a friend in the sense that globalization and small-scale industries are the two wheels of the vehicle of economic growth and prosperity. It is a foe in the sense that small-scale industries can suffer and be strangled to death by the fierce competition put up by globalization. Both globalization and small-scale industries are the essential components of the Indian economy. Government of India and the policy makers should take a serious note of this and make efforts to promote and sustain both in a fair and liberal way. No doubt, with the arrival of globalization, we are now competing with developed countries. However, small-scale industries have empowered the common man to walk with the same stride as the big-wigs.

Globalization is the metamorphosis of the individual nations into an integrated entity by means of their interconnection on an economic, social and cultural level, fuelled by easy transport and communication among them. It is the modern renaissance that makes ideas, goods, services, trade, technology and culture permeate into the entire

geography of the world thus turning it into a global village.

While globalization is a large scale phenomenon, small scale enterprises are a local phenomenon but having effects of dimensions as large as it's global 'friend and foe'. Friend- because both globalization and small scale industries are the two wheels of the vehicle of economic growth and prosperity; foe- because some argue that given the developing nation that India is, **Small Scale Industries (SSIs)** can suffer and be strangled to death by the fierce competition put up by globalization. Let us observe and decide.

Micro and small scale enterprises have existed in India since ages in the form of traditional skills and knowledge based products made by people for the self sufficiency of rural India. Today as per the government definition, "An industrial undertaking in which the investment in fixed assets in plant and machinery whether held on ownership terms on lease or on hire purchase does not exceed ₹ 10 million, can be categorized as small scale undertaking".

After independence, the Indian government made various laws to help revive and flourish the SSI because of the employment potential it had at a low capital cost. It needed mediocre technical knowledge and minimal infrastructure to set up. Thus it was and is the most ideal form of employment opportunity for both the urban and rural population. It not only encourages entrepreneurship among people but also makes them self reliant. Government funding, support and intensive promotion has aided people to participate more in this successful phenomenon making SSI the second largest employment sector after agriculture. It forms about 45-50% of our exports. The products also form a large percentage of our domestic market too with SSI producing a number of products like confectionaries, spices, beverages, natural essence oils, dyes, sports goods, wooden furniture, glass, ceramic and earthen wares, cotton and woolen knitted products, silk and synthetic wear, leather shoes, bags, garments and novelty items, plastic items, survey instruments, auto parts, clocks and watches, musical instruments, lab chemicals, basic metallic and non-metallic mineral products. They are the dynamic sectors of our economy. It also leads to the preservation of many traditional and indigenous skills and products our country is famous for. It is the road to rural industrialization and 'rural urbanization' thus creating a regional balance.

India was self reliant and self sufficient but with the march of the world towards industrialization, India found its closed policy of trade

leading to an impending economic crisis. The main reason behind this was the focus of efforts on heavy industries and lack of it on the consumption goods. From 1991 India witnessed a major change as the government introduced liberalization, privatization and globalization reforms to pep up the economy. Soon the world realized what a big 1 billion plus population-market India was. They brought their goods to India which were mass produced and therefore cheaper and of better quality than the local goods. They started challenging the SSI and thus posed an end to them. Further with the introduction of *Special Economic Zones (SEZs)*, the MNCs were facilitated with areas with liberal economic and trade laws, round the clock facilities and concessions to enhance foreign investments and promote exports. This endangered the existence and survival of SSIs.

But this is not the complete picture. A lot of foreign entrepreneurs who do not have the time or funds to build the infrastructure for their own manufacturing unit in India engage a number of SSI owners to produce goods for them in a short span of time and sell them to cater to the international demand. In other words they outsource the manufacturing to the Indians. Thus it leads to more labour absorption and growth of SSIs. Many of the SSIs have turned into **Large Scale Industries (LSIs)** this way. Also the demand for SSI goods will never finish as a lot of their products are not lucrative options for the MNCs. For example, the incense sticks or agarbatties, bangles, pickles, etc. are not a catch for LSIs but have a constant demand and thus SSIs have a great opportunity in identifying such areas.

So it can be said that both globalization and SSIs are the essentials of Indian economy and India must make efforts to promote, sustain and aid both in a fair and unbiased way. A fruitful measure would be to reserve certain goods for production exclusively by the SSIs and their intelligent outsourcing by the government to ensure maximum benefits. Also the government should advertise the indigenous goods worldwide so that the foreign folk also go in for the ethnic items produced here like khadi, silk, wool, statues, gems, ornaments, etc. as these represent the traditional art form and culture of the region. As far as the financial aids are concerned, the government is doing good work to make things simple and possible for the interested individuals by funding and financial support. Also the setting up of institutes for technical training and skill enhancement of the workforce is helping in a big way.

While globalization has put us on the map of superpower countries,

SSIs have empowered the common man to walk with the same stride as the big-wigs. For India to be a superpower, it must make efforts to strengthen each and every thread of its economic fabric to make the flag of its success fly high



48. Role of Women

Abstract: A woman is patient, calm and receptive. She can bear more pain and has more tolerance than a man. She is stronger in conviction and in perseverance. Yet women all over the world are playing a secondary role only. After Independence the Constitution of India gave equal rights to men and women in all walks of life. But even today one cannot say that all women in India enjoy equal rights with men in all matters. The year 1995, was declared as the International Year for Women throughout the world. The women were made aware of their status and place in society. There have been many movements in our country as well as in other countries for the advancement of women.

Women in India constitute nearly 50% of its population. According to 2011 census, there were 586.5 million of women as against 623.7 million of men. Roughly, there are 943 women for every 1000 men. Man considers woman to be frail and weak by nature. She is shorter and delicate compared to the strongly built man. But man forgets that a woman is made to play a specific role in nature which a man cannot play and that is the role of the mother. In intelligence both are equal. Man is aggressive and emotional. A woman is patient, calm and receptive. She can bear more pain and has more tolerance than a man. She is stronger in conviction and in perseverance. Yet women all over the world are playing a secondary role only. The position in India is no different. Women were glorified in epics and puranas for their service to their men. Serving a father first, secondly a husband, and later serving her children and grandchildren had been her lot. Puranas mention the names of Seeta, Savitri and Anusuya and glorify them for their devote service to their husbands. They even say that a woman can easily get salvation by serving her husband.

After Independence the Constitution of India gave equal rights to men and women in all walks of life. But even today one cannot say that all women in India enjoy equal rights with men in all matters. There are many reasons like the customs and traditions prevalent for centuries,

high percentage of illiteracy among women, ignorance of their rights, patriarchal society, economic system, acceptance of the theory of Karma or fatalism and unchecked male domination in all walks of life. In spite of all these problems, one could see that the condition of Indian women has improved a lot. There are now adequate educational facilities for girls and women. Special incentives and reservations are there to encourage them to study. Even in employment there are special reservations.

We can now see women employed in all fields not only in clerical jobs but also in prestigious civil services and defense. From the political arena score of activities are on the issue of women empowerment alongside active role played by women in national politics. Many of them have worked as chief ministers or still working. Women had played their tremendous role in every walks of life. The first woman prime minister of India Indira Gandhi and the first woman Lok Sabha speaker Meera Kumar are the magnanimous examples. These are considered as exceptions as the women folk particularly in the rural areas are yet to come out of their bondage. To enable the rural women too as significant portion, the central government has introduced a Bill in parliament. In case the bill wins, one third of the seats in parliament and other elected bodies will be amongst the women.

The year 1995 was declared as the International Year for Women throughout the world. The women were made aware of their status and place in society. There have been many movements in our country as well as in other countries for the advancement of women. Recently there was a world meet of women at Beijing, the capital city of China. Women are now no longer in slumber. They are awake and moving fast. They are asserting their rights. As far as India is concerned, it has already agreed to treat women as equal with men in all respects. The difference, whatever now exists, is sure to vanish in the coming decades when women also get equally educated and liberate themselves from superstitions and irrational traditions.

A man and a woman are like two wheels of a cart. The cart can move fast and safely when both of them pull it in the same direction and with equal strength. Hence no developing country or society can afford to ignore the role of women if at all they are to progress.



49. Jan Lokpal Bill

Abstract: Shanti Bhushan proposed the first Lokpal Bill in 1968 and got it passed in 4th Loksabha but failed in Rajya Sabha in the year 1969. Thereafter, Lokpal Bill was introduced in 1971, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005 and in 2008 but was never passed and is still pending in Parliament. Under the Lokpal Bill there is a provision for filing complaints with the Ombudsman against the Prime minister, other ministers and Member of Parliament. Anna Hazare, a social activist along with his team fought for this bill to get passed and did it on December 27, 2011. However, his team and other political parties claimed that the bill is weak and would not serve its intended purpose. Therefore, the proposed Bill by the ruling Congress Party is yet to get acceptance from the Rajya Sabha. On December 29, 2011, the Parliament of India saw a lot of drama and disruption by various political parties like LJP, RJD and SP.

The word Lokpal has been derived from the Sanskrit words “Lok” meaning People and “pala” meaning caretaker. Therefore, the word Lokpal means “caretaker of people”. Shanti Bhushan proposed the first Lokpal Bill in 1968 and got it passed in 4th Loksabha but failed in Rajya Sabha in the year 1969. Thereafter, Lokpal Bill was introduced in 1971, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, and 2005 and in 2008 but was never passed and is still pending in Parliament.

Under the Lokpal Bill there is a provision for filing complaints with the Ombudsman against the prime minister, other ministers and Member of parliament. This was for removing the sense of injustice from the minds of citizens and to install public confidence in the efficiency of the administrative machinery by completing the investigations regarding corruption within a year.

Whenever the Lokpal Bill was introduced to the House, it was referred to a joint committee of Parliament or a departmental standing committee of the Home ministry for further improvements and every time before the government could take a final stand on the bill, the House was dissolved. Anna Hazare, a social activist alongwith his team fought for this Bill to get passed and did it on December 27, 2011. However, his team and other political parties claimed that the bill is weak and would not serve its intended purpose. Therefore, the proposed bill by the ruling Congress Party is yet to get acceptance from the Rajya Sabha. On December 29, 2013, the Parliament of India saw a lot of drama and disruption by various political parties like LJP, RJD and SP.

Salient features of Jan Lokpal Bill are quite appealing and remarkable in the current Indian social milieu. An institution called Lokpal at the centre and Lokayukta in each State will be set up. The Lokpal shall work independently like the judiciary and no minister or bureaucrat will be able to influence their investigations. The corruption cases shall not linger for years and the investigations shall be completed within one year and the corrupt officer or judge shall be sent to jail within two years. The loss caused to the government shall be recovered from the offender at the time of conviction. If any work of a citizen is not completed within the prescribed time limit in any government office, Lokpal shall impose financial penalty on the guilty officer and the same shall be remitted to the complainant as compensation. The people can approach the Lokpal if his or her ration card or passport or voter card is not being made by the concerned officials within the prescribed time limit. People can also approach the Lokpal in case the roads are made of poor quality or siphoning of funds in any Panchayat takes place. Lokpal will have to complete its investigations within a period of one year, the trial will be over in next one year and the guilty shall go to jail within two years.

Any complaint against any officer of the Lokpal shall be investigated and the officer if guilty can be dismissed within two months.

The Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), departmental vigilance and anti-corruption branch of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) shall be merged into Lokpal. The Lokpal shall have complete powers and machinery to independently investigate and prosecute any officer, judge or politician.

It shall be the duty of the Lokpal to provide protection to whistle blower in case of any corruption and those who are being victimized for raising their voice against corruption.

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50. Poverty Eradication Programs

Abstract: The simplest measure of poverty is the head count ratio (HCR) which is calculated by dividing the number of people below the poverty line by the total population. Simply speaking, this is the proportion of poor in the total population. Though easy to understand, the formulation of policy on the basis of HCR leads to trouble, as it makes no distinction between people just below the poverty line and

those much below the poverty line. The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gamodaya Yojana, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Indira Awaas Yojana, Swarna jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana, etc. are some of the poverty eradication and employment generation programmes. But these programmes would be oriented towards strengthening the productive potential of the economy and providing more opportunities for involving the poor in the economic process.

Calorie consumption expenditure level is an important method to determine poverty line in India. Per capita daily calorific minimum has been defined as 2,400 calories in villages and 2,100 calories in cities. If we consider this on the basis of sex, a very rough average for the required intake is 3,900 for working women. This method appears to be a foolproof method but there are some built in glitches. Since this particular measure of poverty is based only on consumption of food, access to innumerable other essentials is ignored. Adequate fuel, clothing, housing, drinking water, sanitation, health and education are just a few of the many essential goods and services that are not covered by this measure of poverty.

The simplest measure of poverty is the **head count ratio (HCR)** which is calculated by dividing the number of people below the poverty line by the total population. Simply speaking, this is the proportion of poor in the total population. Though easy to understand, the formulation of policy on the basis of HCR leads to trouble, as it makes no distinction between people just below the poverty line and those much below the poverty line. Hence, the government can claim to have succeeded in eradicating poverty considerably by spending just enough on the least poor, and spending nothing on the most poor. However, despite this shortcoming, HCR is the official method to estimate poverty.

According to the latest survey by NSSO, the poverty in India is estimated at 26.10 percent for the country as a whole and 27.09 percent in rural areas whereas 23.62 percent in urban areas. Poverty eradication programs have been strengthened over the years to generate additional employment, create productivity assets, impart technical and entrepreneurial skills and raise the income level of the poor. For the year 2014-15, Ministry of Rural Development was allocated Rs 80,043 Cr for rural development, provision of drinking water supply, rural employment and poverty eradication programmes like the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gamodaya Yojana, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Indira Awaas Yojana, Swarna jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana, etc. The

success of the poverty eradication programmes can be seen from the reduction of poverty from 54.9% in 1973-74 to 36% in 1993- 94. The poverty ratio declined by nearly 10 percent in the five years period between 1993- 94 to reach 26% in 1999-2000. Over the last decade, poverty has witnessed a consistent decline with the levels dropping from 37.2% in 2004-05 to 29.8% in 2009-10. The number of poor is now estimated at 269.3 million of which 216.5 million reside in rural area.

Direct poverty eradication programmes are important and will continue on an expanded scale in the ninth and tenth plan. But these programmes would be oriented towards strengthening the productive potential of the economy and providing more opportunities for involving the poor in the economic process. Certain schemes concerning income generation the rough supplementary employment and targeted **public distribution system (PDS)** system to facilitate easy access to food grains could be successfully implemented to improve the living condition of poor people.



51. Abolishing Child Labour

Abstract: NGOs, Trade Unions and various social service organizations have launched innovative programmes to curb the problem of child labour. Besides poverty as one major factor, it has a strong relationship with child's caste. If one compared the child with the caste structure of the country, it would be evident that a comparatively higher proportion of Scheduled Caste children work at a younger age for their own and their families. Lower caste children tend to be pushed into child labour because of their family's poverty. Since, the earning of bonded child labours are less than the interest on the loan, these bonded children are forced to work while interest on their loans goes on accumulating. Even if bonded child labourers are released, the same condition of poverty that caused the initial debt cause to slip back into bondage.

Despite the fact that the government of India has got authority to implement several schemes under planning welfare programmes, legislation and administrative action in the past few decades, a large majority of children of the age group of 5-14 years continue to remain in distress and turmoil. Child labour are exploited, exposed to hazardous work conditions and paid a pittance for their long hours of work. They are forced to leave schooling, shouldering responsibilities far beyond their years. However, the challenging mission is still not complete. No one has so far stepped forward to stop this. On June 17, 1999, the

member states of the **International Labor Organization (ILO)**, unanimously voted to adopt convention 182 on the World Forum on child labour. It was recognized that ending the commercial exploitation of children must be one of the mankind's top priorities.

NGOs, Trade Unions and various social service organizations have launched innovative programmes to curb the problem of child labour. The social and economic consequences can easily be understood if we understand the factors responsible for it. Child labour is a multi dimensional problem. The factors primarily responsible for it are poverty, caste tradition, size of the family, labour scarcity, illiteracy, ignorance, schooling facilities etc. Parents' view that more children means more earning which induces for an increase in child labour. The low income of parents which is not adequate to meet the basic needs of the family, force the children to work and supplement the family income.

Poverty is a common feature of developing countries wherein a considerable proportion of population lives below poverty line. In the rural areas the people has to sell the labour of their children to take out a bare subsistence. Besides poverty one major factor, which has a strong relationship with child labour is caste. If one compared the child with the caste structure of the country, it would be evident that a comparatively higher proportion of Scheduled Caste children work at a younger age for their own and their families. Lower caste children tend to be pushed into child labour because of their family's poverty.

The combination of poverty and the lack of social security network are also responsible for bonded child labour. For the poor, there are few credit sources, and even if there are sources like co-operative loan, bank loan etc. available, only a few poor families manage to satisfy the essential criteria related to access. Here enters the local money lender with exorbitant high interest rates. Most of the times it is not possible for the poor to return back those loans and the parents exchange their child's labour to local money lenders. Since, the earning of bonded child labours are less than the interest on the loan, these bonded children are forced to work while interest on their loans goes on accumulating.

Even if bonded child labourers are released, the same condition of poverty that caused the initial debt cause to slip back into bondage. Lastly, but not the least, the attitudes of parents also contribute to child labour. Some parents feel that children should work in order to develop skills useful in the job market instead of taking advantage of formal education.

52. Indian Strategy of Planning Since 1951

Abstract: At the time of the First Five Year Plan (1951- 56) India was faced with three problems -influx of refugees, severe food shortage, and mounting inflation. India had also to correct the disequilibrium in the economy caused by the Second World War and partition of the country. The Second Plan (1956-61) was conceived in an atmosphere of economic stability. Agricultural targets fixed in the First Plan had been achieved. The Third Plan (1961-66) gave top priority to agriculture but it also laid adequate emphasis on the development of basic industries, which were vitally necessary for rapid economic development of the country. The Fourth Plan (1969-74) aimed at an average 5.5percent growth rate in the national income and the provision of national minimum programs for the weaker sections of the community -the latter came to be known as the objectives of 'growth with justice' and "Garibi Hatao" (Poverty Removal). The Fifth Plan (1974-79) strategies launched a direct attack on the problems of unemployment, under-employment and massive low-end poverty. The new Sixth Plan (1980-85) was launched with its inherent approach, attack on the problem of poverty by creating conditions of an expanding economy. The Seventh Plan (1985-90) sought to emphasise policies and programmes which would accelerate the growth in food grains production, increase employment opportunity and raise productivity. The Eight Plan (1992- 97) was approved at a time the country was going through a severe economic crisis caused by a balance of payments, a rising debt burden, ever- widening budget deficits, amounting inflation and recession in industry. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) was developed in the context of four important dimensions of state policy, viz. quality of life, and generation of productive employment, regional balance and self-reliance. The Tenth five year plan (2002-07) was adopted the reduce poverty rate by 5% by 2007, attaining 8% GDP growth per year, introduction of 20 point programme. The Eleventh five year plan (2007-12) emphasized on social sector, empowerment through education, reduction of gender inequality, environmental sustainability and increased agricultural growth lay 4%. The Twelfth five year plan of the Government of India has decided for the growth rate at 8.2% but the National Development Council (NDC) on 27 December 2012 approved 8% growth rate for 12th five year plan.

Since 1951, India has completed twelve five year plans. Twelfth plan is currently under execution. The guiding principles of India's Five Year Plans are provided by the basic objectives of growth/ employment, self-reliance and social justice. Apart from these basic objectives, each five year plan takes into account the new constraints and a possibility faced during the period and attempts to make the necessary directional changes and emphasis.

At the time of the First Five Year Plan (1951- 56) India was faced with three problems -influx of refugees, severe food shortage, and mounting inflation. India had also to correct the disequilibrium in the economy caused by the Second World War and partition of the country. Accordingly, the First Plan emphasised, as its immediate objectives the rehabilitation of refugees, rapid agricultural development so as to achieve food self-sufficiency in the shortest possible time and inflation control.

The Second Plan (1956-61) was conceived in an atmosphere of economic stability. Agricultural targets fixed in the First Plan had been achieved. Poverty level had registered a fall, and consequently, it was felt that the Indian economy had reached a stage where agriculture could be assigned a lower priority and a forward thrust made in the development of heavy and basic industries of the economy for a more rapid advance in future.

The Third Plan (1961-66) gave top priority to agriculture but it also laid adequate emphasis on the development of basic industries which were vitally necessary for rapid economic development of the country. However, because of India's conflicts with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965, the approach of the Third Plan was later shifted from development to defence. The Fourth Plan (1969-74) aimed at an average 5.5 percent growth, growth rate in the national income and the provision of national minimum program for the weaker sections of the community. The latter came to be known as the objectives of 'growth with justice' and 'Garibi Hatao' (Poverty Removal).

The Fifth Plan (1974-79) strategies launched a direct attack on the problems of unemployment, under-employment and massive low-end poverty. But this approach was eventually abandoned and final draft of the Fifth Plan prepared and launched was to achieve the two main objectives, viz. removal of poverty and attainment of self reliance.

Through promotion of higher growth rate, better distribution of income and a very significant step- up in the domestic saving rate, the new Sixth Plan (1980-85) was launched with its inherent approach. This attacked on the problem of poverty by creating conditions of an expanding economy. The Seventh Plan (1985-90) sought to emphasise policies and programmes which would accelerate the growth in food grains production, increase employment opportunity and raise productivity. All these three immediate objectives were regarded central to the achievement of long term goals determined as far back as the First Plan itself.

The Eight Plan (1992- 97) was approved at a time the country was going through a severe economic crisis caused by a balance of payments, a rising debt burden, ever-widening budget deficits, amounting inflation and recession in industry. The Narasimha Rao Government initiated the process of fiscal reforms as also of economic reforms with a view to providing a new dynamism to the economic reforms. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) was developed in the context of four important dimensions of state policy, viz. quality of life, and generation of productive employment, regional balance and self-reliance.

The Ninth Plan focused on accelerated growth, recognising a special role for agriculture for its stronger poverty reducing and employment generating effects which will be carried out over a 15 year period.

The main objectives of the eleventh five year plan were: rapid and inclusive growth (Poverty reduction), emphasis on social sector and delivery of service therein, empowerment through education and skill development, reduction of gender inequality, environmental sustainability, to increase the growth rate in agriculture, industry and services to 4%, 10% and 9% respectively, reduce Total Fertility Rate to 2.1, provide clean drinking water for all by 2009, increase agriculture growth to 4%. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan of the Government of India has decided for the growth rate at 8.2% but the National Development Council (NDC) on 27 Dec 2012 approved 8% growth rate for 12th five-year plan.

With the deteriorating global situation, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia has said that achieving an average growth rate of 9 percent in the next five years is not possible. The Final growth target has been set at 8% by the endorsement of plan at the National Development Council meeting held in New Delhi. The government intends to reduce poverty by 10% during the 12th Five-Year Plan. Mr Ahluwalia said, "We aim to reduce poverty estimates by 9% annually on a sustainable basis during the Plan period. Earlier, addressing a conference of State Planning Boards and Planning departments, he said the rate of decline in poverty doubled during the 11th Plan. The commission had said, while using the Tendulkar poverty line, the rate of reduction in the five years between 2004-05 and 2009-10, was about 1.5% points each year, which was twice that when compared to the period between 1993-95 to 2004-05.

The Tenth Plan (2002-07) provides an opportunity, at the start of the new millennium, to build upon the gains of the past and also to address the weaknesses that have emerged.

The main objectives of the eleventh five year plan were: rapid and inclusive growth (Poverty reduction), emphasis on social sector and delivery of service therein, empowerment through education and skill development, reduction of gender inequality, environmental sustainability, to increase the growth rate in agriculture, industry and services to 4%, 10% and 9% respectively, reduce Total Fertility Rate to 2.1, provide clean drinking water for all by 2009, increase agriculture growth to 4%. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan of the Government of India has decided for the growth rate at 8.2% but the National Development Council (NDC) on 27 Dec 2012 approved 8% growth rate for 12th five-year plan.

With the deteriorating global situation, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia has said that achieving an average growth rate of 9 percent in the next five years is not possible. The Final growth target has been set at 8% by the endorsement of plan at the National Development Council meeting held in New Delhi. The government intends to reduce poverty by 10% during the 12th Five-Year Plan. Ahluwalia said, "We aim to reduce poverty estimates by 9% annually on a sustainable basis during the Plan period. Earlier, addressing a conference of State Planning Boards and Planning departments, he said the rate of decline in poverty doubled during the 11th Plan. The commission had said, while using the Tendulkar poverty line, the rate of reduction in the five years between 2004-05 and 2009-10, was about 1.5% points each year, which was twice that when compared to the period between 1993-95 to 2004-05.



53. Digitization in the Indian Metroes

*Abstract: The idiot box is no more a box now. With the advent of LED and LCD the TV has been in a way reinvented. The picture resolution and clarity of these high definition displays cannot be appreciated by analog T.V signals and the viewer has to invariably compromise on the clarity. This is like living in a cage with a sports car. The cable operators are obliged to provide signals in a digitally addressable mode which the users will be able to access through **set top boxes** (STB). Indian TV market is 3rd largest in the world with 146 million households. The Indian cable T.V space is composed of two kinds of service providers, the cable operators, the **multi service providers** (MSP) who operate in large areas like the DEN network. The government initiative and TRAI directive for digitalization of cable TV in metros and gradually*

the whole country is not a miracle drug for all the problems plaguing the 32,000 Cr worth Indian broadcasting industry but it is indeed the much needed a palliative therapy which will lessen the industries ailments and enable it to stand firm against the blizzard of overseas competition expected to reach our coasts soon.

Digitization has sneaked into every aspect of our life. The latest directive of TRAI for digitization of cable T.V is another initiative to bring the advances of technology to our door step. But will this make the idiot box smarter only time will tell. Let's put on the cloak of the subscriber the cable operator the government and analyze the issue.

The idiot box is no more a box now. With the advent of LED and LCD's the TV has been in a way reinvented. The picture resolution and clarity of these high definition displays cannot be appreciated by analog TV signals and the viewer has to invariably compromise on the clarity. This is like living in a cage with a sports car.

This new direction of digitization has literally hit the metros as this is a compulsory undertaking. The first wave of digitization which dawned though the DTH was optional. It opened up the TV broadcasting market to new players. But off late the revenues for the DTH operators has been declining owing to the fact that there is an increase in number of DTH platforms and rise in fixed-free bundled offers. This new govt-direction will give a new impetuuous to these DTH operators which also includes a public sector platform in the form of DD direct.

The subscriber or the end user is set to gain from this digitization as it will give his finger tips the power of choice. The digitization will bring in the benefits of "pay for use" and offer better viewing experience due to enhanced picture resolutions. The increase in competition between the broadcasters will invariably lead to viewers getting more bangs for their buck. The users are also set to gain from the fact that digitization enables a more interactive TV viewing and also piggy backing of other value added services like the broadband though the cable network. But the shortage of set top boxes and the issue of hike in the monthly subscription fee by many cable operators brought in a little bitterness to this whole exercise.

The cable operators are obliged to provide signals in a digitally addressable mode which the users will be able to access though set top boxes (STB). Indian TV market is 3rd largest in the world with 146 million households. The Indian cable T.V space is composed of two kinds of service providers, the cable operators, the multi service providers

(MSP) who operate in large areas like the DEN network. The cable operators have been demanding more transparency in financial contracts between broadcasters and MSO's. They are also demanding the non-encryption of free to air channels so that subscribers can view them through the STB. The digitization will ensure transparency in cable business and is expected to increase the average revenue per user to around Rs 142 and subscription revenue for broadcasters thus paving way for value added services like video-on-demand and even ad-free channels. Digitization will also ensure that all private Channels are carried and carriage fee (fee charged by the cable operator to the broadcaster) will be abolished. This will help reinvigorate the sick TV broadcasting industry.

The government on its part has been rational by introducing the digitization in phased manner. 1st phase is around 10 million TV homes in 4 metros, 2nd phase will be implemented in all cities with population over 10 lakhs, and the 3rd phase is for all urban areas having municipal corporations. By 2014 the whole country will be under the digital umbrella. The government is also eyeing the US\$ 2 billion of overseas investment waiting to flow into Indian cable space and it believes the digitization in metros will open the flood gates. The government is also furthering its cause of connecting every village with broadband through this digital revolution.

The government initiative and TRAI directive for digitalization of cable TV in metros and gradually the whole country is not a miracle drug for all the problems plaguing the 32,000 Cr worth Indian broadcasting industry. Nevertheless, it is indeed the much needed a palliative therapy which will lessen the industries ailments and enable it to stand firm against the blizzard of overseas competition expected to reach our coasts soon. Let's stay tuned and hope that this wave of digitization will encompass the masses of this country and bridge the chasm of digital divide.



54. India's Dependence on Energy Supply

Abstract: The demand for energy dates long back. It has increased in the last two centuries after the industrialization has begun in Europe. As a result there was heavy pressure on fossil fuels which resulted in environmental degradation. India

has limited reserves of non-renewable sources of energy. Yet the demand is raising .The demand for coal is estimated to be 1200 tones. Also the crude oil reserves are estimated at 132 million barrels. If current rate of utilization continues it is expected that these reserves may be depleted in about 30 years. Hence successive Governments at the centre have initiated plans for full utilization of non-renewable resources since 1980's. India has a long nuclear energy in recent years has emerged as best alternate to fossil fuel based energy. It offers high quality of energy as such there is high demand for this fuel. Unfortunately the deposits of uranium are limited in India. As a measure to tighten its energy security India made a significant accord with United States in 2010 called the INDO-US civil nuclear agreement. Coastline of over 6000 Km and there is immense potential of generating over 40,000MW of tidal energy. In recent years a milestone was achieved with the installation of pilot plant at Trivandrum.

Energy is the key to development of a nation. It is seen that countries that have achieved self sufficiency in energy production have always remained high in human development index. Thus, it is widely realized that the key to development of a nation is self sufficiency in energy production. It has become such a crucial indicator that the progress of a country is now estimated based on per capita consumption of energy by the people.

The demand for energy dates long back. It has increased in the last two centuries after the industrialization has begun in Europe. As a result there was heavy pressure on fossil fuels which resulted in environmental degradation. India is facing energy crisis since its independence in 1947. With a view to make the country self sufficiency in energy production, successive governments at the centre and states accorded high priority to the promotion and utilization of renewable sources of energy to supplement conventional sources.

The demand for conventional energy has been rising at rapid rates ever since the process of economic liberalization was initiated in 1991. Infrastructure development together with rapid development in transport has put pressure on the conventional sources of energy like coal and petroleum.

India has limited reserves of non-renewable sources of energy. Yet the demand is raising the demand for coal is estimated to be 730 million tones. Also, the crude oil reserves are estimated at 736 million tones. If current rate of utilization continues it is expected that these reserves may be depleted in about 30 years. Hence successive governments at

the centre have initiated plans for full utilization of non renewable resources since 1980's.

The first step in this direction was initiated with the establishment of **Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (DNCES)** in 1982. Besides, government setup Ministry of New and Renewable Energy Sources as a nodal agency to supplement renewable energy sources in the country. The activities included providing improved chulhas, biogas plants, short rotation fuel wood trees, wind mills, and solar photo voltaic systems.

The thrust of the government was to harness the untapped potential of renewable energy such as solar, wind, tidal, hydro power etc. It is estimated that the potential of renewable source of energy in the country is 1, 83,000 MW. Of this only 8085 MW could be tapped. So there is large scope for utilization of this energy.

Another major initiative of the Government is the setting up of The Centre for Wind Energy Technology. The main aim is to harness wind power which is estimated to be over 20,000 MW. India has a long coastline of over 6000 Km and there is immense potential of generating over 40,000MW of tidal energy. In recent years a milestone was achieved with the installation of pilot plant at Trivandrum.

The potential of Biomass in the country is estimated to be about 19,500MW. Also urban areas in the country are estimated to generate about 50 million tonnes of solid waste and about 5000MW of power by 2017. With a view to harness this energy a National Program on Energy Recovery from Urban, Municipal and Industrial wastes was launched from 1995-96.

In recent years as part of government initiative to build strong alternative to energy security, two major steps were taken. As part of utilizing the full potential of solar energy government in 2009 started the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission to generate additional power of 20,000MW by 2022.

Nuclear energy in recent years has emerged as best alternate to fossil fuel based energy. It offers high quality of energy. As such there is high demand for this fuel. Unfortunately the deposits of uranium are limited in India. As a measure to tighten its energy security, India has made a significant accord with United States in 2010 called the **INDO-US CIVIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT**. As part of the agreement United States would help India in accessing nuclear energy for peaceful use for civilian purposes including the setting up of four nuclear power plants

in India. Besides being environment friendly, these plants are in the long run expected to meet the energy needs of the country.

Thus, India has alternate sources for its energy needs. As part of signatory of various International conventions India adheres to the norms for promoting environmental protection at the same time meeting the current needs as well as the demand of the future generations.



55. Safety of Women in India

Abstract: In different newspapers many headlines reporting cases of sexual assault, molestation, sexual harassment, rapes, trafficking, ill-treatment of women in houses, violence against women in remote areas, etc. are displayed. What does this indicate? This certainly implies that there has been an increasing trend of such sexual overdrives in present generation. As good citizens, we have a fundamental duty to contribute towards bringing an order to ensure dignity and respect for women so that she may also enjoy her human rights and fundamental rights with sense of pride, freedom and confidence. To ensure this at every level the society must work together to give an edge to the solution. There must be allocation of woman personnel who should be dedicated to alleviate the trauma of the victimized women. We understand that these women victims not only undergo physical but also mental trauma as their confidence in the system and society is jolted up. Hence trained personnel are needed to boost up the victim's confidence. Moral and spiritual inclination of education will impart impetus to curb the sexual desires of men and women and would not let them indulge in committing such heinous crimes. This solution is an ideal solution which would need a more comprehensive support of all the stakeholders of societies.

Women in India, a better half of Indian society, today, are becoming the most vulnerable section as far as their safety and security is concerned. When we turn the pages of a newspaper, we come across many headlines reporting cases of sexual assault, molestation, sexual harassment, rapes, trafficking, ill treatment of women in houses, violence against women in remote areas etc. What does this indicate? This certainly implies that there has been an increasing trend of such sexual overdrives in present generation.

Our supreme law of land i.e. our Indian Constitution has envisaged a dream of true social, economic and political democracy which guarantees the rich and moral principles of equality (of status, opportunity, law) for our citizens but this has not yet been fully realized.

Still our better halves are unsafe and insecure towards the realization of freedom and liberty. It's unbearable to imagine the plight of women who are sufferers of such crimes. It's a jolt on the confidence of the women, of society and on our judicial system. Besides it has much of cascading effects which affects her life.

But do we think who is responsible for this? Is it only the lapse in legal system of our country or the police or the public where such incidence occurs or the Indian society as a whole? We generally use to play the blame game for any such incidence and hence have not succeeded to reach to the root of the problem. For a better understanding, we can say that any problem has definitely two approaches of solution. The first is short term or immediate solution and the second one is long term solution. These may be visualized as preventive or curative in nature.

Firstly, let us approach towards certain short term and preventive solutions. This would mean to have a multipronged strategy with the participation of multistakeholders of society. As good citizens, we have a fundamental duty to contribute towards bringing an order to ensure dignity and respect for women so that she may also enjoy her human rights and fundamental rights with sense of pride, freedom and confidence. To ensure this at every level, the society must work together to give an edge to the solution. For e.g. women may be provided with such devices which could provide her location using GPS technology to a central control room of police or send messages of her address to nearby locations. But this requires a lot of work relating to scaling the enrollment of women biodata showing her photographs and her permanent or temporary address into a national database system.

Other area of interest would be reform in police system. Allocation of women police in every area and their continuous monitoring which also requires participatory attitudes of government. Such interventions can also be a preventive solution. This also requires installation of CCTV cameras at strategic places, beefing up the police security systems and closely monitoring them. Also reforms in our legal system is required such as stringent punishment which are non bailable in nature. This could act as friction to those who perpetrate crime. Even though these suggestions are urgently required as proactive measures but since they require rigorous effort for implementation it may not be practically realized. So we must have remedial or curative measures such as fast

track courts especially dedicated to deal only with these offences and crimes. These can be made responsible to clear the cases on day to day basis with fair trial as its core principle.

There must be allocation of woman personnel who should be dedicated to alleviate the trauma of the victimized women. As we have already discussed that these women victims not only undergo physical but also mental trauma as their confidence in the system and society is jolted up. Hence, trained personnel are needed to boost up the victim's confidence. All the above measures and interventions are supportive in nature .i.e they act as supportive infrastructure to ensure and protect women from being victimized.

But let us also look to the other face of the coin. Since, only ensuring a strict legal system may also prove to be sometime oppressive as the agencies enforcing the acts in strict sense may violate tenets of human rights. These are also not acceptable. Hence a balance is required to be kept with while implementation of the same.

So far we have dealt with the requirement of stringer laws, legal and administrative system to deal with such sexual overdrive. But it requires further delving into the matter. We all know that India has been a land following various social customs, traditions and certain sets of religious beliefs. These customs has a deep rooted place in the core of our minds and hearts of every people of India which has defined our lifestyle, our thoughts, our expressions and our beliefs be it man or a woman. This has given to the males, the feeling of masculinity in every aspect of their acts and thoughts.

Indian males have thus perceived themselves as physically, mentally superior than their counterparts. Indian women also have accepted to treat their males as superior. This can be seen as women still perform the rituals of Karwa Chauth where they signify men as god.

Other instance can be seen in parents preferring male child over female. In every aspect of the life, women are denied or given less preference over male whether it is for giving education or access to health care. They are always required to be within their limitations and the male counterparts have freedom in this regard. This system thus gives a feeling in male that they are superior and hence dominate over women. This instills in male a sense of hatred against women if they see a woman crossing their limitations. So the problem is just not the case of one or two factors, but a sum total of a large number of factors. For this we need to plan more integrative approach to arrive at a solution.

This requires a large scale and an integrated social reform whereby we need to channelize the potential of woman into the stream of development. This can be brought through measures such as real education emphasizing on the quality of education, through enhanced moral and spiritual teachings so that the seed of enmity which is sown through these customs and traditions gets deeply uprooted.

Moral and spiritual inclination of education will impart impetus to curb the sexual desires of men and women and would not let them indulge in committing such heinous crimes. This solution is an ideal solution which would need a more comprehensive support of all the stakeholders of societies.

Henceforth, to see India as a more flourished nation as envisaged in our Constitution, it is time we need to realize what is right and what is wrong and act in an integrated manner so that women can be channelized into mainstream of development and thus contribute to socio-economic prosperity of the nation.

Changes do not take place soon or easily, but if each one of us join hands in every possible way that we can and start to make little changes within the family from today, it would gradually get implemented and there would be a better society that respects and understands women, at least for our next generation and generations to come. Women could walk around freely, without the fear of being attacked at anytime, anywhere.



56. Price Hike and the Common Indian

Abstract: Taking account of the price hike in essential domestic commodities like food stuff and LPG could reveal the plight of millions of households. The prices of milk and vegetables ratcheted in recent days have instilled upheaval in domestic budget of middle class families. The unruly price hike of diesel and petrol increases transportation costs which has cascading effects on the market commodities. The price of petrol in 2008 was nearly rupees 45.00 per litre which has crossed an alarming high price line of rupees 63.33 per litre throughout the country with little aberrations. The price of diesel experienced an exorbitant price hike of around rupees 16 per litre from erstwhile low rate of approximately rupees 30.00 per litre. Price hike is akin to a viral disease which insidiously affects a larger section of society and brings infrastructural annihilation. Apart from the direct conundrums, it leads to a sudden drop in demand due to contained purchasing capacity of buyers. The drop

in demand is counter balanced by drop in production which means drop in exigencies of variable factors of production, e.g. labour, raw-material, running cost, etc. The drop in labour-requirement unleashes devastating unemployment and under-employment in society. The capitalists face another species of problem simultaneously where the expenditure on fixed factors of production remains equal to the pre-fall demand situation because the fixed factors cost are levied on infrastructure, long-run investment, insurance premium, rent, etc. which are inert to short-run aberrations in total quantity produced. Hence, it bolsters the increase in Average Total Cost of production.

The deteriorating global market due to the repercussions of global recession of 2008 brought fiscal losses and unemployment in a large geo-economic area. Like many developed and developing nations, India failed to keep her insulated from the ramifications of the global slowdown. Consequently, the economic monsters of fiscal-deficit and deteriorating currency imbued the vicious scourge of price hike into the market. A juxtaposition of the current face price of any arbitrary commodity in the market with that of the price before 2008 could insinuate the manifold increase in prices. The statistical data from the competent institutions like NSSO, RBI, Ministry of Finance, PMEAC and the Planning Commission corroborated the uncomfortably high percentage of inflation ranging near double digits from 8.0% to 11.0% at different quarters of the current financial year based on Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Taking account of the price hike in essential domestic commodities like food stuff and LPG could reveal the plight of millions of households. The prices of milk and vegetables ratcheted in recent days have instilled upheaval in domestic budget of middle class families. The unruly price hike of diesel and petrol increases transportation costs which has cascading effects on the market commodities. The price of petrol in 2008 was nearly rupees 45.00 per litre which has crossed an alarming high price line of rupees 70.00 per litre throughout the country with little aberrations. The price of diesel experienced an exorbitant price hike of around rupees 16.00 per litre from erstwhile low rate of approximately rupees 30.00 per litre. The Indifference Curve of every middle class family has been lowered due to the constrained budget line which in turn diffuses dissatisfaction and endangers social unrest. The burning example of which is the contrived situation in the countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen, etc.

Inflation is the term used to denote the percentage growth in prices of goods and services with respect to their prices in some relevant base year. The perplexing price rise is a matter of studies for the eminent economists of every epoch. As a matter of fact, the effect of price rise is both negative and positive in economic terms. Enumerating the reasons of price rise we encounter terms like, monetary inflation, black-marketing, unmatched demand and supply, market monopoly and business accession. Let us demystify the terms one by one, starting with monetary inflation. The problem of monetary inflation indicates a situation of excessive money supply in market which corrodes the real value or the purchasing power of currency. Hence, each unit of currency could fetch fewer amounts of commodities and services. Black-Marketing refers to the depraved act of a few manufacturer and stockiest who hoard the product in godown to artificially inflate the price in order to reap larger profit in future. The unmatched demand and supply has both negative and positive effect on prices of goods and services. If the demand is more than the total potential of supply then the price rises and if the supply is more than potential demand then the price falls. Market monopoly and business accession are two faces of the same coin. When a big giant manufacturer takes over the business of several small enterprises, the competitions in the market evaporate, precipitating back monopoly into the market.

Price hike is akin to a viral disease which insidiously affects a larger section of society and brings infrastructural annihilation. The drop in demand is counter balanced by drop in production which means drop in exigencies of variable factors of production, e.g. labour, raw-material, running cost, etc. The drop in labour-requirement unleashes devastating unemployment and under-employment in society. The capitalists face another species of problem simultaneously where the expenditure on fixed factors of production remains equal to the pre-fall demand situation because the fixed factors cost are levied on infrastructure, long-run investment, insurance premium, rent, etc. which are inert to short-run aberrations in total quantity produced. Hence, it bolsters the increase in Average Total Cost of production. This double faceted situation, on one hand deteriorate the purchasing capacity of market while on the other hand it incurs loss of capital and thus leads to shut-down of factories in financial crisis which in turn further aggravate the problem of unemployment thus lowering further the purchasing capacity.

Trade deficit is yet another implication which is a negative effect of inflation or the price hike where the domestic market gets dearer. It promotes imports over exports which results in loss of foreign exchange. Besides, the difference in imports and exports result in trade deficit. The price hike has a good effect on an economy at initial level and under a comfortable zone of 2%-3%. It leads to growth in economy by increasing demand in employment opportunities. An economist toils to fend off the exaggeration of inflation through monetary policies and fiscal policies. The central bank of a nation is equipped with the tools like bank-rate, cash reserve ratio and bank security. When the inflation crosses the level of ease to the level of discomfort, the central bank of a nation, Reserve Bank of India in our case, increases the bank rate i.e. Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate and Marginal Standing Facilities. These result in higher interest rate on loans to deter public from taking loans. In order to promote saving to attract higher interest from the bank. In both the cases the cash is revoked from the market which helps to resist the fall in real value of currency. The **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** is required to be maintained by the commercial banks to the Reserve Bank of India which also helps in revocation of liquidity from the market. The bond and securities sold by the Reserve Bank of India to the commercial banks is yet another apparatus to revoke the liquidity from the market. Besides, the government levies taxes of different forms to curb the inflation.

Price hike or the inflation is a necessary evil of a growing economy such as ours which could be tamed through suitable and sustainable measures. The efforts of economists have formulated several tactics to maintain the inflation at the zone of comfort. The problem of price hike is a problem faced by common people; hence it is the infallible duty of the Indian Government and the economists to bring it under control whereas it is the duty of the people to proliferate the technical aspects of inflation among unapprised masses.



57. Anna's Lokpal vs. Government Lokpal

Abstract: One of the most debated points is the inclusion of Prime Minister within the ambit of the Lokpal. Another important point of difference is the Selection procedure and composition of Lokpal members. Jan Lok Pal (JLP) provides for an

independent 'Search Committee' consisting of retired constitutional authorities (like judges, eminent IAS officers etc.) to shortlist potential candidates. The Lokpal chairperson and members are to be selected from this shortlist by an independent 'Selection Committee'. Government Lok Pal (GLP) provides for a panel of 10 members, 6 of whom are politicians, 5 of whom are from the ruling party to select the Lokpal members. Even the 'Search Committee which searches for eligible Lokpal members shall be selected by the same panel. Undoubtedly, such a panel will facilitate the Government to appoint its own people thereby reducing the role of the Lokpal to a mere puppet. With corruption spreading its wings, even the NGOs have not been able to keep themselves out of this ditch. Although JLP intends to bring only government-funded NGOs under its ambit, the Government intends to have jurisdiction over all the NGOs in the country, be it small or big, registered or unregistered. Delegation of authority has been considered as the key for effective management worldwide. A similar structure is also made under the JLP where Lokpal members will only hear cases against senior officials and politicians or cases involving huge amounts rest cases shall be heard by other officers of Lokpal. On the other hand, the GLP provides that all work must be done by the 11 member team of Lokpal which is likely to result in unnecessary piling up of cases. In the light of the above mentioned differences and taking into consideration the seriousness of growing corruption in our country, it is necessary to enact a Draconian legislation rather than a feeble and toothless one.

“Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic, and moral. Satyagraha thrives on repression till at last the repressor is tired and the object of Satyagraha is gained. Satyagraha does not depend on the outside for help; it derives all its strength from within.... The method of Satyagraha requires that the Satyagrahi should never lose hope, so long as there is the slightest ground left for it,” Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi said.

Gandhiji's theory of Satyagraha was revived when a country-wide peaceful agitation against corruption gained momentum under the leadership of a 73-year old civil activist Anna Hazare. With thousands of dissenting 'aam aadmi' flooding the streets in support of the Citizens' Ombudsman "Jan-Lokpal Bill" (JLP) over the Government Lokpal Bill (GLP), the nation throbbed and a renaissance has begun within Indian democracy. However, most of the agitators do not cognize what JLP contends.

Although the movement reached its destination half – way on 28th August, 2011 when Parliament adopted a resolution to include three crucial demands by Anna's Camp i.e. inclusion of lower bureaucracy,

appointment of Lokayukta at the State level and incorporation of a Citizens' Charter under GLP. It becomes necessary to know where exactly the two bills diverge and also to analyze significant points of their differences.

One of the most debated points is the inclusion of Prime Minister within the ambit of the Lokpal. Another important point of difference is the selection procedure and composition of Lokpal members. JLP provides for an independent 'Search Committee' consisting of retired constitutional authorities (like judges, eminent IAS officers etc.) to shortlist potential candidates. The Lokpal chairperson and members are to be selected from this shortlist by an independent 'Selection Committee'. The Selection Committee shall comprise of two politicians, four judges and two retired constitutional authorities, minimizing the scope for government interference in the selection process.

On the other hand GLP provides for a panel of 10 members, 6 of whom are politicians, 5 of whom are from the ruling party, to select the Lokpal members. Even the 'Search Committee' which searches for eligible Lokpal members shall be selected by the same panel. Undoubtedly, such a panel will facilitate the Government to appoint its own people thereby reducing the role of the Lokpal to a mere puppet.

The two Bills also differ on the point of accountability of the Lokpal while on one hand JLP makes the Lokpal accountable to the people by giving them enough freedom to lodge a complaint in the Supreme Court and seek removal of a corrupt Lokpal, GLP makes the Lokpal accountable to the Government wherein only the government can seek removal of Lokpal by filing a petition in the Supreme Court. Such concentration of power will not only give a licence to the government to appoint inefficient and corrupt Lokpal but will also defeat the very purpose of enacting a citizens' ombudsmen bill which aims at greater citizen participation. With respect to allegations or complaints of corruption against Lokpal Members, the JLP provides for a comparatively better machinery by establishing an independent authority to address such complaints contrary to the provision laid down in GLP which makes the Lokpal itself the 'concerned body' to hear cases against its own staff. That will do more harm than good as it may not only prejudice the mind of the Lokpal but also induce inherent corruption.

The dismissal of a corrupt public servant under JLP is proposed to be carried out by a bench of the Lokpal which shall hold open hearings

and decide whether to remove the official or not, after the completion of investigations and filing a case in a court for prosecution. Whereas under GLP such dismissal is left to the minister of the concerned department. Like a relay race requires a chain of participants and the efficient and timely exchange of a baton, corruption also involves chain of corrupt officials and the exchange of gains arising out of such collaboration. In almost all such cases, the ministers are found to be beneficiaries at some or the other level which renders justice impossible.

A good legislation is one with simplified procedure, effective remedies and most importantly speedy justice. Keeping this in mind the JLP proposes to set up Special benches in the High Courts to expedite the appeal cases of corruption. To our dismay this provision is not accommodated in the GLP. With regard to the tapping of phones, the required permission is to be granted by Lokpal Bench under JLP while under GLP approval of the Home Secretary is needed. So the next time you spot 'Richie-Rich' hobnobbing with the Home Secretary, do not be surprised if he comes under the scanner and exits dirt-free. JLP intends to enact not only a corruption-free legislation but also a fearless and secure platform for its citizens. It is for this very reason that protection is provided to the whistle-blowers, victims and witnesses of corruption. It is indeed unfortunate to note that no such protection is provided under GLP. According to the Government, protection for whistleblowers is being provided through a separate law. But the said law is so incompetent that it has been badly trashed by the Standing committee of the Parliament itself last month. The much debated aspect of establishing a Lokayukya at the State level which would probe into corruption cases of State level ministers, MLAs and State Government officials has also gained victory after the government nodded in approval for the inclusion of this provision in the GLP.

With corruption spreading its wings, even the NGOs have not been able to keep themselves out of this ditch. Although JLP intends to bring only government-funded NGOs under its ambit, the Government intends to have jurisdiction over all the NGOs in the country, be it small or big, registered or unregistered. Delegation of authority has been considered as the key for effective management worldwide. A similar structure is also made under the JLP where Lokpal members will only hear cases against senior officials and politicians or cases involving huge amounts rest cases shall be heard by other officers of Lokpal. On the

other hand, the GLP provides that all work must be done by the 11 member team of Lokpal which is likely to result in unnecessary piling up of cases.

The method of inquiry into the cases of corruption also differs in both the bills. Under JLP, the method would be the same as provided in Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). After preliminary enquiry, an FIR will be registered. After investigations, case will be presented before a court, where the trial will take place. On the contrary GLP seeks to amend CrPC in order to provide special protection to the accused. After preliminary enquiry, all evidence will be provided to the accused and he shall be heard as to why an FIR should not be registered against him.

After completion of investigations, again all evidences will be provided to him and he will be given a hearing to explain why a case should not be filed against him in the court. Such a process would not only severely compromise all investigations with easy availability of evidences at every stage but would also disclose the identity of the whistleblowers thus threatening their security. Such a dim-witted process is unheard of in criminal jurisprudence. Another heated point, which has now received government's consent is the creation of a Citizens' Charter, which will specify which work to be done by which official and in how much time. Violation of the Charter will attract a penalty and shall be deemed to be corruption.

In the light of the above mentioned differences and taking into consideration the seriousness of growing corruption in our country, it is necessary to enact a Draconian legislation rather than a feeble and toothless one. As citizens of the largest functional democracy, it is our duty to not let the Government give any false illusion of creating an anti-corruption law. We hope the Government sticks to its promises for the inclusion of three crucial demands put forward by Anna Camp as discussed earlier. Democracy is a system by the people, for the people and of the people, and therefore today more than ever, the words of the Mahatma resound loudly in every Indian's heartbeat – “..Be the change that you wish to see...”

58. Effects of Technology

Abstract: With the introduction of Mp3s, TVs and computers, life for humans have become easier but also lazier. Obesity in children is at peak levels in India, United States, etc. Kids are preferring to stay at home and play computer games rather than going out.. Quite simply kids are losing their social life, getting fatter and are having low academic achievements all because of their addictive games on Xboxes, Play Stations etc. We have probably heard that listening to music at high volume levels from iPod can damage our hearing capability but have we cared how other gadgets are also causing damage to our overall health? Cell phones, microwave ovens and even the little bluetooth device that we have attached to our ear causes radiation that might cause harm to our natural health. The fastest growing network of Google is not too far away from this destructive activity. The search engine which has won the hearts of many with its speed has created various problems as well. The problem lies in the way Google works. Using a search engine generates CO2 emissions because the search request goes to more than one server that can be thousands of miles apart. Google have servers in the US, Europe, Japan and China. A recent study reveals that doing a Google search can emit anywhere between 1 and 10g of CO2 depending on whether or not the computer had to be switched on.

So often these days we hear and speak of ‘the conquest of nature’, ‘the taming of a river’, ‘the war against insects’ and so on. Often these phrases are used without consciously attaching any value to them, but they are underlying them with an attitude of hostility towards Nature and it’s creatures, a viewpoint which seems to assume nature as an enemy that needs to be vanquished. Alternatively, nature is seen merely as a ‘resource’ to be exploited to take the maximum out of it regardless of what this does to natural processes and to other creatures which depend on these processes. It is this attitude which sees fellow humans too as a resource to be exploited or other human communities as enemies to be conquered. Most of this destruction of nature is mainly because of the fast-running human mind and the more rapidly increasing advancements in the modern day technology. Science and its inventions over the centuries have made life easier and enjoyable. Its application has proved to be a blessing in more ways than one. The first significant advancement in technology was the invention of fire around 1 million years ago. This enabled humans to cook food and create other items such as spears and utensils. Technology now has improved sharply and

with TVs, MP3s and computers etc. our way of life has changed. We have become the people of modern ideas and innovations and this shows our **stinking richness**.

With the introduction of Mp3s, TVs and computers, life for humans have become easier but also lazier. Obesity in children is at peak levels in India, United States, etc. Kids are preferring to stay at home and play computer games rather than going out and socializing like they used to. Quite simply kids are losing their social life, getting fatter and are having low academic achievements all because of their addictive games on Xboxes, Play Stations etc.

But not only the children, it has also affected lives of adults. Cell phones can cause brain tumors and computers cause problems with your hands and fingers, and posture. So is technology really helping us? Are the pros outweighing the cons. Should we take the risks? We have probably heard that **listening to music at high volume levels from iPod can damage our hearing** capability but have we cared how other gadgets are also causing damage to our overall health? Cell phones, microwave ovens and even the little Bluetooth device that we have attached to our ear causes radiation that might cause harm to our natural health.

Technology has helped the nature as well as it helps us to determine when disaster is going to strike. Also, when earth will vanish and many other theories imply several things. Technology is necessary but not always it has a positive influence on our modern life. This issue has especially come into vogue in the last decade due to the mind-boggling pace of technology. Technology has really been very hazardous to the environment as well.

The modern world gadgets use technology of radiations and other harmful rays that have immense effect on the environment. They imbalance all the processes and in turn they are causing a great effect on the entire living world and also the eco-cycle. Now, what is about geo-sciences? It has largely affected the earth and the environment as it involves digging up of the earth to extract various resources of one's daily need. This in turn has led to over-exploitation of the resources all around the world. These resources take millions of years to be converted from the fossil fuels and organic matter. But due to extreme usage of them they are getting depleted. As aptly said,

The fastest growing network of Google is not too far away from this destructive activity. The search engine which has won the hearts of many with its speed has created various problems as well. The problem lies in the way Google works. Using a search engine generates CO2 emissions because the search request goes to more than one server that can be thousands of miles apart. Google have servers in the US, Europe, Japan and China. A recent study reveals that doing a Google search can emit anywhere between 1 and 10g of CO2 depending on whether or not the computer had to be switched on.

Thus the need of the hour is to adhere to more environment friendly practices such as switching to fluorescent bulbs and driving electric cars which is referred to as 'Going Green'. Recycling material goods, using alternative energies and buying local goods are all components of the Green lifestyle. Nowadays, jute and paper bags are encouraged rather than plastic bags to carry various materials. Green Games (Commonwealth Games) will also be held in India and their motto would be to reduce environmental degradation. The purpose of this overhaul of lifestyle is to heal the environment and the damage that has been done to it by human existence. This is a noble service indeed to stop using Google for our searches. But, is it possible? Technology will inevitably continue to grow and we have to ask that technology is doing more harm than good.



59. Rising Population: A Myriad Problems

Abstract: The rapid growth of the world's population over the past one hundred years results from a difference between the rate of birth and the rate of death. It took the entire history of humankind for the population to reach 1 billion around 1810. Today the world has a population of 7 billion and the population of India stands at about 1.27 billion. This only means that more people are now being added each day than at any other time in human history which poses as a major problem. This increase or overpopulation now has given rise to various problems like illiteracy, unemployment, pollution and poverty. We have created an interrelated web of global environmental problems. We are destroying our natural resources and biological diversities. India is facing an intense crisis of resources. There is fierce competition for the nation's limited natural resources leading to quarrels between states, between communities and even families. The fast rate of growth of population has affected the

quality of life of the people. Gandhi advocated that it is easier to practice self control than control by contraceptives. Multiplicity of wants would multiply problems in multiple folds. Thus, to tackle the problem, rather than following stringent rules and regulations, a change of mindset would help more through the involvement of education, advertisement and campaigns ensuring for a developed and a healthy India. Therefore, all we need is to shift the mindsets from "Population Control" to "Population Development". Development of people through right education and healthcare can solve much issues-even population, assuming it is a problem! We humans must grow up and learn to walk, hand in hand with each other and with our natural world. There is no alternative if we yearn to sustain humanity and advance our civilization.

It is rightly said 'The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function'. For countries like Spain, Canada and Italy where the population is decreasing, population explosion might be considered as a boon. But for developing country like India population explosion is damaging the development of the country and its society. With 16% of world's population, India is the second most populated country in the world. Developing countries are already facing shortcomings and lacking in their resources and needs. Due to rapid escalating population, the resources available per person are further plummeting and leading to increase poverty, malnutrition and other population related problems. Therefore, predicament is much more severe here in India because of the escalating pressure on the limited resources of the country.

As far as India is concerned, according to statistics, as of 2014, the total population of India is 1,236,344,631. The population clock in the Union Health Ministry in New Delhi now ticks at the rate of 29 persons per minute. The clock shows that about 42,434 babies are born in India every day. This gigantic growth rate is due to the industrial and technical revolutions that has taken place. The new technologies available have brought down the death rate because of the vastly improved medicare resulting in increased life expectancies. Various cultures, norms and migration all have contributed to population rise. India is projected to overtake China as the world's most populous nation by 2030.

This increase or overpopulation now has given rise to various problems like illiteracy, unemployment, pollution and poverty. We have created an interrelated web of global environmental problems. We are

destroying our natural resources and biological diversities. India is facing an intense crisis of resources. There is fierce competition for the nation's limited natural resources leading to quarrels between states, between communities and even families. The fast rate of growth of population has affected the quality of life of the people.

To check ill-effects of population growth on the socio-economic front, the Indian government had launched the Family Planning Programme in 1951. This was later rechristened as the Family Welfare Programme. This programme promotes on a voluntary basis, responsible for Planned Parenthood through independent choice of family planning methods best suited to the people. If this is properly implemented by making them rightly follow the slogan 'one couple, two children' could do wonders. But, at the same time a proper family planning would only work if women, especially in the rural areas could be made to come out of the false notion that having many children is a boon. For this, the requirement is to improve the literacy rate, female education and the socio-economic status of the families as population growth is directly allied to these factors. Special benefits and provisions need to be highlighted and be provided to the people who have one child and maintain a small family. Benefits like free education, better facilities and financial support should be put forward so as to encourage nuclear families.

Therefore, the need of the hour to tackle this problem of overpopulation lies in education. This can be done if one person takes into their stride of educating the other. 'Each one, teach one' should be followed and advocated. Persuasive measures need to be taken. We have seen in the past that there have been coercive measures attempted in India. In 1975- 77, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi created sterilization camps and forced vasectomies causing population-control policies to be met with strong resistance and fear. More recently, the government has considered using injection birth- control methods which have been alleged to have significant negative side effects and recall the coercive measures of the 70s.

What thus needs to ensue is to financial and political support that must be given to promote, encourage and facilitate birth control and methods which involve people as an agent of change rather than being a source of dilemma. Around 30 million Indians want to use contraceptives, but do not have access to them; money ought to be given

to provide it. Others are unaware and unwilling to discuss birth control methods, efforts must be made to promote discussion and spread knowledge of it to those who are receptive. Also, campaigns currently expound on the good of the country. Instead, media should emphasize that a small family is beneficial to an individual's own well-being rather than focusing on population control for the national good. These types of measures have been enacted in some states including Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and they have since been country's growth stability leaders. They now show high literacy rates and thus a well planned society. This has to be cultured all over India. The philosophy must be to have the people be an active participant in the country's problem. If the people understand that and want to help then the problem disappears because there is no one left to cause it.

Gandhi advocated that it is easier to practice self control than control by contraceptives. Multiplicity of wants would multiply problems in multiple folds. Thus, to tackle the problem rather than following stringent rules and regulations, a change of mindset would help more through the involvement of education, advertisement and campaigns ensuring for a developed and a healthy India. Therefore, all we need is to shift the mindsets from "Population Control" to "Population Development". Development of people through right education and healthcare can solve much issues-even population, assuming it is a problem.

Lastly, it can be concluded by saying that with so many of us on a very small planet and with the addition of so many more every week, we can no longer persist to relate to each other or our environment, ecological systems and the biosphere like we have, we will succumb to the effects of human overpopulation. Mother Nature could not care less, will eliminate us. We humans must grow up and learn to walk, hand in hand with each other and with our natural world. There is no alternative if we yearn to sustain humanity and advance our civilization.



60. India: The Future Super Power

Abstract: Since independence India became part of all important international organisations and plays a significant role in creation of non-aligned movement during the Russian USA cold war period. Now India is member of major

international organisation such as UNO, WORLD BANK, IMF, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WTO, and FATF etc. Currently India is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for two years for which the election was held. In that election India got a record 189 votes. Only four countries voted against its membership. This shows India's popularity throughout the world. India formed south south co-operation with Brazil and South Africa to provide financial help to the least developed countries which were earlier dependent only on the north for aid. India started an India Africa e-network project to connect all the 53 countries of Africa through fibre optic connection. This network will also be connected with some of the reputed technical institutions and famous medical colleges to provide e-education and telemedicine services to African people. Apart from this some of the other Indian project in Africa got international acclamation like construction of railway line linking Ethiopia and Djibouti, setting up of 80 institutions for capacity building in various sectors such as food processing, agriculture, textile, weather forecasting and rural development. India has one of the largest and advanced security forces in the world. She has a strong navy, army and air force which is not only protecting our countries but also engaged in UN's peace keeping process weather it is in Srilanka, Somalia, Afghanistan or any other countries. She has also engaged in the Indian Ocean's inter-transit corridor to protect the merchant vessel from the Somalia pirates which has become a sanctuary for them.

In the 20th century entire world considered USA, Russia, Japan and some of the European countries as the global leaders. Over the 21st century, two more countries from Asia emerged as the global leader that is India and China. Now the question is who is a global leader? Though there is no clear cut definition. A global leader is one who can play a major role in world affairs, work for maintaining peace and tranquillity and can extend all type of help in preventing global crisis such as climate change, food insecurity, hunger, poverty etc.

India is emerging as a global leader in the 21st century due to it's all round development. She got freedom from British government in 1947. From there on; she never looked back and made rapid progress in the growth trajectory. First of all entire credit goes to her great leaders, visionaries and the makers of the constitution. They did not left any loophole in the constitution. They established a responsible legislative body to make law and new policy, an executive body to execute various policies enacted by legislation and an independent judiciary to safe guard the constitution and the fundamental rights of each citizen. No individual or politician in India can take the power and law into hand as it is rampant in African countries or even in Pakistan .Pakistan is a

country got freedom with India but the military power there has the power to topple the civilian government creating instability. This is not the case with India. Her pioneering leaders made a system by amalgamating the best features of other democratic countries. That is why India is known as one of the stable country of the world.

Since independence India became part of all important international organisations and plays a significant role in the making of non-aligned movement during the Russia-USA cold war period. Now India is member of major international organisation such as UNO, WORLD BANK, IMF, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WTO, and FATF etc. Currently India is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for two years for which the election was held. In that election she got a record 189 votes. Only four countries voted against its membership. This shows her popularity throughout the world.

In the first three to four decade after independence India could not play any major role in international affairs due to her fragile economic condition and involvement in three major wars: two with Pakistan and one with China. She was mostly dependent on foreign aid for its socio economic and infrastructure development, but after 1991 economic liberalisation she has become a major contributor of aid to the third world countries. In 2008 India achieved a remarkable feat by becoming a trillion dollar economy. Currently India is at the cynosure of the world leader for its contribution to each and every continent of the globe.

Currently India is engaged with various countries for their infrastructure development, capacity building, and socio economic development. Being a part of south Asia, India always takes the lead role in promoting peace, financial stability and facilitating free trade among the south Asian countries under the SAARC umbrella. It is helping Srilanka by providing financial and technical assistance in the construction of railway line, road, and housing for displaced Tamils during LTTE war, renovating a Kankasanthurai harbour. It has provided \$1 billion grant in aid to Bangladesh for their infrastructure development. India has allowed Bhutan and Nepal to use its land to do trade with Bangladesh and to import or export goods using Bangladesh port. Due to India's sincere effort the relation with Pakistan is also improving.

India formed south-south co-operation with Brazil and South Africa to provide financial help to the least developed countries which were

earlier dependent only on the north for aid. India started an India Africa e-network project to connect all the 53 countries of Africa through fibre optic connection. This network will also be connected with some of the reputed technical institutions and famous medical colleges to provide e-education and telemedicine services to African people. Apart from this some of the other Indian project in Africa got international acclamation like construction of railway line linking Ethiopia and Djibouti, setting up of 80 institutions for capacity building in various sectors such as food processing, agriculture, textile, weather forecasting and rural development.

India has the observer status of SCO and also planning to join CSTO. She is working closely with the SCO member countries in maintaining peace and stability and preventing terrorism, drug trafficking from central and south Asia. It is also planning to extend help in construction of nuclear reactors for some of the central Asian countries like Kazakistan. It is the world's 6th largest contributor to the Afghanistan infrastructure project and also providing training to Afghanistan security forces so that they can protect their country after America's pull out from 2014. Along with this India has taken the responsibility of giving training to Afghan government employees through VV Giri National labour institute, constructing road from Delaram to Zarang and building power plants to meet its energy need.

With the grouping like BIMSTEC, Mekong Ganga co-operation, India ASEAN summit, East Asia summit India is maintaining cordial relations with all the south east asean countries. India has promised to promote culture by protecting all important historic monuments through ASI of India. She has proposed to build a highway which will connect Myanmar, Thailand , Laos ,Vietnam and Cambodia to facilitate free movement of goods and spur economic development in that region. India is also establishing training institutions to provide vocational training to the students as a part of Indian ITEC (Indian technical and economic co-operation) program. She is also providing grant in aid to these countries. Recently Indianprime minister Dr Manmohan Singh offered 500 million grants in aid to Myanmar. As a peace loving nation India wants peace to prevail in the west Asia and North Africa. She wants an amicable resolution of outstanding issues between Israel and Palestine and India is one among the few countries who recognised Palestine as an independent state. As a larger democracy of the world it promotes

democratic government instead of autocratic government throughout world.

Above all India has developed strong institutional capabilities that will benefit the world community. Indian election commission is providing all necessary assistance to the countries which want a strong impartial election process in their system. Recently Indian election commission extended help to Egypt for their election reform. India is also providing her wonder machine EVC (electronic voting machine) to Nepal, Mexico, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Afghanistan etc. for conducting elections. Indian CAG (controller and auditor general) which is another example of a unique institution in the field of audit appointed as the external auditor of two major UN organisations: IAEA and world intellectual property right.

India has one of the largest and advanced security forces in the world. She has a strong navy, army and air force which is not only protecting our countries but also engaged in UN's peace keeping process whether it is in Srilanka, Somalia, Afghanistan or any other countries. She has also engaged in the Indian Ocean's international transit corridor to protect the merchant vessel from the Somalia pirates which has become a sanctuary for them. Till now India escorted more the 1000 vessels including some Indian. India has a well developed space research centers (ISRO) which is regularly launching satellites for itself and for other countries. The types of satellites include communication satellite, weather forecasting, remote sensing etc. Recently ISRO launched a satellite called Meghatriptics with collaboration with France which will benefit all tropical countries. This will provide real time data regarding rainfall pattern in tropical region thereby helping farmers in agriculture and ensure food security. India is World's first country to identify presence of water on Moon surface through her Chandrayan-I mission and planning for Chandrayan-II mission to send humans on to the moon surface.

21st century belongs to the country leading in food production and having large work force and India is having both. India's food production is increasing year by year to feed the world. The contribution India will make to the global society is prefigured by the upsurge in the national mood which is marked by ambition, optimism and the spirit to accept the challenge of innovation and accomplishment. There is no doubt that India is a present leader. The world leaders should

acknowledge it by providing unequivocal support for its quest as a permanent member in UN's reformed Security Council. Then only her efforts and contribution towards the world will be rewarded.



61. Crisis of Indian Agriculture

Abstract: There is an ongoing debate in country regarding the state of agriculture. There is a general agreement that the Indian agriculture is in crisis but there is intense debate about the causes which led to such crisis and various way to manage them and put agriculture on healthy footing. According to nutritional emergency (by Samantha) there should be emphasis on pulses. Alagh's approach is ground level with people participation which is realistic in outlook. Government has announced financial package for those districts in country where maximum suicides by farmers have been reported. The financial packages include interest waiver, rescheduling of loans, and advancing of more capital etc. Government in Union Budget has made provisions for cheap loans for agricultural sector. In the areas of green revolution the situation of farmers was no different. It appeared farmers here had become rich by entering into entrepreneurship. But the fact is different in other parts of country Agricultural yields were stagnant but in green revolution area, agricultural yields were actually declining. This is attributed to over exploitation of land and water. Government should improve the livestock of milking animals by importing and cross breeding good animals and then by introducing such animalism in the country side. This would ensure more milk yield for the fodder consumed. Governments should either with help of cooperatives such as AMUL or with help of private sector explore the possibilities of market in ASEAN countries or Gulf Countries. Corporatization of agriculture should be allowed but in controlled and regulated manner. Government should ensure that corporate sector discharge its social obligations also. With purposeful partnership between private sector and agriculture sectors the crisis in agriculture can be solved.

India is an agricultural country. While India's industrial and service sectors are growing by leaps and bounds, still India lives in villages. Over 70% of India's population is supported by agriculture. Even industrial and service sectors are invariably entangled with the fortunes of agriculture due to various intricate forward and backward linkages.

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and various ways to manage them and put agriculture on healthy footing. According to nutritional emergency (by Samantha) there should be emphasis on pulses. Alagh's approach is ground level with people participation.

There have been ominous signs which showed that the Indian agriculture is in crisis. Unending chain of suicides by farmers in different parts of the country shows that everything is not well with agricultural sectors.

Import of wheat by government in the era when there is a talk about green revolution in the country, high prices of vegetables and pulses, stagnation in white, blue and yellow revolution, setbacks caused by Avian influenza to poultry farmers, inability of peasants and farmers to withstand the competition from globalize market, unmistakably show the state of Indian agriculture. Government of India is not sleeping over this crisis. National Commission on farmers has been constituted under the eminent scientist Dr. M.S. Swami Nathan. He has recommended a comprehensive national policy for farmers to give an all-round boost to the sector.

Government has announced financial package for those districts in country where maximum farmer suicides have been reported. The financial packages include, interest waiver, rescheduling of loans, and advancing of more capital etc. Government in Union Budget has made provisions for cheap loans for agricultural sector. Moreover the present government prefers its concerns about the common man of country and the peasants and farmers which invariably constitute majority of common man in the country. Nevertheless, it is a sad state of affairs where government is busy in talking about superficial remedies instead of taking the concrete steps. More waivers of interests and rescheduling of loans (as in Vidarbha) do not address the real problem. Real problem is: how the farmers got entangled in debt trap in the first place? Were governmental policies or free market forces responsible for it? Or, was it faulty crop selection and cropping pattern which leads to such situation? The National Commission on farmers is like toothless tiger. What is the use of well-meaning and well-researched recommendations of the Commission if government is deliberately going slow over it? The other radical factor is the recent corporatization of Indian agriculture with entry of corporate giants such as Reliance, Bharti, Godrej, and Munjals etc has to be critically analyzed in a long term perspectives.

The genesis of underlying factor for the present crisis in agriculture can be traced back to second five year plan where emphasis was shifted to industrial growth and agricultural sector was to a provider of cheap raw material and a market for finished goods. It was a drain of wealth under the garb of national development. There was a shift in government stand late in 1960's. The year 1968 marked the beginning of Green Revolution. It solved the problem by saving foreign exchange and provided food security to country.

In the decade of liberalization, privatization and Globalization i.e. the last decade of 20th century, the agricultural landscape of the country was dismal and full of contradictory agricultural growth. Conditions of farmer remained the same throughout the country i.e. they fought hard to earn their livelihood in agriculture in the season of unpredictable monsoon. This statement sums up the level of infrastructural support available to Indian farmers.

There is deficiency of micronutrients rising input costs coupled with declining yields that led to a situation where farmers in Punjab on the average are under the debt of more than ₹ 2 lakh. The fragile condition of agriculture became apparent in light of free market forces which were released by the government under the petted of taking Indian economy to next level. While Industrial and service sectors were equipped to deal with global markets, Indian agriculture was taken by surprise. Not even the green revolution farmers were economically and technologically ready to tale on the challenge of global market. This ultimately was manifested by farmer suicides in all the regions of the country. To emerge from the present crisis the approach needs to be two-pronged: immediate relief and structural changes as along term measure. Relief package based on debt relief, waiver of interest rate and better credit flow will take care of immediate relief to farming community.

Studies point out that choice of crops by farmers has not been correct. The kinds of crops they grow are less suitable to the condition of cultivation. Water intensive crops are cultivated in water scare areas. As a consequence crop risks increases. Long term solution lies in the policies that will induce farmer to cultivate crops. Which offer has got best return and have low risk? This will be accompanied by better irrigation and marketing support. Government should introduce such cropping patterns which would ensure that there is market for product in global markets. For example green revolution belt can produce fruits,

vegetables and flowers for export to the markets of developed world.

Dry land regions consisting of those areas where assured irrigation facilities are non-existent can specialize in the production of organic produce. The subsistence farming prevalent in such regions ensures that farmers cannot afford to put chemical fertilizers and insecticides in their fields; hence there is natural advantage for organic farming. Lately, dairy sector has been projected as a profit making occupation for farmers. Milk grid has been established in India and farmers are assured of cash income for the milk they produce. However, a study in Punjab suggests that the cost of milk produced is more than what farmers get. The only reason that farmers are producing milk is the availability of otherwise scarce cash. It should be noted that today, India is one of the largest producers of milk but milk does not translate into property of farmers. Government should improve the livestock of milking animals by importing and cross breeding good animals and then introducing them in the country side. This would ensure more milk yield for the fodder consumed. Governments should either with help of cooperatives such as AMUL or with help of private sector can explore the possibilities of market in ASEAN countries and Gulf Countries.

Milk processing unit should be established all around the country and hygienic chain from ladder to chocolate bar should be established. White revolution should be a revolution for producers and not just a revolution for consumer. Horizons of Blue Revolution should be expanded to include prawns and other delicious fishes. Emphasis should be on organic production. Sanitary should be adhered to hygiene. Fish production can help to fill the gap of protein requirement of Indian population from long coastlines. Co-operative movement should be strengthened in the country. Farmers in India are faced with the problem of shrinking land holdings and coupled with rising input cost. Cooperative movement on the lines of Kibbutzim of Israel can solve such problem.

Farmers can pool their resources and achieve economies of scale corporatization of agriculture represents an anti-thesis to the cooperative movement. Corporatization of agriculture means the entry of corporate business houses in agricultural sector with an aim of profit maximization. It is irony that corporate world is ambitious towards the profit yielding potential of agriculture while a study by NSSO suggests that 40% of

farmers are ready to quit agriculture as according to them, it is not profitable. Though, the legislative support for contract farming and the land ceiling laws has been given a go by. Now a company can control a vast area with positive role towards the implication of corporatization of agriculture but on the other hand it has been argued that corporatization of agriculture would result in marginalization of peasants and subsistence farmers. This in turn would lead an increase in already unemployed people of unskilled workforce.

Corporatization of agriculture should be allowed but in controlled and regulated manner. Government should ensure that corporate sector discharge its social obligations also. With purposeful partnership between private sector and agriculture sectors, the crisis in agriculture can be overcome. Developed India is possible with the attainment of growing advancement of manufacturing and service sector. Prosperous India is possible only with healthy agricultural sector. The pride and confidence in farmers and farming needs to be restored. This alone can help agriculture grow like never before.



62. Right and Duties Go Together

Abstract: We are tipping off the balance once we become unduly conscious of our rights or even of our duties. An undue awareness of our rights without a proportionate discharge of duties is liable to encroach upon others right and it is sincere discharge of duties that provides a healthy check on our rights. "Science has given us knowledge but not wisdom, it has given us comfort but not happiness" said Bertrand Russell. Liberalism has only made us conscious of our rights; it has failed to render happiness. Our ancestor was much happier than us since they emphasized on duties. The aim of every individual is to lead a balanced life. To that end, one should see that the balance of rights and duties is not tipped at one position. To fulfill a rightful demand for one's rights should be supplemented by wise transaction of duties. It is rightly said "Give to the world the best you have and the best will come to you." Unfortunately, one of the reasons for sliding down on economic social and political fields is our too much insistence on rights only. Do the trade unions which give a call for strike on a minor issue in the so called interest of its members even care to tell their constituents to their duty towards public in general and nation in particular?

Old and young, high and low, men and women all clamor for their rights unmindful of any genuine reason for the same.

Factory workers demands to be liberated from the oppression of the authority. Old men complain that no right is guaranteed to them and that they are being discarded as an invalid gentry. So much so that school children are no longer prepared to tolerate parental authority and the tyranny of the elders.

Claiming for one's rights may be an expression of increased awareness of one's responsibility towards the society but, the expression does not acquire fully fledged meaning unless demand for rights is duly supplemented by an equal response to one's duty. An individual who is careful in fully exploiting his rights is naturally inclined towards performing his job well. For, rights arise from one's sincere discharge of duties. It is this balancing of rights and duties that establish relationship between people and the society. Moreover, the deal between the individual and society is not one-way traffic. In consonance with the truth of the above statement, the Russian Constitution aptly declares that the state gives to each according to his needs and expects from each according to his capacity. The concept perestroika only strengthens this reality. In fact it is the individual's capacity to give that determines his rights. A farmer claims his rights as much as a professor.

However, degree and the nature of their rights vary. But the farmer's job is not to be treated with condemnation. He feeds the entire world. On the other hand, a teacher's job is far more superior in that he provides food for the mind. It is obvious that their demands vary considerably. In order to get the best out of life, one has to put ones best into it. What we put into life is our duty and what we obtain out of it is our right. Our capacity to give should be the basis of our right.

We are tipping off the balance once we become unduly conscious of our rights or even of our duties. An undue awareness of our rights without a proportionate discharge of duties is liable to encroach upon others right and it is sincere discharge of duties that provides a healthy check on our rights.

Democracy is a government by consent. In an election, a candidate sees that his rights to stand for election are protected. Nevertheless, he shirks from his responsibility after being elected. The much canvassed right is curtailed by the same person. In fact, the very basis of democracy lies in the fact that each citizen should try to do what he/she is capable of doing without waiting for others to perform the same work.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan once said “each individual in civilized society should only think of what he is capable of doing for his country and know what he can get out it.” The more one is capable of giving without considering what he can get in terms, gets the maximum.

“Science has given us knowledge but not wisdom, it has given us comfort but not happiness” said Bertrand Russel. Liberalism has only made us conscious of our rights; it has failed to render happiness. Our ancestor were much happier than us since they emphasized on duties. Now there has been a shifting of emphasis from duties to rights, which has only afforded to give monetary pleasure but not happiness. Liberty without proper execution of duties means license. The only price of freedom is blood. The aim of every individual is to lead a balanced life. To that end, one should see that the balance of rights and duties is not tipped at one position. To fulfill a rightful demand for one’s rights should be supplemented by wise transaction of duties. It is rightly said “Give to the world the best you have and the best will come to you.”

Unfortunately one of the reasons for sliding down on economic, social and political fields is our too much insistence on rights only. Do the trade unions which give a call for strike on a minor issue in the so called interest of its members even care to tell their constituents to their duty towards public in general and nation in particular?

In fact, the advent of trade unionism without duties is the bane of our public life. Let us think of the Japanese labors that were in factories working with black badges even on strike. They work to their country with a dedicated service so that national product does not suffer.



63. Indian Judiciary System

Abstract: Just like the other two organs the Indian Judiciary is also at the lowest ebb of functioning and efficiency. However, the one thing that occurs to the reader’s mind is we must at least appreciate the honesty of the judiciary to have openly accepted the existence of such a huge back-log of cases which are piled up and pending before the honorable judges. What a state of honesty that without the blinking of an eyelid, the judiciary accepts that the back-log can be dealt with only in the span of about three centuries. That too, if no new case comes up through these three centuries. What a tall claim? This simple logic and analysis is enough to explain how and why cases are kept pending for not only years but few decades. To be exact, the only

solution to such a ghastly problem is plain and simple honesty that in turn is not an easy task to achieve at least for now when our dishonesty has reached the pinnacle of success and accumulating wealth is the only slogan of the times. Thus, when there is no apparent relief from this ghost of so called justice, the Indian public has to accept it and learn to live with it, for there does not appear an end to this road. We can all keep praying to God that in this country never should any decent and honest person get involved in any case and never should he need to see the door of any court for justice. The judiciary system should be made such as no person believes in the punch line: justice delayed is justice denied.

Like all other scenarios on the Indian horizon, the Indian judiciary is not a thing to be proud of. When the other two organs of the government, the Legislature, and the Executive are rotten to the very core, how can the third organ the Judiciary be any better?

The scene of the Indian judiciary is very bleak, unhappy, and unholy. Just like the other two organs the Indian Judiciary is also at the lowest ebb of functioning and efficiency. In these days of the free press, we often get the chance of reading in different publications of national importance and others about the rot seeping into the Lower Courts and Higher Courts, and now eyeing the Supreme Court. It is interesting to note how the Supreme Court is often heard passing strictures against the Legislature and the Executive, but it is sad to note that the organ that is trying to infuse good health and new blood in other organizations is, itself, rotting.

When we read in the daily papers that three Cr and odd law suits are pending in the courts and new ones keep adding on a daily basis. The idea that strikes the reader is that for one, what were the courts doing all these years, and for how can such a huge back-log develop if work is continued daily. How could the courts have accumulated such an impressive back-log? The second idea that ticks through the mind of the reader is how many lives in how many centuries will this backlog be completed?

Any layman even will be able to understand that this is an impossible task and of course the courts don't mean to complete the backlog as they very well know that all people involved will have perished with time and there will be no need to finish the backlog. However, the one thing that occurs to the reader's mind is that, we must at least appreciate the honesty of the Judiciary to have openly accepted the

existence of such a huge back-log of cases, which are piled up and pending before the honourable judges. What a state of honesty that without the blinking of an eyelid, the judiciary accepts that the back-log can be dealt with only in the span of about three centuries and that also, if no new case comes up all through these three centuries.

What a tall claim!

With this candid, though seemingly shameless acceptance of the existing situation of the judiciary what can any layman add to the high standards of working of the Indian Judiciary. The position is very clear. With this background of the situation it is very important for us to analyse how this situation has come to exist. To this also, the answer is not far to seek. All this has come to be because like all other professions, the legal profession has also become a money spinning profession. It is indeed, very lucrative to postpone endlessly each and every law suit.

The only person interested in the speedy disposal of any case is the individual and that also only if the individual is honest. All the other parties involved in any case, i.e. the real culprit and the lawyers of both sides are just not interested in the finishing of a case. This is because the finishing of a case means the end of the income accruing from the case to the lawyers. Then, why should the lawyers finish any case and so, the back-log keeps mounting with no problem to anyone except the honest man fighting the legal battle? Who is interested in this man's welfare and why? Thus, with four parties involved in every legal case, only one party, the honest man is interested in the finishing of the case with speedy decision. How can it be in this country that is India where only majority counts? What about a single man trying for a fair deal? In the bargain of delaying of cases all the parties involved stand to gain. Will the finalizing the case mock at an earning?

This simple logic and analysis is enough to explain. How and why cases are kept pending for not only years but few decades. It appears that the only solution to such a ghastly problem is plain and simple honesty that in turn is not an easy task to achieve. At least for now when our dishonesty has reached the pinnacle of success and accumulating wealth is the only slogan of the times.

Thus, when there is no apparent relief from this ghost of so called justice, the Indian public has to accept it and learn to live with it, for there does not appear an end to this road. We can all keep praying to God that in this country never should any decent and honest person

get involved in any case and never should he need to see the door of any court for justice. The fact is that at the court where man seeks justice is just the place where justice is denied, delayed and rendered meaningless.



64. Revolutions: White, Blue and Green

Abstract: The major benefits of the Green Revolution (GR) were experienced mainly in northern and north-western India between 1965 and the early 1980s. Though the food grain yields continued to increase throughout the 1980s, the dramatic changes in the years between 1965 and 1980 were not. Wheat was sown with high-yielding varieties. For rice the comparable figure was 45 percent. Operation Flood or White Revolution was a rural development programme started by India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in 1970. One of the largest of its kind, the programme objective was to create a nationwide milk grid. It is called White Revolution of India as it resulted in making India the largest producer of milk and milk products. It also helped reduce malpractices by milk traders and merchants. This revolution followed the Green Revolution and helped in alleviating poverty and famine levels from their dangerous proportions in India during the era. Blue Revolution is the water equivalent of the green revolution and primarily refers to the management of water resources that can steer humanity to achieve drinking water and crop irrigation security. The aim of the ongoing Blue Revolution is to rapidly increase fish production in small ponds and water bodies. This is a boon to small farmers, the nation's nutrition and its gross domestic product. Whatever revolution it was, it gave the country much needed impetus and was instrumental in taking the country to the greater heights.

After 1965, the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds and the increased use of fertilizers and irrigation made India self-sufficient in food grains. This substantial increase in production and improvement in the Indian agriculture is known as the Green Revolution. Famine, once accepted as inevitable in India, has not returned since the introduction of Green Revolution crops.

On the lines of the successful agricultural development process in Mexico by Norman Borlaug in 1943, India started the programme with the help of the US-based Rockefeller Foundation. It was based on high-yielding varieties of wheat, rice, and other grains that had been developed in Mexico and in the Philippines. Of the high-yielding seeds, wheat

produced the best results. All India Radio (AIR) is credited for playing a vital role in creating awareness for these methods. Along with high yielding seeds and irrigation facilities, the enthusiasm of farmers mobilized the idea of agricultural revolution.

The major benefits of the Green Revolution were experienced mainly in northern and north-western India between 1965 and the early 1980s. Though the food-grain yields continued to increase throughout the 1980s, the dramatic changes in the years between 1965 and 1980 were not duplicated. By the year 1980, almost 75 percent of the total cropped area was under wheat cultivation with high-yielding varieties. For rice the comparable figure was 45 percent.

The plan was implemented only in areas with assured supplies of water and the means to control on large inputs of fertilizers. Since these inputs were easily available in parts of Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, yields increased most in these states. In other states, such as Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, in areas where these inputs were not assured, the results were limited or negligible leading to considerable variation in crop yields within these states.

Thus, the Green Revolution created wide regional and interstate disparities. It also increased income disparities as higher income growth and reduced incidence of poverty were found in the states where yields increased the most and lower income growth and little change in the incidence of poverty in other states.

Operation Flood or White Revolution was a rural development program started by India's *National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)* in 1970 was one of the largest of its kind in the agriculture sector. The program objective was to create a nationwide milk grid. It is called White Revolution of India as it resulted in making India the largest producer of milk and milk products. It also helped reduce malpractices by milk traders and merchants. This revolution followed the Green Revolution and helped in alleviating poverty and famine levels from their dangerous proportions in India.

The engine behind the success of Operation Flood was *Anand Milk Union Limited (or Amul)*, which in turn became a mega company based on the cooperative approach. Verghese Kurien (Chairman of NDDB at that time), then 33, gave the professional management skills and necessary thrust to the cooperative and is considered the *architect of India's White Revolution*.

Operation Flood has helped dairy farmers. It directed their development and placed control on the resources they created by their own hands. A 'National Milk Grid', links milk producers throughout India with consumers in over 700 towns and cities, reducing seasonal and regional price variations while ensuring that the producer gets a major share of the price the consumers pay. The bedrock of Operation Flood has been village milk producers' cooperatives which procure milk and provide inputs and services, making modern management and technology available to members.

Operation Flood was implemented in three phases. Phase I (1970-1980) was financed by the sale of skimmed milk powder and butter oil donated by the European Union (then the European Economic Community) through the World Food Programme. NDDB planned the programme and negotiated the details of EEC assistance. During this phase, 18 of India's premier milk sheds were linked with consumers in India's major metropolitan cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. As a result, mother dairies were established in these four metros.

During Phase II (1981-1985), the milk sheds were increased from 18 to 136 and 290 urban markets expanded the outlets for milk. By the end of 1985, a self-sustaining system of 43,000 village cooperatives with 42.5 lakh milk producers were covered. Domestic milk powder production increased from 22,000 tons in the pre-project year to 140,000 tons by 1989, all of the increase coming from dairies set up under Operation Flood. Direct marketing of milk by producers' cooperatives increased by several million liters a day, thus, promoting self-reliance in the dairy products.

Phase III (1985-1996) enabled dairy cooperatives to expand and strengthen the infrastructure required to procure and market increasing volumes of milk. Veterinary first-aid health care services, feed and artificial insemination services for cooperative members were extended along with intensified member education. This phase consolidated India's dairy cooperative movement and added 30,000 new dairy cooperatives to the 42,000 existing societies organized during Phase II.

Milk sheds peaked to 173 in 1988-89 with the numbers of women members and Women's Dairy Cooperative Societies increased

significantly. There was an added emphasis on research and development in animal health and animal nutrition. Further, innovations like vaccine for theileriosis, bypassing protein feed and urea-molasses mineral blocks, all contributed to the enhanced productivity of mulch animals.

In short, White Revolution was much more than a dairy program. Rather dairying was seen as an instrument of development generating employment and regular incomes for millions of rural people. It can be viewed as a twenty year experiment confirming the rural development vision which resulted in increase in milk production, augmenting rural incomes and providing fair prices to consumers.

Blue Revolution is the water equivalent of the green revolution and primarily refers to the management of water resources that can steer humanity to achieve drinking water and crop irrigation security. The aim of the ongoing Blue Revolution is to rapidly increase fish production in small ponds and water bodies, a boon to small farmers, the nation's nutrition and its gross domestic product.

It has resulted in increase of fish production to five million tons from only six lakh tons of fish fifty years ago. This includes 1.6 million tons of fish from freshwater aquaculture. Although the yield from marine fisheries has stagnated, freshwater aquaculture is growing at a healthy 6 percent a year.

The Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), India's largest center of its kind has been the source of much of the science that has driven the growth of Indian inland aquaculture. The institute began the challenging task of turning what was a minor village tradition into a science that not only could increase the tonnage of fish per volume of water but also cope with inevitable problems that come with more intensive production such as how to feed fish economically and how to deal with sudden outbreaks of disease brought on by crowded conditions.

Fish production in India has increased more than tenfold since its independence in 1947. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, fish output in India doubled between 1990 and 2010. Even India's vast distances, hot climate and vegetarian tradition do not place insurmountable obstacles in the way of expansion.

65. Communal Violence Prevention Bill

Abstract: Prevention of communal and targeted violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2013 is UPA's one of the latest bills introduced in the Parliament with an agenda to prevent communal clashes. According to the Bill it aims to provide equal access to justice and protection to the vulnerable groups through effective provisions for investigation, prosecution and trial of offences. The Bill also intends to provide for the restorative relief, rehabilitation and compensation to all persons affected by communal violence. The Bill aims to prevent atrocities, sexual assault, unlawful assemblies, hate propaganda etc. being organized leading to communal violence. There are constant pressures from the social activists to pass the bill for the prevention of communal violence in the country. However, due to the criticisms of some of the contentious provisions of the bill, it continues to be in cold storage. The UPA government came up with a bill Communal Violence (Suppression) Bill soon after it came to power. However, it was rejected owing to its legal faults. Later Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation) Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2005. It was referred to the parliamentary committee on constitutional affairs for review. Prevention of communal and targeted violence (Access to Justice and reparations) Bill, 2011 was one of the latest bills introduced in the Parliament with an agenda to prevent communal clashes. According to the Bill it aims to provide equal access to justice and protection to the vulnerable groups through effective provisions for investigation, prosecution and trial of offences. If the Bill is passed in both the Houses with the absolute majority, the people of India shall feel relieved.

India is a land of unity in diversity and people from many religious, social and cultural backgrounds live harmoniously. However the diversity of the subcontinent has often been exposed under threats of religious violence. As Marx rightly says religion often turns out to be the 'opiate of masses'. The communal violence is one of the major threats to Indian democracy. It has been a barrier to the socio- economic development of India.

The communal issue has deep roots in the Indian past. The colonial rule was based on communal divisions. The British found the divide and rule policy as the most comfortable way to establish their hold in Indian subcontinent. The communal issue associated with the partition of India was one of the major catastrophes in Indian history. India faced the worst form of communal violence during the partition which led to massive death and destruction.

Even after independence, communal violence continues. The first major clash between Hindus and Muslims occurred in Madhya Pradesh in 1961. The Ahmedabad riots of 1969 claimed the lives of about thousand people. The 1984 riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi was another black spot. This was followed by the Meerut riots of 1987, Bhagalpur riots of 1989. The Mumbai riots of 1992 following demolition of Babri Masjid killed about 1788 people. The Gujarat riot in 2002 was one of the worst communal carnages in India.

Besides, there were other communal riots that have sprouted out in other parts of India. This includes the Varanasi bombings of 2006, Kadhmal riots in Orissa in 2008, Mumbai massacre on November 26th, 2008, Assam violence in 2012, and the Dharbha Garti massacre in May 2013 and the latest one Muzafarnagar riots in September 2013.

In this context, it is essential to examine the need of a bill for preventing communal clashes in the country. There have been heated debates whether new laws are essential in this respect or the existing provisions are enough. The Indian penal code encompasses certain provisions to prevent the communal clashes. Section 141 to 160 provides for various provisions against any type of communal violence. It has provisions against unlawful assembly, riot or any sort of activity which causes disharmony.

Article 335 of the Indian Constitution states- "It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution"

Nevertheless, the recurring communal riots prove that the existing provisions have not succeeded in preventing communal clashes in India. It is in this context that the necessity of a bill to prevent communal clashes arises.

The UPA government came up with a 'Communal Violence (Suppression) Bill' soon after it came to power. However, it was rejected owing to its legal faults. Later Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation) Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2005. It was referred to the parliamentary committee on constitutional affairs for review.

Prevention of communal and targeted violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2013 is one of the latest bills introduced in the Parliament with an agenda to prevent communal clashes. According to the bill it aims to provide equal access to justice and protection to the

vulnerable groups through effective provisions for investigation, prosecution and trial of offences. The Bill also intends to provide for the restorative relief, rehabilitation and compensation to all persons affected by communal violence. The Bill aims to prevent atrocities, sexual assault, unlawful assemblies, hate propaganda etc being organized leading to communal violence.

There are constant pressures from the social activists to pass the bill for the prevention of communal violence in the country. However, due to the criticisms of some of the contentious provisions of the bill, it continues to be in cold storage. According to the BJP and their ally, the bill is anti-majority and against the federal structure of the nation.

However, all these issues and other can be discussed on the floor of the house by introducing the bill in the Parliament and eliminate its shortcomings. After that it should be made into a law. The prevention of communal violence is essential to keep the secular spirit of the constitution and the glory of the nation.



66. Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

Abstract: The Indian judiciary system is such that many a case still remains to be solved. There is a backlog of unsolved cases. Commonwealth Games scam and other scams showed the weakness of the UPA government. When these scams and scandals came to light for the first time, thanks to the continued efforts from the media, the government was under immense pressure. Due to widespread protests by the NGO's and the civil society groups, the government initially caved into their demands in panic because these groups captured the popular sentiment of the middle class which provides government its legitimacy. But as soon as the government was able to devise ways of confusing the middle class, it backtracked from its promises. In the present scenario, in order to maintain its democratic status, the nation needs an institution like LOKPAL to bring about accountability. There is discussion going on that the prime minister shall be brought under the ambit of LOKPAL along with the higher judiciary, but democracy is being cited as the reason for not bringing the nation's highest functionaries within its ambit. It is being argued that prime minister being accountable to parliament will be automatically checked by the opposition and that giving this power to LOKPAL, an external agency, will undermine parliament. Also inclusion of PM within the purview of LOKPAL will prevent him for taking tough decisions for fear of inviting challenges.

The year 2010, the second year of UPA-II regime, turned out to be most disastrous to the image of the alliance, in general and congress party in particular. First the Commonwealth Games scam surfaced up where there seems to be blatant loot in contracts and purchase of exercise machines and even toilet paper rolls. The key player in all this was the chairman of CWG, then a sitting congress MP from Pune, pointing fingers at the integrity of party. Later in the year, another blow to the party's pride came when the biggest scam in the recent Indian history, the 2G scam, came to light. The involvement of people from the union cabinet though from an Alliance partner, did not help the cause of the party.

These scams and scandals came to light for the first time unfolded by continued efforts of the media. This ignited the minds of the millions. The government was under immense pressure. Due to widespread protests by the NGO's and the civil society groups, the government initially caved into their demands in panic because these groups captured the popular sentiment of the middle class which provides government its legitimacy. But as soon as the government was able to devise ways of confusing the middle class, it backtracked from its promises.

On investigations conducted by the prime investigation body, the CBI, it was brought into notice that the whole thing could not have been carried forward without the nod from the prime minister. In the middle of the blame game that has started now as more names of the accused have started pouring in and the opportunist politics being played by the opposition, the middle class which needed to lead the fight against corruption has become all the more confused.

In wake of these revelations, different people have given their completely different versions of the story. Some have even gone to the extent of suggesting that if bribe giving is legalized, the problem of corruption would be less severe. For them, this argument seems to be in line with the case that corruption and smuggling improves economic efficiency. Even some powerful voices have argued for this. Our prime minister, a clever academician, probably one of the most qualified head of states in the world, had acted decisively on issues close to his heart like the INDIA-USA civil nuclear deal which is pushed through in spite of stiff resistance to it and the pertaining threat to his party. But his initial silence regarding scams and the people involved in the recent past, did cause considerable damage to the image of an honest politician

in the world of dirty politics. The media and opposition didn't leave any stone unturned to capitalize on the situation.

Eventually when the PM did speak out, he seemed to be shifting from his 'coalition compulsions' argument to giving technical explanations every now and then which added to his misery. First, he confided that pleasing the parties in the coalition makes them compromise on the principles of party. He further went on to justify that decision makers act in uncertainty without complete information and therefore the resulting inappropriate decisions are not deliberate but errors of judgment. This argument on the face of it seems to many a viable one, but has a lot of shortcoming in context of recent developments in the investigation probing the mega 2g scam. For example why did some of the licenses go to those who had no experience in the field? This has nothing to do with uncertainty. They further argued that he should not be expected to look into the details pertaining to each ministry, not being an expert on all matters. This statement to evade from the responsibility seems to ignore the fact that he has numerous agencies and experts at his disposal. When the wrong doing pertaining to the case were pointed in 2008, he could have taken some appropriate steps to avoid much of the embarrassment that latter cropped up due to the delay.

In the present scenario, in order to maintain its democratic status, the nation needs an institution like LOKPAL to bring about accountability. There is discussion going on that the prime minister shall be brought under the ambit of LOKPAL along with the higher judiciary, but democracy is being cited as the reason for not bringing the nation's highest functionaries within its ambit. It is being argued that prime minister being accountable to parliament will be automatically checked by the opposition and that giving this power to LOKPAL, an external agency, will undermine parliament. Also, inclusion of PM within the purview of LOKPAL will prevent him from taking tough decisions for fear of inviting challenges.

But those who are presenting the strong counter arguments fail to understand that he himself is also human like his cabinet members and that keeping a check on other members but excluding him isn't logical at all. A person with a clean image shouldn't be afraid at all about justifying any act of his. No matter how much pressure he might have faced in making those tough decisions.

67. Communal Harmony and the Internal Security

Abstract: At the time of freedom and partition, it was believed by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pundit Nehru that partition was a temporary phenomenon and once the communist fervor subsides, a United and strong India would be formed. However, contrary to their expectations, India and Pakistan stand apart as separate nations and the fraught question of their bilateral relations remains unsolved till date. The disputed State of Kashmir has been ravaged by violence, civilian casualties, and damage of property, curfew and the resulting disruption of normal life. Communal problem which is the root cause with all its social, political and economic ramifications remains unabated even today and bedevils the State. In order to strike at the base that is to bring about communal harmony, there must be harmony in the minds of the people. 'Aaman ki aasha' is a voluntary initiative taken to improve Indo-Pak relationship. Similar voluntary organizations that encourage communal harmony should come up. Minorities complain that they are looked upon as aliens and trouble-makers in their own land and the Majority community in turn puts the blame on the Minorities. Mental revolution among people, considering the fellow citizens as brethren is essential to bring about communal harmony in the country. The communal harmony thus attained is a sine-qua-non for the internal security of the country.

Communalism is 'the loyalty to a sociopolitical grouping based on religious or ethnic affiliation rather than to society as a whole'. It is an ideology which takes three forms or stages, one following the other. The first stage starts with a belief that those who follow the same religion have common secular interests. That is common, political, economic, social and cultural interests. The second stage is characterized by the notion that in a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests of followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from that of the followers of another religion. In the third stage it is believed that the interests of the followers of different religions are mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.

The communist ideology in India went through all these stages during the freedom struggle against the British. The hard earned, precious independence of India was won after decades of glorious struggle but along with a bloody and tragic partition that ripped apart the fabric of the emerging free nation. Thousands of lives were lost from both the sides, that of the Hindus and the Muslims in the communal

riots and being left with no other alternative, a separate Muslim state of Pakistan was conceded. India was made a secular country with provisions for protection of minority communities. Despite precautionary and preventive measures having been taken, the communal legacy still continues.

At the time of freedom and partition, it was believed by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru that partition was a temporary phenomenon and once the communist fervor subsides, a United and strong India would be formed. However, contrary to their expectations, India and Pakistan stand apart as separate nations and the fraught question of their bilateral relations remains unsolved till date. The disputed State of Kashmir has been ravaged by violence, civilian casualties, damage of property, curfew and the resulting disruption of normal life. Communal problem which is the root cause, with all its social, political and economic ramifications remains unabated even today and bedevils the State.

With the passage of time, the path taken by communalism has changed. Earlier it was the large scale communal riots, now it has taken the route of terrorism. Bomb blasts and shooting attacks have rent the major cities like Mumbai, New Delhi, Pune, Ahmedabad and others. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands were maimed and devastated. Authorities blame terror groups ranging from Islamic insurgents of Kashmir to the Hindu terror groups in Maharashtra. Whatever the reason or religion behind such activities be, the loss is to humanity as a whole. All the religions basically preach love and the feeling of brotherhood towards fellow beings. It is only the parties with vested interests that sow the seeds of communal hatred and violence in the minds of people. This saying of Arundhati Roy is worth quoting: "The mullahs of the Islamic world and the mullahs of the Hindu world and the mullahs of the Christian world are all on the same side. And we are against them all".

India is a developing country, and the fourth largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity. The vision of our national leaders is to make India a 'developed nation' and an 'economic superpower'. However, the internal security of the nation is a prerequisite for the attainment of this vision. As long as the communal tensions inside the country do not ease, the internal security of the nation cannot be ensured, despite the strength of the army or paramilitary employed to control the situation. Once the communal

tension inside the country subsides and India becomes internally secure, then the problems in the bilateral relations between the twin nations of India and Pakistan can be smoothly dealt with.

In order to strike at the base, that is, to bring about communal harmony, there must be harmony in the minds of the people. '*Aaman ki aasha*' is a voluntary initiative taken to improve Indo-Pak relationship. Similar voluntary organizations that encourage communal harmony should come up. Minorities complain that they are looked upon as aliens and trouble-makers in their own land and the Majority community in turn puts the blame on the Minorities. Mental revolution among people, considering the fellow citizens as brethren is essential to bring about communal harmony in the country. The communal harmony thus attained is a sine-qua-non for the internal security of the country.

Only when the internal security is ensured can the nation embark on the path towards development and economic advancement. Recently, the Allahabad High Court gave its judgment regarding the Ayodhya controversy, dividing the disputed land into 3 parts and distributing them among the three contesting parties involved, the Nirmohi Akhara, the Sunni Central Board of Waqf and the Ramlalla Virajman. The peaceful air that surrounded the country following the verdict, bodes well for the nation.



68. Poor-rich Gap in India

Abstract: The Indian economy is such that the rich go on becoming richer and the poor go on becoming poorer. There is a considerable gap between the haves and the have-nots. By above description it is clear that in most of the area poor are lagging. From long back poor people have been ignored by the government but ignoring poor and their demands is not the solution because with poverty not only the poor suffer but country suffers as well. Poverty is one of the big hurdles in the way of Indian economy. Poor people live in mostly village area and in cities for the search of jobs. As they cannot afford the higher education people in this class are dependent on their physical strength to earn and usually labour class people works on factory or some other organization. Their earnings and their purchasing power is extremely low and they are victim of the inflation in true sense. Lack of education and awareness about the things make them sick. Truly, they are devoid of healthy aspects of life or may be because they cannot afford the good stuffs and quality foods. Only money is

not the problem. Indian government is spending so much money on the poor and there are a few schemes like employment guarantee scheme under which they get guarantee of having 150 days work with the best wages available. Food commodities are available at very low cost for people who are below poverty line. Therefore, money is not the problem. What is missing is motivation. People of low class are not aware. Until and unless we motivate the people and make all the basic facilities available to them, fighting poverty is not going to be an easy task for the government alone.

Poor-rich-gap is a big social and economic issue in India. Most of the parties of the country put this burning topic on their political agenda but unfortunately, nothing substantial has yet been achieved. The gap between the two is on rise despite the facts that apart from government, there are several NGOs who are actively engaged for the betterment of a deprived section of the Indian society. The subject Economics explains the term 'poor' as a person who has less purchasing power whereas the rich with more purchasing power. Poor man cannot afford things of his choice which he thinks necessary. Thus, he is not able to change his life style. This gap can be in different forms in every walk of life most importantly the education sector which is the index of civility. Lagging behind in education is the marker of backwardness. After decades of independence, more than sixty percent of the population is still fighting for their basic needs. They are the people still ignorant of government policies. Since they are not educated, they become an easy catch in the hands of the corrupt. Be it a big city or a small village, exploitation of the poor is rampant across the country.

Demon of corruption is everywhere even within the government. Compilation of policies are there but at the level of implementation, government too has to face several uncertainties resulting into no achievements for the poor section of the people. Five year plans and strategically prepared welfare programs are there but the sting of corruption has spared no one. Schemes are implemented and executed with no satisfactory results.

At the level of higher education, a large section of poor people cannot afford the expenses. A big number of such categories have got no access to the type of jobs they are interested in. Hopeless and the hapless, they are out for another job in the labor market. Inflation is hampering their daily wages. Buying essential commodities from the market is not that easy for such daily wagers.

Failures and longevity of welfare programs are the main causes that the poor people are facing today. Political will of the ruling party is not that strong what it needs to be. As there is no such reasons why government initiatives are on hold and treated as secondary for the poor community.



69. India's Rural and Social Transformation

Abstract: The scenario of transition in rural society, especially in post-independence era suggests that the process of planned development has transformations in rural society. The changes in rural India have brought about a process of rapid social restructuration. It is leading to a breakdown in the segmented mode of social change. Socially, the green revolution has been basically a contribution of middle class peasantry who has had traditionally a strong attachment to land and agriculture as mode of life and livelihood. The Jats, Kurmis, Yadavas in North; the Patels and Patidars in Gujarat; the Kammas Reddis and Rajus in Andhra Pradesh have been the leaders of green revolution. The green revolution has led to the consolidation of the status of the middle peasantry as a dominant of class. But the rural poor too have got more organized. They too have now youthful leadership which deals with agencies of development, political parties and institutions of law and order. The upper caste-class groups which traditionally dominated have now been either replaced by the middle peasantry or have to compete with them to maintain their traditional status and power. The quality of the relationship between the middle caste peasantry and the lower castes has particularly declined and is marked by exploitation and violation. A situation is emerging in which the dominant classes do not take kindly to policies of protective discrimination and the weaker sections do not accept the legitimacy of such reform measures. The result is conflict and fewer consensuses on social issues. This happens when more and more mobility and development is taking place.

Rural transformation signifies major shift in rural formation. Rural transformation may be defined as process of transition which signifies a major shift in the entire rural formation. Transformation in rural context denotes the successive changing patterns conceived in rural set, in its structure, fact, form and character, both in positive and negative direction. In sociology, the concept of rural transformation has been interpreted as a concrete process of restructuration in society, conceived as rural. Yogendra Singh writes that the pace of social restructuration,

the emergence of new classes and decline of traditional cultural institutions exemplify the phenomenon of contemporary transformation in rural India. The scenario of transition in rural society, especially in post-independence era suggests that the process of planned development has transformations in rural society. The changes in rural India have brought about a process of rapid social restructuring. It is leading to a breakdown in the segmented mode of social change. It has resulted in rise of new middle class to power. There has been massive use of science and technology in agriculture. Substantial changes in values and beliefs are also taking place in rural India.

The green revolution signifies not merely growth in agricultural production but also the use of new technology and social relationship in production process. These developments make the new phase of changes in rural economy and society a distinct process. A new interaction among technology, social relationship and culture is now taking place in the rural society. This has resulted in social mobility, emergence of new power structure and mode of exploitation of the deprived classes. The major trends of rural transformation in post-independence era may be discussed as the transition of agrarian society from subsistence base to market based agrarian sector. Some other trends can be included as the introduction of modern technology and devices to transform the underdeveloped colonial agrarian economy into a well-knit compact one and its organic integration into the total national economy and the emergence of power blocks which try to work within Constitutional frame using a combination of protests through mass action, appeals to bureaucracy and courts and even lobbying in centers of power. There is a palpable state interventions in adopting different measures to strengthen certain communities, groups or classes on the one hand and weaken others, on the other. A very radical trend is the emergence of dominant group like neo-rich peasants, intermediary castes etc. and their tightened hold over avenues of political power.

Socially, the green revolution has been basically a contribution of middle class peasantry who have had traditionally a strong attachment to land and agriculture as mode of life and livelihood. The Jats, Kurmis, Yadavas in North; the Patels and Patidars in Gujarat; the Kammas Reddis and Rajus in Andhra Pradesh have been the leaders of green revolution. The green revolution has led to the consolidation of the status of the middle peasantry as a dominant of class. But the rural poor too

have got more organized. They too have now youthful leadership which deals with agencies of development, political parties and institutions of law and order. The upper caste-class groups which traditionally dominated have now been either replaced by the middle peasantry or have to compete with them to maintain their traditional status and power. The quality of the relationship between the middle caste peasantry and the lower castes has particularly declined and is marked by exploitation and violation.

The relationship of peasantry caste with the agricultural working classes, the lowest castes and the Hanjans is increasingly that of aggressiveness and antipathy. This is being reciprocated by the lower castes and working classes as well, leading to a sharp decline in the cultural ethos of rural society. A situation is emerging in which the dominant classes do not take kindly to policies of protective discrimination and the weaker sections do not accept the legitimacy of such reform measures. The result is conflict and fewer consensuses on social issues. This happens when more and more mobility and development is taking place. In this process, mixed blessings for society are seen in general. It indicates a remarkable process of restructuration and social mobility. It reflects the rise of an economic ethic which is productive and generates surpluses and capital accumulation. Various development, however, also coincide with negative social process.

A change in the value system and ideology of the people which promotes localism, caste system and communalism has taken place. This results into a conflict and exploitive relationship between the peasant classes and the rural poor. Thus, social changes also have brought about conflict and maladjustment in the structure of society.



70. Making of Telangana Issue

Abstract: Telangana the northern part of current Andhra Pradesh comprises of ten districts. Bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh is one of the most sensitive issues taken by the Central Government in the current decade. There can be two points of view that are allowing bifurcation and formation of Telangana and other having a United Andhra Pradesh. In reality, both of the views are right at their own behest. Recently, Government has passed the resolution for creation of Telangana. There is huge ambiguity associated with each of these view regarding which one is justified.

The state of Andhra Pradesh emerged as a result of merger of Andhra and Hyderabad State (Telangana being a part of Hyderabad state) in 1956. Along with it an assurance of safeguards was given to the people to Telangana through Gentleman's Agreement on in November, 1956. In the year 1969, the people of Telangana showed dissatisfaction with the government not honouring the Gentleman's Agreement. As a result agitations started in Andhra Pradesh for a demand of separate state of Telangana.

In 1973, political parties of Telangana, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalseema region and Central Government reached to a settlement through six-point formula which was legalized through 32nd amendment to the Constitution of India. The constitutional amendments and government's orders were violated. That gave birth to fresh demand of separate state of Telangana. This was supported by the opposition political party, the BJP. The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh was announced in 2009 but soon there were agitations from other parts of Andhra Pradesh to keep the state unified. The Central government decided to form Sri Krishna Committee asking it to present a report on issue.

This Committee in its report suggested six solutions to the problem. One: keeping the State united and providing for creation of a statutorily empowered Telangana Regional Council for socio-economic development and political development of Telangana region; two: bifurcation of the state of Andhra Pradesh into Seemandhra and Telengana regions with both of them develops their own capitals in due course of time and Hyderabad be converted to a Union Territory; *three*: bifurcation of the State into Telangana and Seemandhr as per existing boundaries with Hyderabad as the capital of Telangana and Seemandhra to have a new capital.

Based on the findings of Committee, the UPA II has opted for option *three* with Hyderabad as common capital. The suggestion of Srikrishna Committee that bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh is viable if it is unavoidable and the people of all three regions reach to amicable consensus has not been paid attention by UPA II. The Committee clearly indicated long standing history of demand of separate Telangana state because of dissatisfaction and widespread emotions over non fulfillment of promises of the government towards Telangana. It further said the issue cannot be resolved unless genuine steps should be taken to address the concern of the Telangana people. The UPA II government

went ahead with the bifurcation of the state without obtaining consensus of all regions of the state. Irrespective of the rejection from Andhra Pradesh assembly, the government went ahead with the formation of separate Telangana state. On 07th February, 2014 Union Cabinet passed Telangana bill with some amendments that was later tabled in the Parliament and was passed amidst intense agitation from the Andhra region legislatures. Although idea of being divided is not true paradigm of united nation but for the benefits of a community and upliftment of the people, it is considered to be propitious. The government should have organized a round table discussion with representatives of all regions.

The formation of Andhra Pradesh took place on 1st November 1956. A Gentleman agreement was made for special development of Telengana region that actually was the Nizam ruled Hyderabad state. Subsequently, the Gentleman accord was not abided by the successive governments of Andhra Pradesh. This led to huge resentment in the Telanagana region. After a series of agitations and after consuming large number of agitators, the union government finally decided to announce for the formation of Telanagana state in 2009. While this decision was welcomed by the people of the Telangana region it was disliked by the people of the Andhra region. They started fresh round of agitation against this decision. The central government constituted many committees to get into the context of the matter. All the committees submitted their report to the union government where they recommended some measures before bifurcating Andhra Pradesh.

Some recommendations of these reports were divulged to the public. Others did not come in the public domain at all. The central government failed to grasp the recommendations of the submitted reports. It went ahead with the formation of the Telengana state. However, it is felt that the Central government before taking decision on bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh should have done proper exercise for formation of Telangana state. The Union government should have formed a committee to look after the deprived regions of Andhra. The government should have taken step to announce a slew of measures to guarantee that no injustice will be done after bifurcation.

The government in principle should have accepted some relief measure such as tax holiday for certain period allowing industries to form in Andhra region and taking measures for developing irrigation, setting up infrastructure etc. The central government should have

constituted a committee taking into account the grievances of the people of Andhra region. The government should have given assurance to act for the development of the region expeditiously. It should have directed the planning commission to allocate some share of revenue for development of the region. The central government should also have cleared the projects so that the development of Andhra region takes place fast.

The formation of Telangana as the 29th state in India has taken the shape of reality amidst protest as the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Bill, 2014 has been passed by the 15th Lok Sabha. The formation of Telangana has been full of controversies. Indian National Congress (INC) has been accused by both the Seemandhara and the Telengana people. The Seemandhara region MPs blame the Congress for forming the Telengana state to win 17 seats in 2014 General Elections. The Telangana region MPs blame Congress for delaying the matter from past five years.

It is high time that no new states should be formed just for vote bank, administration purpose or in the name of development and progress. Development need not require the division of a state into smaller states. Dividing the state in the name of development recalls the example of the Partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon. The agitation against that decision in 1905 can be compared with the anger among the people of the Andhra region. The proper path for the Central government over Telangana should have been to focus on uniting the state rather than dividing it. It should not have divided Andhra Pradesh into Seemandhara and Telangana regions. Instead, it should have worked for the development of the people based on their needs. The formation of Telangana is going to have adverse effect on the tribal people who are living along the border of Seemandhara and Telangana. Telangana formation is going to displace more than 200,000 people. Relocation of the tribes might lead to their extinction as most of the tribes come under vulnerable range.

There had been protest from the tribal people of Khammam district that they want to be part of Telangana but have been shunted to Seemandhara region. According to the provisions in the Telangana Bill these tribal people should be relocated to East Godavari and West Godavari region which comes under Seemandhara region. Relocation means loss of livelihood and home which leads to discontentment and misery of the people.

The formation of Telangana will voice the formation of more new states in India such as Gondwana and division of Uttar Pradesh into five states. Further formation of new states means that the hard-work put forth by our forefathers to see a united India will go down the drain.

The political parties have been dividing the states for their political expediency which is completely baseless approach. It looks like “Divide and Rule” policy is back at work. It seems some people are dividing their own country for political gains and remain in power. All they want to do is to create separate electorates by dividing the states to come into power. At the time of independence there were only 16 states and 6 union territories. Now there are 29 states and 7 union territories. Where it should stop no one knows.

There should not be any further division of our country for administrative purposes or in the name of development and progress. We all should live in a unified India with its “unity in diversity.”

India is a federation of states with a strong emphasis on central character. Constitution makers believed that this will not only stop the individualism but also put check on the separatist tendencies. Therefore, they empowered center to take decisions about states, their welfares and their reorganization. Though center-state relations have been subject to debate and discussion, state legislatures have mostly obliged to the center’s decision. Article 3 of constitution empowers center to create, reorganize a new state provided such a bill has the concurrence of the state and has expressed the view in its favor. However, the article does not mention whether center is obliged to accept the amendments suggested by the concerning state.

So far whenever a new state had been formed, state assemblies had supported the Bill with some minor amendments. But in case of creation of Telangana, the state assembly not only opposed the Bill but actually rejected it.

This rejection becomes more important because in Andhra Pradesh the ruling party is same as that in center i.e Congress. This proves that not only there are concerns but also strong disapproval from the majority of people in the state. Discarding this vehement opposition from the state, the central government remained adamant on its decision of creating a new state. The demands of the people of Seemandhra to first resolve their concerns were put aside and the bill was passed. This not only invoked discussions but also had serious implications on the federal

structure of the country. The concerns of the Seemandhra people were not about moving a mountain, they only demanded to resolve a few normal things. But government seemed to be in such a hurry that it did not take into account any of their concern. The correct path should have been to resolve the concerns of the local people first. The benefactor should have been convinced about being benefitted. In this scenario, it was duty of the government to bring all the concerned parties on the same the platform. However it was not done.

An embarrassing situation emerged when no confidence motion was moved by the member of the ruling party in the state assembly. This put entire process in the background and it killed the basic purpose of creating a new state. The process of creating new state specially that of first linguistic state of the country should have been smooth. It should have taken into considerations the problem of businessmen, distribution of water etc of Seemandhra region.

If all these issues had been addressed, it could have won the faith of the local people. But the government bypassed all those necessary steps and passed the bill in order to take the credit for it in the upcoming elections. Had the bill been discussed in the Andhra Pradesh assembly first, had government tried to explain the pros of creating new state, had it discussed the issues with the Seemandhra people, all those problems could have been minimized.

The purpose of fifth constitutional amendment was to make the process of creating a new state smooth and not to take any decision on behalf of the states. However, nothing of that sort happened in case of the creation of Telengana state. Here one important thing needs to be noted. If the discussions and talks and proper meetings between different political parties, concerned people and different agencies had been taken place, all these problems could have been sorted out. Also government could have won the faith of people not only in affected state; but also from all over India. Whenever a state is created on recommendation of state reorganization committee, it involves a lot of discussions, meetings and back and forth communication. There is no use of doing something if many dislike it to happen.

We can understand this ambiguity by considering both cases. Let us consider the reason and necessity for creation of Telangana. It is often said that managing something large is difficult than managing something small. It is basically, Andhra Pradesh being bigger state it is

difficult to manage so instead divide and manage and thereby address problems of people in an efficient way. This was the main reason behind the creation of Jharkhand and Utrakhand. Telangana region generates 45% of the total state income and during allocation and utilisation of funds Telangana receives mere 28%.

Telangana region is backward compared to several districts of successor state SeemaAndhra. Further the major rivers the Krishna and Tungabhadra enter Andhra Pradesh through Mahaboobnagar of Telangana region. Despite of that the region remains worst hit by drought due to various pending projects as most of the water is allowed to flow for irrigation of farmlands in SeemaAndhra region. Apart from these reasons there exists a considerable cultural difference. These are just the few reasons why it was inevitable for formation of Telangana state.

Now let us understand why having United Andhra Pradesh was essential. First reason is that there is a greater conflict over authority of Hyderabad. Hyderabad being the cosmopolitan and IT hub it is the major driver of economy of Andhra Pradesh. Now consider that we have Hyderabad as a part of Telangana so in the SeemaAndhra region there is need to rebuild the IT infrastructure since that being the major source of income for the state. But recent recession and slowdown has already saturated the IT industry. There is no much scope for developing IT facilities as surely industry and corporate would not move out of Hyderabad. This becomes a hindrance for the development of Seema Andhra region. But in reality bifurcation of state further raises the question, is it worth? Creation of newer state means replication of existing institutions, Government assembly, headquarters, high courts and many others, so instead why not use this special package for development of backward regions in Telangana and carry out new projects, rather than merely replicating the institutes and hurting the already recession prone economy.

Both of these viewpoints make sense and appear to be justifiable but in reality only one is possible. It is understandable fact that choosing one is like hurting other. The Government can follow the middle path instead of moving on biases and prejudices. Instead Government should have delayed the process of creation till the completion of 2014 elections and then should have conducted state wide debate to analyse about how the bifurcation could have its implications on the life of people of

both regions. By choosing the middle path it would have been possible for government to agree demands of one side and solve the objections raised by other. The final decision should have been taken on the basis of the fact whether it leads to the benefit of majority, since federal democratic units are for betterment of the people.

Rather than having bifurcation why not make the region of Telangana autonomous with greater subsidies and have its development under the watch of Central Government wherein fair share of resources would be shared by both the regions for their development. This is essential because, there is a saying that “United we are strong, divided we fall”. The same quote applies for our Indian democracy; this bifurcation will lead to or trigger a wave of division of states throughout the country from Purvanchal in Uttar Pradesh, Gorkhland in east, Vidharbha in Maharashtra to Bodoland in Northeast. If this happens no soon India will have US number of states.



71. Opinion and Exit Poll: Necessary or Not?

Abstract: An opinion poll is a survey of public opinion from a sample of population about any issue. It is useful in many ways. In many cases, these are used to capture the public mood about an issue in discussion. An Exit poll, which is the poll of voters, on whom they have voted for, right after exercising their suffrage, is better in the context of reliability. It has no bearing on the outcome of the election results, where as opinion poll does make a difference. Opinion polls are often used for capturing the mood of the people of the electorate before an election. Although the opinion polls give a theoretical estimate of the favorability of the people. It is only a statistical estimate of favorability from a data sample collected from a proportionate amount of people. An opinion poll helps a person to know the views of others. An opinion poll helps the contestants to better their manifestos, introduce new ideas and project themselves better. It has negative points as well. A ban on opinion polls infringes the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the Article 19(1) of the constitution. As many polls during the 2004 general elections predicted the return of NDA government but the UPA came to power. Also, many opinion polls predicted only a few seats for the AAP in Delhi elections 2013, but it made a fabulous debut. An opinion poll is an essential tool for the people of an electorate to decide on a candidate's suitability. They should not be banned but restricted to recognized pollsters only. On the other hand the exit polls which just show a real time update of an election can be kept with the existing restrictions.

Opinion Poll is an inquiry into public opinion conducted by interviewing on random sample of people before actual Election Day and it includes all people who may or may not vote. On the contrary, Exit poll is taken of a sample of voters leaving the polling booth who have actually cast their votes. Their verdict is definite and indicates the final results and can be used to predict the outcome of an election. While exit poll has no bearing on election results, the opinion poll do influence the election and as a result, some political parties are not in favour of opinion poll.

If not adulterated, opinion polls are useful in many ways. Now a days people are educated and they know very well the importance of a good political system. Every party tries to woo people by their campaigns and promise to fulfill their dream if voted to power. People look at these campaigns carefully and select candidates whom they think has capability to fulfill their aspirations. However, there are some people who are unable to decide right candidates and they are influenced by opinion poll. Opinion poll is a reaction taken from people who are very sure about their choice of candidate. So opinion poll helps those people who are undecided about their choice of candidates. In this sense opinion polls are not only useful but also helpful in increasing voting percentage.

Recently Congress party had reported to the Election Commission to ban opinion polls but the BJP was not in favour of such ban. Congress had earlier supported opinion poll but this time it was in favour of ban. The simple reason is opinion poll did not predict its win. Whereas the BJP supported opinion poll because it predicted the results in its favour. Nevertheless, many a times it has been found that the predictions and the actual results were completely different. For example, in the 2004 General Elections, opinion polls predicted that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would again come to power. However, in reality, the Congress formed the government. Even in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh state elections, not a single opinion poll predicted that the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) would form a government. But Mayawati came to power proving all predictions wrong. We cannot ignore the fact that to predict election results of such a massive and diverse country on basis of some samples is very difficult, but nonetheless it's a scientific principle to know the trend and the mood of the voters.

The criticism about the opinion poll is always about the framing of the questions and the methodology used to collect the opinion. In

fact, the exact wordings of questions and the series of question have its importance. Similarly, the method of getting the answers, whether it was through a phone call (selected or random), e-mail, web based-survey or personal visit, is also important. The sample group, its demographic behaviour, its economic status and various other factors also make a great difference in tabulating the opinion. It is also possible that parties can bribe opinion pollsters to show them as a winning party and can influence voters. In spite of such criticism, opinion polls are necessary as they are useful in deciding the most favoured party before the elections, provided if they are conducted with full honesty. Also it helps undecided voters to decide the right candidate. In fact many people do not care about opinion poll results at all. They select their candidate using their own wisdom and sometime also keep opinion poll results in mind. Therefore, banning of opinion poll is not a good idea in a democratic country like ours. Even having restrictions on it is undesirable.

One can clearly see from the definition of the term 'opinion poll' that polls project what voters are thinking and what their mandate will be. It doesn't direct the voters to go for the majority view or to neglect the minority.

The second most argued point is that opinion polls lead to the 'tactical voting' i.e. planned voting. However, tactical voting is not a negative voting. According to Rajni Kothari, a well known political scientist, India has witnessed the dominance of one party system due to lack of credible opposition and this imbalance can be rectified through tactical voting. Further opinion polls are accused of being manipulated and sometimes being wrong. One agrees that it can be manipulated by arranging favourable questions and samples of the survey but voters are the ultimate and the most important part of such poll. What voters think will be reflected in some or the other way. The false and manipulated polls will soon lose their credibility.

Opinion poll is the product of scientific research. Being a scientific process, whenever polls are wrong that's because of the data or its misinterpretation. Such errors can be easily rectified once they are detected. It is also argued that in India elections are held in phases and on different dates. So prediction of the early stages of the election will affect the voting at the later stages. Also predicting the public mandate can affect the moral of the cadres of the political parties. But one should remember that it is not the duty of the media to keep the moral of the

party cadres high. Media is accountable to the people not to the political parties. If that is the case, then speeches of political leaders affect the moral of the opposition's cadre, will they be banned too?

Indian constitution has guaranteed every Indian citizen the freedom of speech and expression through article 19.A. Ban on the opinion polls will certainly curtail this right. So no argument against opinion polls holds any moral ground. In a country like ours, opinion polls and exit polls are much needed to enrich our healthy democracy.

Opinion polls exhibit the feeling and sentiments of the public towards the ruling party's and other options available for the people. It bridges the gap among the trio- what the incumbent party promised, what it has actually delivered and what the other options have to offer. If taken optimistically, the party which is at the dismay at the polls' results can actually analyze what is going wrong and what preventive measures it can take. At the same time, exit polls show the drawing or redrawing the current political map that is likely to take place.

After the 2013 assembly elections, when the results of exit polls and the actual results were tallied, it showed how various agencies predicted near correct results on the basis of their small sample. These general trends can actually serve as corrective measures for the "not so lucky" parties to tackle the areas which lead to their defeat. But instead of doing so, they indulge in debating whether these polls should continue or not.

Today's media has far reaching impact than that of earlier whether it be print media, news channels or the news in the headlines or the social media.

The opinion poll demonstrates which policies are being liked by the general public, what more expectations they possess, what they demand from the government and the issues over which they can form their opinion. These polls can serve as an interactive platform between the voters and the various parties. If taken in the positive sense, it can assist the parties in molding their policies towards a welfare state which is the only requirement of the public.

Some times polls conducted by these media are often accused of distorting the true picture. In order to show the actual picture, these polls should be completely unbiased, sample size should be representative so as to serve the actual purpose. Representing only a section of society or community can ultimately result in distorting the picture defeating the purpose of these polls.

In a country like ours where the population is in Billions one cannot comprehend the mood of the election without devices such as opinion polls. Considering the latest example of Delhi election, one can give a thought about how things would have changed if pollster had not predicted that AAP will also be a force in the election.

What if the opinion poll result created a sense of confidence among voters that others are also voting for the same party? Of course overtime it has been quite clearly proven empirically that bandwagon effect (backing of dominant candidate) prevails over the underdog effect (underdog gets sympathy vote). So opinion polls might reduce the occurrence of a hung assembly which usually results in inefficient governance.

The argument by those insisting on ban on opinion polls is that they are inaccurate. On certain occasions this has been true. Classical examples include 2004 loksabha election and UP assembly elections. There are indications that social media content (twitter, FB) is used for predicting voting patterns. The major defect with this approach is that it includes the sample population having access to internet, computers, and smart phones. It does not include voters without access to twitter or FB. However if the regular prediction models are coupled with these new models we might have more accurate predictions based on which the voter can decide smartly.

Another reason which gives negative idea about these opinion polls is that it can be biased. The media as it has been proven many times can be prejudiced or sometimes even bought for money or other favors. There has to be some regulation under which these polls have to scrutinize but enforcing a ban will not be ideal. It is illegal to have opinion polls in Bulgaria but the media gives out ranking of the most popular street of a candidate or a party thereby predicting the result as well as not breaking the law. Political mileage can be obtained if an opinion poll is backing the party. It's only the indoor type politicians who are worried about the opinion poll's results, the serious politicians know that it requires a lot of hard work to win an election. It is also to be noted that due to by election commission's restriction in holding political rallies that such tools like opinion polls have gained significance.

Now considering exit polls, there is nothing much to worry about it. EC has a ban on exit polls until 48 hours of the last hour of voting. It is more to satisfy the curiosity of the voter and the political parties

rather than influence a voter. The same reasons exist for inaccuracy of the exit polls. Inappropriate and irrelevant sample sizes, not considering the demography of the constituency exactly and a basic 3% error when extrapolated to a larger population are the reasons why they have failed previously.

Like all the improvements happening in science and technology, psephology is also undergoing improvements. Errors are inevitable but the margin of error is decreasing over the period of time. Certain regulations have to be enforced to make these polls unbiased but a ban on them is definitely not the solution. Opinion poll provides an opportunity for the voters to cast the vote intelligently rather than follow some blind way that has been prevailing all these years.

Opinion polls are opinion collected from the group of people before the main elections are to be held. Sometimes opinion poll gives different opinion which misleads people.

Media plays a crucial role in this, media houses conducts the opinion poll by framing the question in not proper manner and the methodology used to collect the opinion may also not be correct. It is because of these reasons many political parties have given a written letter to election commission seeking a ban on opinion polls.

If the opinion polls are not banned then the election commission should ensure free and fair opinion polls. The political party wants transparency and a proper set of guidelines and procedure all the data collected by media conducting opinion poll and this should be checked some authority to ensure fairness of such results.

In case of Exit Polls they are conducted after the election is over by taking the views of the people coming out from polling booths. Their statement is extrapolated to predict the result about who is going to power. In number of previously conducted elections such exit polls has also proved to be wrong.

Therefore opinion polls and exit polls should be banned in upcoming years as it does not affect much in elections process of India.



72. Food Security Bill

Abstract: Food security law, an issue which has come to tickle every mind of this nation as food security Bill has been passed by the Parliament. This Bill is seen as a

major step by government to fulfill its commitment to achieve Millennium Development Programme envisaged by the UNO. It also helps India in improving its global hunger index and inclusive growth strategy implementation. This Bill proposes numerous points which aim at providing guarantee meal to every individual in this nation. The main aspects of this Bill are food entitlements for 75 percent of rural population and 50 percent of urban population, reforms to the targeted public distribution system, meal entitlement for specific group of society which includes malnourished children, pregnant women, starving people, children below the age of 14 years etc.

We are working a lot for poor; we have brought in Right to Work, Right to Education and Right to Food for the poor. Is this the right moment to be proud of? Poverty on the one side and celebrating the 67th Independence Day on the other, we hold our head high but we failed to fight poverty. India has the highest number of poor people proportionate to her population among the BRICS nations. The number is the highest in terms of malnutrition and child mortality. There was never an introspection why there is poverty in India. If the government really wants to do anything for the poor then it must find the reason of that and provide a permanent solution.

According to recently passed most awaited food security Bill, the people below poverty line in village and not in city will be benefitted. They will be able to save money because they will get food at a very low price and that money can be spent on medical and education. But is this a reality? As per international standards, a person needs 14 kilos of cereals a month. According to a survey conducted by the NSSO, we find that the poorest people in rural areas needs at least 9.88 kilos of food grains a month but the government is providing 7 kg whereas only 50% of urban population will be provided food grains. What about the rest of the people?

The minimum support price must be revised every three years for the farmers. Will the price of diesel not increase in three years? Is there a guarantee that the farmers will have the right price for their produce and their land will be protected? The government should bring in amendments that ensure that every grain produced by the farmers will be bought by the government.

This highly subsidized Bill will not only increase the fiscal deficit but put pressure on the government to keep the MSP as low as possible. If the government is forced to import foodgrains because of a bad

agriculture year, the Bill will be unmanageable. The country's finances will go for a toss and the farmers will suffer the most. If the Centre is taking credit for the Bill, it should also bear the expenditure. It is incorrect where the states spend the money and the Centre takes the credit. It is also sad that the Bill will not give universal coverage. And if this Bill was pending for a long time then why was it passed just before the Elections? Any way, the Bill is a hasty measure to increase the Governments' political bargaining power.

Emphasising about the biggest programme in the world to fight hunger, the monsoon session of the parliament passed the food security Bill after a long debate. Though, this Bill is facing strong criticism, the government has successfully passed the Bill with a view to eradicate hunger of the poor.

The Bill benefits 67% of the total 1.2 billion people. It ensures the BPL (Below Poverty Level) category of people to have rice for 3 rupees, wheat for 2 rupees and other coarse grain for 1 rupee. Besides the subsidies, the Bill also ensures healthy food for the women and the children below 14 years of age. A pregnant woman or a lactating mother is eligible to get free meals under this scheme. They are also eligible to have a maternity benefit of ₹ 6000 for the next 6 months after the child Birth.

By closely examining the salient features of the scheme, it clearly indicates that the Bill focuses on providing food to the hungry poor. Being a centrally sponsored scheme, the central government is totally responsible for the smooth functioning of this scheme. Currently the allocation of the grains in different states is under the arms of the central government. Also in case of the shortage of the food grains the central government will issue funds to the state government for managing the crisis. It means if a family doesn't get subsidy, the family is eligible for getting a monthly allowance accordingly.

Due to the wide perspective of the Bill, it has gained good public attention as it is a scheme with a focus on the hungry poor and thereby gradually exterminates the poverty in the country.

On the stage of passing the Bill in the Parliament, the opposition came forward with several accusations. They claimed that the farmers won't get any benefits. The opposition reiterates its claim for taking up this Bill when it was in power at the centre. Chattisgarh is the one to implement this scheme. But the ruling party kept aside all the allegations and explained the benefits of the scheme. At the time of

discussion on the Bill, contradictions were plenty. Virtually, the UPA government got it passed amidst heavy contradictions and allegations. It is indeed a milestone achievement for the government.

The other side of the story about the Bill as raised by the opposition is that the Bill is an anti-hunger action plan. If it had been launched into action before a couple of years back, it would have changed the scenario of our country entirely. If the hunger of the poor is completely eliminated, it will lead our country to a much better situation economically and globally.

The country had to import rice and wheat from US to satisfy the food grains need of her people. With advent of green revolution (1964) a package of hybrid variety seeds fertilizers assured irrigation modern machineries turned India as self sufficient nation in food supply. The government already offers food through various schemes such as food for work mid day meals for children and antyodaya anna yojana for poorest of poor.

The food security Bill is major achievement of the UPA government, which tries to subsidized food grains to vulnerable section of society. The Bill aims at providing rice at Rs 3/kg wheat at Rs 2/kg and millets at Rs 1/kg. Each member of family is entitled to get 5kg of grains. However the government is not providing oil and pulses at subsidized rates.

As majority of people in India are poor so such scheme is necessary for their food security. The scheme shall be beneficial for people in forests and hilly tracts, where the problem of naxalism persists. Once these people are fed properly majority of internal disturbances can be minimized.

This scheme is highly successful in Tamil Nadu, Kerala Andhra Pradesh. In the state of Chattisgarh it is able to provide 90% food security to the people. It is popularly called Chattisgarh model. The government provides food grains to its people through public distribution system.

However, in order to provide food to the people the government has to bear the burden of additional subsidy of Rs.1.20 lakh Cr which is equal to 1% of the GDP. The burden can be overcome by encouraging exports of agricultural products like tea, coffee, cotton, milk products etc. This would enhance our foreign exchange earning capacity. Employment opportunities should be generated in agriculture and industrial sectors. Household savings should be invested in industries.

Finally, the food security Bill may not be considered as poll gimmick but should be seen as anti hunger action plan. There is only one thing in world in which we say is must for all and that is food, lets offer this to our fellow human beings.

The National Food Security Bill, 2013 was passed and ratified by both the houses of the parliament. The Bill envisages ensuring food security to 67% of the Indian population, excluding 50% in urban area and 25% in rural areas. The Bill divides the whole Indians into three categories: the Anna Antyodaya Yojana Households who will continue to get 35kg of food grains under the present scheme also, the priority households entitled to 5kg of rice, wheat and cereals at Rs.5,3 and 2/- respectively or 25kg for an average family of five and the exclusionary households without any benefits.

The clamor to universalize the scheme was on the premise of past hindsight where the much intended beneficiaries got excluded from the scheme due to large scale corruption and aberration in delineating the beneficiary groups. The entitlements on a per capita basis rather than on per family household basis will strike the families with less than 5 persons hard. Also the Bill is in clear violation of a Supreme Court judgment to give not less than 35kg a month to all the Below poverty Line (BPL) households and the ruling of Indian Council for Medical Research prescribing not less than 14kg a month to an adult and 7kg a month to a child.

The Bill does not include any nutritional standards thereby avoiding nutrient groups like pulses, vegetables, fruits etc. The lack of mention of community kitchens, free meals to the destitute etc is highly conspicuous. The Bill has also been earmarked 'anti-farmer' as the State procures the food grains from the farmers directly on such a large scale which excludes them from other private markets where they could get a higher price for their produce.

The Minimum Support Price provided to the farmers though will help them in times of distress like during drought, floods etc, it would have adverse ramifications at normal times of produce. Also the excluded category is though less in percentage terms it would actually amount to lakhs in absolute numbers. The current environ in the cities shows us that a large population living in the cities are unemployed and even if employed are in the unorganized sector. About half of the population being excluded in urban areas has left the 'urban-poor' in consternation.

Social security to the citizens of a highly lauded democratic nation like ours cannot be calculated in mere monetary terms. The subsidies for ensuring food security should be considered supremely inevitable and the surplus would just have to be balanced somewhere like implying cuts in humongous import subsidies bequeathed for oil, gold etc.

The 12th Five Year Plan has also taken steps to identify the beneficiaries of various schemes specific to each scheme. The Social and Economic Caste Census (SECC) is an integral part of this objective. The SECC expected to submit its report by April 2014 discerns poverty as a multidimensional factor rather than on consumption expenditure terms alone. It measures the various facets of poverty in terms of deprivations like lack of a pucca house, identifying physically disabled persons etc.

In addition nutritional poverty can be identified from the results of National Family Health Survey. With the help of all these, an effective list of the beneficiaries can be conclusively derived and the effective implementation of the scheme with acute cooperation between the Centre and the States is sure to make the program a flagship program in the country.



73. Land Acquisition Bill - Boon or Bane?

Abstract: Land acquisition and compensation is always a highly contentious and emotional issue between the landowner and the acquiring authority. Land acquisition is defined as the forcible acquisition of land from an unwilling seller and is different from purchase by a willing seller. As 60% of the population depends on agriculture so land is supposed to be the precious natural gift to the people of this nation. But in recent period cases of public unrest at many places such as Singur (West Bengal), Yamuna expressway, Noida (Uttar Pradesh) has aggravated the problem related to the land acquisition. The Land Acquisition Bill 2013 is considered to be the part of the restructuring of more than a century old weak, ineffective and draconian land acquisition Bill of 1894.

Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2013 was recently passed by the Parliament. Which came into force from 1st January 2014. The Bill has provisions to provide fair compensation to those whose land is acquired by public or private sector. There are advantages and

disadvantages of the Bill. It brings transparency to the process of acquisition of land to set up factories or buildings, infrastructural projects and assures rehabilitation of those affected. This legislation will benefit both industry and those whose livelihood is dependent on land. It provides two times more compensation in urban areas and four times more compensation in rural areas than the circle price. The circle rates are decided by the local government on the basis of average sale price for the last 3 years or last 3 months whichever is higher. The Bill establishes regulations for land acquisition as a part of India's massive industrialization drive driven by public-private partnership. It will be central legislation in India for the rehabilitation and resettlement of families affected by land acquisitions. In addition the Bill has a provision by which states can add some more benefits to it.

The Bill will eclipse the eminent domain criteria and introduce voting criteria in which 80% of the people should say yes only then land will be acquired. It will replace the decade old Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which was enacted during British rule. However there is still some confusion whether the Bill is boon or a bane. Many people say it is a boon, others say that it is just a move to increase the vote bank in the forthcoming elections.

The Industry has serious concerns on some of the provisions of the Land Acquisition Bill. The CII say that the cost of land acquisition will be increased by three times thus making the forthcoming projects unviable. In addition, the CII notes that the Bill would lead to major delays in the process of Land acquisition. The clause of obtaining consent of 80 percent of affected families for private sector and 70 percent of affected families for Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects would make the process of obtaining consent a very long drawn out process. The Bill talks of an urgency clause which means that government can acquire a land it wants by ignoring all the pre-set conditions. The Resettlement and Rehabilitation clause gives no guarantee to jobs.

The Bill compensates different categories of affected families at par, not aligned to their losses. So there could be cases where compensation calculated is lower than the market rate. State is the ultimate decision maker when it comes to acquiring farm land. The Bill does not guarantee return of unused land if land owner repays compensation to the state. In addition, the government has exempted some clauses and act from the Bill. They can acquire land under these acts without any voting as these are exempted sectors. Some of the sectors are: railways,

highways, defence, nuclear projects, low cost housing and Industrial area or parks.

Besides these, the land acquisition has been placed under state list. States will decide now whether to improve the Bill or follow the existing norms. Looking at all these facts, the Bill has brought more disadvantages with it rather than the advantages. The Bill is said to be the base for “Right to Fair Compensation,” it means wellbeing of the people whose lands are acquired. Now the question is whether the Bill has benefitted the people. Seeing all the disadvantages, the answer is a NO. The question for acquiring land for some public use is a pettifog issue having social, economic, and political repercussions. Right from the British period this issue has created a commotion among those who are the land owners. Even more than sixty percent of our population is dependent on agriculture, only 25 percent of our total GDP comes from agriculture. If our country needs to grow steadily, the bulk of its growth has to come from non agriculture sector such as manufacturing and services. This in turn needs agricultural land for its infrastructure development.

In order to cater to this the concept of Special Economic Zones have created but it has become the area for fierce dispute. We have witnessed flare-ups like Nandigram, Singur, Kalinga Nagar, Yamuna Expressways and Noida as cases for such dispute. There is huge controversy over the land acquisition. The result is a number of large infrastructure projects are at a standstill because of delays in acquiring land.

Recent studies by ASSOCHAM shows that delays in land acquisition is threatening to endanger investments in near term and this will create negative impact on economy growth, job opportunities and tax collection.

Compulsory land acquisition, a consequence of urbanization and large scale public infrastructure development, was governed by the land acquisition act 1894, a 120 year old lopsided legislation. The government now has drastically changed its provision by passing ‘The Right to Fair, Compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition Bill 2013. The Bill is said to have features like compensation for the owners four times the market value in rural areas and twice in case of urban areas. Also consent of 80% of displaced people is required in case of private or public sector that acquires the land. These features appear to be alluring bait for the beneficiaries. But along with these beautiful

jazz, there are some snooty facts too associated with the Bill. The provisions of the Bill shall not apply to acquisitions under 16 existing legislations including SEZs.

It is not clear whether the Parliament has jurisdiction to impose rehabilitation and resettlement on private purchase of agricultural land, no consent of people required in case of PSUs, the government can temporarily acquire the land for three years and there is no provision for rehabilitation and resettlement in such cases.

Nonetheless the Bill is definitely a much advanced and fairer replacement to the draconian Land Acquisition Act of 1894, but until and unless the idea is properly implemented it cannot give positive results. Undoubtedly evolving of a law of such nature is a complex process and given that the affected people are the disadvantaged segment of the society, it carries huge social and economic responsibilities. More importantly it provides them a say in the process which was lacking, but it has been rightly said that don't count your chickens before they hatch. Therefore, one will have to wait and watch over a period of time to understand the Bill whether it really offers what it promises- a harbinger of fast track infrastructure development, or it's just beating round the bush, related to gain electoral advantage to the government in power.

Sounding optimistic, one hope that the Bill may provide a legal framework for land acquisition which will lead to fast tracking of the laggardly industrial infrastructure development.



74. Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Abstract: Sexual harassment is the expression of male power over women and is closely connected to male attitudes about the "proper" role of a MAN in the society. The perception of men about masculinity is being a good provider of his family which is strong. Therefore, the feminist drive for economic equality is seen as a threat to their traditional role and thus takes the form of sexual harassment, may be a tool of self-protection. Lewd remarks, touching, wolf-whistles, looks are now part of any woman's life, so much so that it is dismissed as normal. Tolerance at first instance may be taken as acceptance and that may lead to further harassment. Women have accepted themselves as universal victim of such acts and are hesitant to take any action against it because of apprehension of being ridiculed. Thus, combating sexual

harassment involves developing understanding of what is sexual harassment and change of attitudes in all, be it employees, colleagues, friends, administrators, employers or the law makers. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redresses) Act, 2013 has widened the definition of sexual harassment and its victims. Moreover, the Act of 2013 is more centered on complaint redresses mechanism rather than prevention of such act whereas the major hurdle in combating with this evil is that majority of incidents are not reported. It is very clear that just black and white letters are not enough to provide a safer environment for women at workplace.

In India the concern of sexual harassment of women at work place is increasing. Every other day instance of sexual harassment pops up. It is good from one point of view that now more and more instances are being reported so that the issue can be understood with depth. Such instances were taking place before but were not reported. In India the issue is not being treated with gender neutrality and according to the law only a woman can be subjected to sexual harassment. There is a growing consensus among the HR departments of leading firms world over, which deal with the issue more often that even males are being subjected to such harassment by other females or male colleagues. Hence the issue is not limited to the fairer sex.

It is very important to understand what sexual harassment legally means in India. In the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013 it is defined as “unwelcome sexual gesture or behaviour whether directly or indirectly, sexually coloured remarks, physical contact and advances, showing pornography, a demand or request for sexual favours, any other physical, verbal/nonverbal conduct being sexual in nature and passing offensive and unacceptable remarks.”

The issue of sexual harassment of women at workplace came into major limelight due to Bhavari Devi Case of 1992. The incident unfolded the traumatic condition through which one woman has to pass even after being subjected to a heinous crime of rape. The poor functioning and passive attitude of the state machineries in handling the issue was exposed. This resulted into issuance of Vishakha Guidelines in a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court of India in 1997 which has to be adhered to, until legislation is passed in the assembly regarding the issue.

It was good on the part of the SC to issue guidelines because it took another 15 years for passing legislation on 23rd April 2013 and

that too due to public outrage after Delhi Gang Rape of December 2012.

The issue of sexual harassment is really complex due to role of various elements such as society, psychology, job security and career comes into play. Professionals handle work in teams which consists of both the sexes. They work together and travel together for the work. This creates intimacy but at times the limit is crossed. Tolerance at the first instance may be taken as acceptance which may lead to further harassment.

Today women have reached the board rooms from kitchens. They are taking up leadership roles at all levels. At times this might be posing challenge to the role of males who traditionally haven't work under the females and hence are reluctant to accept their control and dominance. Politics at workplace in the form of bullying, job insecurity and frustration aids the issue. Personal problems can also be a factor, and sexual harassment can be a symptom of the effects of life traumas such as divorce, or death of a spouse or child.

Another fear in the minds of women is that she wouldn't be heard on the issue or no concrete steps would be taken. Either she tries to get herself transferred or leaves the job instead of being vocal. The reason for this is even after Vishakha Guidelines and Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act the Government as well as private organizations hasn't been proactive to form Sexual Harassment committees as per the instructions.

Department of Women and Child Welfare should look in this regard and assure that there is adequate women representation in the committee as per norms. In brief the employer should be made responsible for providing a safe working atmosphere for women by taking preventive measure. The preventive measures can be through (1) spreading awareness regarding the legal provisions and its penal consequence through training (2) display of such law through posters at the workplace (3) framing their own sexual abuse policy which will also show their commitment for the cause (4) impartial mechanism for the redressed of the issue.

As mentioned earlier that there is a growing consensus about the male sexual harassment. Males are less vocal since their masculinity and gender orientation would be questioned in the society. Legislators and judiciary should be proactive in this regard also even though the problem is in the budding stage instead of taking curative measure after any incidence.

Indian women are making their imprint as the most influential women in the Forbes list, but on the other hand some are facing harassment at their workplace. This paradox has come to limelight with such profile cases such as former Supreme Court Judge A. K. Ganugly and Tehelka Managing director Tarun Tejpal.

Well the fundamental rights in our Constitution enshrined under articles 14 to 21 prohibit any sort of discrimination on account of sex, but the real picture is quite different. This is due to our patriarchal society that prefers men over women.

Women should be given confidence of being heard if such incidents take place. The formation of an independent Women Forum in every organization may be helpful in handling such cases. Same way, the so called masked faces in the organizations should be cautioned of severe consequences if they resort to any unethical and immoral practices. An ethical code of conduct should be a part and parcel of every organization. The implementation of it should be done in letter and spirit. This should be on the lines of the legal rules framed for the security of women by the Government.

The problem of sexual harassment in work place is increasingly coming out of the closet. The case of Tarun Tejpal, managing editor of the news magazine Tehalka is a case in point. This particular case has brought this issue on the center stage as more victims are gathering courage to complain such offences. After Tarun Tejpal's case a public debate is raging in the country how to control such incidents in future. This is because the sexual dimension of such cases having implications on personal, psychological, moral and marital status of an individual is a vital social issue.

Sexual harassment occurs in the workplace due to unwelcome, unwanted, uninvited, action or behaviour of a person that causes discomfort, humiliation, offence or distress to the other. Majority of such cases are directed towards woman by men working at high position in an organization.

Women are vulnerable to sexual harassment because they more often lack power and often work in insecure positions. Due to the fear factor women often resign to their fate rather than raise their voice against sexual harassment. Since they do not know where to go for complain and how their complaints would be treated, they often keep quit and suffer in ignominy.

Every organization should have an effective employment policy that should ensure well planned career paths based on merit to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and harassment by those who abuse their power and authority. There should be awareness among the staff members about sexual harassment and the consequences they may face if they indulge in such an act. They should know their social responsibilities to prevent such incident in their organization. The staff member subjected to sexual harassment must first complain to the committee members constituted for such purposes in the organization, before going to the police.

Every time the government or the society cannot protect women, so they should be made independent to handle acts of sexual harassment. A safety kit for women should be made available which should include basic safety tools including pepper spray, knife, etc., so that they can take a swift action to protect themselves. Basic self-defense training should be provided to women for free. The laws should be made more rigid regarding sexual harassment crimes. Sexual harassment is a crime and a strong approach should be followed to make workplaces safe for women. Our founding father had only one dream to establish an egalitarian state where rule of law prevails and dignity of every citizen irrespective of sex, caste, race, religion and place of birth would be secured.

The awareness about sexual harassment should be brought by teaching moral science and educating the students about respecting each other and not harassing the girls. As it is very easy to teach children about harassment and it will be beneficial for the society. The overall assessment is that sexual harassment in a work place is a social human crime. This is a gender neutral crime. This needs to be addressed because being sexually harassed, is an assault on the existence of a human being. Therefore everyone should fight and try to eradicate this malaise from its workplace and even outside it for the sake of developing a civilized society.



75. India's Mars Mission

Abstract: Accomplishing a new milestone into space technology, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched India's first mission to Mars.

This is India's first inter-planetary expedition which aims to substantiate India's capability to reach the Red Planet. The presence of methane on the Mars is an indicator of life on the planet. This is a challenging Mission. The navigation will explore space communication as well as study the Martian atmosphere and its surface features, though the Mission has been dubbed as 'unnecessary' and 'superfluous' by the world media. This mission is beyond doubt a momentous and remarkable achievement in our country's space program. It aims to take on a complete and comprehensive study of the physical features such as the internal structure, surface geology, climate and atmosphere of the Red Planet. It has always been a matter of great speculation whether Mars has the capability to sustain life. The mission aims to expand human understanding of Mars and to probably divulge new facts and figures in relation to the possibility of life on this very important planet. Further this mission will act as a morale booster for ISRO to come up with more of such technologies and cognitive ideas that will significantly contribute towards the advancement of India's space technology.

What India does has always been a subject of great interest and debate in the world. These debates always begin from a critical evaluation of India's multifaceted potential, and culminate in reprimanding our country's evolving prowess. India's *Mangalyaan* or Mars mission is an ambitious project that has been completely sidelined by the world media calling it unnecessary scientific experiment by a country that houses almost a third of the world's malnourished people. Contesting such school of thought, India's maiden Mars mission is a big scientific achievement that places our country amongst the exclusive elite in the space technology.

India is the sixth nation in the world to launch a mission to the red planet. This was done at very low cost. ISRO's reputation for austerity is aptly exemplified by the fact that Mangalyaan was developed recycling an existing spacecraft body design. Also, it is a commendable feat of ISRO that it has achieved a successful first flight launch mission to the Mars, at a price that would put other space agencies to shame. ISRO which has indigenously developed technologies to launch spacecraft in the past is fast becoming a space hub in the country and is likely to generate thousands of jobs for our engineers.

The Mars mission comes as a welcome relief to the country facing the problems of economic slowdown. It raises their moral and the common man feels proud at our scientific achievement. This ambitious mission has strengthened India's foothold in community of scientific nations. More enticing fact about this project is that the kids and

teenagers are getting lured to pursuing rocket science in their higher studies. This is a healthy sign for the development of scientific temper in the country.

The Mars mission aims to achieve utilitarian goals by digging deeper into the secrets of the red planet. The orbiter while making an effort towards sniffing traces of methane, would also measure relative abundance of hydrogen in its upper atmosphere, to introspect the history of water in this planet. The mission promises to generate useful engineering and scientific data that could be useful for further research. Those who say that India is struggling with problems of poverty and malnutrition, sanitation and hygiene should have kept away from taking giant leaps towards scientific fulfillment and should understand that our problems are not because of lack of expertise but due to incapacity to execute the right policies.

As a result the 450cr expenditure, incurred on ambitions mars mission should not become an excuse to downplay our capabilities and achievements. If critics say that it was an act of garnering international prestige then yes it is indeed our moment of pride, earned with self-reliance. We should not ridicule the great efforts of our scientists, who achieved this feat with little exposure and at with a minimum cost.

The red planet Mars has attracted the scientists all over the world in the recent past. It seems there is a global race going on to conquer the Mars. This is because planet earth is facing various issues challenging human life. So the mankind is in search of a new planet to make its new dwelling there. Among all the planets, Mars seems to resemble the earth most and there is great interest among the scientists to explore the possibilities of life there. So far 51 missions have been sent to the Mars out of which only 21 have succeeded. The US space agency NASA is exploring this planet since 1964. NASA and other agencies sent various missions to the Mars to investigate habitability, its climate and geology. The purpose of the all the Mars mission is to collect the data for an eventual manned mission to this very important planet. India has too joined the race to Mars. With the successful launch of its “Mangalayaan,” India has entered a new era in its space program to explore Mars.

“Mangalayaan” is India’s first interplanetary mission. It will revolve around the Mars and explores the presence of life there. The spacecraft consists of five scientific instruments to study various things around the red planet. Methane Sensor will explore methane which is an

indicator for life presence, and map its sources. *Lyman-Alpha Photometer (LAP)* will measure the hydrogen isotopes ratios deuterium/hydrogen. It will find out the water source and estimate the amount of water loss to outer space. *Thermal Infrared Imaging Spectrometer (TIS)* will measure temperature and emissivity of the surface composition and mineralogy of mars.

Mars Exospheric Neutral Composition Analyzer (MENCA) will analyze the neutral composition of particles in the Exosphere. *Mar's Color Camera (MCC)* will capture the Mars surface in the visual spectrum. Thus, India's primary objective of the Mars Orbiter Mission is to develop the technologies required for design, planning, management and operations of an interplanetary mission. It comprises a few important tasks like to design Mars orbiter with capability to perform earth-bound maneuvers, cruise phase of 300 days, Mars orbit insertion/ capture and on orbit phase around Mars; to deploy deep-space communication, navigation, mission planning and management; to enable incorporates autonomous features to handle contingency situations. It will measure surface features such as morphology, mineralogy, and atmosphere. The Mars Orbiter mission has opened a new page in historical chapter of India's space program. The primary objective of the Mars Orbiter Mission is to showcase India's rocket launch systems, spacecraft-building and operations capabilities. It demonstrates how fast India is developing. It's definitely a feather on India shining adage.

The landmark work of Indian scientists – *The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)*, also known as 'Mangalyaan' was a monumental event for every Indian. India has successfully launched its mission into Mars, also known as The Red Planet. With this India has become the first country to have succeeded in the first try to Mars mission. The mission was achieved at an extraordinary low price tag of ₹ 450 Cr – one tenth of what a similar mission would cost NASA.

Many saw this momentous occasion as the country's attempt to vie for technological supremacy against the Chinese. The situation almost seemed reminiscent of the uncompromising space race fought between the United States and Russia.

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) described their attempts as a technology demonstrator, with the primary ambition involving the design, planning and management of an interplanetary mission. The objective of the space agency was both technological and

scientific. In terms of technological innovation, they aimed to manufacture and launch a Mars orbiter that was capable of withstanding Earth bound maneuvers, as well as the length of time required to reach the Red Planet – some 300 days. The scientific research goals are aimed at exploring Martian surface features, including the planet’s morphology and mineralogy, alongside its atmosphere. The orbiter encompasses a number of scientific research instruments; including a Mars color camera and a thermal infrared imaging spectrometer for investigation of the planet’s surface. A mass analyzer will perform particle environment studies, while photometers and methane sensors will explore its atmosphere. Although the mission is chiefly designed as a technology demonstrator, ISRO is using its solar-powered instruments to determine precisely how the weather systems of Mars work. The results could give insight as to how most of the planet’s water disappeared.

‘Mangalyaan’ has definitely cherished the dreams of many young people who aspire to become scientist. Small children when explained by elders and teachers are in awe hearing the innovation science has made. They are definitely inspired by the feat of the India scientists. All this pose a bright future for the country.

The road to Mars is a long one and a number of mission-critical maneuvers still have to take place. If successful, it will provide a new platform for the scientists to showcase their talents. In that case India will surely strengthen its position in the tech-world and will confidently respond to the criticism of its Mars mission.



76. India’s Dependence On Energy Supply

Abstract: With raising environmental concerns over climatic changes and also due to the mortal nature of coal, crude oil and natural gas reserves, India has to look towards other less-harvested and clean sources of energy like solar, wind, shale gas and bio fuel. Presently solar, wind, bio fuel along with hydroelectricity contributes 2% to India’s electricity basket. As per the data of central statistical office the potential of these clean sources is 89774MW as of March 2012. India’s diverse landscape with high altitude and hot tropical regions provides the physical potential for harnessing wind and solar energies. Government should invest in developing the technology and infrastructure to harness it. India is found to have good shale gas

reservoirs of around 38 trillion cubic feet (tcf) as per the US energy information administration across Gangetic plane, Assam, Rajasthan and other coastal parts. The US has already mastered the technology of shale gas production and replaced its depleting conventional natural gas resources (LPG) with shale gas. India having a good bilateral agreement with the US in shale gas production should look forward to attain energy security needs in the next few years. The share of nuclear energy is 1% in our energy basket with 7 operating plants.

Energy is the key to development of a nation. It is seen that countries that have achieved self-sufficiency in energy production have always remained high in human development index. Thus, it is widely realized that the key to development of a nation is self-sufficiency in energy production. It has become such a crucial indicator that the progress of a country is now estimated based on per capita consumption of energy by the people.

The demand for energy dates long back. It has increased in the last two centuries after the industrialization has begun in Europe. As a result there was heavy pressure on fossil fuels which resulted in environmental degradation. India is facing energy crisis since its independence in 1947. With a view to make the country self-sufficiency in energy production successive government at the center and states accorded high priority to the promotion and utilization of renewable sources of energy to supplement conventional sources. The demand for conventional energy has been rising at rapid rates ever since the process of economic liberalization was initiated in 1991. Infrastructure development together with rapid development in transport has put pressure on the conventional sources of energy like coal and petroleum.

India has limited reserves of non-renewable sources of energy. Yet the demand is raising. The demand for coal is estimated to be 730 million tones. Also the crude oil reserves are estimated at 736 million tones. If current rate of utilization continues it is expected that these reserves may be depleted in about 30 years. Hence successive governments at the center have initiated plans for full utilization of non-renewable resources since 1980's.

The first step in this direction was initiated with the establishment of Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in 1982. Besides Government setup Ministry of Renewable Energy sources as a nodal agency to supplement renewable energy sources in the country. The activities included providing improved **chullas/cooking range**, biogas

plants, short rotation fuel wood trees, wind mills and solar photo voltaic systems.

The thrust of the government was to harness the untapped potential of renewable energy such as solar, wind, tidal, and hydro- power etc. It is estimated that the potential of renewable source of energy in the country is 1, 83,000 MW. Of this only 8085 MW could be tapped. So there is large scope for utilization of this energy.

The potential of Biomass in the country is estimated to be about 19,500MW. Also urban areas in the country are estimated to generate about 50 million tons of solid waste and about 5000MW of power by 2017. With a view to harness this energy a National Program on Energy Recovery from Urban, Municipal and Industrial wastes was launched from 1995-96.

In recent years as part of Government initiative to build strong alternative to energy security two major steps were taken. As part of utilizing the full potential of solar energy Government in 2009 started the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission to generate additional power of 20,000MW by 2022.

Nuclear energy in recent years has emerged as best alternate to fossil fuel based energy. It offers high quality of energy as such there is high demand for this fuel. Unfortunately the deposits of uranium are limited in India. As a measure to tighten its energy security India made a significant accord with United States in 2010 called the INDO-US civil nuclear agreement. As part of the agreement United States would help India in accessing nuclear energy for peaceful purpose for civilian purpose including the setting up of four nuclear power plants in India. Besides being environment friendly these plants are in the long run expected to meet the energy needs of the country.

Thus, India has alternate sources for its energy needs. As part of signatory of various International conventions India adheres to the norms for promoting environmental protection at the same time meeting the current needs as well as the demand of the future generations

Self-sufficiency in power or energy plays pivotal role in contributing to the growth and development of a nation. We have always noticed that developed countries have achieved greater self-sufficiency of energy compared to developing countries that are still dependent on developed countries to meet their energy requirements.

India shifted from agrarian economy to industrialization which led to increased dependence on energy. Even though India has huge sources of non-conventional energy, it had always been dependent on conventional energy sources. This was because India lacked technology to harness these resources. But this scenario changed after the economic policies in 1991. Since then the concept of Alternative energy started gaining momentum in the country for two important reasons: one, fossil fuels are exhaustible. India felt the need to reserve them for future use and to avoid the wastage of such resources; two the concept of sustainable development demanded a healthy ecological balance and as such the greenhouse gases that are emitted by burning of fossil fuel (the worst environment pollutant) needs to be prevented. Thus India realized the need for exploring non-conventional energy sources and set-up a Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

India has huge potential for harnessing solar energy in the western part of India i.e. Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Government launched Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission in 2009 to generate up to 20,000 MW solar powers. The government has commissioned a 50MW Solar Project at Phalodhi, Rajasthan in March 2013.

Wind energy is the most efficient alternative source of energy and is absolutely pollution free. India has potential for wind power in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra because of the topography. India has the fifth largest installed wind power capacity in the world. The wind power plant at lamba in Gujarat is the largest in Asia.

With increase in population and industrialization in India, there will be increase in the amount of waste that our country will generate. The biological products from agriculture, industrial residues, and municipal waste can be used for biomass production or bio-energy. Biomass will help India in reducing pressure on fuel food. The government has launched National Program on Energy Recovery from Urban, Municipal and Industrial wastes for promoting biomass energy.

Recently India is giving significance to bio-fuel development for reducing its dependence on coal and petroleum. This is possible by cultivation and processing of *Jatropha* plant seeds. The *Jatropha* plant can grow in wastelands across India requires very less water and the oil from these seeds are considered to be an excellent source of bio-diesel.

The long coastline of approximately 7500 km makes India potential for tidal and wave energy especially in the Gulf of Kutch in the state of Gujarat, Gulf of Munnar in Tamil Nadu and Gangetic Delta in the

Sunderbans region of West Bengal.

Nuclear energy is an important alternative to fossil fuels and will help in reducing global warming. With the establishment of Bhaba Atomic Research Centre in 1967, nuclear energy has gained importance. Some important nuclear power project is at Tarapur, Maharashtra and Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. However, one of the main drawbacks of nuclear energy is the generation of nuclear waste and the difficulty to manage them as they take many years to lose its radioactivity and is dangerous to human health.

Green Energy Revolution in India is taking place. India's slow transition from being a country dependent on conventional energy sources is gravitating towards using non-conventional energy sources.

Energy is the key to development of a nation. It is seen that Countries that have achieved self-sufficiency in energy production have always remained high in human development index. It is widely realized that the key to development of a nation is self-sufficiency in energy production. It has become such a crucial indicator that the progress of a country is now estimated based on per capita consumption of energy by the people.

India is an energy hungry nation with its energy consumption growth rate of 5.96% over last thirty years exceeding GDP growth of 5.7% over the same period compounded annually. It has also become the fourth largest consumer of crude oil and natural gas in the world after USA, china and Russia in 2012-13. Although the romanticism of calling India as world's fastest growing economy has shaken due to the present economic scenario. There is no denying that ours is still a strong economy, likely to pick up by the end of 12th five year plan.

Having such support and growth rates, we are bound to consume more energy in order to produce more industrial output, increase the breadth of services sector and other energy incentive sectors. With poverty alleviation, more people will fall in to middle class, consuming more energy than before in form of cooking gas, petrol, diesel and electricity.

India has been importing crude oil of 105.96 Million Tons(MT) which is 70% of total crude oil requirements costing exchequer \$ 144.3 Billion and coal imports stood at 135 MT in the 2012-13 period adding to *current account deficit (CAD)* vows.

More than this statistics, depending on other countries for energy needs may prove to be dangerous in the long run. Therefore, to attain

independence over energy resource, searching for alternatives is very essential. The total installed capacity of power generation in India is 236.38 Giga watts which always failed to meet the peak hour demand. To meet the rising demands of the future, this capacity has to be increased by completing the presently under construction plants and by building new ones which can be carried out effectively by *public-private partnership (PPP)* ventures which are both profit incentive and socialistic. Policy makers in the energy sector have to be stringent if at all there is a will to do so. The policy bottle necks have to be cleared urgently to increase domestic production of energy. The recent coal scam which resulted in cancellation of coal block allocations and prohibition on coal mining at Goa and other parts of the country over environmental issues, stalled production of oil and natural gas at KG-D6 block in Andhra Pradesh due to alleged conflict of interests between Reliance industries and government of India over pricing and tremendous agitation against Kudankulam nuclear power plant etc. are hurting India's chances en route to achieving energy security. Government has to take decisive action to resume the production and also invest in exploration and development of reserves of other energy sources.

Government should also develop state-of-art public transportation system, discouraging personal vehicles which will prevent India from depending on foreign countries for crude oil and petroleum and save a huge imports Bill.



77. Bihar Mid-day Meal Tragedy

Abstract: Recent events in Bihar and other states bring out fallacies in implementation of Nutritional Support Schemes. The tragedy was a question to us: are we serious about health of children of our country. Very high numbers of stunted children, anemic girls and poor infrastructure to deliver Nutritional Support Schemes like Mid-Day Meal (MDM) are serious doubts in answering above question in affirmation. The main question is where we are now and from here where should we go. Presently, schools and Anganwadis are institutions for delivery of hot meals and iron and folic acid tablets for anemic children. The problem with these institutions is hygiene of lack of funds at disposal of ASHAs. Important point to note is that coverage of Mid-Day Meal has been impressive and the problem is with

better delivery. In case of Bihar, fertilizers were found in very high proportion in food, lizard was found in Rajasthan and there are similar other problems with quality of cooked food. The problem was compounded when it was not properly tested by the person in-charge and hence even though smell and taste of food in Bihar was filthy. Children went on to eat it anyway. Since the funds are not available to ASHAs, they have to go ahead with government's supply of food which is usually of substandard quality. Hygiene is the biggest culprit and this should be corrected at the earliest. Clean dining and cooking are needed to prevent addition of any unnecessary organisms at the corresponding stages. ASHAs should be empowered financially. Proper auditing and connection of ASHAs bank accounts through AADHAR can bring transparency in the usage of funds to prevent any misuse of funds.

National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education was launched by government of India in the year 1995. The primary objective of this scheme was to provide nutritional meal to children in government schools and government aided schools. This scheme was renamed as Mid-Day Meal in the year 2001 and the mode of the implementation was left to the discretion of the states. The cost of mid-day meal scheme is shared between Central government and state government and at present, 75% of the scheme is funded by Central government.

Mid-day meal scheme since its inception has been successful in reducing school drop-out rates and increased the school attendance rates in government schools across the country. The hot cooked nutritious meal which is served to children belonging to poor families under this scheme has helped in persuading the parents of these children to send their children to school for their better future. The mid-day meal scheme has contributed significantly in improving the overall literacy-level in the country. It has been successful in improving the nutritional standards among the underprivileged children but still it has a long way to go.

The recent tragic death of atleast 23 children after eating their mid-day meal at Mashrakh of Chapra district, Bihar, in the month of July 2013 has exposed serious discrepancies and loop holes in the scheme. The presence of highly poisonous pesticide monocrotophos in the food served to these children according to the forensic report questions the quality of the food served to them. This is not the first time that such incidents have occurred, but various scams have been reported earlier. Corrupt practices like fake enrolments are being done in some schools to embezzle money. Quality of food served to these children is

compromised at their cost by authorities responsible for the implementation of the scheme just to earn few extra bucks. While the scheme mandates to provide for a hot cooked meal to ensure specific energy content for children studying in primary classes, still large numbers of children are suffering from mal-nutrition and hunger in the country. Several cases of irregularities in the supply of food grains to schools have been reported from time to time which highlights the issue of accountability of officials responsible for the mismanagement of the scheme.

A majority of the school feeding programs across the world especially in economically poorer countries incorporate nutritional education as part of the delivery mechanism. Countless studies have shown how the lunch program contributed to educational and economic productivity gains. But the Indian scheme from the outset failed to grasp the learning from overseas experience. Ours is a number oriented meal program not a nutrition program. The administrators have been focusing more on volumes and not value when it comes to generating outcomes from a well-intentioned feeding program.

The Bihar incident is a tragic eye opener to the policy-makers in more than one sense. Revamping of the mid-day meal scheme is the need of the hour. It tackles the systematic errors prevailing in the current scheme. The momentum on nutrition needs to be built on all fronts. Therefore, government and authorities should ensure efficient delivery system that can cater for minimum calorific values; protein and micro-nutrient content and adhere to safety standards on bacterial content and other contaminants. Government should open more testing and monitoring centers across the country so as to keep a check on the quality of food being served to the children. Government should recruit well qualified staffs, trained cooks and nutritionists to ensure the quality of food served to the children in all the schools coming under mid-day meal scheme. Government should appoint well qualified teaching staffs in these schools so that the dual purpose of providing quality food along with proper education can be served. Government should encourage participation of mothers of these children in the program and making them instant guardians of what is being put on their child's plate.

All said and done, the point of view is that the mid-day meal scheme has the ability to reach the children, but now it is the time to evolve the program into something that provides the type of quality that promotes real social equality. However, it is equally imperative that for

translating the benevolent concept of Mid-Day Meal into reality, effective implementation has to be ensured.

In a country like India with a huge percentage of population under the age of 18 and school-going, the mid-day meal scheme is estimated to benefit at least 12Cr children approximately. It is more than a government scheme here-providing employment to many women where children of all castes and communities sit together for a meal thereby breaking all types of barriers and impediments of the society. It is also a relief to the poor parents who don't have to worry about their children for one meal at least and also helps to assure full attendance. Thus it has become a part and parcel of the society especially in the rural areas. The recent tragedy at Mashrakh of Chapra District of Bihar which led to the death of 23 children has left the nation in consternation. The whole nation shed tears for the tiny lives lost. Many theories have come forward as to what brought the tragedy like poisoning and cavalier implementation of the program etc. However after further investigation the most plausible reason was found to be the poor storage facilities for fruits and vegetables which led to its degradation thereby rendering a poisoning effect to them. It is heart throbbing to see how a minor careless mistake led to such a gruesome tragedy. A similar tragedy occurred in Neyveli District of Tamil Nadu also where several children were admitted to hospital due to nausea and giddiness after having the mid-day meal. These incidents must serve as an eye-opener to the administrative authorities as well as the public. The need for a complete overhaul of the scheme is absolute necessary and the time for it is NOW more than ever.

To begin with, parental committees should be formed in every school to overlook the working of the scheme including the quantity and quality of the food, nutritional standards required, periodical supervision of the storage facilities and infrastructure, hygienic conditions at the cooking surroundings etc. Also under the current scheme the cook-cum-helper woman is not recognized as a government employee and is only provided a nominal incentive for their voluntary services rendered. Recognizing them as government employees with a fixed salary per month is sure to bolster their morale thereby leading to a more effective implementation of the program in its most quintessential form. As far as the nutritional standards are concerned there is a wide clamor around the nation that the current allowance of Rs.4/child at the primary level and Rs.4.65/child at the upper primary

level is highly inadequate and needs immediate reforms. An increase in these allowances will help to ensure nutritional cereals, pulses etc. to their salubrious diet.

The government should also come to par with the fact that this program is more than just a government scheme to the people and should take earnest and immediate reforms to make the program more effective. It has been conclusively seen that in districts where non-governmental agencies have played a role the scheme has failed miserably and where the scheme is fully State-run it has been running successfully. Therefore the government should take control of the full implementation of the scheme beginning from direct procurement of the agricultural produce from markets at affordable prices, their transportation and storage to cooking and serving thereby demarcating these profit-oriented agencies from any intermediary role. The government should also appoint agencies like *Society for Social Audits, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT)* to conduct regular social audits of each school. It is to be noted that mere appointing of the agencies is not enough but a threat free environment where they can present the findings and grievances from their reports, open discussions and debates on the subjects in the presence of parents. Adequate measures for their redressal should also be ensured by the government. Steps to assure drinking water, toilets and other facilities in every school can also play a pivotal role.

The government has to take cognizance of the fact that any scheme is ultimately meant for the welfare of the people and their well-being. Tragedies like these are not only a blotch to their political image but also to the image of a nation as a whole in the global scenario. Public also has to clearly send an unambiguous message that incidents like these will not be tolerated at any cost. Let us hope that with the right mindset and a holistic view, this scheme will turn out to be a flagship program of our nation for everyone to be revered upon.



78. Slowdown of Indian Economy and Improvement

Abstract: The Indian economy exemplified as a success story of the third world economies just a couple of years ago is at crossroads today limping at a pace slowest in

almost a decade showing signs of drifting towards the pre 1991 era. Ironically, the man who steered us clear of the 1991 storm, and is at the helm of affairs now is helpless and at loggerheads owing to constant accusations of policy paralysis, corruption allegations and leadership crises weighing down his options. Some of the factors are: high and constantly increasing Current Account Deficit (CAD); sharp deceleration of industrial production; India's expansionary fiscal policy and global financial crisis. Some board of measures that can be implemented to bring everything under control.

Indian economy is described as an economy which is tenth largest in the world by nominal GDP and third largest in terms of purchasing power parity. This economy was growing at a fast pace in recent past has been plagued by such a slowdown that our currency is on a free-fall and it is not able to ascertain its lower limit.

Economy of a country depends on number of factors which are divided in three general categories like Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. Over independence-era, Indian economy till 1991 was based on a mixed economy which combines the features of capitalism and socialism resulting in interventionist policies and import substituting economy. This economy has always given much emphasis on agriculture which is called as backbone of the nation as the percentage of people dependent on it is approximately 60% of the total population. But the misery is that its contribution in total GDP of the nation is less than 10%.

Looking on the various sectors that contribute to make the Indian economy like agriculture, trade, services etc. In context of Indian economy, the most important one is the trade aspect that consists of import, export and various business processes. Trade aspect alternately tells us about the industrial growth of a nation and its dependence on other nation. Recent slowdown of economy is attributed to the fact that import has exceeded the level of export that lead to heavy deficit of balance of trade.

The most important factor in the slowdown of Indian economy is the poor infrastructure, low growth in agriculture production and industrial activities. After the adoption of LPG principle in 1991 India has opened its economy for global prospects which mainly involves liberal and free market policies. This opening has brought various pros and cons with itself as earlier our economy is tightly regulated by government policies and principles.

Our country is rich in number of metallic and non-metallic minerals which has given a strong base for the rapid industrialization. But there are few types of natural resources which are present in scarce amount like petroleum, natural gas, gold, silver etc. global scenarios is telling that the economic fight of future times is based on these aspects. To fulfill the gap created by this scarcity India has to buy a heavy amount of this resource from foreign players who are also in the arena of global power fight.

To have a control on the issue of petroleum, it has to explore alternatives like LNG and other alternatives. Economic condition of a country is also decided by the physiographical, social and political condition existing in that nation. Looking from the perspective of India one can easily ascertain the upheaval condition existing due to its distorted relation with its neighbors, dangerous internal condition due to rampant corruption, narrow minded politics involving communal forces etc.

Politicians involved in making the framework for Indian economy are not ready to understand the seriousness of the situation due to their vote bank politics still the various policies in this economy are formed on the influence of certain groups which have political ground. India as a nation with vast manpower, sufficient amount of natural resources, suitable natural location for global trade has good amount of potential which can make it a superpower. But to achieve the top slot, it has to look at various loopholes present in its planning section as well as implementation section. But if a nation has to exist and maintain itself in the front in the run of this economic competition, he has to keep his pace with global standards. There are certain other aspects that it can adopt to reduce its dependence on global economy as increasing its research and development share, establishing good relations with its neighbor so that it can reduce its heavy expenditure on defense sectors, planning economic- centric schemes which try to maximize the capital part along with social responsibility. Politicians have to understand the fact that time has come when they have to realize the importance of the moment and resolve their differences on economic issue and bring out a plan that can boost the factors responsible for growth of domestic industries. These policies must be freed from the local influences and have a global outlook.

Of the numerous challenges India has been facing four distinct situations: fall of rupee against dollar and other currencies, widening

current account deficit (CAD), soaring inflation, and dampened GDP growth. These factors are alone sufficient to show that we are far from where we were standing a couple of years ago. All these factors possess a cause-effect relationship. The worsening of one factor leads to the impairment of others. What exactly went wrong with the economic system of India to cause such a holistic downfall of the national economy? Surprisingly, the most recent and the most concerning situation at the moment is rupee tumble. It has very little to do with our faults or mismanagement or any shortcoming on the part of our central bank or government policies. The crisis literally started with the announcement by the U.S. *Federal Reserve Bank* that it would taper off its *quantitative easing (QE)* policy which pumps a huge amount of capital in developing economic markets and which can substantially alter the state of market. The implementation of this policy change is yet to see the light of the day. It has already caused a sense of panic in investors and industrialists. It is not for nothing said that when the U.S. sneezes, the world catches cold. Hence, the reasons for depreciating rupee are less statistical and more speculative.

The next important aspect is the burgeoning CAD. It is currently pegged at 4.8% of GDP (about \$90 Billions). The most obvious reason for this is increase in imports and decrease in exports in the recent years. India has seen a contract in the mining and quarrying sector and the growth in the manufacturing sector has been nominal.

A soaring inflation, though, can be reasonably attributed to the government policies which are more voter-centric than citizen-centric. Policies like regulating oil and LPG gases and providing huge subsidies for them which had to be amended at some point of time (petrol has been deregulated recently) were like time-bombs waiting to explode.

Still not ready to learn from its mistakes, the government has recently decided to shoulder yet another colossus subsidy in the form of National food security Bill. Though a policy like this is undeniably heartening the government categorically fails to answer from where the resources necessary for implementation of this apparent game-changing policy will come. These situations stem except the fall of rupee, stems from inside the system. The solution lies within the system only.

Hence, the situation needs to be faced on a holistic basis, though handling them on different time axes would be more prudent. A very surprising fact about the Indian economy is that India transformed directly from an agrarian economy to a tertiary economy. At the time

of independence, most of the people of the nation were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and most of the share of the GDP came from this sector only. But today, though 62% people are still dependent on agriculture, only a meager 18% share of the GDP comes from this sector, the majority is from the service sector.

In this way, India could never realize the full potential of being an industrialist economy. Over-dependence on tertiary sector growth was certain to back-fire sooner than later. In the long run, India will need to strengthen its industrial sector, and it has no alternatives at all. Any other growth model would just not be sustainable as we have seen in the past. It is not just in India but in the entire world. Since this massive task will start bearing fruits over the next decade or so only, an immediate and short-duration policy is the need of the moment.

India has to rebuild its forex reserve. There is nothing more effective than foreign investments, especially *foreign direct investment (FDI)*. FDI is stable, effective and flows directly into the system rather than some private hands which is the case with FII. Disinvestment of PSUs, though on a limited basis, can be another stress buster at the moment.

The latest government policies regarding FDI which underline its readiness to welcome foreign investors to bring in investments are very welcoming and should be supported by one and all without partisan differences. The next important idea is to cut down on unsustainable subsidies, which might prove untenable a few years down the line. The man responsible for bringing India back from crisis in 1992 is the Prime Minister himself. He should ensure that reforms are pushed again emphatically to ensure sustainable developments. The CAD has ballooned partly because court orders have closed Indian mines for iron ores and coal, reducing exports and necessitating imports of those products. The government should understand that non-essential imports, particularly those imports that have affected employment and livelihood. Gold imports have to be reduced substantially.

The Governor-designate of the RBI, Raghuram Rajan has very wisely said that we have to shift our focus from consumption to supply. It is high time we understand that being a consumer doesn't count in the long run; it is being a producer that counts. This is the key to becoming an economic super-power. And if we are ever dreaming to be one, we better start acting like one.



79. Maoists, Terrorists and Anti-national Activities

Abstract: In a functional democracy political objectives seem highly inconsistent and absurd. The Maoists disbelieve and derecognize the State. These cadres of Left Wing Extremism have often sided with the enemies during testing times of Indo-China war of 1962 and also in 1971. This clearly reflects their anti nationalistic attitudes. The usual 'Jehadi' terrorists have religion as their motivation. Seems that both forms of terrorism have waged a war against India which is tantamount to sedition. The 'Red Terror' works from within and is even more complicated and difficult to handle as a direct face off severely affects civilians. Most Maoist prone areas are devoid of basic facilities of infrastructure, health and education for which the people are rightly entitled.

Maoists in India have become the greatest threat to our country. The extent and magnitude of the Maoists operations are so gigantic that they are affecting the social, economic, political and even the well being of our country. Maoist also called Naxals in Indian context refers to the armed insurgency by the cadres of Bhakpa Male, Tritiya Prastuti Committee and People's Liberation Front of India etc. The followers of Maoism believe that the means of production and resources existing in the world are concentrated in the hands of exploiters. Hence they like to overthrow them, even if it means by armed and should be re-placed by a system that is to be in the hands of the masses.

In India, Maoists have planned to overthrow the democratic system of governance by 2050 and replace it by their own system of governance and gain complete control over the country. Maoism has originated in India from West Bengal at a place called Naxalbari. In the initial days, it was a motley collection of students, farmers and intellectuals that was led by two leaders Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal. Initially those who felt dissatisfied and neglected joined this extreme left bandwagon. But soon Maoists have spread to the other states. Maoist rebels now control and run a parallel government in as many as 10 states. Over the last few years, more people have died as a result of Maoist insurgency than due to any other kind of militant movement in the country. The Maoists have complete disregard for democracy, laws and human values. They have been committing crimes like abduction and killings with impunity. Whether it is abduction and killing of Jharkhand policemen 'Francis Induwar' or the attack on the convoy of a political

party in Bastar, all demonstrate the ruthless attitude of the Maoists. According to intelligence agencies estimates, the total number of Maoists cadres in country could be about 50,000 and the majority of them being below 25. The Maoist have an annual budget of rupee 10,000 Cr. Majority of it comes in the form of extortion (levy), illicit drugs cultivation and covert aid. On an average, Maoists demand a levy of 15-20% on any government or private funded activity. As a result, no commercial entity is willing to work in the areas of Maoist dominance. Hence the affected areas have no roads, factories or even cottage industries. Thus the people there do not get any jobs and are ultimately forced to join the rank and file of the Maoists. Recently, a few splinter groups have broken off from the main Maoist group CPI-ML and formed their own organizations. These groups are fighting regular turf wars for dominance and control over their respective areas. In the beginning the Maoist movement may have been one of some disgruntled elements but now it has completely evolved into armed insurgent groups.

Maoists from the very beginning have been open to receiving foreign aid and assistance. It's proved by the recovery of foreign made weapons from them. It also found out that trainers from countries like China, Philippines and Ireland have arrived in our country to provide training in Guerrilla warfare to the Maoists. The Maoists have also been trying to join hands with the various international communist insurgent groups such as the Nepali Maoists, FARC, Irish republican army etc. It has been confirmed that Maoists have links with the Kashmiri separatists and North-East insurgent groups. All these instances clearly point that Maoists are anti-national elements and be dealt accordingly. In dealing with the Maoists, the Indian Penal Code Chapter VI that deals with offences against the state, S.121 Waging war against government, S.124-A sedition which has been further supplemented by laws such as National security Act, should be strictly implemented. A message of deterrence must be sent to them that no enemies of the nation will be tolerated by the Indian leadership or the governing elite. However, care should be exercised to avoid collateral damage and those who have joined the ranks of Maoists forcefully should be allowed to join the mainstream and lead a normal life. A carrot and stick policy should be adopted and the disgruntled Maoist cadres should be won over by a good rehabilitation package.

Recruitment drives and employment counseling camps should be held in the affected areas to rope in unemployed youths. In the Maoist affected area establishing block offices, primary and secondary schools, hospitals, village panchayat offices etc should be the priority. Civil authorities should make sure that beneficial measures such as public distribution system reach the needy speedily. Lessons should be learnt from Andhra Pradesh which was one of the worst sufferers of Maoist violence. However by adopting a multi-pronged strategy, the government has succeeded in eliminating the Maoists from that state.

The special police force 'Greyhounds' established by Andhra Pradesh authorities succeeded in almost wiping out the Maoists from the state. This was quickly followed by establishing all necessary infrastructure (like roads, schools, hospitals and beneficiary schemes) to bring about the oppressed and deprived people on par with the mainstream society. Andhra Pradesh as a result today is free from clutches of the Maoists. Maoism didn't take shape in one day; neither will it go away in one day. Fighting Maoism will take years. If the measures mentioned are implemented rigorously, the days are not far when India will be free from all these trouble mongering entities. If India has to race towards its ultimate goal of providing peace and security to its citizens, then the problem of Maoist insurgency has to be sternly dealt with. It is the duty of the government to make the things difficult which are wrong, easy the things which are right for the people.

On one hand, India has experienced relatively fast economic growth which has led to increased levels of national wealth. On the other hand, this economic growth has been uneven among regions and has widened the disparity between the rich and the poor. Naxalites or Maoists are brutally killing innocent policemen who are performing their duty in that area. There is no ground on which these killings can be made approved. They are destroying infrastructures created by Indian government. All these activities create instability and insecurity to that area. There are some proof also that these activities are funded by China to create insecurity in India which act as a hindrance to development in these remote areas. Countries like China are supplying arms and ammunition as well as training to them. Maoists basic demand was getting these poor people at an equal platform to urban people but the havoc they are creating nowadays is opposite to their so called actual aim on which their ideology is based.

What Maoists are doing today is anti national. Killing innocent people and policemen, destroying infrastructure cannot be legitimized for the name of revolt of poor people it's totally anti national. Activities which are creating fear ,insecurity, instability and are funded by our country's adversaries can be called as 'terrorism'. So they should be treated on par with terrorist and anti nationals but military response is not the only option of solution .There should be continuous talk with the local people of the affected area. At last we must remember our country India's policies and actions are based on principle of non violence .So any violence of any type anywhere in our country is an act of terrorism and anti national activity.



80. Mixing of Sports and Politics

Abstract: Tamil massacre in Sri Lanka is indeed a disgraceful act, but this is also true that banning Sri Lankan players in Chennai would not lend any solution. Preventing Sri Lankan players from playing in Chennai because of wrath with Sri Lankan government is replica of Tamil massacre. Using sports as a platform to support political indifferences and disputes is unfortunate for sports and is a blow over its essence. Chauvinism and discrimination are never supposed to be in purview of sports whereas the current IPL controversy has introduced these two facets very effectively in sport's domain. It has not only raised a question over continuation of unbiased cricket in India but over the willingness of governments and IPL officials towards it as well. Explosion at Boston marathon has showed us another eventuality of amalgamation of politics and sports. It has yielded terrorism in domain of sports as another ingredient which is unfortunate not only for future of sports but for whole society as well.

In context of IPL we find that it has had several interference with politics either it was Bala Sahab Thakre's stand which prohibited Pakistani players from playing in IPL, or Tamil conflict which had assured relocation of all the matches that were to be held in Chennai. None of them turned out to be any good for anyone.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalitha's stand to keep Sri Lankan players out of Tamil Nadu may sound legitimate to a few as if one thinks about current situations of Tamils in Sri Lanka, but in context of sports it could be termed as chauvinism which could have a longer effect on neutrality of sports.

Using sports as a platform to support political envy and disputes is unfortunate for sports and is a blow over its essence. Chauvinism and discrimination are never supposed to be in purview of sports, whereas the current IPL controversy has introduced these two facets very effectively in sport's domain. It has not only raised a question over continuation of unbiased cricket in India but over the willingness of governments and IPL officials towards it as well.

Bowing down the political pressure every time makes IPL official's role ambiguous over their willingness to continue sport without any partiality. Extending this view we find that central government has also been oblivious to this whether it was few years back in hockey or in state level cricket boards. They have always been aside on this matter whenever sports needed a support from them for its existence in a fair way.

Demise of hockey in India is exemplary in this case. Not long time ago India was on top of the game but after its interference with politics it has never seen an uphill. It has gone worst and worst only. Reason behind this is politics in sports. It comes with wrath in administration, racism (most effective aspect of politics), perverts and various other facets which eventually turns out to be destructive for essence of sports.

Explosion at Boston marathon has showed us another eventuality of mixing politics with sports. It has yielded terrorism in domain of sports as another ingredient which is unfortunate not only for future of sports but for whole society as well. Terrorism in sports has been seen before but Boston bombings were latest reminder of the same. Nevertheless, it is indeed a fact that each notion has pros and cons but when cons lead pro's side with a notable lead there is certainly something to worry about.

Today's world is changing with great pace. So are our sports, sports personnels and the sportsmanship. One of the most striking parts of sports is cricket. The main reason for changing cricket is the beginning of its new format of fast and furious cricket T-20 or 20-20.

This T-20 cricket is highly influenced by *Indian Premier League (IPL)*. IPL is the Indian form of International T-20 cricket. It was started in 2008 by *Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI)* under the chairmanship of Mr. Lalit Modi. Just as the first auction of players got started in Indian Premier League (IPL), it is being taken as one of the most expensive sports of the world league match. IPL has got second place in the list of world's most expensive sports league.

As one of the most innovative form of cricket, it shares the feature of being two sided of a coin. One side, which is showing future of cricket while the other showing the reality of that future. But its roots are still not fair and transparent.

Controversy has struck IPL right from its beginning. It was pointed out by the people and media that T-20 became very popular and succeeded in a very short period of time. Does this success is from the involvement of big corporate houses and prominent bureaucrats of the ownership of teams and sponsorship of the league?

From its first session, cases of indulging of players in spot-fixing was started which banned career of several talented buds. Several cases of money laundering have questioned the quality of money being used in the league. In some cases the ownership of the teams is forfeited and in some cases huge fines has been enforced on the teams by *Enforcement Directorate(ED)*. Players have been seen consuming drugs during late night parties.

Coming on to the second side of the coin it has become the great platform for budding talents. It is giving equal chance to every player either from village or urban areas. It has got appreciation on the international level and to carry on this appreciation it has to be considered like sports.

Sports must be taken in a way of sports not as the platform of politics. Sports and politics are two different fields and must be taken differently. Both of this are used for betterment of country and this betterment can be done only when these two does not collide with each other. Politics has played its nefarious role in India's recent debacle in one day matches and test cricket.

Talking about cricket in India is like talking about religion and the cricketers are like divine souls for every Indian. Our emotion, passion was so intensely associated with this great game of cricket. We almost played with those eleven players who are playing on the ground. Every single time we are also involved with our closed ones in making strategies to counter the opposition on ground. We almost had our pads-on that at any point of time we get a call to play for India. We are also involved in choosing best eleven and almost all aspects of this great game of cricket. This type of involvement is there. If the result is not according to the expectation then we really get cheated.

India's test failure started way back on the English soil against the same English team when England thrashed the Indian cricket team by 4-0 in their home series. Thereafter Aussies also did the same when everyone was busy in gossiping around that Indian team was favorite that time and they had easily beaten Australia. Aussies too white washed the Indian cricket team in the test series very easily.

They returned back to India after eight consecutive losses on foreign soil and then the great IPL-5(Indian Premier League) started. Eeveryone then forgot the test losses and again got them busy in tailoring their size of their pockets to grab more money. The attitude of all Indian players are that they forget past. , forget about the boring test cricket it's time to enjoy the great festival of IPL and the T-20 fashion is in and the cool captain is leading from the front in this too. he sudden take rest and ignore ODI series just to be fit and ready to play the IPL matches. That tells the story already about the commitment of Indian cricketers towards test cricket. There are players one time who said that they want to prove themselves in test format and then show their mettle in other games. The greats of like saurav ganguly, sachin tendulkar and Rahul dravid debut their career from test cricket and because of that sheer talent and ability they enjoyed the other formats of this game. but these days the story is reversed, now the player are from IPL breed, they started their career from 20overs game and one fine day when they hit some shots they came into the focus and the poor managers are busy in circulated the Indian cap to anybody.

The Test failure of Indian cricket was just because that the stalwarts like Dravid, Laxman, Ganguly hung up their boots and the like of sachin, sehwag are on their last leg and struggled due to bad form, but what about these T-20 generation.? This new generation doesn't have the stamina to play gently throughout the day on any kind of soil on any ground across the world. They are twenty over cricketers and that don't want to play or prove themselves in Ranji matches first and then boring test cricket. They are not meant for test cricket and that's the sole reason to go failed in test cricket. Indian cricket always dominated the world cricket through their batting but recent downfall in batting department creates panic in Indian cricket. It seems like that India doesn't have the bench strength to fill up the vacuum created after the retirement of stalwarts. The current breed of cricketers did not have enough potential or enough mettle to play and survive for the whole

day. The condition is so worse that even the secondary level bowlers like Monty panesar had bowled out the entire star-cast in few hours. This is by far the saddest phase of Indian test cricket.



81. Changing the Pattern of Civil Services Exam

Abstract: India is a developing country and is seeing tremendous improvements in various areas. The status of the country in the international scenario is surging high and now we are in a position to perform in a certain degree and not finding reasons. The proposed changes in the pattern of the examination are a perceptible step towards taking Indian bureaucracy to international standards. The reflection of the decision of the commission and the charges against the commission terming the body "language biased" is something unfortunate. It is imperative to deal with things in a long term and only that could prove beneficial. Mother tongue of a person certainly has its own significance, but what people of India often forget is that English is our official language. If the decision of the commission to implement English as a compulsory paper had been implemented, it could have paved way for many other things. We strive towards excellence only by facing the odds and the move would have in a way encouraged everyone to learn English and become proficient in the language.

The long awaited change in the pattern of civil services (Main) exam had finally come into force and the recent withdrawal of English as a compulsory paper closes the ambiguity over the pattern. The recent change introduced by the Union Public Service Commission is certainly a welcome move which is designed to test the real ability of the candidates.

When the union public service commission (UPSC) introduced a compulsory paper in English and decided to consider the marks secured in the paper for ranking, it only created woes and uproars, rather than getting into deeper insights of the commission's decision. To put it in simple words, there were only reactions. People in such situations are expected to respond rather than react and that is entirely off the context.

India is a developing country and is seeing tremendous improvements in various areas. The status of the country in the international scenario is surging high and now we are in a position to perform in a certain degree and not finding reasons. The proposed

changes in the pattern of the examination are a perceptible step towards taking Indian bureaucracy to international standards. The reflection of the decision of the commission and the charges against the commission terming the body “language biased” is something unfortunate.

It is high time to recognize and identify that time has come for Indians to step out of the comfort zone and work towards better administrative machinery. The changes may to a larger extent affect the students from rural areas and the case may be even worse in the case of people attempting for the last time. However, one crucial and stubborn decision becomes the need of the hour in taking India to a better position. After the uproar in the parliament and strong sentiments of the people in various parts of the country, UPSC, however, published a corrigendum concerning the same. The corrigendum restoring the language papers and withdrawing the compulsory marking system for English can be considered only as a temporary solace. It is imperative to deal with things in a long term and only that could prove beneficial. Mother tongue of a person certainly has its own significance, but what people of India often forget is that English is our official language.

If the decision of the commission to implement English as a compulsory paper had been implemented, it could have paved way for many other things. We strive towards excellence only by facing the odds and the move would have in a way encouraged everyone to learn English and become proficient in the language. Everyone knows to express well in their mother tongue and expertise in mother tongue would certainly not satisfy the problems in the international scene. The primary motive of a civil servant should be to drive the country towards excellence and as a step towards it such hues and cries for a change in pattern should be deemed unnecessary.

When a person is not able to adjust even with a simple pattern change in examination how will he adapt to the changes he/she is going to face as a civil servant? And is there anyone who answers this question? UPSC can be blamed only for one reason: for introducing the pattern change late and to have made the announcement late. The debate on language papers stands closed for now, but take a look and think deep, one will always find UPSC was right.

82. Crimes Against Women

Abstract: Times has changed but the mentality still prevails in the mindsets of several narrow minded people in the country. The recent incident in which a 23 year old paramedical student was gang-raped by six men inside a moving bus near a posh Delhi locality and thrown off the bus naked after herself and her male friend were beaten and assaulted with an iron rod has undoubtedly shocked the nation to its core. This was reflected in the massive protests that followed the incident, demanding justice for the victim who unfortunately succumbed to the damage caused by her body by the assault (a major part of her intestines had to be removed due to the spread of gangrenous infection) in a hospital in Singapore. Although it was a most heinous case of cruelty, it is ironical to note that such incidents are not actually rare in our country. There are several such cases happening everyday where females (from infants to old ladies, from upper middle class women in metro cities to dalit women of villages the list can be endless) are subjected to horrendous sexual torture by lustful men who are, in most cases, known to the victims. One cannot generalize the victims or those guilty of sexual crimes in India; they come from all strata of society and from every part of India and belong to all the age groups. Making stringent laws is necessary to ensure that the guilty in such cases get the punishment that they deserve and don't walk freely due to the weak provisions or loopholes of the existing laws. But asserting that stringent laws will be able to curb male sexual overdrive in India cannot be justified. Some women are the unfortunate wives who have to indulge in sexual intercourse with their husbands even if they don't want to (non-consensual sex is nothing but rape).

Women in India—a better half of Indian society, today, are becoming the most vulnerable section as far as their safety and security is concerned. When we turn the pages of a newspaper, we come across many headlines reporting cases of sexual assault, molestation, sexual harassment, rapes, trafficking, ill treatment of women in houses, violence against women in remote areas etc. What does this indicate? This certainly implies that there has been an increasing trend of such sexual overdrives in present generation.

Our supreme law of land i.e. our Indian Constitution has envisaged a dream of true social, economic and political democracy which guarantees the rich and moral principles of equality (of status, opportunity, law) for our citizens but this has not yet been fully realized. Still our better halves are unsafe and insecure towards the realization of freedom and liberty. It's unbearable to imagine the plight of women who are sufferers of such crimes. It's a jolt on the confidence of the

women, of society and on our judicial system. Besides it has much of cascading effects which affects her life. But do we think who is responsible for this? Is it only the lapse in legal system of our country or the police or the public where such incidence occurs or the Indian society as a whole?

We generally use to play the blame game for any such incidence and hence have not succeeded to reach to the root of the problem. For a better understanding we can say that any problem has definitely two approaches of solution, the first is short term or immediate solution and the second one is long term solution. These may be visualized as preventive or curative in nature. Firstly, let us approach towards certain short term and preventive solutions. This would mean to have a multipronged strategy with the participation of multistakeholders of society.

As good citizens, we have a fundamental duty to contribute towards bringing an order to ensure dignity and respect for women so that she can also enjoy her human rights and fundamental rights with a sense of pride, freedom and confidence. To ensure this at every level the society must work together to give an edge to the solution. For e.g. women may be provided with such devices which could provide her location using GPS technology to a central control room of police or send messages of her address to nearby locations. But this requires a lot of work relating to scaling the enrollment of women biodata showing her photographs and her permanent or temporary address into a national database system.

Other area of interest would be reform in police system. Allocation of women police in every area and their continuous monitoring which also requires participatory attitudes of government. Such interventions can also be a preventive solution. This also requires installation of CCTV cameras at strategic places, beefing up the police security systems and closely monitoring them. Also reforms in our legal system is required such as stringent punishment which are non bailable in nature. This could act as friction to those who perpetrate crime. Even though these suggestions are urgently required as proactive measures but since they require rigorous effort for implementation it may not be practically realized. So we must have remedial or curative measures such as fast track courts especially dedicated to deal only with these offences and crimes. These can be made responsible to clear the cases on day to day basis with fair trial as its core principle.

There must be allocation of woman personnel who should be dedicated to alleviate the trauma of the victimized women. As we have already discussed that these women victims not only undergo physical but also mental trauma as their confidence in the system and society is jolted up. Hence trained personnel are needed to boost up the victims confidence.

All the above measures and interventions are supportive in nature .i.e they act as supportive infrastructure to ensure and protect women from being victimized. But let us also look to the other face of the coin.Only ensuring a strict legal system may also prove to be sometime oppressive as the agencies enforcing the acts in strict sense may violate tenets of human rights.Such practices are also not acceptable. Hence a balance is required to be kept at the time of implementation also. So far we have dealt with the requirement of stringer laws, legal and administrative system to deal with such sexual overdrive. But it requires further delving into the matter.

We all know that India has been a land following various social customs, traditions and certain sets of religious beliefs. These customs has a deep rooted place in the core of our minds and hearts of every people of India which has defined our lifestyle. Our thoughts, expressions and our beliefs be it a man or a woman. This has given to the males, the feeling of masculinity in every aspect of their acts and thoughts.

Indian males have thus perceived themselves as physically, mentally superior than their counterparts. Indian women also have accepted to treat their males as superior. This can be seen as women still perform the rituals of Karwa Chauth where they signify men as god.

Other instance can be seen in parents preferring male child over female. In every aspect of the life, women are denied or given less preference over male whether it is for giving education or access to health care. They are always required to be within their limitations and the male counterparts have freedom in this regard. This system thus gives a feeling in male that they are superior and hence dominate over women. This instills in male a sense of hatred against women if they see a woman crossing their limitations. So the problem is just not the case of one or two factors, but a sum total of a large number of factors. For this we need to plan more integrative approach to arrive at a solution.

This requires a large scale and an integrated social reform whereby we need to channelize the potential of woman into the stream of

development. This can be brought through measures such as real education emphasizing on the quality of education, through enhanced moral and spiritual teachings so that the seed of enmity which is sown through these customs and traditions gets deeply uprooted.

Moral and spiritual inclination of education will impart impetus to curb the sexual desires of men and women and would not let them indulge in committing such heinous crimes. This solution is an ideal solution which would need a more comprehensive support of all the stakeholders of societies.

Henceforth, to see India as a more flourished nation as envisaged in our Constitution, it is time we need to realize what is right and what is wrong and act in an integrated manner so that women can be channelized into mainstream of development and thus contribute to socio-economic prosperity of the nation.

In other words, we need to take action not by force but by will to make our country more secure and safe for our better halves and bring up reforms in the desired direction so that woman can also enjoy their freedom and rights ,and feel more empowered and fearless ,as entrusted by the Supreme law of the land.

The condition of women in India has always been a matter of grave concern. Since the past several centuries, the women of India were never given equal status and opportunities as compared to that of their male counterparts. The patriarchal nature of Indian society, which even though gives respect to women as they are our mothers and sisters, has greatly hampered both the independence as well as the safety of women.

One of the main reasons of violence against women is the mentality which deems women inferior of men and merely limits their importance to the maintenance of the household, the upbringing of children and pleasing their husbands and serving other members of the family.

Even in today's times of modernization of society, many working women are still subjected to immense pressure to shoulder the dual responsibility of a housewife and a working woman simultaneously with little or no help from their husbands.

It is the same mentality which, some generations ago, used to think of women as mere objects of attaining sexual pleasure and a servant of the husband, who was considered "parameshwar" which literally translates to "supreme god".

83. Indian People Vs. Price Hike

Abstract: Inflation is the term used to denote the percentage of growth in prices of goods and services with respect to their prices in some relevant base year. The perplexing price rise is a matter of studies for the eminent economists of every epoch. As a matter of fact, the effect of price rise is both negative and positive in economic terms. Enumerating the reasons of price rise we encounter terms like, monetary inflation, black-marketing, unmatched demand and supply, market monopoly and business accession. Let us demystify the terms one by one, starting with monetary inflation. The problem of monetary inflation indicates a situation of excessive money supply in market which corrodes the real value or the purchasing power of currency. Hence, each unit of currency could fetch fewer amounts of commodities and services. Black-Marketing refers to the depraved act of a few manufacturers and stockiest who hoard the product in go-down to artificially inflate the price in order to reap larger profit in future. The unmatched demand and supply has both negative and positive effect on prices of goods and services.

The deteriorating global market due to the repercussions of global recession of 2008 has brought fiscal losses and unemployment in a large geo-economic area. Alike many developed and developing nations, India failed to keep her insulated from the ramifications of the global slowdown. Consequently, the economic monsters of fiscal-deficit and deteriorating currency imbued the vicious scourge of **Price Hike** into the market. A juxtaposition of the current face price of any arbitrary commodity in the market with that of the price before 2008 could insinuate the manifold increase in prices. The statistical data from the competent institutions like *NSSO*, RBI, Ministry of Finance, *PMEAC* and the Planning Commission corroborated the uncomfortably high percentage of inflation ranging near double digits from 8.0% to 11.0% at different quarters of the current financial year based on **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**.

Taking account of the price hike in essential domestic commodities like food stuff and LPG could reveal the plight of millions households. The prices of milk and vegetables ratcheted in recent days have instilled upheaval in domestic budget of middle class families. The unruly price hike of diesel and petrol increases transportation costs which has cascading effects on the market commodities. The price of petrol in 2008 was nearly ₹ 45.00 per liter which has crossed an alarming high price line of ₹ 70.00 per liter throughout the country with little

aberrations. The price of diesel experienced an exorbitant price hike of around ' 20.00 per liter from erstwhile low rate of approx. ' 30.00 per liter. The Indifference Curve of every middle class family has been lowered due to the constrained budget line which in turn diffuses dissatisfaction and engenders social unrest. The burning example of which is the contrived situation in the middle-east countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, etc.

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Black-Marketing refers to the depraved act of a few manufacturer and stockiest who hoard the product in go-down to artificially inflate the price in order to reap larger profit in future. The unmatched demand and supply has both negative and positive effect on prices of goods and services. If the demand is more than the total potential of supply then the price rises and if the supply is more than potential demand then the price falls. Market monopoly and business accession are two faces of the same coin. When a big giant manufacturer takes over the business of several small enterprises, the competitions in the market evaporate, precipitating back monopoly into the market.

Price hike is akin to a viral disease which insidiously affects a larger section of society and brings infrastructural annihilation. Apart from the direct conundrums, it leads to a sudden drop in demand due to contained purchasing capacity of buyers. The drop in demand is counter balanced by drop in production which means drop in exigencies of variable factors of production, e.g. labour, raw-material, running cost, etc.

The drop in labor-requirement unleashes devastating unemployment and under-employment in society. The capitalists face another

species of problem simultaneously where the expenditure on fixed factors of production remains equal to the pre-fall demand situation because the fixed factors cost are levied on infrastructure, long-run investment, insurance premium, rent, etc. which are inert to short-run aberrations in total quantity produced. Hence, it bolsters the increase in *Average Total Cost of production*. This double faceted situation, on one hand deteriorate the purchasing capacity of market while on the other hand it incur loss of capital and thus lead to shut-down of factories in financial crisis which in turn further aggravate the problem of unemployment thus lowering further the purchasing capacity.

Trade deficit is yet another implication which is a negative effect of inflation or the price hike where the domestic market gets dearer. It promotes imports over exports which results in loss of foreign exchange. Besides, the difference in imports and exports result in trade deficit. The price hike has a good effect on an economy at initial level and under a comfortable zone of 2%-3%. It leads to growth in economy by increasing demand. Thus result in employment opportunities. An economy toils to fend off the exaggeration of inflation through monetary policies and fiscal policies. The central bank of a nation is equipped with the tools like bank-rate, cash reserve ratio and bank security. When the inflation crosses the level of ease to the level of discomfort, the central bank of a nation, Reserve Bank of India in ours case, increases the bank rate i.e. Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate and Marginal Standing Facilities. This result in higher interest rate on loans which deter public from taking loans whereas promote saving to attract higher interest from the bank. In both the case, the cash is revoked from the market which helps to resist the fall in real value of currency. The Cash Reserve Ratio is required to be maintained by the commercial banks to the Reserve Bank of India which also help in revocation of liquidity from the market. The bond and securities sold by the Reserve Bank of India to the commercial banks is yet another apparatus to revoke the liquidity from the market. Besides, the government levies taxes of different forms to curb the inflation.

Price hike or the inflation is a necessary evil of a growing economy such as ours which could be tamed through suitable and sustainable measures. The efforts of economists have formulated several tactics to maintain the inflation at the zone of comfort. The problem of price hike is a problem faced by common people; hence it is the infallible duty of the Indian Government and the Economists to bring it under

control whereas it is the duty of the People to proliferate the technical aspects of inflation among unapprised masses.

Petrol has become an indispensable part of our day-to-day life, and we can't imagine our life without it. But the petrol prices are sky rocketing, and it is eventually going to affect each and everything that we use in our day to day life. Poor people are already working hard to earn square meal a day and this hike is definitely going to paralyze these already-burdened people. Within three years petrol price has increased 10 times and is still increasing. It is nothing but adding fuel to the fire. Petrol hike directly or indirectly affects all the major sectors like transportation, textiles, auto, FMCG etc. for manufacturing and transportation. This affects the prices of daily essential commodities which are transported on a daily basis. Banking sector is also expected to suffer due to high inflation level.

Increase in fuel price will also increase in food price. This will have a more severe impact on poor people because poor households spend more than half of their income on food and only a tenth on fuel. It is a chain reaction once started will affect all. Increase in petrol price will increase the transportation cost, increase in transportation cost will increase in price of goods, and this increase in price of goods would gradually force the people to loosen their pockets even more, and so on like this, the chain will further propagate. These ups and downs push more people into poverty and leading to a more pathetic situation of those already poor. This has obviously sent shock waves to the common man who is trying hard to make both ends meet. Price hike affects only the low wages or fixed salaried middle class families as compared to higher wages salaried class. The existing middle class is squeezed and many of those striving to attain the middle-class standard find it persistently out of remit will bring no negative impact on government employees as their DAs will be increase accordingly. Rich and corrupted people are least bothered of it. Business class like auto-rickshaw drivers shall transfer the burden to common people so they are also safe. Common people if doing business shall also pass the burden to customers and chain reactions. The community that suffers the most is the common people or "AAM AADMI".

What are we thinking for then? For the situation to get worse or are we waiting for such a heroic person who'll bring us out of this situation. We, the people are the one to do something and control the situation. Let us stop blaming government and think how to solve it.

We Indians import oil from different countries. We don't have enough oil to meet our requirements. So we have to depend on import of oil. If there is increase in international price then we have to bear price hike in India also. Value of rupee in comparison with dollar is becoming weaker in the international market. Increase in number of vehicles also causes hike in petrol prices. The thing we can do is to reduce oil consumption by using public transport for travelling to routine places like our office and markets etc. We can use of high capacity transport system like train, ships instead of trucks and carrier vans. We can use bicycles to go to nearby places instead of bikes or cars. Cutting off fuel supply or switching the engine off when traffic is halted for long. Developing alternate sources of energy like solar energy etc. Government should allocate more funds for developing alternate sources of energy as well as develop high capacity goods and public transport system. Let us conclude that petrol is a natural resource and limited in nature. We have to use it judiciously so that our future generations can also use it, and thus lead to sustainable development.



84. Foreign Direct Investment

Abstract: The disadvantage from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) arises when the economically powerful investor can control the competitive enterprises in the market which can lead to the monopoly in pricing and due exploitation of the market. Proper policies and regulations should be adopted for avoiding this trend. The sovereignty of the country should not be surrendered to the foreign hands at any costs or by any means. The Indian labor laws complicated legal procedures and wide spread corruption are causing investors to shy away from investing in India. India was ranked far below, lower than Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, in the ease of business index released by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector and arm of the World Bank has ranked India 116 out of the 155 countries surveyed. In this contest even if government is attracting investments via tax holidays, low tax rates, special economic zone (SEZ) etc. it will be difficult to attract foreign money. Steps should be taken to make labor laws more flexible, reduce intricacies in legal formalities and increase the morale of the country for economic reforms to be effective, otherwise steep decrease in investment growth can be foreseen.

Recently the issue of *FDI* is dominating the media with the clamorous protests and supports from all over India. Each state, each

political party and even every individual is having its own views on the FDI. It is the investment by a foreign country in the production of another country either by expansion of the operations or by purchasing companies in the country.

As a country investing in other countries has an eye on the cheap labour and resources in the target country or tariff free access to the market of the country. Whereas, the host country receives foreign funds for its development, new technologies, experience, expertise and new job opportunities. The FDI is opposite to the portfolio investment where investor is least bothered in the management. The foreign direct investor may acquire the voting power in the enterprise. He can acquire the company or its wholly owned subsidiary, acquire shares of an associated enterprise, and merge an unrelated enterprise and can participate in the equity joint venture.

Considering the FDI in global scenario, the United States of America is the largest recipient of FDI of \$194 Billion, followed by China with \$85 Billion, in 2010. In India FDI started in 1990 with less than \$1 Billion investment. In 2010-12 the sectors such services like telecommunication, construction activities and computer software and hardware attracted unprecedented in flow of FDI to India making it the most sought destination after China. From \$44.8 Billion investment in 2010, there was an eight fold increase in March 2012. On September 2012, by *Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)*, government of India announced permission for FDI in aviation up to 49%, in the broadcast sector up to 74%, in multi-brand retail up to 51% and in single-brand retail up to 100%. The choice of allowing FDI in multi-brand retail up to 51% has been left to each state. It is this decision for allowing FDI in retail sector that triggered wide spread agitations in India.

It is undisputed fact that the foreign investments has booted up the Indian economy in recent decades that even a lay man can realize by comparing the economic situation of the citizens over the decades. Indian streets are characterized by small retail shops and a good proportion of population finding their living hoods in retail sector. The perspective on FDI changes as from which level of the society we are viewing it. A retailer is frightened because of the rival's enormous potential the one who is going to compete with. As a purchaser, he will be happy to be exposed to select from the wide variety choices and he will get a satisfaction of purchase of his will and also at reasonable costs.

The economists view the FDI in terms of the money flow into the economy and its impacts. Similar apprehensions happened when the indigenous retail marketing giants were introduced. People are attracted to the retail shops because of the benefits they are able to avail at reasonable costs. And despite the fears the petty retail shops also surviving, thanks to the Indian demographic features. The retail market in India is highly unorganised with some people holding monopoly of procuring products from the farmers, so that the farmers are the least benefitted group in the supply chain. The FDI in the retail sector can help in goods procurement at reasonable rates as the information on market demand; prices etc become easily available thus eliminating the middle man from the supply chain.

India has prohibited FDI in sectors such as Business of Chit Fund, Nidhi company, agricultural or plantation activities, real estate business, or construction of farm houses, or trading in transferable development, lottery business including government /private lottery, online lotteries, etc, gambling and betting including casinos etc, manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes, activities / sectors not open to private sector investment e.g. Atomic Energy and Railway Transport (other than Mass Rapid Transport Systems) for protecting better interests of the country. Opening of above said sectors to FDI should be prevented in the coming years also.

The disadvantage from FDI arises when the economically powerful investor can control the competitive enterprises in the market which can lead to the monopoly in pricing and due exploitation of the market. Proper policies and regulations should be adopted for avoiding this trend. The sovereignty of the country should not be surrendered to the foreign hands at any costs or means.



85. Indian Labour Law

Abstract: Indian labour laws, complicated legal procedures and wide spread corruption are causing investors to shy away from investing in India. India was ranked far below, lower than Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in case of business index released by the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

There are always many facts of any realistic situation in today's world, especially in a country like ours, where democracy is deemed

above anything else, and where the right to freedom of speech and expression is used (and misused) over and over again. Unlike countries like U.S, there are only two major political alliances (the Democratic and the Republicans). We have, in India, apart from the two dominating alliances, a host of other fronts, all of them persistently engaged in scuffles over every single agenda, sometimes not even paying much attention to what their stands mean to themselves and to the country.

Same has been the case with the issue of introduction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Indian retail market. The government has decided to open up the Indian retail market for global players through FDI in multi-brand retail with a 51% threshold (i.e. they can have only 51% equity in the investment) and 100% ceiling in single-brand retail. There are several versions of the possible outcome of this scenario floating in the different spheres of the country. But the different interpretations ought to be backed with rational reasons.

Broadly, there are two different views with regard to the decision of the Indian government to allow FDI in Indian retail market, one supporting it and the other opposed it. The first argument is put forward by the government itself obviously supporting its resolution. The government claims that 10 million jobs will be created in the retail sector in the next three years (though without floating any judicious explanation). It mandates a minimum investment of 100 million U.S. dollars (approximately 500 Cr rupees) for the foreign companies with at least half the capital to be invested in back-end infrastructures, including cold chains, refrigeration, transportations, packing, sorting and storing. Now, this is no secret that India, amongst the other developed and developing nations of the world, falls way behind when it comes to infrastructures (as has been recently pointed out by Ernst and Young that most of the multi-national companies backing out of India cite lack of proper infrastructures as their key concern). Hence, under these circumstances, this step can be deemed most welcoming.

Another very influential agenda pointed out by the government is the nuisance of middleman ship. FDI in retail will ensure procurement of raw materials, especially of fruits and vegetables, directly from the farmers, thus filtering out the roles of middlemen. The price that a farmer gets for a kilo of onions today is about half the price at which retailers and vendors sell the same stuff to the consumers. Another proposal buoying this idea is that a minimum of 30% of the value of manufactured items procured should be sourced from small and

medium Indian enterprises. The government backs its decision with a host of other reasons, e.g., the presence of foreign retail majors will ensure supply chain efficiency. It also alludes to examples of some other nations (China, Thailand etc.), though they fail to explain why the same system will be beneficial to our country as well.

The second version includes the views of the opposition and those who consider this decision to be inconsistent with the nation's development. There are over 1.2 Cr shops in India, employing over 4 Cr people, 95% of which are small shops run by self-employed people. The opposition claims that the move will lead to large-scale job losses. Since there is no compulsion to procure all the raw and manufactured materials from Indian sources only, it may lead to domestic agro-industries getting haywire. The move can also lead to market prices being controlled by the foreign giants, further causing a slump of traditional Indian markets and monopoly in the markets. The fact being pointed out by the opposition that any comparison being made between India and someone like China is bogus, is crushingly genuine.

Both these versions of possible upshots are anything but restrained. And going by the history of our nation's reaction to issues pertaining to the common-man's life, a lot of hype is being created over the situation and the issue, by and large, is being blown out of proportions. These extremist views, being largely politically motivated, are far from being the truth. The truth lies somewhere in the middle. Firstly, a sheer glance at the whole matter at hand gives anyone the fair idea that this move is going to do more good than harm. Since the government is not directing anything against the Indian domestic enterprises, they can co-exist with the big guns of the world, and a healthy competition is never a bad idea in today's world. They should, in fact, look forward to work in liaison with these companies. If the idea to introduce FDI means that the farmers are going to get their worthy rewards and the masses are going to have access to better qualities of commodities at better prices, then this step should be welcomed with open arms, even if this means that a handful of people will be driven out of jobs. Choosing between two evils, one should always go for the lesser evil.

However, if the government is backing its decision purely on the basis of examples and references of nations like China and U.S., then it should also keep in mind the grave differences between the highly-disciplined systems of theirs and the ever-worsening chaotic conditions of our system.

The bottom line is that any step of any nature taken by the government is always going to benefit a particular section of the society and at the same time, is going to be harmful for another section. But the million-dollar question is whether this decision has really been taken with a chaste heart, or is just another example of greedy politics.

. The government had suffered severe criticism from all sides on this decision because of the concern about the loss of livelihoods it is likely to create. Let us analyze what actually is FDI in multi brand retail and how is it likely to impact the Indian economy. Retailing means selling of goods to the end consumer for final consumption. The Indian retail sector is divided into two groups that is organized and unorganized sector. Organized retail sector includes trading activities of licensed retailers which are registered for sales tax, income tax etc. These retailers are publicity-traded supermarkets, corporate backed hypermarkets and also privately owned large retail businesses. Some examples in India include Big Bazaar, V Mart, and Shopper's Stop etc. Unorganized retailing on the other hand consists of traditional retailing formats like local kirana shops, mandi, beedi/cigarette shops, fruit and vegetable vendors and alike. The share of the organized retailing sector in Indian retail setup is extremely low which is about only 10% and rest 90% of retailing is done by the unorganized sector which mostly employs family members and lack adequate storage and logistics facilities.

Though the current level of opposition which led to the holding back of the FDI in retail policy tends to generate a very negative public opinion towards this but the true picture as not as dark as it is shown. There are many flaws associated with the present retailing set up of unorganized sector which leaves the consumer with very little choice and poor quality goods. From a study it is found that about 30-40% of the farmer's produces gets destroyed because of lack cold storage and warehouse facility. The various riders attached by the government to the opening of multi brand retail in India are likely to take care of such problems. According to these conditions the establishing retail store must invest at least 50% of its total investment in developing back end infrastructure and facilities like modern product sourcing management, logistics, supply-chain management, cold storage, packing, transportation, sorting, processing and refrigeration etc. which will prevent post-harvest losses and will also lead to infrastructure development and employment generation in diverse sectors as according

to the commerce minister around 10 million jobs will be created in three years and farmers will be able to get better prices for their products. Also the mandatory sourcing of at least 30% of their products from small and medium scale enterprises will boost small scale industries as these chains will procure the same for their foreign outlets also.

Customers will be benefitted by competitive prices and variety. It will also help control food inflation. An example can be taken from China and Thailand where similar protests took place in the beginning but after allowing FDI in multi-brand retail these countries had been actually accelerated their economic growth. In India these stores will be allowed only in the cities having a population of million plus thus only about 53 cities will be covered in initial phase. Moreover the final decision to implement the policy will be left with the state governments only allowing them to either accept it or reject it. Hence we can say that if FDI in retail is allowed it will boost the Indian economy by allowing inflow of foreign funds and investment. Also customers will get access to quality products at competitive prices.

But we must also keep in mind that may lead to large scale unemployed in unorganized retail sector. These stores may monopolize the prices. Hence opening up of the FDI retail sector should take place in a gradual phased manner so that small retailer's interests are also taken care of. A possible policy may provide these small retailers with cheap credits, subsidies and technical facilities to increase their efficiency and make them competitive. Government could make it mandatory for these stores to provide certain proportion of employment to rural youth. Appropriate legal frameworks can be implemented to prevent them from resorting to predatory pricing and monopolistic tendencies.

Hence, we can say that if FDI in retail is allowed with certain preconditions it will help boost the Indian economy in the long run and will project a positive image of India regarding its liberalization policies. It will help growth of exports and employment generation. Therefore it must be allowed and at the same time interests of small retailers be also protected y for economic reforms to be effective, otherwise steep decrease in investment growth can be foreseen.



86. Coal Allocation Scam

Abstract: The Controller and Audit General (CAG) report claiming loss of 1, 86,000 Cr to national exchequer by not ensuring transparency during the period of 2004-2009. The CAG has arrived at estimated loss based on the average cost of production and sale price of open cost of Coal India during 2010-2011. The PMO also suspected for delaying a decision on competitive bidding which is under Regulation and Development Act 1957 which could have been implemented way back in 2006. The process of competitive bidding was initiated way back in 2006-09, after correspondence amount various ministers for 2 years the later it was dropped though Development of legal Affairs and law secretary of the time stood against the decision Union Coal Minister Saipradad Jaiswal along with UPA leaders rejected the CAG report. According to Union coal minister the policy which adopted for coal allocation blocks was not faulty. The CAG report is based on few aspect of the coal allocation. The Prime minister of India Dr. Man Mohan Singh in his defense made statement regarding First CAG charge to parliament directly instead of discussing with Public Account Committee (PAC) addressing the finding of the final CAG report.

Coal mining controversy is major scam of 2012 which has involved Rs 1, 86,000 Cr losses to national exchequer. This is a serious allegation against Prime Minister of India Man Mohan Singh who is in a serious scrutiny of the CAG. It led to protest against the ruling political party NCP and its allies at the Centre.

The CAG report has claimed loss of 1, 86,000 Cr. to national exchequer by not ensuring transparency during the period of 2004-2009. The Controller and Audit General (CAG) has arrived estimated loss based on the average cost of production and sale price of open cast mines of Coal India during 2010-2011. The PMO also suspected for delaying a decision on competitive bidding which is under Regulation and Development Act 1957 which could have been implemented way back in 2006. The process of competitive bidding was initiated way back in 2006-09, after correspondence amount various ministers for 2 years the later it was dropped though Development of legal Affairs and law secretary of the time stood against the decision.

One of the biggest beneficiaries of the coal allocation is Anil Ambani's *Reliance Power Limited (RPL)*. On November 2007, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan requested Prime

Minister to RPL to use the surplus coal of captive blocks of Sasan Plant. The recommendation of empowered group of minister was considered and it was granted, the decision resulted in a benefit of Rs 29,033 Cr with a *net present value (NPV)* 11,852 Cr to the project developer. The report says 25 firms including Essar Power, Hindalco, Tata Steel, Tata Power and Jindal steel and power gained ₹ 1.86 Cr from coal allocation.

The coal allocation scam resulted in a deadlock in the parliament Lok Sabha as well as Raj Sabha for four consecutive days. BJP Leader Sushma swaraj and Arun Jeithely argued that since Dr Singh was in charge of coal mining during this period and he should take moral responsibility of the 'Coalgate' scam and resign from the post. Advocate M.L Sharma have filed a *Public Interest Litigation (PIL)* in the Supreme Court seeking for cancellation of 194 blocks based on illegality and unconstitutionality. As a result of this litigation, the Supreme Court of India, in its September 2012 hearing has ordered the government in power on basis of not following policy of competitive bidding for coal allocation. The internal ministers group (IMC) has recommended de-allocation of 4 coal blocks.

Union Coal Minister Saipradad Jaiswal along with UPA leaders rejected the CAG report. According to Union coal minister the policy which adopted for coal allocation blocks was not faulty. The CAG report is based on few aspect of the coal allocation. The Prime minister of India Man Mohan Singh in his defense made statement regarding first CAG charge to parliament directly instead of discussing with *Public Account Committee (PAC)* addressing the finding of the Final CAG report. Prime Minister too has given statements in both the houses. Firstly, computation of extractable reserves based on averages would not be correct. Secondly, the cost of production of coal varies significantly from mine to mine even for CIL due to varying geo-mining conditions, method of extraction, surface features, number of settlements, availability of infrastructure etc. Thirdly, CIL has been generally mining coal in areas with better infrastructure and more favorable mining conditions, whereas the coal blocks offered for captive mining are generally located in areas with more difficult geological conditions. Fourthly, a part of the gains would in any case get appropriated by the government through taxation and under the MMDR Bill, presently

being considered by the parliament, 26% of the profits earned on coal mining operations would have to be made available for local area development. Therefore, aggregating the purported financial gains to private parties merely on the basis of the average production costs and sale price of CIL could be highly misleading. Moreover, as the coal blocks were allocated to private companies only for captive purposes for specified end-uses, it would not be appropriate to link the allocated blocks to the price of coal set by CIL.

The major mines and lignite bearing states like West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Orissa where the oppositions were ruling. They opposed to switch to the process competitive bidding.

Before getting into any conclusion regarding sole responsibility of the scam, we should have kept in mind all the prospective. Since 1993, allocation of captive coal blocks was being done on the basis of recommendations made by an inter-Ministerial Screening Committee which also had representatives of State governments. Allocation of coal blocks to private companies for captive use commenced in 1993 after the Coal Mines Nationalization Act of 1973. It was done with the objective of attracting private investments in specified areas.

Bhartiya Janata Party whose demand for resignation of Prime Minister owing to the moral responsibility of scam. However BJP should have grabbed the opportunity from UPA government's offer to have discussion on the issue. This can be possibility that BJP is avoiding the discussion with government because audit report turned out to be equally guilty unflattering itself. According to CAG report two of them major states Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan had opposed the competitive bidding. The then chief minister of Chhattisgarh Dr. Raman Singh wrote a letter to PM saying bidding in coal blocks would make steel industry unviable and Vasundharah Raje, past CM of Rajasthan opposed saying it is against Sarkaria Commission Recommendation.

Hence, it is clear that not only leading party is involved in the 'Coalgate' scam, whoever is involved in it this is for sure, the corruption in India is growing day by day which is impacting the economy and growth of India. As a citizen of India, we should choose the wise leader for country. The duty of youth is to challenge corruption.

87. Discovery of Higgs Boson

Abstract: Obviously, discovery of 'Higgs Boson' or actually, to be more accurate, a particle which shows properties very close to 'Higgs Boson' as theorized by Peter Higgs has become a model of scientific approach of understanding nature and it is a proof of how much can be achieved just by strong will and vision. What happened at CERN is obviously a great discovery, but that's not the end, and obviously it was not the beginning. Unknown to most people is the fact that the particle found at CERN is one of fewer than 20 building blocks all known matter is made from. In fact, in 1980s CERN made discovery of W and Z Bosons which were also very important in the standard model but it didn't get as much attention as Higgs or in a way nothing compared to it. So, it is not that much new to the physicists, then what makes it really special and worthy of so much media coverage.

Almost 50 years after the physicist Peter Higgs gave theoretical proofs about existence of it, the Higgs Boson has now been successfully detected along with concluding data about its existence. But what is special about this particle? Is it wise to call it the 'god particle'? And what is the reason of so much of media excitement on this?

Obviously, discovery of 'Higgs Boson' a particle which shows properties very close to 'Higgs Boson' as theorized by Peter Higgs has become a model of scientific approach of understanding nature and it is a proof of how much can be achieved just by strong will and vision. What happened at CERN is obviously a great discovery, but that's not the end, and obviously it was not the beginning. Unknown to most people is the fact that the particle found at CERN is one of fewer than 20 building blocks all known matter is made from. In fact, in 1980s CERN made discovery of W and Z Bosons which were also very important in the standard model but it didn't get as much attention as Higgs or in a way nothing compared to it. So, if it is not that much new to the physicists, then what makes it really special and worthy of so much media coverage.

As long as media is concerned there are number of facts which together made it 'The Big Show'. The amount of money which had been put in creating the LHC and making it run is just eye popping. Also, a theory given almost half century back finally became experimentally verified. Apart from that, the technological advancement in communication and involvement of scientists from different regions of the world at such a large scale resulted in the big buzz.

The most distinguishing feature of the particle is its associated field which gives mass to other particles within the field. And the fact that we are much familiar in handling things which have mass rather than what gives mass makes it hard to explain, and this 'Hard to explain' part is also one of the reasons of naming it the 'god particle' by some media groups. Calling 'Higgs Boson' discovery historic is easy but if instead of being amazed we try to understand it then we will know that this step in science was the result of more than 50 years of theoretical and experimental work and every step that led to this is as much prized and an achievement for human race as is this one.

As exciting is this discovery, there are innumerable problems in the world which are not solved by it. There is still a lot to be researched and this is just another chapter in the book of science like all other which led to it and many the others which will be found because of it.



88. INS Vikramaditya War Ship to our Indian Navy

Abstract: The Dock trails of INS Vikramaditya began in March 2011 to test the main power generation units and radio-electric armament. Indian navy personal also began their training in December 2011. On April 19, 2012, it was announced that all internal systems are functioning and the ship was entirely self-contained. The sea trails for INS Vikramaditya were started on 8th June, 2012, which are scheduled for 120 days. Indian Navy's long term objective is to be able to respond to emergent situations far away from main land. The 'String of Pearls' theory of China and increasing Chinese activity in the Indian Ocean may put India at a military disadvantage. India needs to develop a grand strategy to counter the Chinese aggression in the Indian Ocean. INS Vikramaditya will have to play a crucial role in achieving this objective. Induction of INS Vikramaditya will significantly increase the overall effectiveness of the Indian Navy. This will be a milestone in the road map of the Indian Navy, to become a Blue-water navy. INS Vikramaditya's weakness will be defensive. An official Indian CAG report says that INS Vikramaditya will have no aerial defences until 2017.

In modern times, aircraft carrier for any navy across the world forms one of the most essential parts. If any country wants to flex its muscles in the high seas then an aircraft carrier is more than a necessity. India is one of the few countries currently owning an aircraft carrier, INS

Viraat. Though the life of the sole aircraft carrier is coming to an end and to replace the ageing soldier INS Vikramaditya is being inducted into the navy. Induction of the warship INS VIKRAMADITYA to the Indian Navy was in 2013.

INS Vikramaditya was originally built as Admiral Gorshkov in Russia during the cold war but was later on put up on sale in the year 1996 as it was not feasible to maintain such a carrier on a post-cold war budget. Since then India and Russia had been on the negotiating table for the purchase of the Kiev class carrier. Finally in April 2004, it was agreed that the ship would be free and India would only pay for the refitting it's desired.

India demanded the hybrid carrier to be converted into a full carrier by removing the missile launchers and other weaponry system from the foredeck of the carrier to make space for the STOBAR (short take off and assisted recovery) system. The things demanded by India to be modified also included the boilers to be replaced by diesel types. The hull has been modified and enlarged to add more stability. The complete Gorchakov package would also include MiG 29k all-weather planes, Kamov Ka 31 helicopters, advanced radar system and many other small things.

Though many skeptics are wary of this carrier but most of the experts in the industry have maintained that after refurbishing the carrier would fulfill most of the current needs of the Indian navy and add the requisite muscle, after the initiation of the work as the cost overruns and revision cause stale mate between the two countries. Russia even expressed its desire to continue the refurbishing and induct it into its own navy. The carrier comes with a life expectancy of about 20 years but our navy system expert's gauge the carrier should last for about next 30 yrs. The most important aspect of this buy is not for it to act as a short term transition carrier as INS Viraat is retired and INS Vikrant is still being developed. Its main role lies along with the indigenously developed INS Vikrant. It will allow the Indian navy to deploy its resources more effectively and would be able to maintain different enemies at different locations. As aircraft carriers play such a pivotal role in modern warfare system as they not only acts as offshore refueling points but they also act as support system in the form of men, material, strategy etc., and it's not just for the navy but for the other arms of the defense establishment also.

The skeptics still argue about Vikramaditya being a second class warship but in USD \$ 2.2 Billion, it's a steal as compared to the cost for a newly built aircraft carrier of the same specifications, size and firepower. The addition of power to the Indian navy would come not just with the MiG 29 planes or the 'Helix' copters but also from the range of movement of Indian forces it would facilitate, along with the requisite machinery and other heavy goods which might prove to be too costly for airlifts. INS Vikramaditya is another step in the journey of India and its people towards a more stable and secured future.

A country's power is derived from its military capability. A country's military capability also determines its capability to exert influence on global scale. The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian armed forces. The primary objective of the Navy is to secure the maritime borders. India also uses its Navy to enhance its foreign relations. In recent years, the Indian Navy has undergone considerable modernization to replace aging equipment currently in service. One such modernization is, replacing the aging INS Viraat aircraft-carrier with INS Vikramaditya.

INS Vikramaditya is a modified Kiev class aircraft carrier built by the former Soviet Union during the cold war period. INS Vikramaditya is the new name for Admiral Gorchakov. The Admiral Gorchakov entered service in 1987, but was deactivated in 1996 because it was too expensive to operate on a post-cold war budget. This attracted the attention of India which was looking for a way to expand its carrier aviation facilities. After a series of negotiations, India and Russia signed a deal in 2004 for the sale of this ship. They announced delivery date for INS Vikramaditya was August 2008, but with issues compounded by the ongoing cost overruns for upgrading the ship. Its induction in to the Navy was scheduled on December 4, 2012. INS Vikramaditya is equipped with MiG-29K Fulcrum fighters and Kamov anti-submarine helicopters.



89. Setting up of National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC)

Abstract: We need to examine as to why there is a need of NCTC. All police and intelligence agencies in India have their designated roles. All the police agencies in India are assigned the role of law enforcement, crime control and crime investigation.

While the intelligence agencies are already burdened with the herculean task of gathering, analyzing and developing the field inputs. Hence the present structure has a scope for a specialized agency in fighting terrorism. And the formation of NCTC is a step towards fulfilling that void. However it is to be understood that the NCTC will not be making any arbitrary arrests. All its activities will be regulated by the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and Indian Penal Code (IPC). Now-a-days increasing numbers of states have established their own counter-terrorism organization like Mumbai ATS, UPSTF, and Delhi STF etc. In this case, NCTC will become a mother organization and help in better coordination of these organizations and increase in their potential.

The ongoing debate between Centre and various States' administrations on the scope and structure of the *National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC)* invokes several misgivings on the efficacy of our federal fabric. The Home Minister has led a callous show from the Centre and opposition parties in the states have maliciously taken advantage to gain as many political points as offered. While the political circus remains without a ringmaster. The innocent, ordinary Indian remains uncertain if his bus or train ride to office or shopping time with family is safe and secure from extremists who brazenly and mockingly strike, abduct, hijack etc. seemingly at their own whims and free will.

Although the Centre continues to generate much hula hoop around the highly ambitious NCTC fact remains our track record – botched operations like Dante Wada incident where 76 CRPF jawans were brutally ambushed and RAW reported Pakistani shopkeepers and traders as terrorists, abductions of government officials, prolonged trials of Taj and CST assailant Ajmal Kasab and Afzal Guru led attackers of the Parliament - continues to pain the blood and kin of victims and lowers citizens' confidence. Nevertheless the evolution and nature of the ongoing debate which has engrossed national thinkers and international observers focused upon counter-terrorism, is noteworthy.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its June '08 report "Combating Terrorism" suggested a federal agency to investigate terror offences under CBI among other recommendations. After the November '09 Mumbai terror attacks at the Intelligence Bureau Centenary Endowment lecture the Home Minister P. Chidambaram took the dais to propose the bold new NCTC. Chidambaram ambitiously envisaged a body subsuming NIA, NSG, NTRO etc.

together with the Multi Agency Centre supported by the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) – accessing about 21 categories of database entries (railway, air travel, income tax, credit card and bank account statements, etc.). However a truncated version within the Intelligence Bureau was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security in January 2012 empowered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for arrests, searches and seizures.

Response to the NCTC at the Chief Ministers' conference was highly critical of the proposed body. Opposition CMs Narendra Modi, J Jayalalitha, Naveen Patnaik, Nitish Kumar and Prakash Singh Badal as well as alliance CMs Mamata Banerjee and Omar Abdullah amongst other seasoned bureaucrats voiced concerns on various aspects of the proposed setup. Principle among these was the anticipated infringement of state subjects of 'Public Order' and 'Police' by empowering NCTC to arrest/search/seize "in situations where immediate action is required" on intelligence inputs without informing state administrations. Such power resting in the secretive IB – a non-constitutional, non-accountable body - was also a concern for them. The presence of a multitude of agencies – Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), National Investigation Agency (NIA), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Anti-Terror Squad (ATS), etc. also begged a question on the need for an additional organization.

The NCTC also adds to various bones of contention between Centre and States such as abolition of cascading taxes under proposed uniform goods and services tax regime, feeble state-level Lokayuktas in Lokpal institution, rehabilitation and resettlement clauses in the proposed Land Acquisition Bill and proposed amendments to RPF and BSF acts to empower them with authority to arrest. However as we lurch through blasts, ambushes and abductions, the criticality of concerted and synchronized Centre-State efforts towards a counterterrorism body to face our complex internal security challenges cannot be emphasized further. Encouragingly the NIA met ATS units of 28 states and UTs - formed four sub-groups to streamline investigation process, Maoist influx, Northeast insurgency and fake currency circulation and also called for coordination to track and nab 75 'wanted' people. But we should bear in mind, the NIA's role shall commence after an incident has occurred.

Jihadists centrally plan and attack while Maoists roam jungles transgressing state borders freely. Counterterrorism has a great responsibility towards the citizenry in rooting out forces inside and outside our borders that incite fund and provide resources to such activities while the State has to ensure youth have several avenues of constructive opportunities. Turf wars will be best avoided by utilizing the best skills of each participant. It would be erroneous to not utilize the collated intelligence of the Centre from across monetary, communication, freight, satellite, etc. surveillance networks and the understanding of local languages, terrain and population available with state police and ATS units. The US NCTC operates under the Directorate of Intelligence with experts from CIA, FBI and the Pentagon collecting, collating and assessing information to share with policymakers. After 9/11 Bill Clinton stood aside President George W. Bush when he declared War on Terror and ten years hence President Barack Obama had George W. Bush by his side when addressing from Ground Zero on Osama's killing. Unfortunately, we lack leaders of vision who will prevent our going from one crisis to the next with our lives reduced to mere statistics.

National counter terrorism center better known as NCTC is a premier organization designed to deliver an edge to the government in its fight against terrorism. Terrorism is a very widespread and flexible phenomenon. Incidents of terrorism happen every now and then. To counter these threats, it was decided by the present U.P.A. government to establish an organization specifically dedicated to the task of fighting terrorists. It was to work under Intelligence Bureau, and was armed with powers like making arrests to carry out its functions smoothly. However the coming of NCTC has caused quite a stir in the governance sphere in India. Many states have accused that the powers given to NCTC are an encroachment on the powers and a clear violation of the demarcation of powers between Centre and state given under the constitution of India. Some voices have arisen that there is no need of NCTC because the existing agencies are adequate to fight terrorism. Ever since the Mumbai blasts of 1993 have occurred the threat of terrorism has grown significantly in India and over the years sporadic events of terror have made news every time an act took place. 26/11 was also one such act but the manner in which it was carried not only reminded us of the growing threat of terror but also managed to expose

some serious loopholes that exist in our system of national security. Comprehensive reforms in national security began henceforth and recently one of the primary institutions slated to be setup under such reforms was proposed by union HM P. Chidambaram. It is the *national counter terrorism center (NCTC)*.

The body of NCTC is made on the similar lines of its US counterpart (with some changes made to suite Indian requirements) whose main objective is to counter any terrorist activity that might take place India. It is being seen as a huge step in dealing with the evil of terrorism.

The proposed institution of NCTC will have investigation, intelligence and operational powers vested with it. Critics say that not only the powers are extraordinary but it is too much for a single body to handle effectively. Intelligence should be the only prerogative of NCTC and the rest should be handled by the already existing setups of police and central agencies.

NCTC is a national level agency which would undertake the investigation, interrogation and indictment of all terror attacks in the country and the culprits involved, is one such step in the direction to counter terrorism in the country.

The NCTC Act is based on the lines of the US Anti-Terrorism initiative, which has more or less the same provisions, but the only difference is that the leaders there are more concerned about their people's security and here in our country, they are more interested in pouring every critical issue, irrespective of the degree of criticality, in the political cauldron and draw out their respective cheap vested interests in order to make the reform process cumbersome and leave it indecisive.

At the national level, we have security agencies like Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Commando Forces and at State-level we have Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and police forces to take up with the issue of terrorism, which has grown in menacing proportions in the last decade or so. Terror attack on Parliament on 13th Dec 2001, 2006 Ayodhya terror attacks on Babri Masjid, 2006 and 2010 Varanasi bombings of which IM took responsibility, repeated strikes in Delhi and 2011 Delhi High Court bombing, all are the tight hard slaps on the faces of our security chiefs and Defense and Home Ministry. Besides losing our military brave hearts and innocent civilians, we Indians have started losing something else

too, which is more horrendous and worrying as far as citizens of a Republican country is concerned, and that thing is the faith on our administrators and the sense of security that we are safe within the boundaries of our nation.

India both geographically and demographically is a vast country which makes it quite easy for the terrorists from outside and inside the territory of India to operate with ease. Moreover, this being the vary reasons for the inability of security agencies of the country to act against such terrorist activities effectively.

It took over two years for the NCTC proposal to finally get the Cabinet Committee on security nod and was decided to start appointments of directors and core team of officials by March 31, 2012 so that the agency can start working from 2013.

The ministry of home affairs is trying its level best to satisfy the questions raised by the states. The center has assured the states that the counter-terrorism body will work in synchronization with the states. The coordination with state government shall be built into its operating system through state nodal officers and standard operating procedures. This will take care of apprehension that any counter terror action by NCTC can be conducted without involving the state governments. The center may accept the state governments demand that the authority and functions of the standing council be defined in the NCTC order itself. There is a need to build coordination between state and center over NCTC, while also ensuring that secrecy is not compromised.

The political parties of India should raise themselves above the limitations of politics and should support the formation of a body like NCTC. The government should formulate such provisions to help fighting against terrorism in a more efficient manner rather than ending up in forming another investigating agency.

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90. Increasing Demand of Electricity

Abstract: The Jharia coalfields in Jharkhand constitute the richest coal-bearing area in the country: they contain large quantities of high grade coking coal. Also in India power generated through nuclear power plants such as Kudamkulam, Tarapur and Kakrapur, wind power plants such as Muppandal, Tamil Nadu and recently

Gujarat government started 500MW solar power plant. Apart from this India buys electricity from Countries like Bhutan and Nepal. India has an opportunity to pursue its existing nuclear program with more focus on RandD using Thorium as a long-term option. Various Technologies for Thorium based plants are already being developed and deployed on a test basis in India which has a promising future. Also there is comparatively less impact on ecology when India adapts to Nuclear energy rather than depending more on Coal. In the 13th. Annual Report of the Planning Commission, inputs were provided for the preparation of a Note for the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) in consultation with the Ministry of Power for approval on the “Key Policy Targets of Power Sector” for the Year 2012-13.

Energy is the most fundamental requirement of every nation as it progresses through the ladder of development. Of course, once it reaches a relative degree of development, the energy demand becomes more stable. There is a distinct and categorical correlation between the energy consumption and income of a nation — each reinforcing the other. Every step into progress comes with an addition of demand for energy — cars, ships and aircraft to move, hospitals to give quality healthcare, education, as it follows the model of e-connectivity, production of more and better goods and irrigation for better farming.

In India, the electricity is being generated from different sources such as using coal, hydroelectric power plants, solar energy, and wind power, nuclear fuels etc. But more than 50% of electricity is being generated from Coal which is also called as Type-0 fuel. The Jharia coalfields in Jharkhand constitute the richest coal-bearing area in the country: they contain large quantities of high grade coking coal. Also in India power generated through nuclear power plants such as Kudamkulam, Tarapur and Kakrapur, wind power plants such as Muppandal, Tamil Nadu and recently Gujarat government started 500MW solar power plant. Apart from this India buys electricity from Countries like Bhutan and Nepal. In India, overall energy consumption per year is 258.701GW and per capita usage of electricity in developed counties like US is fourteen times more than in India. It is easily understood that as country progresses, energy also needs increases. According to the 12th Planning Commission, it is understood that more focus will be on manufacturing sector which has more energy requirement. Being India the 8th largest producer of Wind energy and has the larger scope of generating solar electricity from different states like Rajasthan, Gujarat etc. there is a lot of opportunity in India for

the energy production which requires only initial capital and little maintenance.

In addition to that, Type - I fuel *Thorium* is 90th element in the periodic table, slightly lighter than *Uranium* and available in the purer form. It is believed that the amount of energy contained in the Thorium resources is more than the combined total energy that is left out in petroleum, coal, other fossil fuels and Uranium. India has an opportunity to pursue its existing nuclear program with more focus on R and D using Thorium as a long-term option. Various Technologies for Thorium based plants are already being developed and deployed on a test basis in India which has a promising future. Also there is comparatively less impact on ecology when India adapts to Nuclear energy rather than depending more on Coal.

It is clearly understood that India will have more electricity need in 2014 than 2013 and India will be a electricity surplus country in 2014 provided it better makes use of the existing resources and more focus on using Type-1 fuel than Type - 0 by overcoming the internal aggressions such as Kudankulam nuclear power plant and by maintaining good relationship with other nations. India is more dependent on other countries like France, US, Germany, Australia for the nuclear fuel. Also steps taken by government such as newly introduction of *Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 2011* will be helpful for better use of our nation's natural fuel resources for our country's benefit. Power theft is a very big concern. Nearly 20-30 % of the electricity is wasted by power theft. So this must be prohibited at any cost. Also government should make people aware about the necessity of saving power for the future.



91. Union Budget and Adhar Scheme

Abstract: Let's start with the tax reforms which are considered to be the most significant part of the budget as it affects the 'middle-income's economy directly. Exemption limit for the salaried persons has been raised from ₹1, 80,000 to ₹2, 00,000 which surely can't be considered a substantial increase because this year people were expecting higher exemption on the back of high inflation and rising food prices. In the social sector, widening the reach of "Aadhaar" in 200 identified districts and linking social welfare schemes with the biometric platform (e.g. NREGS

and PDS) could well be the unprecedented move towards the social inclusion process. The allocation of 5.75 lakh Cr to the agriculture and allied sector, aimed at achieving the much touted 4% growth in the sector for which the economy has been yearning since the announcement of last 5-year plan, could bring in efficient markets and handsome returns to the farmers.

Union Budget often succeeds Economic Survey every year. This is a forward looking economic statement which reflects the macro and micro economic aspects of the economy. The strategies and course of actions taken by the government in the form of allocations, schemes and outlays is to bolster growth and development process. Economic Survey can be seen as the balance sheet of the previous year's economic and social transactions within the economy showing various assets and liabilities in various sectors of the economy. Every year, before the budget presentation, there is so much talks about what the government has in the offing for the common man which sometimes gets culminated with rejoice and sometimes with despair. This year's budget has invoked mixed reactions from various communities which raises a debate whether the introduced reforms are crucial or just rhetoric.

Let's start with the tax reforms which are considered to be the most significant part of the budget as it affects the 'middle-income' economy directly. Exemption limit for the salaried persons has been raised from ₹ 1, 80,000 to ₹ 2, 00,000 which surely can't be considered a substantial increase because this year people were expecting higher exemption on the back of high inflation and rising food prices. But by looking at the higher fiscal deficit figures of the order of 5.9% of the GDP, the move looks reasonable as the government is trying to boost the average tax collection to compensate the deficit problem. In the Financial Sector, *QFIs (Qualified Financial Investors)* are allowed to invest in the corporate and government bond market marks a welcome move that might see large FII inflows which got subdued after the recession in the wake of slow recovery in the US markets and Europe sovereign debt crisis, which would strengthen the investors' sentiments in the market but due to the fluctuating nature of portfolio investments the approach has to be cautious. Early implementation of DTC and GST Network would be the landmark events to watch out for in this fiscal year.

In the social sector, widening the reach of "Aadhaar" in 200 identified districts and linking social welfare schemes with the biometric platform (e.g. NREGS and PDS) could well be the unprecedented move

towards the social inclusion process. The allocation of 5.75 lakh Cr to the agriculture and allied sector aimed at achieving the much touted 4% growth in the sector for which the economy has been yearning since the announcement of last 5-year plan, could bring in efficient markets and handsome returns to the farmers. Allowing 100% and 51% FDI in single-brand and multi-brand retail respectively hasn't achieved a consensus yet but the parliament would surely look to come up with a cognitive outcome keeping the impacts of the move on the unorganized sector and the farming community. Increase in excise duty from 10% to 12% has caused worries in the industry as the declaration would likely to hit the manufacturing sector dearly. Increase duty on artificial gold ornaments has attracted wrath from jewelers across the country.

Every change has its loss as well as benefits. It's up to us to minimize costs and maximize benefits. This year's budget has some goodies to offer which might well work out to be the hit of the year. Universalization of RTE and NFSB will pose a daunting task in front of the Government but the success lies in the integrated community-driven effort and by making sure that being a responsible citizen of the country, each one of us should do one's bit to reduce corruption in our daily life and brings in transparency so that the agenda which the Government has set forth to achieve, could do so in a holistic manner.



92. Collapse of Kingfisher Airlines

Abstract: "King of good times" is seeing its worst time in recent months. All the 'service with glamour' provided by Vijay Mallya is not looking so glamorous at the closed ticket counters. Several flights have been cancelled and Government is swinging between the idea of shutting down or not the service. The losses incurred by the kingfisher is around 7000 Cr. Revenue department is also blaming the airlines for tax evasion of another 2000 Cr. His shares tumbled around 19 percent at BSE. Airlines, along with its owner, are facing its worst financial crunch. Mallya kept this business under his direct control and this was one of his biggest blunders.

Many of the management gurus and experts were perceived to be behind the global recession of 2008, but there is only one man who's mismanagement could have done this...yes the Big Bang collapse of India's most fashionable and luxurious airline brand – "Kingfisher".

There are several reasons for the much touted financial collapse of Kingfisher which was foresaw by Gopinath and many other experts on Kingfisher board itself.

First of all, Mallya's inability to strategize and place the critical airline business on the national and global front, which is totally different both in nature as well as in approach than his liquor business. His attitude of 'Ekla Chalo Re' in airline venture caused him much harm than good as he didn't delegate the business operations and decision making rights to other skilled executives who could have taken much better decisions than him. Secondly, he has mastered the art of squandering away opportunities, first when he acquired Air Deccan and then ignoring the microeconomic conditions prevailing within the country's boundary (where there is a sustained large market for Low Cost Carrier Airline) as majority of people belongs to the economy class, he continued to take care of the elite and executive classes. Thirdly, he always considered Air Deccan as his step child and continued allocating globally operating flight slots to Kingfisher, completely ignoring the core competence of Air Deccan in operating flights on international skies which otherwise could have generated profits for the ailing airline carrier.

Not able to cope up with ever mounting debts due to insufficient passenger traffic on such routes and increasing fuel prices, he then resorted to salary cuts and pay loss of the airline employees which further aggravated the airline woes as the employees started venting out their frustration in the form of misbehaviour and mistreatment of passengers which broke the cordial link between the airline and its loyal customer base.

There is another critical feature to this failure is that he has been over indulged and wasting away resources in Kingfisher calendar activities and of course, the multi Cr rupee event, IPL where he had diverted huge sums of money from his core businesses. Despite asking government of India to bail his debt-ridden airlines out (accumulated losses stands at 8200 Cr), he better would have invested this money in restructuring the Airlines' organization structure and strategize the course of action to be taken with his top executives and lenders. Government, though did the right thing not to give away any relief package to him as the national funds are meant to be used in bailing out national ventures (Indian Airlines in this case) first rather than a

private one, and that too until and unless it is of some strategic importance to the nation and Kingfisher is surely not fits into the picture.

Kingfisher was launched as an all-economy, single-class configuration aircraft with food and entertainment systems. After about a year of operations, the airline suddenly shifted its focus to luxury. When an airline keeps changing its model and takes to random expansion, there is no time for the airline to stabilize. After Kingfisher's plunge into luxury came its next folly—a merger with Air Deccan, an airline formed by Captain G R Gopinath in 2003. The general belief is that this resulted as the fall of Kingfisher airlines which started the very day when they bought Air Deccan. Capt. Gopinath, the owner of Air Deccan can be termed as shrewd but smart investor who knew when to part with his investment, just at the right time. The all-economy configuration of Air Deccan was rebranded and called Kingfisher Red which continued to operate as its low-cost wing till recently.

Kingfisher ended up spending Rs 550 Cr on an airline that had losses of over Rs 550 Cr. It is widely believed that Kingfisher merged itself with Air Deccan so that it could classify as an airline with five years of domestic flying in 2008, thus fulfilling requirements to fly international routes. The fact that Jet had meanwhile swallowed Air Sahara didn't help, fuelling a competitive race to be the biggest airline around. Essentially jet fuel prices began to sky-rocket and soon touched \$150. 2008 recession came that made fundamentals in the airline industry worse.

Some companies just fail to learn—either from the examples that its peers may have set for the industry or from its own past mistakes. Now, Kingfisher has decided to change its model yet again—discontinuing its Kingfisher Red brand and completely converting its fleet to a dual class, full-service configuration. Kingfisher was gifted to Sidhartha Mallya by his father on his birthday i.e. a Near Zero experience in running a company and the later CEOs appointed by Mallya couldn't bring any significant result too. IPL is also one of the reasons for Kingfisher downfall because it is known that many of the money was diverted to IPL from Kingfisher airlines resulting into defaulted Loans and recently became a NPA (non-performing asset) to its leading bankers like SBI .

The lack of management and top of it the soaring petrol prices, the airport charges added to Kingfishers humiliation. Frequent cancellation of flights, nonpayment to employees, rude staff laid the ground for Kingfishers grave. Kingfisher reputation took a beating when it was known that employee's tax was not submitted to government on time since the last three years. Government of India also closed 40 Kingfisher's bank account. The Kingfisher employees were not paid three months' salary. A company which forgets its employees is also soon forgotten. A classic example is Kingfisher airlines. Mallya had to sell 49% of his ownership of Force India(F1 car) to Subrato Roy to get kingfisher going (owner of ailing airline Air Sahara , years back) , but it too failed to save the airlines from tatters. We still have hope from Mallya that he will refrain from over indulgence and concentrate on his fragile business.

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93. 2G Scam

Abstract: The latest and the biggest of all scandals had surfaced in 2010 as 2G Spectrum scam when CAG showed large-scale irregularities in the spectrum allocation. As per draft CAG report placed before Supreme Court, the 2G Spectrum scandal involved undercharging mobile telephony companies for frequency allocation licenses and the short fall of money is estimated to be ₹176,645 Cr. The evidence shown by Subramanian Swami definitely shows a relation of Chidambaram with 2G case and the ruling of the lower court is very surprising. The co-accused plea is based on prima facie evidence. Unless Chidambaram's case is fully investigated like Raja, no one can say that he is culpable or not. It can also be estimated that a scam of this scale is not possible without the involvement of senior Government Ministers like Chidambaram who held a not negotiable ministry in relation to financial matters at that time

In India, the menace of corruption is evident from a long time. The Ketan Parekh's Securities scam in 2001, Navy war room spy scandal 2006, cash for vote scandal 2008, Madhu Koda mining scam 2009, Commonwealth games scam 2010 are just a small list of big scandals in recent years but the actual list can't be quantified here. The problem of Corruption is also evident from the *Transparency*

International Corruption Perception Index (TICPI), in which India ranked 95th out of 178 countries.

The latest and the biggest of all scandals had surfaced in 2010 as 2G Spectrum scam when CAG showed large-scale irregularities in the spectrum allocation. As per draft CAG report placed before Supreme Court, the 2G Spectrum scandal involved undercharging mobile telephony companies for frequency allocation licenses and the short fall of money is estimated to be ₹ 176,645 Cr. The main person accused of this scam was the then Telecom Minister A Raja. It is also believed that P Chidambaram, the then Finance Minister, and also favored Telecom Minister in the scam. The Janta Party chief Subramanian Swami deposed against Chidambaram in a Delhi court to prove his alleged complicity in the 2G spectrum scam. Swami alleged that Chidambaram was involved in giving licenses on 2001 prices and that he endorsed Raja's actions and decisions. Swami said that he produced before the court documents from CBI that showed Chidambaram gave permission for allowing Unitech and Swan Telecom to sell their equity to Norway's Telenor and UAE-based Etisalat respectively. He added that Chidambaram 'disregarded' a home ministry advisory and allowed the foreign companies to buy in the Indian companies, compromising national security. The Delhi court on 04 Feb 2012 dismissed swami's plea to make Chidambaram a co-accused in the 2G case. However, Swami has cleared that he will go to the higher court to seek out the matter.

The evidence shown by Swami definitely shows a relation of Chidambaram with 2G case and the ruling of the lower court is very surprising. The co-accused plea is based on prima facie evidence. Unless Chidambaram's case is fully investigated like Raja, no one can say that he is culpable or not. It can also be estimated that a scam of this scale is not possible without the involvement of senior Government Ministers like Chidambaram who held a not negotiable ministry in relation to financial matters at that time. In this case, the Court should have directed for an investigation rather than dismissal. Swami should continue his fight and P Chidambaram whose election results is questionable and still in the court, should not feel that he is free. As a representative of the people, he is answerable to the Nation for his knowledge of the 2G facts and wrong practices. In case he is found guilty of not performing his duty properly then like everyone else he should

also get corresponding reward. The fate of Chidambaram will only be clear in due course.



94. Rahul Gandhi's Entry into Politics

Abstract: Till 2006 Rahul Gandhi eschewed to hold any political office. In 2006 at Hyderabad in high profile congress campaign for the 2007 assembly election, Rahul Gandhi was again urged by the congress camaraderie to step ahead and become the iconic youth face of congress to take on the reins of leadership. Consequently in September, 2007 Rahul acceded as general secretary of All India Congress Committee and also took charge of youth congress and NSUI. With a sound political acumen and vision of the party Rahul created a think tank for the beleaguered Indian Youth Congress for which he interviewed a bunch of 40 pre-screened people. The organization has been revamped since Rahul took over the charge. Rahul had been confronted and quizzed at JNU, considered to be influenced by leftist, on hierarchical politics in India, visit to Dalit house, economic growth and education reforms. In 2009 Lok Sabha elections once again Rahul was able to woo the voters leading to a victory margin of over 3,33,000 votes

Rahul Gandhi better known by the sobriquet 'RG' in the party circle arrived in the mainstream politics during mid of the past decade. A graduate from Trinity College, University of Cambridge Gandhi's entry into politics didn't appall many. Politics comes naturally to Gandhi who since coming to active politics has been heralded as PM in making.

In the words of Rahul Gandhi "There is a work that my father had started, a dream he had dreamt. I come to you today saying, allow me to carry that dream into reality". These words of Rahul urged the country to accept him as the successor of a quintessential figure of Indian National Congress, Rajiv Gandhi, who revolutionized our country. Till 2003, Rahul Gandhi didn't conform to the request of his supporters of joining active politics. In March 2004 Lok Sabha elections, Sonia moved to the Rae Bareilly constituency leaving the patriarchal constituency of Amethi for Rahul to contest and to bring him into the fray. In his first interview with foreign media, Rahul portrayed himself as a unifying leader of the country and condemned "divisive" politics in India saying that he would try to reduce caste and religion tensions. The result is being a pompous victory by a margin of over 100,000 votes.

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Rahul had been confronted and quizzed at JNU, considered to be influenced by leftist, on hierarchical politics in India, visiting Dalit's house, economic growth and education reforms. In 2009 Lok Sabha elections, once again Rahul was able to woo the voters leading to a victory margin of over 3, 33,000 votes.

As we know, nothing comes with ease; same has been the case with him too. He has been marred with controversy in a brief carrier spanning over 8 years. His remarks over 7/11 terror attack, comparison of RSS and SIMI, Sukannya Devi case and ilk issues have also irked the public. Though one may say that as a part of Gandhi dynasty leads him into politics but then it is one's charisma and persona that sustains them in a long run. Further it is also pertinent to recall once again that prior entering into quagmire of Indian politics and confront with its vexed issues he had done a lot of ground work to firm up his foothold, sine qua non to fulfill the dream that his father has dreamt.



95. Has Corruption Haunted India's Growth?

Abstract: In India, corruption is a result of relation between bureaucrats, politicians, and criminals. At the systematic level, Indian democracy itself is "based on corruption because all political parties have to collect funds in cash, which is black money. Corruption thus is now a low-risk, high-profit business. At present, political corruption is common in India. In many parts of the country, elections seem mainly for spreading crime. This clearly shows that politicians are in constant thirst for money and not caring about the welfare of people. Tax evasion is one of the most popular forms of corruption. Former Mines Minister and Chief Minister of

Jharkhand, Madhu Koda, is in jail on allegations of having siphoned off about US\$1 Billion, mainly from corrupt mining deals during his short tenure. Alleged tax evader Hassan Ali Khan who is supposedly an associate of mobster Dawood Ibrahim, allegedly illicitly placed US\$8 Billion in UBS AB Zurich bank. Audits of the giant rural work program, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme (MGNREGA) indicate that in some states only a small percentage of allocated funds is provided to intended recipients.

Corruption has different connotations for different people. However, in general terms it is stated as an act of bribing someone to gain some benefits which may be lawful or unlawful. As a popular saying goes that before a person has to pay bribe to get wrong thing done but today one has to pay for getting right things done at the right time. Corruption has become so pervasive that some people take it as an accepted way of life. The prevention of corruption act 1988 defines corruption on taking gratification other than the legal remuneration in respect of an official act. Corruption can be defined as misuse of public funds for private. Corruption may be attributed to plethora of reasons like acts of commission and omission or delay, exercise or discretion as violation of rules.

Though India has been hailed as a rising economic power in recent times, attracting FDIs (*Foreign Direct Investments*) from all over the world. The picture is not very rosy. The rampant corruption prevailing in the country in all the spheres is posing a threat to India's growth story. As corruption is directly linked to the economy, it can have disastrous effect on India's economy. Slower growth means the fight against poverty will slow as number of jobs will be reduced. According to a report India tops the list of black money in the entire world with almost US\$1456 Billion in Swiss bank. However 80% of Indians earns less than Rs 5 per day. Alleged tax evader Hassan Ali Khan (supposedly an associate of gangster Dawood Ibrahim) allegedly and illicitly placed US\$8 Billion in UBS AB Zurich bank. In his short tenure, Madhu Koda, the then chief minister of Jharkhand allegedly siphoned off about US\$1 Billion. In 2011, India ranked 95th of 183 countries in transparency international corruption perception index. The major reason behind India's low scoring is big corruption scandals, like the Commonwealth Games and the 2G telecom scam.

Corruption has destabilized India's growth and will continue to do so unless some strict action is taken. Private investments in India

are slowing down due to corruption prevalent in the country. Some of the foreign companies as well as India have shifted their base outside India or are planning to go out. Inflation has also become a major problem even after RBI has raised interest several times to curb it. In the recent 2G telecom scam, India's loss is estimated to be approximately US\$39 Billion. Unless the markets get the required assurance that allocation of funds will be swift, efficient and fair, the process of investment will be slow.

Politicians should also take responsibility in checking corruption in order to avoid debacle like Enron the power sector in Maharashtra. The project which was not deemed economic viable by the World Bank which denied financial help to it was granted permission by India ignoring the protests against unpopular power project. Even the *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme (MGNREGA)* is not free of corruption as some audit reports that in some states only a small percentage of allocated funds reach to the original workers. Corruption does not only affect the parties involved in the scandal but also public at large. A corrupt official will result in delay of schemes intended for the benefits of general public in pressure of a company or any other person who are seeking to get private benefit from the projects. This will result in vicious circle of poverty as the poor are most affected by corruption.

If India has to fight poverty and achieve a sustainable growth rate, it should take proper anti-corruption measures and enforce them strictly. Though corruption cannot be eradicated permanently, proper checks and balances will ensure India's rise as economic powerhouse and future development.

A few people are accumulating as much wealth as possible and stocking it for their future generations. The bulk of the nation is striving hard to fulfill their basic needs. While India finds itself in the top ten countries of the world in terms of GDP. It ranks 135 in terms of HDI. It is clearly seen that even though the country is experiencing a high economic growth rates, basic living conditions continue to be very poor. India is a country with highly rich resources which it has been exploiting for years. Government is doing its due by passing various Bills for the improvement of the living conditions of the common man. It has failed to make a big impact. Bills like NREGA, NRHM, FOOD SECURITY, and RIGHT TO EDUCATION have immense potential in improving

India's HDI. But the execution of these Bills was very poor. The middle men between the government and the common man, Public officials are the major culprits in the non-deliverance of the goods from the government to the people. It's here, where the majority of corruption exists. It is mainly at this point where the common people suffer the most. Their development is retarded.

India with 1.2 Billion people can actually boast about its rich human resource if looked at it in a different way. Human resource fetches itself the highest value compared to other resources because it is this resource which makes use of the other resources. Without human resource, other resources do not have any materialistic value. It is of utmost importance to convert most of the population into assets rather than liabilities. It is here where the execution of the various developmental schemes of the government comes into play. And it's right here where corruption presents itself as a large barrier. Looking at the trend of HDI of INDIA over the past decade or so, it clearly highlights the role of corruption in stalling the country's development.

That's not all. Corruption has not only been a roadblock in India's path to development, but also has brought shame to the country. Whenever India hosts an international event there is always some sort of controversy causing embarrassment to the country. Take the example of Common wealth games, or the Cricket world cup for that matter. These events were often looked upon as a boost to the tourism industry as a means to draw international attention and a sign of encouragement to participate in sports. But corruption has always had its share of involvement abtaining the smooth functioning of the events.

It is also said that the public officials are cornering 1.26% of the country's GDP through corruption. The 2G spectrum scam, mining scandal in Karnataka and cash for vote scam very well narrate the story of India's progress. The tax paid by the citizens meant for country's growth is used to make money by the higher officials and increase their income illegally. The money spent for growth of the country is not even quarter of their black money. Government Schemes are implemented much for the benefit of public officials and less to the needy. The amount proposed for the welfare and progress of poor gets reduced at each level in the hierarchy of officials and finally the poor gets 25% of the proposed amount. According to a report, India's black money in Swiss banks is – "\$1.4 trillion" which is a mind-boggling statistics so far on corruption.

India's growth cannot take place without fostering the needs of the poor who are still living in deplorable conditions. Individual corruption is the simplest and the toughest way indeed to deal with this debacle. Corruption has also haunted India's economic growth.

In other words when people are dissatisfied with what they have they invent dishonest ways to acquire more which is simply known as corruption. In the Indian society corruption has become so deep rooted that it is quite impossible not to encounter it in our daily routine. One of the major areas where corruption has set its roots deep is the Government, especially the lower bureaucracy, but with the recent telecom scams being unearthed it is quite evident that corruption has left no part of the government from its grasp. It rules one and all. If somehow we could remove the word 'corruption' from India then let us be assured that we would become a developed nation much earlier than we think.



96. India: As the Next Global Leader

Abstract: Since independence India became part of all important international organizations and plays a significant role in the creation of non-aligned movement during the Russian- USA cold war period. Now India is member of major international organization such as UNO, World Bank, IMF, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WTO, and FATF etc. Currently India is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for two years for which the election was held this year. In that election she got a record 189 votes. Only four countries voted against. This shows India's popularity throughout the world. In the first three to four decade after independence India could not play any major role on the international front affairs due to fragile economic condition and involvement in three major wars: two with Pakistan and one with China. India was mostly dependent on foreign aid for its socio economic and infrastructure development, but after 1991 economic liberalization she has become a major contributor of aid to the third world countries. In 2008 India achieved a remarkable feat by becoming a trillion dollar economy. Currently India is at the cynosure of the world leader for its contribution to each and every continent of the globe. Indian CAG (Controller and Auditor General) which is another example of a unique institution in the field of audit appointed as the external auditor of two major UN organizations: (International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and World Intellectual Property Right (WIPIR).

In the 20th century entire world considered USA, Russia, Japan and some of the European countries as the global leaders. But in the 21st century two more countries from Asia emerged as the global leader that is India and China. Question is: who is a global leader? Though, there is no clear cut definition, a global leader is one who can play a major role in world affairs, work for maintaining peace and tranquility and can extend all type of help in preventing global crisis such as climate change, food insecurity, hunger, poverty etc.

As mentioned above India emerged as a global leader in the 21st century due to it's all round development. Thereafter she never looked back and made rapid progress in the growth trajectory. First of all entire credit goes to her founding fathers and constitution writers. They did not left any loophole in the constitution. They established a responsible legislative body to make law and new policy, an executive body to execute various policy enacted by legislation and an independent judiciary to safe guard the constitution and the fundamental rights of each citizen. No individual or politician in India can take the power and law in hand at will like what is happening in African countries or even in Pakistan .Pakistan is a country got freedom with India but the military power there has the power to topple the civilian government creating instability. But this is not the case with India. Great Indian leaders made a system by amalgamating the best features of other democratic countries. That is why India is known as one of the stable countries of the world.

Since independence India became part of all important international organizations and plays significant role in the creation of non-aligned movement during the Russian- USA cold war period. Now India is a member of major international organization such as UNO, WORLD BANK, IMF, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WTO, and FATF etc. Currently India is a non-permanent member of the *United Nations Security Council* for two years for which the election was held this year. In that election she got a record 189 votes. Only four countries voted against its membership. This shows her popularity throughout the world.

In the first three to four decades after independence India could not play any major role in international affairs due to her fragile economic condition and involvement in three major wars: two with Pakistan and one with China. India was mostly dependent on foreign aid for its socio economic and infrastructure development, but after 1991 economic

liberalization she has become a major contributor of aid to the third world countries. In 2008 India achieved a remarkable feat by becoming a trillion dollar economy. Currently India is at the cynosure of the world leader for its contribution to each and every continent of the globe.

Currently India is engaged with various countries for their infrastructure development, capacity building, and socio economic development. Being a part of South Asia, India always takes the leading role in promoting peace, financial stability, and facilitating free trade among the south Asian countries under the SAARC umbrella. She is helping Sri Lanka by providing financial and technical assistance in the construction of railway line, road, and housing for displaced Tamils during LTTE war, renovating a Kankasanthurai harbor. She has provided \$1 Billion grant in aid to Bangladesh for their infrastructure development at the interest rate of .75%. India has allowed Bhutan and Nepal to use its land to do trade with Bangladesh and to import or export goods using Bangladesh port. Due to India's sincere effort the relation with Pakistan is also improving.

India formed South-South Co-operation with Brazil and South Africa to provide financial help to the least developed countries which were earlier dependent only on the north for aid. India started an India Africa e-network project to connect all the 53 countries of Africa through *fiber optic connection*. This network will also be connected with some of the reputed technical institutions and famous medical colleges to provide e-education and *telemedicine services* to African people. Apart from this some of the other Indian project in Africa got international acclamation like construction of railway line linking Ethiopia and Djibouti, setting up of 80 institutions for capacity building in various sectors such as food processing, agriculture, textile, weather forecasting and rural development.

India has the observer status of SCO and also planning to join CSTO. She is working closely with the SCO member countries in maintaining peace and stability and preventing terrorism, drug trafficking from central and south Asia. She is also planning to extend help in construction of nuclear reactors for some of the central Asia countries like Kazakhstan. She is the world's 6th largest contributor to the Afghanistan infrastructure project and also providing training to Afghanistan security forces so that they can protect their country after Americas pull out from Afghanistan in 2014. Along with this India has taken the responsibility of giving training to Afghan Government

employees through VV Giri *National labor Institute*, constructing road from Delaram to Zarang and building power plants to meet its energy need.

With the grouping like BIMSTEC, Mekong Ganga co-operation, India ASEAN summit, East Asia summit India is maintaining cordial relations with all the South-East ASEAN countries. India has promised to promote culture by protecting all important historic monuments through ASI of India. She has proposed to build a highway which will connect Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia to facilitate free movement of goods and spur economic development in that region. Also, India is establishing training institutions to provide vocational training to the students as a part of Indian *ITEC (Indian technical and economic co-operation)* program. She is also providing grant in aid to these countries. Recently Indian P.M Dr. Man Mohan Singh offered 500 million grant in aid to Myanmar. As a peace loving nation India wants peace to prevail in the west Asia and North Africa. She wants an amicable resolution of outstanding issues between Israel and Palestine and India is one among the few countries who recognized *Palestine as an independent state*. As a larger democracy of the world she promotes democratic government instead of autocratic Government throughout world.

Above all, India has developed strong institutional capabilities that will benefit the world community. Indian election commission is providing all necessary assistance to the countries which want a strong impartial election process in their system. Recently Indian election commission extends help to Egypt for their election reform. Also, India is providing it's wonder machine *EVC (electronic voting machine)* to Nepal, Mexico, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Afghanistan etc. for holding of their elections. *Indian CAG (Controller and auditor general)* which is another example of a unique institution in the field of audit appointed as the external auditor of two major UN organizations: *IAEA (International Atomic Energy Administration)* and world intellectual property right.

India has one of the largest and advanced security forces in the world. She has a strong navy, army and air force which is not only protecting our countries but also engaged in UN's peace keeping process weather it is in Srilanka, Somalia, Afghanistan or any other countries. She has also engaged in the Indian Ocean's international transit corridor to protect the merchant vessel from the Somalia pirates which has

become a sanctuary for them. Till now India escorted more the 1000 vessels including some Indian. She has a well develop space research centers (*ISRO*) which is regularly launching satellites for itself and for other countries. The types of satellites include communication satellite, weather forecasting, remote sensing etc. Recently ISRO launched a satellite called *Megha-Tropiques* with collaboration with France which will benefit all tropical countries. This will provide real time data regarding rainfall pattern in tropical region thereby helping farmers in agriculture and ensure food security. India is World's first country to identify presence of water on Moon surface through her Chandrayan-I mission and planning for Chandrayan-II mission to send humans on to the moon surface.

21st century belongs to the country leading in food production and having large work force and India has both the above factor. India's food production is increasing year by year to feed the world and she has one of the largest work forces of the world which is a boon for her. The contribution India will make to the global society is prefigured by the upsurge in the national mood which is marked by ambition, optimism and the spirit to accept the challenge of innovation and accomplishment. There is no doubt that India is a present leader. The world leaders should acknowledge it by providing unequivocal support for its quest as a permanent member in the UN's reformed Security Council. Then only her efforts and contribution towards the world will be rewarded.



97. Dirty Scams in India

Abstract: Ever since India has achieved her freedom, she has also been known as a corrupted land. The extend of corruption has increased to such an extent that, any person joining political parties does have an intention of making easy and fast money within the shortest period of time. If all the amounts that have been disclosed, for every scam till date is pooled up, I guess , India is most richest country and the power and strength She holds could not be compared with any other. However, since people are getting more and more self-oriented, when it comes to progress and wiping away poverty, nobody is least bothered.

A few of the top scams that have taken place since the year 1947 is discussed here, just to bring to the notice of the public where we stand and how things are working.

The Indian Coal Allocation Scam is one among the latest scams that has occurred concerning the Indian government's allocation of the nation's coal deposits to public sector entries and private companies. According to the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General of India), the Indian Government was accused of allocating coal blocks, in an inefficient manner during the period 2004-2009. The reason for this allegation was because, the Government had the authority to check on the allocation of coal blocks by a process of competitive bidding, but they failed to do so, resulting in lower payment by the public sector enterprises and the private firms.

The 2G Spectrum Scam was one which involved the politicians and government officials equally. The scam involved in issuing frequency allocation licenses by the telephone companies in re-creating 2G subscriptions for cell phones. When valued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India about the money composed from the 2G licenses , the defeat for the exchequer was ₹ 176,369 crore (USD \$ 39.16 billion). The issuing of licenses began in 2008; however it came to public attention when the Indian Income tax Department conducted an investigation on the political campaigner Niira Radia. The Supreme Court on February 2012 declared cancellation of all licenses issued in 2008 during the tenure of A. Raja, who was the minister of telecom then. There were about 122 licenses that were cancelled.

Common Wealth Games Scam was harshly criticized by several well-known social activists and politicians as billions of dollars were being spent on sporting event, although the fact that we have the leading concentration of poor people. Some of the other major problems that was being highlighted was grave corruption by the games organizing committee, delay in the erection of the main Games venues, and infrastructural compromise.

Indian businessman Azim Premji called the Commonwealth games a "drain on the public funds" and also said that hosting such an expensive game event was not the priority for India, and India had other priorities to look into like education, public health and infrastructure.

In the history of the corporate, Satyam Computer Services Scandal is biggest ever and the chairman, Ramalinga Raju confessed that the company's accounts were falsified. For near to a decade, Raju kept the accounts details in the dark by pumping up revenues and earning up figures of Satyam. He confessed that , as per the balance sheet of 30th September 2008, the company had exaggerated figures for cash and bank balances of ₹ 5040 crore (USD \$m 1.12 billion) as next to ₹ 5361 Crore (USD \$ 1.19 billion) in the book thus acquiring an interest of ₹ 376 Crore , which was not existing. This scam was in tune of near to ₹ 14000 Crore.

Bofors Scam is also known as the hallmark of in Indian Corruption. This was a most important corruption during the 1980's where the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and quite a few others which also includes a powerful NRI family named the Hinduja were accused of receiving bribe from Bofors AB for engaging a proposal to supply India's 155 mm field howitzer. The scale of the corruption was so worse that it led to the crush of Gandhi's ruling in the Indian national Congress party. It was hypnotized that the level of the scandal was tuned .to be about ₹ 400 million. The middle man who was associated with this scandal was an Italian businessman named Ottavio Quattrocchi and who also represented the petrochemicals firm, Snamprogetti.

The Fodder Scam involved the misappropriation of about ₹ 950 crore (USD \$ 179.55 million) from the government treasury, of Bihar. The scheme involved the manufacture of 'vast herds of invented stock' for which food, medicines and animal husbandry equipment was apparently acquired. In this scam even the Chief Minister of Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav was included then which finally led to his resignation.

The scam had its origins in small scale by some government employees by submitting false expense reports, which grew in magnitude and drew additional elements over a period of time which ultimately led to the forming of a mafia. This scam still continues to be exposed by the media due to the widespread links between tenured bureaucrats, elected politicians and businesspeople involved.

The Hawala Scandal was an Indian political scandal, which involved payments allegedly acknowledged by politicians through four hawala brokers, mostly the Jain brothers. It was about \$ 18 million bribery humiliation. In an arrest linked to the militants in Kashmir is what gave way to the raid of the hawala brokers and the scandal through them,

which revealed large scale payments to national politicians.

Cricket is a game where lot of commotions occur and there hare many hurdles to cross over and the IPL (Indian Premier League) is no better at it. The BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) has found itself in the middle of many conflicts with the coming of IPL. The IPL had set forth many terms at many occasions, which were not accepted and had to be terminated. There were conflicts with the Cricket Club of India, with the England and Wales Cricket board, with Cricket Australia and many more. The IPL chairman Lalit Modi was suspended in 2010 for alleged act of individual transgression by the BCCI. There was also spot fixing among the players during the IPL in 2012.

The point here is that most of us Indians have witnessed or experienced corruption in one form or the other, and unless we raise our voice against it the government is just going to sit on it. It is unless we, the ordinary people, the heart of India, start doing something, only then would this evil be uprooted from our society. The fight against corruption has often been dubbed as the second fight for our independence. The first fight was to free our country of foreign powers while this fight would be to weed out all forms of corruption from our society.



98. Cash for Vote Scam

Abstract: The cash for vote scam came to the fore when the MPs waved a wad of notes in the parliament creating a ruckus. The situation led to Somnath Chatterjee the former Lok Sabha speaker to order a probe inquiry to Delhi Police Chief. The parliamentary investigation referred to as Kishore Chandra Deo Committee found no real evidence against the accused involved in the scam. The Supreme Court questioned the efficacy of the investigation and reprimanded the police to carry out the investigation in its earnest manner. The BJP pounced on this opportunity and called for resignation of the PM and also slammed the CNN-IBN not to telecast the video coverage where MPs were exchanged money at their house. The UPA government with Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh at its helm in a bid to sustain its power and credibility went for shockingly bribed the MPs to win the confidence vote for a nuclear deal with the United States. A deal which was outright opposed by BJP and CPI (M) parties in a view that the US would have a larger say in looking after the

nuclear program. The prime accused Samajwadi Party bigwig Amar Singh and Sudheendra Kulkarni hatched a plot to bribe the three BJP MPs to win the confidence vote in Lok Sabha. Kulkarni former aide to LK Advani was the mastermind of the scam who was in touch with all the conspirators and during the illegal gratification when the bribe was paid to the MPs.

With the onset of political stability and the introduction of universal adult suffrage, the votes had been the greatest liability offered to people of the country to choose their own government. But amidst the growing greed of power, the authenticity of casting of votes within the country and within the parliament had been a far cry. The cash for vote scam is one such type of scam, gained notion now-days, revealing the bitter secrets of the chosen one's within the parliament.

The elected members of the parliament played a key role in bringing out new reforms and Bills that would help the nation and the people of the nation to progress and develop. But seeing the today's world scenario, where money and politics go hand-in-hand, this power of the members has opened a door for outside gratifications for his valuable vote in favor of a particular party. The cash for vote scam reveals the involvement of Member of Parliament in changing their votes on the US-India Nuclear deal, thereby bringing in the ambiguity over its authenticity.

The involvement of senior then Samajwadi party leader Amar Singh and MPs of Bhartiya Janta Party shows that the fixture on the deal had been on a very high level than thought. The US-India Nuclear deal is one of the important deals between India and US paving way for future development, thus an unbiased voting would have brought in a clear state of response. But the scam brought in an enigma among the members thus making the worst out of the deal, out of which the most can be made out.

The cash for vote scam also put forward the weakened disciplinary acts against the tormenters of democracy and showcases the line of breakage of trust among the members of the same party leading towards a huge political upheaval and showing clear signs of anarchy onset in the country. The parties are facing a growing distrust from people bringing in the need for a stable and fare government. A raging behavior has started to grow up among the people of the country giving a clear sign of cutting off such types of scams. The UPA government with Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh at its helm in a bid to sustain its power

and credibility went for shockingly bribed the MPs to win the confidence vote for a nuclear deal with the United States. A deal which was outright opposed by BJP and CPI (M) parties in a view that US would have a larger say in looking after the nuclear program. The prime accused party bigwig Amar Singh and Sudheendra Kulkarni hatched a plot to bribe the three BJP MPs to win the confidence vote in Lok Sabha. Kulkarni former aide to LK Advani was the mastermind of the scam who was in touch with all the conspirators and during the illegal gratification when the bribe was paid to the MPs.

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Delhi Police in its charge-sheet along with Amar Singh and Kulkarni, named two former BJP MPs Faagan Singh Kulaste and Mahabir Singh Bhagora along with Sanjeev Saxena former aide of Amar Singh and Suhail Hindustani alleged BJP activist who were in judicial custody. In Tehelka's revelation it was based on three crucial pieces of evidence: the first hand-account of the CNN-IBN reporter Siddharth Gautam who actually did the sting on the ground.

The story also rested on 10 crucial phone recordings that have never been shared in the public domain and were not even made available to the parliamentary panel set up to probe the scandal. These phone recordings now in Tehelka's possession, displays BJP MP Argal frantically calling people and shopping for someone to buy him and the other two BJP MPs on the night of 21 July 2008, the eve of the nuclear vote. The intention was to somehow pull off a sting operation that could discredit the UPA government.



International

1. Obama's Visit to India

Abstract: India and US are related to each other politically as India is the largest democracy and the US is the oldest democracy. Through years, both the countries have had mixed feelings for each other. They have shown each other the cold shoulder for some issues and have backed each other for others. With President Barack Obama's visit to India, both the countries are looking towards a new aspect of their relationship. The following essay is an attempt to explore the highlights of President Obama's visit to India in November 2010 and January 2015.

The U.S., being the world's oldest democracy, has had a very complicated and contradictory relationship with India the world's largest democracy. It is always believed that the relationship between India and the U.S. relations strengthens itself practically through joint efforts in every area of cooperation.

Both countries share common interests and concerns in terms of power acquisition and peace values.

US President Barack Obama's visit to India (6-9 Nov 2010) was like a tangled mix of bitter memories experienced in the past and a ray of optimism about the future. During his stay, he announced that he would support New Delhi's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and asked Pakistan to bring culprits of 26/11 attacks to justice.

Approximately, 3,000 people including Secret Service agents, US government officials and journalists escorted the US President. Even before his arrival, there were various officials from the White House and US security agencies who were already there with helicopters, a ship and high-end security instruments.

It was estimated that the US had spent a whopping \$200 million (Rs. 900 Crore approximately) per day on President Barack Obama's visit to Delhi. The huge amount of around \$200 million was spent on security. The US Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications, Rhodes had told journalists at the White House that Obama's approach would be focused on expanding exports for U.S. goods, deepening partnerships in an important part of the world and partnering together in the G20. He also informed that the President

will address the business summit, focusing on the US-India economic relationship.

In his address to the Parliament, Obama openly offered that the U.S. would play an important part in making Indo-Pak relations better and peaceful. He also made an announcement that the US supports India's bid for permanent seat in the UNSC. In addition, the President also strongly made a statement to Pakistan that 'safe havens' inside its territory is totally "unacceptable".

However, the announcement is actually seen as a gesture of diplomacy, as there is no doubt that the Security Council reform is going to be a long and tedious process. Keeping that in mind, Obama wisely used the expression "in the years ahead".

Then in the forthright speech, Obama, sounded a little critical about India for not giving any support sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme. He also appeared critical when he said that India did not speak out over human rights abuses in Myanmar where New Delhi has a good relationship with military rulers.

Barack Obama is an ardent fan of Mahatma Gandhi. He also has a portrait of the Mahatma hanging in his senate office.

The two leaders appreciated the idea of the deepening relationship between the world's two largest democracies. They also encouraged the increasing cooperation between their governments, citizens, businesses, universities and scientific institutions. Since both the countries share the same culture of pluralism, education, enterprise and innovation, the citizens of both the countries are expected to be benefited.

India and the US mutually agreed on a range of new initiatives, including promoting cooperation on internal security, elimination of Indian companies from the US sanctions' list and building a high-tech civil nuclear research centre in India. India has also added a feather for herself in the form of a temporary seat on the UN Security Council. India will take up the responsibility for two years from January 1. The US and India also signed deals worth \$10 billion. All in all, Obama's visit to India has shown a ray of hope in terms of business and power. However, his visit is equally beneficial for the US in terms of partnership based on shared values and interests.

In January 2015, after arriving in India over the weekend, U.S. President Barack Obama concluded a series of bilateral agreements with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Obama, who was invited to India as the chief guest for India's annual Republic Day celebrations,

broached the once-uncomfortable topic of climate change with Modi, making surprising progress on the issue. The two leaders followed up on themes addressed during Modi's September 2014 trip to the United States and addressed some issues that had been on the U.S.-India bilateral back-burner for several years now. What follows below is a quick distillation of nine highlights out of the released joint statement, joint strategic vision document, and the visit overall. I'll likely follow this up shortly with more detailed analysis on at least a couple of these points I put together a similar summary of the previous U.S.-India bilateral joint statement after Modi's U.S. trip, which focused primarily on defense and security issues.

This visit is a strong indicator that U.S.-India ties will follow a positive trajectory over the course of this year. It was indeed bold of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi to extend an offer to Obama to visit India so soon after visiting Washington himself. Obama, by accepting, became the first sitting U.S. president to visit India twice while in office (though Obama did cut his visit short to visit Saudi Arabia to pay respects to its recently deceased king). It's been clear for some time now that the United States and India are strategically converging. Unfortunately, given India's low standing on the list of U.S. foreign policy priorities and latent skepticism about U.S. intentions in India, the pace of that convergence was sluggish. If Obama's visit and Modi's 2014 U.S. visit are any indication, both countries are serious about making up for lost time.



2. Has Globalization Transformed International Politics?

Abstract: A hot debate on how globalization alters global governance has been taking place for the past many years now. Globalists and skeptics all over the world have argued about the alterations going on, their nature, importance and their impact on global politics. Throughout history, interconnections between states and people have been growing. However, globalization seems to have forced these changes to a point in which a new global order arises, that threatens to transform the essence of international politics. This essay would explore the ideas that have been raised around the issue of globalization within international politics, trying to give a conclusion on whether they have suffered a transformation or not. With this purpose,

we would try to take a look at the different perspectives defended by globalists and skeptics, as the theories proposed by both are quite relevant to understand the reach of the current circumstances.

Though globalization is defined differently by different people, there is a common consensus about it. The most accepted definition states that globalization is the process by which regional economies, societies and cultures become integrated through a global network of political ideas through communication, transportation and trade.

When we talk about globalization, it is generally believed that we are talking about economic globalization. Economic globalization can be understood as the integration of national economies into one international economy with the help of capital flows, trade, immigration, foreign direct investment, technology and military presence. Broadly, when we talk about globalization, we refer to an amalgamation of economic, technological, socio-cultural, political and biological factors. Some academicians also use this term to mean transnational distribution of languages, ideas, thought processes and popular cultures through socialization. The parts of the world that have gone through this process can be said to have truly globalised.

Globalization can also be understood as a rapid technological change in core countries and their ability to dominate the production of consumer goods over the rest of the world. It also involves the increasing interdependence of national economies, financial markets, trade, corporations, production, distribution and consumer marketing. By its very nature, globalization draws attention to the economic and technological aspects of life and to change at the level of culture or identity.

The hyper-globalist perspective contends that history and economics have come together to create a new order of relations in which states are either converging economically and politically, or are being made irrelevant by the activities of transnational business. Today, markets play significant role in determining economic policies compared to governments. Countries that have an advanced telecommunication system need to thank the media for its globalization. According to the hyper-globalist perspective, globalization and the migration associated with it has made the concept of national products, national industries and national corporations redundant.

Globalization has also weakened the ability of nation states to

regulate economic activity and govern multinational corporations. This also owes to the fact that the production facilities have moved to where the costs are lowest and revenues are adjusted in different countries in order to pay less tax, receive more subsidies and make more profit. The hyper-globalist's view about globalization is that of a single world order, represented by international education by those who see a system of education, which transcends all national borders.

On the contrary to this, the skeptical perspective argues that globalization is a compensation for the current dominance of neo-liberal free market capitalism or for the spread of social democratic regulation of markets. This different perspective makes a comparison between globalization and the internationalization of trade. It says that both these terms are different and should not be considered as one and the same. It also puts forth historical evidence which indicates that the world is not on its way to becoming a single market however that it is the development of regional economic blocs and the facilitation of trade between countries.

For the skeptical perspective, the economic era in which the Gold Standard between national currencies prevailed represents a far more globalized economic system compared to what exists today. The skeptics point to equal or greater integration in history and that a strong nation-state is needed to ensure the efficient running of the global economy. Skeptics see globalization as a process and not as an end state.

If pondered over, the skeptical perspective seems more convincing due to the fact that internationalization and globalization are contradictory trends, since international trade is strengthened by the existence of nation states whose policies actively regulate and promote it. The formation of regional trading blocs results in two classes of countries – those countries that are members of the blocs and those that are not. The increasing internationalization of trade between some countries has marginalized the others, such as African countries like Somalia.

This perspective is also more convincing as the nation-state does have a role in a globalized world. Nation-states do have the capacity to exert considerable power over the large transnational companies that have emerged out of the new globalized economy. History brings out the evidence, when the first great globalization was ended by nation-states taking back control. The first great globalization ended as it did because nation-states panicked as a result of losing direct control of

domestic markets. This happened along with the political unrest caused by the immediate losers of globalization.

Many people, especially the disadvantaged, are apprehensive and experience globalization as something that has been forced upon them, rather than as a process in which they can actively participate. For Africa, the concept of globalization has been disastrous, with per capita incomes actually falling. This gives rise to the key questions that refer to the utility of globalization: Does it encourage justice? Does it respect cultural identity? Does it work to empower people? Does it provide or take away the freedom?

One of the aspects of globalization is the de-politicization of publics, the decline of nation-state and the end of traditional politics. The fact is that changes in technology and work relationships are moving way too quickly for cultures to respond. Social, legal and cultural safeguards and the result of people's efforts to defend the common good are vitally necessary if individuals and intermediary groups are to maintain their focus.

Some people believe that globalization is actually the rise of a common government which would monitor international relations and look after the social welfare and economic welfare of its governing body. The possibility of forming the global government lies with the super powers of the world. By the super powers, we mean those economies that have a wealthy and a strong economy. This is the case with the United States. Today, U.S. is one of the strongest and wealthiest nation and thus has a say in international politics. However, with the current trend China is set to challenge U.S. in the next twenty years.

Some scholars also argue that the transformation of sovereignty is also a result of globalization. They feel that globalization is a bilateral process and it contributes to the change and reduction of the definition and capacity of state sovereign powers. Globalization's bilateralism lies in the fact that in one hand, the factors that fairly undermine the countries sovereignty are becoming stronger and on the other hand, most states voluntarily and deliberately limit the scope of their sovereignty.

A complex interconnection between capitalism and democracy, what we call globalization, involves positive and negative features that both empowers and dis-empowers individuals and groups. But globalization often risks destroying these carefully built up structures by exacting the adoption of new styles of working, living and organizing

communities. This brings us to the conclusion that transformation, as such, has no doubt been there. But the fact that whether this revolution has been for the actual benefit of all the players of the international economy is still open for a debate. There have been different perspectives the world over, yet what remains is the issue of the long term consequences if the current scenario stays on.



3. Terrorism and its Effect on International Relations

Abstract: All of us have been affected by terrorism at some point or the other in our lives. Terrorism has destroyed nations, homes and individuals the world over. There is no state, all over the world, that has not been effected by terrorism. This kind of widespread misery and devastation calls for some action against terrorism. Till now, we have been fighting our individual wars against terrorism, but the time has come when we need to join our hands and fight terrorism collectively. This essay explores the effects of terrorism on international relations and how it has changed the global equation.

Terrorism is defined as an act of violence aimed at civilians with the intention of instilling fear, generating attention, creating political upheaval and at times, also trying to destabilize a government. Generally, terrorism is understood in the context of small groups that fight against powerful states. But, apart from this, even government can practice terrorism. Government supported terrorism can be directed either at civilians or at other countries. Directed either ways, terrorism can have an adverse effect on the country and can also raise doubts in the minds of the citizens about their security.

All through history, terrorism has taken various forms and directions. Just in the last two centuries, terrorism has been used by Russian nihilists, nationalists in Israel, Nazi forces, environmentalists worldwide, left-wing guerrillas in Europe, disgruntled radicals in the United States, Latin American death squads and Islamic fundamentalists. Unfortunately, terrorism is not tied to any particular philosophy or set of people.

Take the example of the killings of Indians in Australia. Though called racial discrimination, is it not an act of terrorism? No Indian

would feel safe in Australia. In fact, even Indians who want to visit Australia would have second thought about doing so. This act of pseudo terrorism has resulted in strained relationships between both the countries.

Similarly, take the act of terrorism carried out by the Islamic terrorist group, Al Qaeda against the United States. As a part of the act, popularly referred to as 9/11, terrorists belonging to the Al Qaeda rammed two American Boeings into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, bringing them and a major business hub down. Following this, the USA vowed to take out Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda and started waging a war in Afghanistan. Hundreds of suspected people were captured and tortured; Afghanistan was bombed; but Bin Laden is still free. Through this act, Al Qaeda appealed to all the Muslims to take part in the war against the west. Who do you think committed a greater act of terrorism? Al Qaeda or the USA? A question that is unanswered and not raised by many. After 9/11, Muslims are generally not issued visas to visit America and the American citizens had to face minor acts of vandalism and terrorism all around the world.

As if this was not enough, terrorism is upgrading itself rapidly in the face of globalization. Terrorists are using globalization to improve their modus operandi. Realizing the usefulness of indigenous or local products for spreading terror, they now actively refrain from using factory made products.

With easier and more affordable access to Internet being available, making weapons of terrorism has become very easy and simple, as all information is freely and easily available on the internet. In fact, with easy access to information like this, the risk of small organizations coming up and carrying out acts of terrorism has increased by manifold. Experts on terrorism feel that the future attacks of terrorism can be similar to those that were carried out in Bali and Mombasa.

More and more terrorist outfits are preparing suicide attackers and using them to spread their act of terrorism, especially in the United States and Europe. Another factor that is quite scary is the fact that products used to create weapons of mass destruction are now easily available. According to some modest estimates, 22 million antiaircraft missiles are in existence. Many of these are available at very low prices in the black market. This realization has made travelling on commercial airplanes a major risk. This was demonstrated by the failed attempt to take down the Israeli aircraft in Mombasa.

Another example that showcases the global reach of terrorist and their acts of vandalism is the fact that terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda are so well organized that have a world-wide presence. 3000 members of Al Qaeda have been arrested in 98 different countries all over the world after the 9/11 incidence. Another example is that of Jemaah Islamiah, with its base at Indonesia. Jemaah Islamiah has created nearly fifty businesses in Asia, which are now providing the moolah for their operations.

The wide spread tentacles of terrorism have necessitated a combined action. The need of the hour is to combine our forces and fight against terrorism. In fact, the strategy that we use to fight terrorism will shape the future of international relations. Though the United Nations (UN) has been formulated to define a combined action against terrorism, its effectiveness has been questioned again and again. Take the example of Iraq. The UN had passed many resolutions initially asking and then demanding Iraq to disarm its weapons. In spite of the repeated warnings from the UN, Iraq managed to ignore the UN for 12 years. One of the reasons given for the UN's inability to coerce Iraq in doing what they wanted was the lack of fear of consequences. When Iraq did not need to face consequences, there boldness increased leading to the ignoring of the UN directives. This raised questions pertaining to the efficiency and significance of the UN Security Council. Another example that showcased the inefficiency of the UN was in the 1990's when the UN failed to find a solution for the redressal of the atrocities committed in Rwanda and Bosnia.

As a consequence of the debate on the war on Iraq, the US, Europe, Russia and China have seen a significant shift in bilateral relations. When France and Germany objected to the protection provided to Turkey by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), they broke the main principle of NATO, which stated that an attack against one NATO nation is an attack against all NATO nations. This act questioned the very essence of NATO. The disbandment of NATO would prove to be a serious hindrance in the path of the West to wage a war against terrorism. The disbandment or the gradual disappearance of NATO would result in the emergence of enhanced roles of the European countries in international relations.

The fight against terrorism requires some combined efforts of all the countries. Ian Lesser, a well known scholar, offers a thorough approach that can be used to fight terrorism. Following issues like social and

economic problems and conditions; unresolved racial, cultural and national conflicts; stymied political ambitions; as well as personal experiences of people who may become future terrorists.

To discourage terrorists and their sponsors, Lesser recommends taking considerable and personal actions against terrorist leadership.

Lesser calls for annihilation of weapons of mass destruction that can be used by terrorists to inflict devastation and misery.

Finally, he says that there is a need to get prepared to strike back in cases where discouragement does not work. The retaliation should be quick and effective so that it leaves an impact on the terrorist outfits as well as on terrorism.

In a very short time, the war on terrorism has shaken the foundation of the post-cold-war geopolitical arena. The most momentous change in this arena is the indisputable volatility of future events and the degree of their impact on global politics and economics. Today, we have become a part of a structural change that will prove to be as important as that what occurred in 1945 and 1989. Seeing the impact that the changes in 1945 and again in 1989 had on our lives, it is for sure that the changes in the contemporary equation will lead to changes unforeseen.



4. Non-Aligned Movement

Abstract: The skepticism and doubt about relevance and meaningful role of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is full of cynicism is unsustainable. Great visionaries and stalwarts established NAM for the achievement of common goals like equality, independence, peace, mutual trust, and development. Many of these aims are yet to be achieved as compared to other developing countries. NAM has to redefine its goals and priorities with more unity and understanding among the member nations. It should have result-oriented, time-bound policies and programs with full backing of its followers. Moreover, cold war may soon begin again, and China may emerge as the other bipolar power.

Has the **Non-Aligned Movement** lost its relevance? Is there a need to redefine NAM? These questions can be effectively answered by asking some counter-questions. Was NAM simply a reaction in response to cold war and in rivalry with other developed countries? Do peace and security prevails and are nations free to follow their own independent decisions? Has the hegemonistic approach to the world issues ended?

Has the U.N. Security Council been restructured to make it a democratic organization? Are its five permanent members willing to give up their veto? What about the sinister re-emergence of the new face of imperialism in the shape of economic and industrial apartheid, protectionism, restrictive trade practices, new labour laws, etc? These are some of the significant questions and their answers lie in the relevance of NAM.

NAM came into being in **September 1961** with its first summit at Belgrade, of erstwhile Yugoslavia. The first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the founders. The two others were President Nasser of Egypt and President Tito of former Yugoslavia. The first NAM summit was held with members of 25 nations. Its aims and objectives were defined in the *Ban Dug, (Indonesia) Declaration of 1955* and reiterated in the Brioni, (Yugoslavia) Declaration of 1956. Based on the principles of PanchSheel, its basic objectives are: keeping away from power blocks, close and friendly relations with all the countries, peaceful settlement of disputes through non-violent means, discussion on world issues and problems in the forum, collaboration, co-operation and exchange of views in matters of mutual interest, etc.

With the emancipation and independence of more Asian, African and Latin-American nations, NAM grew in size, numbers as well as in its acceptance, with the passage of time. Now it has nearly 120 members, apart from about 35 observing and guest countries like Germany, Canada, Australia, China, Russia and Italy. Now, it is not looked down upon and pooh-poohed even by the U.S. But sheer numbers are not enough. If numbers are its strength, they are also its weakness. They make NAM unwieldy, uncohesive, unassertive and somewhat a divided house. Because of its large size and diversity and lack of perseverance and unity of purpose, it has done nothing significant in relation to its basic objectives such as disarmament, non-discrimination, equality of status, development, independence of judgement and freedom. NAM failed to prevent Iran-Iraq war. What has had been happening in Afghanistan, Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, Somalia and in the Middle East is a sad commentary on its effectiveness and relevance as a forum and organization representing the Third World Countries comprising the majority of the world's population.

In many of the NAM countries there prevail appalling poverty, malnutrition, hunger, starvation, illiteracy, fundamentalism and terrorism. According to an estimate about a billion people of these countries

struggle to subsist on less than \$1 a day; 2 hundred million children die each year from poverty related causes. They depend on dole and help of the West for their survival and in return allow themselves to be used as their convenient tools to prevent NAM as an effective pressure group in the U.N. and outside, on many vital issues affecting the interests of the member-nations. Many of its member-nations are non-democratic; they do not have representative governments. These are some of the basic problems which undermine its strength and curtail its leverages.

It is high time that NAM gets its act together, has a well-organised and professionally run secretariat to coordinate its programs, policies and priorities. There is need for introspection and self-reform before it can effectively undertake to reform the world and cure its ills. It should revitalise itself by mobilising full and enthusiastic support of its members-nations who represent millions and millions of the Third World population. It has a majority on its side. No other forum or organization has this advantage except the U.N. The developing and under-developed nations represented by NAM have had been on the receiving ends in matters of social justice, economic development, environmental protection, trade practices, etc.

NAM should re-assess its strength, reorganise its activities, resist the economic apartheid, prepare a new course of joint action and address the unfinished agenda covering disarmament, re-shaping of the U.N., particularly the Security Council, South-South co-operation, North-South dialogue, and human rights. It should put up a meaningful common front against big-brother attitude and dictation by the G-7 nations. NAM should assert its rights and resist any encroachment on the interests of its member-states by the developed countries. It can avoid being reduced to a "cold war relic" by working in unison instead of pursuing separate and individual agendas by member countries. Notwithstanding independence of judgement, views and identity of its constituent countries, NAM can be a very effective instrument of resurgence, growth, development, disarmament, peace and mutual benefit in the now radically changed realities of the unipolar world. It should not be under any pressure from industrialised big powers on such vital issues as the urgency of elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner, removal of discriminatory labour laws and standard social clauses, environmental conditions, etc.

No doubt, now the world is not divided into two clear-cut power

blocks, the cold war has ended and ground realities have radically changed and yet the continued relevance of NAM is beyond doubt as a pressure group against the interests of its member-nations, as a forum for the like-minded nations and as an organization against any kind of discrimination by wealthy and advanced countries. In the absence of rival power blocks, it cannot be considered to have lost its relevance and purposefulness.

NAM's constituents should hold sincerity and in-depth consultations among themselves; reform its strategy, redefine its goals, develop its cutting edge and use freely its bargaining power. It should revise its agenda to establish strong trade links and ties among member-nations. It should see that the U.N. Security Council is restructured and expanded to give NAM nations adequate representation as early as possible. It would certainly change the way the world is being governed by the few powerful countries. NAM should also see that the rich countries fulfil their promises made at Rio Conference in regard to the help and compensation to be given to developing countries in matters of pollution control, environment protection and economic growth.

The U.S. has recently developed very dangerous nuclear weapons called "**nuclear freefall bombs**" which are more powerful than the earthquake bombs used in Gulf War against Iraq in 1992. The creation of these most lethal weapons, the messengers of mass destruction and death, is blatantly against NAM's cherished principle of peace and disarmament and should provide it a new incentive and inspiration in redefining its goals and role.

Initially NAM was founded, shaped, inspired and guided by such stalwarts, visionaries and luminaries as Jawaharlal Nehru, Josip Broz Tito and Gamel Abdel Nasser.

India, as one of the founding fathers of NAM, can take initiative and spearhead the non-aligned movement in co-operation with like-minded countries, in bringing the member countries closer to one another in implementing developmental projects and in getting NAM its legitimate status and dignity in the community of world-countries. Inaugurating the 12th NAM Ministerial Conference held in New Delhi, (April, 1997), the then Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said that globalization was generally accepted as the direction of the future, but it "cannot be equated with the interests of only the powerful economies and corporations. It must be accompanied by the empowerment of all economies". In regard to the nuclear disarmament

he said, “NAM must continue to exert its full moral pressure and generate public opinion towards arriving at a nuclear weapons convention as agreed upon in the last summit.”

The argument that in the present unipolar situation when there is only one super power, NAM has lost its relevance, is not valid. Moreover, the apprehension that another cold war may be upcoming and soon there would be bipolarity in the world politics, is not far from truth. The guess is that this time it would be West versus China. China is being seen as economic, political and military threat by the West. Political pundits and analysts are sure that China is shaping up like a super power and the U.S. has already started its campaign against China. Come what may, NAM has to play a significant role in the years to come.

NAM's concern over Iraq crisis was seen during its summit in Kaula Lumpur, Malaysia, 2003. The 114 member NAM raised its curtain with an imminent attack on Iraq to address the Iraq crisis. Officials during summit discussed a number of issues at the foreign minister level. Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar (2003), put stress on the role of NAM and said that its member would fail in their duty if they did not address the Iraq issue. It was unanimously declared by the NAM members to achieve a message of peace and not confrontation.

Issues related to terrorism and disarmament were raised by NAM chairman Ahmad Furi Razak. A separate statement on Palestine was issued at the NAM summit as it was felt “nothing has been done to resolve it”. Iraq's position (vis-a-vis the conflict with the United States) was taken up to convince the world. It is remarkable to note that several NAM members from the African countries felt that Iraq should not dominate the meeting because the revitalisation of the movement should be given priority. Thus, NAM and its relevance is tremendous. Immediate contemporary political, economical and social issues can be resolved under its banner.



5. Human Rights

Abstract : Every human being is entitled to human rights such as right to live and exist, right to freedom, freedom from exploitation, equality before law, to have adequate standard of living etc. The UN adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights

in 1948. Rights have their corresponding duties. Human rights presuppose a rule of law and equality. Violation of human rights is very common among totalitarian, theocratic, despotic states etc. Women, children and weaker sections of the society are often victims of discrimination and violation of human rights. Deaths in police custody, sex-apartheid, child-abuse, political killings are very common which have very much degraded the quality of human life. Violation and denial of human rights by states is very dangerous and it often gives birth to revolutions. Violence against women is most pervasive. It needs to be tackled effectively. The massive violation of human rights throughout the world is a matter of great shame for the entire humanity.

Human rights are the rights to which an individual has a just right as a human being. Men, women and children collectively and individually have these by virtue of their birth as human beings. For the sake of convenience, human rights have been put into two categories: natural rights and civil rights. Under natural rights come such rights as right to live and exist and sustain life with food, shelter, clothing, etc. Freedom from torture, cruelty and slavery, freedom of movement, the right to marry and have a family, freedom of thought and conscience and faith are some other fundamental natural rights. Right to work, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, right to a fair trial, equality before law, the right to a nationality, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, to have adequate standard of living, freedom from exploitation and discrimination, right to participate in elections, etc. are important civil rights.

The UN General Assembly adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Declaration recognized the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. This Charter of Human Rights was mostly drafted by Rene Cassin, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1968. The Charter urged the right to political, economic, social and cultural self-determination; the right to peace; the right to live in a good environment; and the right to share in the natural resources. It pledged the rights of life, liberty and security of a person—the basic human rights. Although these rights are not legally binding but they have been universally recognized and were later on ratified by a couple of international conventions. Then there are political rights which entitle a person to contest an election and to vote freely, without any fear for a candidate of his or her choice.

Human rights and their implementation, practice and protection are `benchmark of developed, civilized and democratic society. In a

democracy, people enjoy the maximum number of human rights. But rights and duties go together. The human rights have their corresponding human duties. They are two sides of the same coin. Liberty never means license. Human rights pre-suppose a rule of law where all the citizens follow a code of conduct and behaviour for the good of all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, social status, region, etc. It is the sense of duty, tolerance, mutual participation that lends meaning and sense to the rights. Rights have their existence on the principle of live and let live. For example, my right to speech and expression involves my duty to all others to enjoy the same freedom of speech and expression. Human rights and human duties are inextricably inter-linked and interdependent. My rights become duties for others and vice versa. A perfect balance should be always maintained between the two. Whenever there is an imbalance, there is violation of human rights leading to disturbance and chaos. Rights cannot survive without their corresponding obligations and duties.

Violation and denial of human rights are very common in totalitarian and despotic States. In theocratic States there is much persecution in the name of religion and the minorities and women suffer the most as we see in many fundamentalist countries. The women, children and the weaker sections of the society are victims of these transgressions and violation.

The UN Commission on Human Rights is mainly concerned in protecting and promoting human rights and freedom of the people of the world. In its various sessions held from time to time in Geneva, it adopts various measures to encourage worldwide observations of these basic human rights and freedom. It calls on its members to give information regarding measures complied with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** whenever there is a complaint of violation of these rights. Then there are many voluntary human rights organizations throughout the length and breadth of the world but in most of the cases, they have become a mere instrument of cheap publicity, propaganda, personal gains, popularity etc. in the hands of vested interests. For example, in India itself the Kashmiri Pandits etc. have been subject to terrorism, loot, rape, killings and displacement for many years but no human rights organization has come forward to give voice to their sufferings or to protect their human rights. Similarly, in the western countries there prevail all sorts of discriminations and violation of human rights. In the U.S., churches of the black are being

burnt and they are persecuted. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, women are being denied their basic rights and freedoms. They are flogged and stoned to death publicly without any fair judicial trial on false and fabricated charges. They cannot marry men of their choice or seek an employment. In Cambodia under the dictatorship of Pol Pot of Khmer Rouge, millions of people were massacred systematically and nothing was done to check it or punish the men responsible for this mass genocide.

People and political parties talk of human rights but in practice there are flagrant violations of them. Death in police custody and fake encounters is an example of such violations. The police often take the law in their own hands and kill the so-called criminals instead of subjecting them to due process of law. No investigations are held as to whether the deceased had committed any offence. In the capital city of Delhi, the police shot dead two innocent businessmen and seriously wounded their companion and then placed a revolver, etc. in their car to prove it an encounter. The violation of human rights by the police, the very protectors of law and order, are too numerous to count. They harass, maltreat, humiliate, tyrannize and lacerate people in the name of interrogation and investigation.

Till recently in South Africa, apartheid was in practice, the native Africans were denied their just and legitimate human rights. Then there are other forms of apartheid in blatant practice world-wide. In Myanmar (Burma) there prevails terrorism and military dictatorship and the masses are being denied their basic democratic rights. Sex-apartheid is most rampant. Women are subject to various kinds of abuses and exploitations. Children too are being abused and exploited. They are forced to work hard in very dangerous situations. Sexually, they are assaulted and exploited, sold and bounded for labour. Their limbs are sometimes amputated to make them earn for the mafias as beggars.

Human rights may be reshaped and redefined to some extent according to the political needs but they should not be distorted out of shape. Such tendencies are totalitarian, inhuman, savage and should be resisted. The awareness of the sanctity of human rights and basic freedom should be spread to more and more people of the world. They should be united into very effective social and political groups to preserve their rights and privileges. In case of transgression and violation of human rights, the individuals should be compensated suitably and it should be ensured that these are not repeated.

Violation of human rights gives rise to various other evils such as terrorism, extremism, alienation, frustration, separatism, etc. In many cases, the governments control by self-seeking, over ambitious and narrow-minded people use repressive, unconstitutional and savage means and spread violence and terror to command the obedience from the masses. But State terrorism, violence, transgression of people's rights is a very dangerous strategy and often boomerangs. In the background of all world revolutions there has been this strategy. Whenever there has been systematic and widespread state persecution and violation of human rights, there broke out rebellions and revolutions and history repeats itself.

Gender violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, denial of economic, sexual and reproductive rights etc. are in practice unlimited. The remedy lies in widespread legal reforms, better enforcement of existing laws, new procedures to document violations, education about human rights and close alliance between organizations concerned with their rights. According to a U.N. report the cases of rape are on the rise and in courts, rape victims are often stigmatized and their testimony and integrity impugned.

Child prostitution, dowry-deaths and dowry-related crimes are other areas of concern. In India, thousands of women die because of dowry-related crimes. Girl-children are often held in bondage in brothels. The marked preference for boys over girls, sex selective abortions etc. are also matters of much concern and should be effectively tackled. These massive violations of human rights, taking place across the world, is a black stain on the face of humanity.



6. SAARC Summit

Abstract : This is the age of regional economic co-operation and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) has become the latest such forum. The 18th SAARC Summit was held in Kathmandu on 26th and 27th November 2014. The combined economy of SAARC is the 3rd largest in the world in the terms of GDP after the United States and China and 8th largest in the terms of nominal GDP.

This is an age of regional groupings and economic alliances, globalization and liberalization notwithstanding. Many countries in

the same area are coming closer in many ways for mutual economic growth, industrial development, poverty alleviation and business-integration. These strategies have become crucial in order to serve further the individual national interests collectively. There has been European Union since 1957 and *European Free Trade Association (EFTA)* was formed in 1960, which was later merged into the European Free Trade Area. Similarly, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore formed the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) in 1967 and Brunei joined it in 1984. In our own region was formed the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation), however, belated by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives in 1985.

The First SAARC Summit was held in Dhaka on *8th December, 1985*. Now the SAARC is 14 years old body and during this period SAARC has made some progress, though not spectacular. The Eighth SAARC Summit was held in New Delhi in *December 1994*. The Summit urged the liberalisation of world trade and dismantling of artificial barriers which impede exports from developing countries. It also focused on known areas of concern like terrorism, increasing trade in narcotics, environment protection, empowerment of women and children, poverty alleviation and global nuclear disarmament. It also expressed confidence that the momentum given to SAPTA during the summit was bound to be carried forward with even greater vigour in the coming years. When asked what SAARC had to boast of its 10 years' existence, the then Union Minister of Commerce, P. Chidambaram, said, "SAARC may not exactly have to boast of achievements in its 10 years' of existence, at the same time it cannot be belittled. SAARC has been able to establish a strong base of regional co-operation in several areas such as agriculture, communications, education, environment, drug-trafficking, rural development, science and technology, poverty alleviation, empowerment of women, etc. But it is unfair to compare SAARC with ASEAN or European Union which have been much longer in existence."

India being the biggest partner and economy in the group, has to play more responsible role in the development and success of the SAARC.

The Ninth SAARC Summit was held in May 1997 at Male. During the summit these South Asian countries moved a step closer towards interaction among themselves by agreeing to have more frequent

informal consultations. At the conclusion of the Summit it was declared that the aim of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic co-operation might be best achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building confidence. The leaders agreed that the process of informal political consultations would prove useful in the matter.

During the Summit, the SAARC leaders had been holding informal bilateral talks and discussions in the intervals between formal meetings. The leaders also agreed to transform the South Asian Region into a free trade area. This can be said to be one of the biggest achievements of this Summit because the new target date of 2001 represents a four year advance over the original deadline of 2005. It will prove a big boost to intra-SAARC trade which is currently very low at 3 per cent in comparison to other regional groups like ASEAN etc. There is a vast possibility of regional integration of trade and investment among the member States in such vital infrastructure sectors as roads, transport, communication and power. Increased integration and co-operation will also allow business and industry to take more advantage of a larger regional market.

Greater co-operation among member nations also means greater collective strength to foil protectionist measures in the guise of environmental and labour standard justification by the developing countries. Obviously, much speed work needs to be done by the group countries individually and collectively to make SAFTA a success. The transition from SAPTA to SAFTA pre-supposes an implementation of an action plan involving tariff cuts which has so far been a major road-block in increasing the intra-SAARC trade. India, being the largest country, economy has to take a lead in the matter by removing the non-tariff barriers on many items and commodities. SAFTA will benefit all the member nations immensely if the preparatory work is done honestly and expeditiously. For poverty alleviation program and empowerment of women and children it is imperative that defence expenditure is appreciably reduced and the funds are utilised for literacy and other welfare schemes. The member countries, particularly Pakistan and India have to agree to cut their defence spending and decide the road-map for future prosperity and growth.

Regional co-operation grouping is a binding force for SAARC countries. "Growth Quadrangle floated by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India has been a successful means to achieve SAARC's immediate

issue. Though it was a point of discussion of Pakistan calling a violation of the SAARC charter as it intended to isolate certain member countries. However, India called “Growth Quadrangle” geographically contiguous.

Colombo SAARC Summit 1998 which coincided with 50th Independence anniversary of the island made effort to accelerate intra-regional trade to higher levels. Interaction with ASEAN including Japan was on the agenda to be initiated to increase the area of business and marketing.

Islamabad SAARC Summit 2004 was held with memorable events in the federal capital which enhanced the country’s prestige. It continued for three days, and on the concluding day the SAARC social charter was signed.

In its 14th Summit in New Delhi 2007, the Heads of State agreed to work on the modalities to implement the provisions of the existing SAARC Conventions to combat terrorism, narcotics and psychotropic substances, trafficking in women and children and other trans-national crimes. They expressed their commitment to take every possible measure to prevent the financing of terrorist acts. They reiterated the need for law enforcement authorities of Member States to enhance co-operation in the prevention, suppression and prosecution of offences problem.. The Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to a rule-based multilateral trading system. They called upon all members of WTO to show commitment for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

Realizing the gravity of the South Asian regional issues particularly on economic and political front, Bhutan on March 13 contacted the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu offering to host the 16th summit in the spring of 2010. The unfulfilled tasks and their revival which could not be materilized in the Doha submit will once again be accelerated for their achievement by regional united force SAARC.

The Heads of State welcomed the People’s Republic of China, Japan, European Union, Republic of Korea and the United States of America, to be associated as they have been doing in the past as observers to SAARC. The region would benefit from these external linkages and help its economic integration with the international community. They also welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran to be associated as Observer to SAARC.

The 18th SAARC Summit was held at the Nepalese capital Kathmandu from November 26 to November 27, 2014 and was

attended by the prime ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, the presidents of the Afghanistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The motto was 'Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity'. Pakistan will host the 19th summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Islamabad in 2016. This was announced by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his address to the 18th SAARC summit being held in the Nepal's capital.



7. India and CTBT

Abstract: India has always favoured total and universal disarmament and not partial and discriminatory disarmament pacts and treaties. India did not sign NPT only because it was hegemonic and unjust. In 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test and since then India has kept its nuclear options open. Surrounded by hostile and powerful neighbours, India cannot compromise its security. India objected to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) on the same grounds in spite of its endorsement by 158 nations in the UN. The treaty did not have any provision for time bound elimination of nuclear weapons possessed by the 5 super powers. It favours nuclear powers and discriminates against others. CTBT allows nuclear powers to have computer-simulation tests in the labs. They can also exchange among themselves the nuclear technology and thus develop far more dangerous and devastating weapons. CTBT also goes against India's independent nuclear policy and security requirements as it forbids acquiring, manufacturing, testing, deploying and transferring of nuclear arsenals. But there are some who favour signing of CTBT by India as they feel it is not worth spending so much political capital for an option which India may never exercise.

India has always been in favour of total and universal disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons. Since 1954 India has been making fervent appeals to the community of nations to achieve total disarmament within a timeframe and has never been a party to partial, discriminatory and hegemonic disarmament pacts and treaties. In 1963 US, UK, and the USSR signed the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty banning nuclear tests in outer space, in the deep sea and sea-beds. However, China and France did not sign it.

In 1968 the Nuclear, Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed in the UN and was endorsed by over 100 nations, however, India did not sign it on the grounds that it was hegemonic and discriminatory.

Besides India, Israel and Pakistan remained outside the NPT regime. Pakistan did not sign it because India did not. And so the NPT failed in its declared aim of universal membership of the treaty. The major aim of NPT was to prevent the spread of nuclear technology to non-nuclear States. In 1974 India successfully conducted its first nuclear test at Pokhran in Rajasthan. Since then India has kept its nuclear options open refusing to submit to any regional or global regime that limits India's nuclear weapon options. India believes that any nuclear regime is unacceptable which does not envisage total disarmament by the nuclear powers. India does not favour any pact, treaty or instrument that aims at only non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and not at universal disarmament.

Initially in the years 1993-94, when the negotiation began for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), India supported it wholeheartedly, but since then India has come a long way and realized how not to compromise its own security needs being surrounded by hostile and powerful neighbours. Consequently, in August 1996, India blocked the CTBT by vetoing it in the Disarmament Conference held at Geneva. The 61-nation conference wanted to send the Treaty to the UN for signing by the member nations, but India's vetoing made it impossible.

The CTBT was then presented before the UN in September 1996 at its 51st session. Australia took the initiative and Denmark prepared the draft and it was approved by the majority of 158 member nations in spite of India's opposition. Besides India, Bhutan and Libya also opposed it, and Cuba, Lebanon, Mauritius, Tanzania and Syria abstained from voting. The American President Bill Clinton was the first to sign it followed by others.

India did not sign CTBT on many important grounds. Firstly, the nuclear powers failed to make any commitment to a time bound program for elimination of their nuclear weapons and universal disarmament. Secondly, India needed safeguards and nuclear option. Thirdly, it was hypocritical and discriminatory. The 5 nuclear powers conducted 2,045 nuclear tests between 1945 and 1996 and then came with the proposal of CTBT asking others to desist from nuclear tests. CTBT prohibits all States, except the 5 big ones, from acquiring, manufacturing, testing, deploying and transferring of nuclear arsenals. India's refusal to sign CTBT makes it categorically clear that she is not ready to accept the treaty in its present form and that she is not prepared

to give up its independent nuclear policy in spite of great pressure from powerful nations led by the US. India as a threshold nuclear power, finds the Treaty discriminatory and against its own security needs.

India is committed to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and to global nuclear disarmament on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. At the same time, India's legitimate national security requirements cannot be overlooked, especially in view of the developments in this region. In this context, as a non-aligned country, India has always maintained that it would not be a party to any discriminatory non-proliferation system. The principal plank of our nuclear policy has not changed and we continue to believe that a nuclear weapon free world enhance India's security along with the security of all other nations. Nevertheless, India as a nuclear weapon state, is more conscious of her responsibility in this regard.

India's nuclear policy is crystal clear. A formal commitment has been made to know first use of nuclear weapons. India maintains a unilateral moratorium on explosive nuclear tests. It is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including a CTBT. It is remarkable to note that India's nuclear deterrent is based on the principle of strict political and civilian control. Such control would be exercised through appropriate scientific, technological and military management of the nuclear assets of the country to prevent unauthorised or accidental use.

International community is aware of India's policy on disarmament and international security issues are predicted on certain fundamental principles that are based on a broad national consensus.

CTBT allows the nuclear powers to have computer-simulation tests in nuclear labs. These powers have already acquired the technology that enables them to have simulate nuclear tests in lab conditions. The nuclear haves can also exchange the nuclear technology among themselves and build far more dangerous and devastating arsenals when they wish, and their economies allow.

The CTBT unjustly maintains the status quo which is not acceptable to India. But there are many who favour the signing of the Treaty on the ground that there are many serious logistical and financial problems to be overcome before India can test a nuclear weapon superior to its first bomb tested in *1974 at Pokhran*. If India carried such a test it would be immediately detected by a vast network of 170 seismological

monitoring stations, 80 radionuclide detection centers, 60 infrasound and 11 hydro acoustic stations spread throughout the globe. Moreover, India would have to carry a series of such tests to make the weapon effective and deployable. And all this would result in strong world disapproval, condemnation and criticism besides economic restrictions and halt of financial aid and assistance to the country. CTBT does not impinge on our sovereignty. And then there is a clause in the CTBT which allows a member nation to withdraw after a six-month notice, if the member nation feels extraordinary events, circumstances are jeopardizing its supreme interests. They avert that in this era of globalization, it is not only the political power of the nuclear States of the West but also their economic power that can be brought to bear upon our emerging economy. Why to spend so much political capital for a nuclear option which India may possibly not use, they ask.

India has refused to sign the CTBT in its current form. Apparently this act has come under a mushroom cloud of biased international criticism. Sooner than later, the current draft of the treaty of the international community on CTBT should unmask the faces of bitter critics. It does not mean that this refusal on the part of the moral strength and positive attitudes on the issue of nuclear purposes, India will abandon its policy. Still, India has chosen the talks rather than walk out during the CTBT Conference in Geneva which failed to result in an agreement.

The treaty is discriminatory. This has not been echoed by India only but by the immediate neighbours like Pakistan and China too have said that the text of the treaty does not meet their concerns.



8. Global Water Crisis

Abstract : Every faith advocates that water is sacred and water is life. Mythologically, a very popular proverb BHAGIRATH TAPASYA has got the connotation with water. The Quranic interpretation of the value of WATER is that Almighty has gifted water to mankind as most beneficial. Both plant and animal kingdoms cannot survive without water. The physical infrastructure including the industrial growth is directly guided by the availability of water. Even politics and economic growth of a country, particularly India, are not untouched by the water as the main issue. Talk on water is tremendous: the glory of water is endless.

October 9, 2003 paralyzed life in Chennai. 12 hour dawn-to-dusk general strike to condemn Karnataka's non-refusal to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu was the main reason. The strike was total and peaceful. No violence was reported from anywhere in the state. Pondicherry, the coastal city of Tamil Nadu, too, observed a total bandh to protest against the plight of farmers in the Karaikal region following Karnataka's refusal to release Cauvery Water. On the other side, Karnataka's chief Minister decided to cut short his *Padyatra* on the Cauvery issue and dismissed threats about imposition of Presidents' rule in Karnataka, for not obeying the Supreme Court directive on water release. The only reason behind the bone of contention between the two Indian States is nothing but the Cauvery issue.

Water crisis in India is miserable. There are draughts and famines causing untold misery, death and destruction. Today, there are thousands of villagers and towns facing an acute drinking water shortage. Water supply plants are not able to supply sufficient water in cities. Pollution on our water resources is on rise. As a result, more and more villages, towns and cities are facing the problem. Funds to the tune of Rs. 20,000 crores are needed to sustain drinking water system in the country for the next 5 years. The urgent need of the hour is that communities should be involved in sustaining the water resources created for the people, especially in the Indian cities.

Water management efforts have yet not been made very effective. It has given us a poor scenario. Agriculture, and other water management aspects are there in the constitutions of India, but the water crisis still remains an incomplete national task. **Cherapunji in India is the wettest place in the world** which receives an annual rainfall of about 15,000 mm and yet the village often faces drinking water shortage because of widespread deforestation resulting in drying up of water sources soon after raining season is over. The other side of the picture is that of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. It receives just about 100 mm of annual rainfall and yet this desert town could manage to collect enough water for its use.

Now, what amount of water crisis is there in the other part of the World? More than one billion people, most of them among the world's poorest don't have access to enough fresh water. That number is expected to double by 2015, and then more than triple by 2050. As a result, more than 76 million people will die over the next 20 years because

they cannot access enough fresh water, according to the Pacific Institute, Oakland, Calif.

Industrial growth of all types, needs water. No liquid products including medicine can be made without water. Multiplicity for more water requirement is constantly on rise. On the other hand the fact is that an average human needs 49 litres of water per day for drinking, cooking, and sanitation. The average US citizen uses 269 liters of water per day. The average inhabitant of the African continent uses 6 litres per day.

Since water becomes more scarce, it fuels international conflicts. Twenty-two countries depend upon water that flows through river system that begin in other countries. Many of these are located in flashpoint regions such as the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East, and Sub-Sahara Africa. The late king Hussain of Jordan said, **“Water is the one issue that could drive the nations of these regions to war.”** This is not the only example in respect of water crisis. There have been many riot-like situations in many parts of the Asian and African countries. In the Indian sub-continent alone—there is an environmental problem on several fronts. Economic development and a rapidly growing population that has taken the country from 300 million people in 1947 to over one billion people today is putting a strain on the environment, infrastructure, and the country’s natural resources. Industrial pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and land degradation are all worsening problems. The Indian Government has estimated the cost of environmental degradation at about 4.5% of GDP in recent years. At this point of critical environmental hazards—acute water crisis is no longer a subject matter to be taken non-seriously. Water crisis is worsening.

Global warming adds more of complexity to the situation. If the world’s temperature rises, ice caps holding more than half of the world’s fresh water will melt, making estuaries flood and rainfall patterns more erratic. Just one example of the dangers inherent in global warming is the melting glaciers of Kazakhstan. Such frightening portents have not stirred the world to action. Taking into account the gravity of the situation, in the United Nation Millennium Assembly in September 2000, the attendants agreed to cut in half by 2015 the current number of people without enough water.

Stephen Harrison of Oxford University is of the view that glaciers have receded so far already that massive rock spills have left rocks

clogging up dams throughout Central Area. He says, “There is a real danger of disastrous dam bursts, hurling rocks and debris on the settlements below.”

Eli Raz, an Israeli geologist, found himself in something of a hole, and a rather deep one on a desert highway near his home by the Dead Sea to inspect some rock formations in 2003. The Dead Sea is, in a word, disappearing. Normally, the Jordan River feeds this body. In the last few decades, however, Israeli and Jordanian farmers have been siphoning water for agricultural use. Just in a worldwide trend: More than 80 % of the water used in developing nations goes towards agriculture. Today’s Jordan River is little more than a bubbling brook in the north, reduced to a damp mud bed in the south. By the time it reaches the Dead Sea, it dries. As a result, every drop has refilled the Dead Sea, which, because, it is located at a Earth’s lowest point in the middle of a desert and surrounded by reflective cliffs, evaporates rapidly. According to the geologist, the Sea’s shoreline has already retreated some 24 meters in the past 70 years.

Environmentalists agree that the Dead Sea is in a deep crisis. It is also an important stop for one of the world’s largest bird migration routs. If it disappears, it could drastically affect wildlife throughout Europe and Africa. The World Bank has agreed to spend \$ 400 million (US) to build a pipeline from the Red Sea in the South to the Dead Sea. The plan has not been set in motion, mainly because of fears that regional violence will sabotage it. Meanwhile, every year, the Dead Sea recedes by another one to two meters.

Economic growth and industrial developments are the areas where overemphasis is focused on. For instance, virtual water is a way to obtain water where there is no involvement of technology or construction. This term was coined by Tony Allan, a geographer at King’s College, London, in 1994. The Term “virtual water” means the amount of water needed to produce goods. Israel for example, developed a citrus export industry in the first decade of its existence. Oranges and grapefruits can thrive in the fertile crescent sunshine, but they require a lot of irrigation. Similarly, Jordan has all but has abandoned emphasis on agriculture and favours other sectors such as tourism and heavy industry.

Drinking water from the sea is possible only when an affordable way could be found to squeeze the salt out of seawater which is a costly endeavour, mainly because it craves energy. More than 11,000 desalination plants, cleaning billions of litres of water a day, are located

throughout the world, primarily in the Persian Gulf. Most of these Gulf-based plants use an older technology called **multistage flash distillation (MFD)**, which basically boils the water. The process is extremely energy-intensive, which brings a problem for just about every country except those in the oil-rich Gulf countries. This method, too, is not that much bearable and cost-effective. According to an estimate about \$ 2000 for a cell that produces 3,785 litres of desalinated water per day is quite expensive. Besides, more environmentally dangerous issue is: where to put all that extracted salt?

Search for a viable and cost-effective technology is the thirst. Development strategists are wary of investing in such expensive technologies in the hope that they eventually will become cost-effective. Some of the more utilitarian water technology research is being done on creating systems that are simple and the cheapest. A researcher, Wiveder spent his time in his Munich lab monitoring a model sewage system that automatically recycles household water multiple times. It means whatever amount of water is used returns to the same houses after it is cleaned. Rice producing countries including India, no crop requires more water than rice. One kilogram of this staple requires 1,500 litres of water. World Water Development Report of the United Nation says that the water often drawn from rivers becomes salty because of high evaporation rates, which then salinises surrounding bodies of water. Now, it is possible to ask people to give up rice. This could be one way to reduce the world's water crisis, but half the world's population consumes it.

Water demand in India is for four primary consumptive uses, namely irrigation, power production, domestic and industrial. In the area of water management—it is known that water quality deteriorates due to repeated use, no serious attention has been paid to the qualitative aspect of water resources. The total water available in India is about 1900 thousands million m^3 , annually, which would be shared between the four primary consumptive uses, as mentioned earlier. However, aquatic ecologists suggests that at no point of time should more than half of the total water available annually for utilization be withdrawn. The total quantity of return water, which becomes waste-water after utilization, is estimated at 286 thousands million m^3 . Similarly the volume of industrial liquid water is about 8 to 16 % and above of the total city waste. The time is not far away that the volume of wastewater discharged by the Indian industry may be half the volume of domestic

sewage generated in the cities. **The water of the Ganga and the Yamuna is the worst victim as both human and industrial wastewater mixes.**

It is important to identify the major sources of pollution and arrange the same in order of severity to plan a control strategy. Cities are considered as major sources of pollution and so the urban sewerage system, particularly in the class-I cities, would play a very vital role in water pollution control because this system, if properly planned, takes care of both domestic and industrial waters. Most industries are located in the cities and continue to attract more industries in their neighbourhood, as such a process of industrialization with the cities is one of the primary causes of urban growth, both in size and population.

Control strategy for water management in India is slow. Cities are considered as major sources of pollution. It may be the Yamuna in Delhi or the Ganga in Kanpur. Both the sacred rivers are badly polluted. Sewerage regulation hardly keeps control over industrial waste discharge. Although the water prevention and control of pollution act is in force since 1974 but still the role of this Act needs **BHAGIRAT TAPAYSA**. No doubt, the importance of water conservation is a landmark achievement of the Act. Every drop of water used in the industry is levied. The industry has become cautious of the wasteful use of water and realized the recycling process as an integrated concept while planning water use. Less water means less wastewater and this in turn requires lesser volume of the reactor vessels for treatment, all this would inevitably lead to economy. In order to avoid establishment of new industries without pollution, the licensing procedures and subsequent follow-up action needs to be streamlined. While setting up any new industry, environment impact assessment should be made more effective for making correct decisions regarding possible negative impact and nature and extent of abatement technology required for mitigating ill-effects of pollution and possible eco-degradation. Similarly, in urban sector, a proper land use plan will have to be evolved and adopted for containing the stress of environmental pollution on resident population.

Turning to Kaveri issue—it is the truth that the prime need for life process, rivers have been used for domestic, agricultural, fisheries, industrial, recreational, aesthetic, navigational and power generation purposes. India's progress is entirely based on agricultural sector. And this is attributed to the presence of an irrigation system. There are chains of rivers, canals and channels in the country. Thus, the irrigation system has been very vital for our agriculture from times immemorial. We find

an evidence from the early medieval period where a Minister is reported to have advised his King in the following words:

‘O, King, hast then, ensured that agriculture in the Kingdom does not depend on rain.’

Water is Nature’s precious gift, a bliss every human being needs. People of the world must realize it. Or the day is not far away when as the late King Hussein of Jordan said: “ Water is the one issue, that could drive the nations of this region to war.” Water crisis in Indian context can never be exempted in terms of global water crisis.



9. The Euro’s Role

Abstract : The Euro, a single and common currency for eleven European countries was launched at mid-night of 31st December, 1998. Greece was not admitted to the Euro while Sweden, Denmark and Britain opted out. The event was hailed as the most ambitious scheme of the millennium and launched with great enthusiasm. It has integrated all the member nations into a great economic power and common union. Till 2001 all Euro transaction would be in electronic means as there would be no Euro coins and notes, but there is every likelihood that Euro coins and notes be introduced earlier than the stipulated date. The Euro is likely to give the dollar a run for its money and decrease the American clout.

The Euro, a common currency for Europe, has arrived with a bang. The long cherished dream came true on 31st December, 1998 as the clock struck 00:00 and the new year, the last of the present millennium (zero), was rung in. This new common currency called **Euro** at present represents eleven of the fifteen European countries and about 300 million people which accounts for nearly a fifth of the world’s economic trade, business and turnover. The eleven European nations making the European Union who have adopted Euro as their single common currency are—Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Ireland, Finland and Holland. Greece was excluded from the Euro for the time-being because she failed to meet certain Maastricht Treaty conditions related to debt, deficit, inflation etc. Sweden, Denmark and Britain opted out because they were not prepared to surrender their individual sovereignty to a pan—European single and common currency.

The launch of the Euro has been termed as the most ambitious and famous project and program of this millennium. But few years ago there were many skeptics and the detractors who thought the common currency scheme for the Europe was merely a wishful thinking and a utopian project not likely to come to function so soon. However, this biggest economic event of our times was celebrated with great enthusiasm, fanfare, champagne and celebrations in the European capitals. Really, the launch of Euro has been a landmark and an epoch-making event in many respects but particularly in the sense that it has brought many European nations economically closer and bound them into a common bond who were once at war with one another. The arrival of Euro certainly marks a great forward leap towards European integration, unification and greater economic assertiveness.

The consumers would pay in Euro through their cheques and credit cards for their purchase throughout the European Union (EU). It is obvious that Euro would remain a "book currency" for the next three years and people would not have Euro currency and notes in their pockets and wallets at least till 2001. But there are much expectations and enthusiasm in the consumers and they look upon it as the most ambitious economic experiment in history. They feel much gratified that after all Europe has kept its date and tryst with the destiny by launching Euro as scheduled. They see it as a dawn of a new era and a brave new world. Keeping this momentum of the success and enthusiasm in the mind, the European finance ministers may forward the date of introduction of Euro notes and coins. Thus there is every likelihood that the introduction of Euro notes and coins may be speeded up. The concerned financial ministers now feel the urgency of making Euro an every day reality as early as possible. But the task is not easy because it implies production of billions of notes and coins to replace the existing eleven currencies by one single currency. Till Euro becomes a physical reality for common customers and consumers, it means a lot of confusion because when they go for shopping there would be two quotes, one in the local currency and the other in Euro. It implies more calculations. It is estimated that about 50 billion coins and billion notes will be needed to replace the existing eleven currencies.

The arrival and emergence of Euro is being seen by many as a great challenge to the global supremacy of the almighty dollar. They believe the Euro would give the dollar a run for its money. They say that Euro

would turn the entire Europe into a single power block economically as strong and powerful as the US comprising of 50 states. In the times to come Euro would certainly weaken the American clout and dollar. It also means increasing challenge and confrontation to American hegemony, monopoly and supremacy in world politics and financial matters.

But there are many others who feel that introduction of Euro, the single currency of United States of America does not mark at all the beginning of the end of supremacy for the American dollar. They say that as soon as the present euphoria subsides, many European countries may regret the change. They argue that the launch of Euro does not mean a viable and desirable integration and unification of the European countries because of their different cultures, languages and interests. And so they can never be as perfectly integrated as the US states. Moreover, these nations would be hard pressed to co-ordinate their economic policies since they continue to retain considerable control over many important issues like labour, taxation and regulation of business. It is also argued that Euro-region is relatively a high tax area and it would discourage the investors of the world from shifting to Euro from dollar. They think that these and such other problems and issues will ultimately make Euro a much weaker currency. Some American analysts even predict that the launch of this single currency would lead to high inflation, worse unemployment and ultimately even the outbreak of old hostilities and armed conflicts because the compromise and surrender of the individual sovereignty to the needs of the European Union cannot be affected so easily and smoothly. These grim warnings and forebodings may not come true but they will certainly have a far reaching impact on US-European relations.

What does Euro mean to India and other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Does it mean more business? Does it mean no more risk of exchange rate fluctuations and less calculations and paper work? Many say it also means greater exports from India and so the Indian companies stand to gain once the Euro stabilizes and the hegemony of dollar is broken. More and more business is expected as there would be less currency fluctuations and risks. Consequently exports and imports would be more simple, easy, smooth and uniform. The advent of Euro is also believed to work as a strong hedge as it gets strengthened in days to come. Euro is also likely to speed up the Indian

investments in the Euro-region by the Indian companies. It will also result in bringing down of the borrowing costs and more and better business options. Certainly it opens up a new and vibrant economic world for corporate India. The change over to Euro would help the Indian exporters and businessmen to reduce the expenses in their business dealings with European countries because of many factors mentioned above besides better banking services and larger market.

European countries offer a far greater market and corporate opportunities than the US. It is predicted that EU economy would soon emerge as the strongest as a result of this economic integration and launch of the Euro. Analysts see massive opportunities for Indian exporters and businessmen in telecom, software and service sectors besides in traditional items from India to the so big a single market with stable currency and such other strengths. Experts say that Euro would be soon the currency of choice due to better liquidity and improved investor interest. It has been pointed out that there would be great opportunities for exporters and importers as the competition and transparency would increase. Competition, transparency and efficiency should enhance cheaper imports from the EU countries to India. Euro has opened a new frontier for Indian businessmen which may soon trigger off better opportunities, gains and a spate of investments as European Union is the single largest trading partner of India and accounts for 20 per cent of India's foreign trade.

The other positive aspect of Euro is reduced costs for travellers to Euro-countries because there would be fixed exchanged rates and the banks would not include a margin for exchange risk. Euro means doing away with a complex nature of currency conversions. The highest denomination of the Euro is to be 500 Euro notes and it would facilitate carrying of large amounts of cash for travellers and others. Now a traveller to Euroland need not convert currencies while entering the different countries of Europe.

It was during the days of Roman Empire that Europe had a common currency. The launch of Euro has again introduced the common currency since Roman days. The journey to the single and common currency has been long and difficult. Its history goes back to 1957 when European Union came into existence with six members of European Coal and Steel Community signing the Treaty of Rome with the aim of removing all internal barriers to trade. Earlier in 1952, these six countries—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg had pooled

control over their coal and steel industries under a plan proposed by the French statesman Robert Schuman.

In 1970 Pierre Werner, the then Prime Minister of Luxembourg prepared a plan for a single and common currency for Europe and a 10-year deadline was determined but the plan could not be materialized for various reasons in the stipulated period of ten years.

Jacques Delors, a Frenchman worked hard to conceptualize the common currency with the active support of German chancellor Helmut Kohl. The efforts of these Euro-visionaries culminated in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 which categorically laid down a plan as how to achieve the goal of common currency by 1999.

The Euro Big Bang has been proclaimed as the biggest single event of our lifetime. It has been described in many glowing terms. One expert says it is like watching the Berlin Wall coming down. This biggest and the boldest economic experiment is destined to redefine economic financial and political interaction among the member countries and the rest of the world. The Euro may soon become the hottest and the strongest currency for many countries and trading partners.

Currently, the financial crisis and its impact on the euro and neighbouring countries including EU members and major trading partners, are bringing home three fundamental limitations of the. As a result the euro has become the official currency of 16 of the member states of the European Union (EU). The States, known collectively as the Euro zone, are Australia, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The currency is also used in further five European countries, with and without formal agreements and is consequently used daily by some 327 million Europeans. Over 175 million people worldwide use currencies which are pegged to the euro, including more than 150 million people in Africa.

The euro is the second largest reserve currency and the second most traded currency in the world after the U.S. dollar. As of August 2014 with more than €995 billion in circulation, the euro has the highest combined value of banknotes and coins in circulation in the world, having surpassed the U.S. dollar. Based on **IMF** estimates of **2008 GDP** and purchasing power parity among the various currencies, the Euro zone is the second largest economy in the world.

10. Indo-US Relation

Abstract : India-United States relations (or Indo-American relations) refers to the international relations that exist between the Republic of India and the United States of America. Despite being one of the pioneers and founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement of 1961, India developed a closer relationship with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. During that period, India's relatively cooperative strategic and military relations with Moscow and strong socialist policies had a distinctly adverse impact on its relations with the United States. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, India began to review its foreign policy in a unipolar world, and took steps to develop closer ties with the European Union and the United States. Current Indian foreign policy is based on maintaining strategic autonomy to promote and safeguard national interests.

According to Gallup's annual public opinion polls, India is perceived by Americans as their 6th favorite nation in the world, with 75% of Americans viewing India favorably in 2012, though this declined somewhat to 72% in 2014. President Barack Obama was the first US president to be the chief guest of the 66th Republic Day celebrations of India held on 26th January, 2015.

During the run-off to the general election there was wide ranging skepticism regarding future of the strategic bilateral relation under Modi's premiership as in 2005 he was, while Chief Minister of Gujarat, denied a US visa during the Bush administration for his alleged poor human rights records. However sensing Modi's inevitable victory well before the election, the US Ambassador Nancy Powell had reached out to him as part of greater re-approachment from the west. Moreover, following his 2014 election as the Prime Minister of India President Obama congratulated him over telephone and invited him to visit the US. US secretary of States John Kerry visited New Delhi on 1 August to prepare the grounds for Modi's first ever US visit as Prime Minister. In September 2014, days before visiting the US in an interview to CNN's Fareed Zakaria, Modi said that "India and the United States are bound together, by history and culture" but acknowledged that there have been "ups and downs" in relations. Modi travelled to US from 27-30 September 2014, beginning with his maiden address in the United Nations general assembly followed by attending a gala public reception by the Indian American community in New York's Madison Square Garden before heading Washington, D.C. for the bilateral talk with

Obama. While there, Modi also met several American business leaders and invited them to join his ambitious Make in India program in a bid to make India a manufacturing hub.

Barack Obama, the president of the United States, was invited to India as a chief guest for the Indian Republic Day parade on 26th January, 2015. He reached New Delhi, India at 10:00 AM (Local Time) on 25th January and addressed the country jointly with Narendra Modi in Hyderabad House, followed by recording of a radio program. Both Modi and Obama described each other as close friends who could crack jokes easily. Obama stated India and US can be best partners in trade.

India and the US held their first ever bilateral dialogue on the UN and multilateral issues in the spirit of the “Delhi Declaration of Friendship” that strengthens and expands the two countries’ relationship as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The United States is one of India’s largest direct investors. From 1991 to 2004, the stock of FDI inflow has increased from USD \$11.3 million to \$344.4 million, and totaling \$4.13 billion. This is a compound rate increase of 57.5 percent annually. Indian direct investments abroad began in 1992, and Indian corporations and registered partnership firms are now allowed to invest in businesses up to 100 percent of their net worth. India’s largest outgoing investments are in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 54.8 percent of the country’s foreign investments. The second largest are in non-financial services (software development), accounting for 35.4 percent of investments.

The US is one of India’s largest trading partners. In 2011, the US exported \$21.50 billion worth of goods to India, and imported \$36.15 billion worth of Indian goods.[151] Major items imported from India include information technology services, textiles, machinery, gems and diamonds, chemicals, iron and steel products, coffee, tea, and other edible food products. Major American items imported by India include aircraft, fertilizers, computer hardware, scrap metal, and medical equipment.

President Obama’s visit is only a small step in the right direction; there are still ‘miles to go, before we accept that India’s ‘Shanghai moment’ has arrived.

11. Face of War or Terrorism?

Abstract: Central Asia is perturbed by several capricious antisocial organizations. Extremism and the tentacles of terror have shaken and threatened severely the global peace and harmony. Blood shed and brutality have never been a means to achieve human cause. Hidden political agenda, vindictive attitude and violence in any form are utter chaos and will further lead to the defragmentation of our civilization. Usage on terrorism and those who are encountering terrorism has opened up a vagary of psycholinguistic discussions for the world forum. Social needs and justice are the core issues and they need to be addressed faithfully and amicably in the interest of humanity and global peace.

In **January 1878**, a Russian Marxist Vera Zasulich shot and wounded a Russian police officer. That Russian lady put down her weapon down without killing the police officer announced, ‘I am a terrorist, not a killer.’

The same word or phrase “War on Terrorism” is today’s stuttering big bang and the headlines in the first lead of the international dailies. Has terrorism become a newly born culture of the millennium, or a repeat of the past bleak age? Will modern civilization take it as a game of long-term melodrama of a syndicate? The spread of rumour activates confusion and largely its success spearheads the functioning of mall doers. Now, no place is free from such antisocial virus like terrorism. International nexus plan promoting terrorism has shown havoc in one form or the other everywhere.

Evil hands of terrorism could not spare even the world’s first Islamic country, an abode of spirituality for rejuvenating humanism of the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia. The bombing of al- Khobar Towers in **Riyadh in 1996** by radical trained organization, can never be done in the name of Islam. The birth of Al-Qaeda having a connotation of terror activity cannot be given a branded name as ‘Muslim terrorist organization’ that sounds across the world to fight terrorism in the name of Islam. Al-Qaeda was formed to activate and spark off the pseudo military like operation to fight against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. The same coin gets a face, branded as Taliban and the implied meaning has been given to it as ‘the Islamist regime’ is wrong in the right sense of the teaching of Islam. The **September 2001** attack got itself perverted as an attack on Afghanistan in the name of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ which removed Taliban from power and ended Al-Qaeda’s

use of the country as base. At the same time, the process of several adoptions and adaptations were underway. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 1373. By 2003, UNSC adopted 12 major conventions and designed several protocols to combat terrorism.

The same phrase earned currency when it was used by the British colonial government. Jews attacked the British Mandate of Palestine several times in the late 1940s. That too was labelled and proclaimed as 'War on Terrorism' against Jewish groups like Irgun and Lehi and finally British left Palestine. The same phrase was used several times by Ronald Regan in the 1980s to explain his woes against Libya and Nicaragua. And this way the story of war on terrorism goes on. George W. Bush on 20th September, 2001 said, "Our war on terrorism begins with Al-Qaeda."

The transformation of this global catastrophe has got a different linguistic approach to discuss it in the media and addressing the world. Newly elected US President Barack Obama on 20 January 2009 said, 'Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred.' The impact is that the Defense Department officially changed the name of operations from 'Global War on Terror' to 'Overseas Contingency Operation'. Britain's most senior criminal prosecutor Ken McDonald spelt out of those who were responsible for bombings in London in 2005 are not 'soldiers' in a war, but 'inadequate' who should be dealt with by criminal justice system.

The fate of Somalia in the African belt is experiencing a severe ethnic crisis. On the whole it has been considered a 'failed state' posing endless law and order crisis. Sea root is the earning street for the vandalisms. Yet this state of lawlessness has not been given a name whether it falls under war or terrorism. Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an Islamist faction campaigning on a restoration of law and order in the state through its Sharia Law does not attract the attention of the multinational military power as it does the most in case of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The recent development in Pakistan for the eradication of Taliban's extremism vis-à-vis Sharia Law, the two self contradicting global issues, war or terrorism has given a despairing note of message to the world mass media. Saddam Hussein regime was a continuing problem for the UN. The fear was that Iraq would use 'chemical weapons against Iran and Kurd. The consequences take the shape of the declaration of 'Iraqi no-fly zones' by the UN for the protection of Kurdish minority and Shi'a Arab population in Iraq's northern and southern regions. And

finally the culmination of the crisis into a war ground by launching **Operation Desert Fox in 1998**. In the same year President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act that was responsible for regime change on the basis of its supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction. UNSC Resolution 1441 got executed and forced Iraq to comply with its disarmament obligations. The result was that the US Congress authorized the president to use force to disarm Iraq in order to 'prosecute the war on terrorism' keeping apart the opposition from China, Russia and France. US sought support and assembled a coalition of the willing from the nations who pledged support for its policy of regime change in Iraq and at last the invasion of Iraq was launched on **20 March 2003**. Iraq government was quickly toppled in May in the same year. Ba'ath regime is over but the insurgency against the US is still causing bloodsheds of countless.

The other shoot off of the same plantation of the tree, the disastrous tentacles in the name of war/ terrorism reaches southern **Lebanon in July 2006**. Israel called it fighting a war against terror. Hezbollah too called Israel as terrorist state. The endless counter blaming by one another since **1940s** is still on in the entire Middle East regions. Political crisis deepened during 2008 and was almost beyond control. The government got backing from the US while the Shi'a militants were armed and financed by Iran and Syria. This internal turmoil led to the fall of Beirut and finally went to the opposition forces. Yemen's predicament is that the central government is substantially weak. Powerful tribal system on the land is a continuing threat to the North-South conflict which has resulted into several domestic conflicts.

Over the course of **1980s** and the 21st century, Indian territories have experienced several terrors and war-like situations. The terror groups are still active and have threatened the country's security. The recent **2008 Mumbai** attacks have put a big question mark on the internal security of the country. Political nexus with a criminal tone cannot be overruled. Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's premier external agency has observed growing link between terrorist groups based in Afghanistan and Pakistan who were responsible for other deadly terrorist attacks in the rest of the country including Gurudaspur PS attack, 27, July 2015, Punjab, the latest one.

Afghanistan and the United Kingdom have already accused Pakistan for aiding and financing terrorism. American military aid to Pakistan went several times up to combat terrorism in the regions. But

to every one thought, one is surprised to notice about the two self contradicting facts: one, financial support to combat terrorism and the second influx of foreign aid to promote terrorism. Still, any one of these will never pave ways for the return of peace and harmony in the affected regions. There must be an honest and consolidated effort to combat all types of uncertainty.

Pakistan has blamed India for supporting terror groups in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with the aim of creating unrest within the Pakistani regions that too at the cost of diversion of funds is an outcome of sheer frustration. Contrary to this, the deployment of 80,000 Pakistani army on its own territory to remove Al-Qaeda and Taliban is a bitter irony on the part of the internal matters of Pakistan.

US-Islam-Terrorism, the trio must not be in an intermingling terms for debate on the world forum. Obama administration has opened up a new chapter to freeze the differences politically and through dialogues. Nevertheless, the dialogues must address the fundamental inter-conflicting issues that confuse the subject matters of the talk at any level. Taliban and Al-Qaeda do not fuse with Islam. Any act against humankind by any organization is un-Islamic. No region or country in the name of Islam wages war at the cost of human lives. It is good and certainly a welcome step of Obama that he is trying to rebuild ties with Muslims after anger at the invasion of Iraq and war in Afghanistan, made more urgent by a resurgent Al-Qaeda and Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Declaration and reaffirmation in the Turkish parliament in Ankara by the US president on his official visit in **April 2009** that 'the US is not at war with Islam' must not be confusing, now. It simply means that Islam has no connotation with any organization that spreads violence and hatred at all. The new millennium has unfortunately been laced with malicious thoughts and wrong propaganda on the issue of Islam and its teaching: peace and security of the world.

Europe has witnessed two World Wars; the land of America has seen many civil wars and blood shed of Americans by themselves; the curse of apartheid got its root deeper and deeper in the land of South Africa and was removed after tremendous sacrifice by the people of the land, and there are many more events of barbarism that history of world civilization can witness, the worst of them is the dropping of nuclear bombs, the first of its kind on the people of Japan in **August, 1945**. Undoubtedly, **September 2001** event has been condemned worldwide.

Is Islam responsible for any of these or even for any of those in the past? True interpretation of Islam is by action not only by true Muslims but by every civilized individual of the world.



12. Towards the Ice Age

Abstract: Solar activity showing long-term trends of brightening or cooling as well as a distinct 11 year cycle is not static: With the sun on the verge of entering a new cycle, speculations are that we could be heading into a period of lower solar activity, leading to global cooling and possibly even a new Little Ice Age. Russian scientist Abdussamatov predicts that around 2040, the sun will cool down to Maunder Minimum levels. This was a period in the 17th Century with the Little Ice Age. Is there a possibility of a new ice age? Let's explore.

Solar prediction is not an easy exercise as there are no proper physical models for any predictions. Therefore, predictions tend to be based on statistical inference only e.g. longer solar cycles tend to be followed by a weaker cycle.

However, a scientific consensus on solar prediction, comes from the Solar Cycle Prediction Panel, comprising members of NASA, NOAA, ISES and other US and International representatives. In March 2007, they released a consensus statement for the amplitude of the upcoming Cycle 24.

According to the prediction, Cycle 24, which is expected to begin in early 2008, may be larger or smaller. The cycle and predictions are largely speculative until it begins. Here one thing is clear that when Solar Cycle 24 begins, the warming sun will add to the global warming trend as it heads towards the solar maximum. This would nearly double the projected temperature rise due to greenhouse gases from 2008 to 2012.

Any more predictions of the solar cycles in the future are even more speculative. In his paper = "Grand Minima and Maxima of Solar Activity: New Observational Constraints", Usoskin (2007) = found that solar variations to be defined by chaotic processes. This cast significant doubts on long-term predictions using multi-periodic analyses. The sun is currently in a period of "grand maxima" where activity is higher than usual. It was found that the termination of a grand maximum is a

random process. In other words, the time when the sun will start cooling from its current “grand maximum” state is random. Therefore, the prediction, becomes a tougher job.

What if Another Maunder Minimum Occurs?

However, unlikely and difficult to predict, let’s take a hypothetical condition in which the sun does go through another Maunder Minimum over the next century. What will be the effect of this on earth’s climate? The difference in solar radiative forcing between Maunder Minimum levels and current solar activity is estimated between 0.17 W/m^2 (Wang 2005) to 0.23 W/m^2 (Krivova 2007).

On the other hand, the radiative forcing of CO_2 since pre-industrial times has been 1.66 W/m^2 (IPCC AR4), far outstripping solar influence and that excludes the extra CO_2 supposed to be added to the atmosphere in coming times. So the warming from CO_2 would be greater than any potential cooling even if the sun was to return to Maunder Minimum levels.

According to ice cores from Antarctica, the past 400,000 years have been dominated by glacials, also known as ice ages that last about 100,000 years. Periods of inter-glacials have been found to be in between these glacials. Inter-glacials can be defined as short warm periods which typically last for 11,500 years. As our current inter-glacial, also known as Holocene, has already lasted approximately 12,000 years, it has led some to claim that a new ice age is imminent. The question that now arises is about the validity of the claim.

In order to answer this question, it is essential to understand the cause of the shifts between ice ages and inter-glacials during this period. The cycle appears to be a response to changes in the earth’s orbit and tilt, which affect the amount of summer sunlight reaching the northern hemisphere. When this amount declines, the rate of summer melt goes down and this makes the ice sheets grow. In turn, this increases the amount of sunlight reflected back into space, increasing (or amplifying) the cooling trend. This leads to the emerging of a new ice age that lasts for about 100,000 years.

So what is happening in the current period? Changes in both orbit and tilt of the earth do indicate the cooling of the earth. However, there are reasons to explain why an ice age is unlikely. The reasons are as follows:

These two factors— orbit and tilt— are weak and are not acting within the same timescale. These are out of phase by about 10,000

years. This explains why their combined effect would probably be so weak that it may not be able to trigger an ice age. One has to rewind to about 430,000 years ago to find an inter-glacial that occurred with similar conditions. This inter-glacial lasted for about 30,000 years.

CO₂ and other greenhouse gases are known to create the global warming effect. This effect is far greater than the cooling effect expected from natural factors. Without the existence of factors such as the human interference and the earth's orbit and tilt, a slight decline in solar output since 1950s and volcanic activity would have led to global cooling. But looking at the current scenario, we know that global temperatures are definitely on the rise.

It can, therefore, be concluded that with the rising CO₂ concentrations and the other phenomena taking a backseat, a return to ice age conditions does not seem to be likely. In contrast, temperatures are constantly increasing and this increase may come at a considerable cost with little or no benefit.

Contrary to this, the evidence which brings out the probability of the little ice age in the coming time is the Vostok Ice Core Sample. The Vostok Ice Core Sample consists of approximately 420,000 years of the earth's climate. Based on this sample, scientists created a graph, containing 420,000 years of temperature and CO₂ increases and decreases. This is known as the Vostok Ice Core Graph.

This pattern is unmistakable. To read the graph, one has to work his way from 420,000 years ago to the present. The graph looks like a cardiogram, except that it has a pattern of temperatures going up, then trending downward in the long run.

Temperature spikes toward a peak, declines but still remains high, then drastically dips down. It, then again rises back up, but nowhere as high as the previous inter-glacial period. Then the temperature dips again; each attempt is "weaker" than the previous attempt. Once it reaches the peak, it goes back down and repeats the process = until it peaks into a new inter-glacial period.

Some 90,000 years ago, temperature remained well below what it has been for the last 10,000 years. This 90,000 year period is what we associate with massive glaciations, an ice age.

The most recent peak on the graph took place 8,000 years ago, a period scientists call the 'Holocene Maximum'. The general trend since then has been "downward". Since then, warming has increased and cooling has decreased. The Medieval Warm period brought

temperatures back up before a Mini Ice Age kicked in. We pulled out of that in the 19th Century and entered the 20th Century Warm Period.

Both the Roman and Medieval Warm periods were a lot warmer than the 20th century warm period. The temperatures peaked in the 1930s, the dip started in the 1940s, then peaked again in the 1990s. Temperatures stabilized from 2002 to 2005 with a downward trend and then dipped strongly in the period of 2007-08.

Following the Vostok Ice Core Graph, in spite of the global warming influence and the inactivity of Earth's orbit and tilt, we reach the conclusion that we are headed into an ice age: Now the only question arises: Are we headed into another mini ice age, or will it be the big one?

If there occurs a mini ice age, like the one ushering in the 1800s, the new mini ice age will certainly be colder. The Vostok Ice Core Graph shows that pattern over 400,000 years. The warm period that follows this oncoming mini ice age would not be as warm as the 20th Century was. This back and forth pattern would repeat itself, each time having lower temperatures than the previous cycle.

In that scenario, we are spiraling into a mega ice age. We are at the point on that graph where any massive temperature-dip, "could be the one;" that brings us into a mega ice age.



13. The Nuclear Option

Abstract : America has developed new weapons of mass destruction, more powerful than the earthquake bombs on the pretext of punishing the so-called "rogue countries". China is also increasing and expanding her nuclear and missile muscle. She is also supplying nuclear weapon technology to Pakistan to India's great security risk. In such a situation, India is keeping nuclear option open is right and understandable but unfortunately nothing has been done to exercise this option since Pokhran test in 1974 and it has cost the country a lot in terms of political capital etc. This procrastination in going nuclear is baffling and undesirable. Our commitment to keep nuclear option open must be matched with commitment to deployment. With the revival of Agni missile programme nuclear warheads should also be developed and deployed.

In spite of NPT, CTBT, FMCT/MTCR etc. the nuclear nations are busy in upgrading their weapons of mass destruction and stockpiling

nuclear warheads. The US has already developed new bombs, more powerful than the earthquake bombs. These bombs are said to be able to penetrate deep underground nuclear launchers, hidden reactors and buried stockpiles of chemical weapons. The US alibi for developing these so potent weapons is to deal with what she describes as the “rogue States” like Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea. The development of the new B61-11 nuclear free fall bombs are designed to deliver most of the energy from a nuclear blast into the ground, giving it larger acceleration to destroy deeply buried targets. America has also entered into a pact with France and Britain to exchange information on weapon research. America has also expanded NATO by extending nuclear security to Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The message is loud, clear and inexorable. India’s next door neighbor China is increasing and upgrading its nuclear weapon-power. She is on the biggest expansion spree of missile and nuclear capabilities. The return of Hong Kong has further increased its economic, political and strategically importance. India’s vulnerability to these Chinese nuclear arsenals and missiles is now an open secret and a cause of great national concern. Recently China flexed its missile muscle and tried to terrorize Taiwan. This attempt by a country to terrorize another neighboring country was unprecedented. These dangerous developments dramatically change the global security scene in general and that of Indian subcontinent and the South-east Asia in particular.

Despite nuclear non-proliferation treaty, China continues to sell and supply nuclear technology to Pakistan. Pakistan’s nuclear programme has received a tremendous boost because of China. It is now a well-known fact that China has been supplying Pakistan with ring magnets for enriching uranium to weapon grade. Besides this many other critical nuclear weapons related equipments are being sold to Islamabad by Beijing. Pakistan has also obtained ballistic and cruise missiles from the same source. Pakistan has successfully test fired a medium range missile with a target range up to 800 km. The Haft series of missiles have been successfully test fired with a much increased range. The report of these missiles was made public by the Pakistani authorities following the alleged deployment of Indian Prithvi missiles near the Pakistan border. However, Prithvi has a range of 200 to 250 km. only and it gives Pakistani Haft missiles an edge over the former. Islamabad is also in possession of M-11 Chinese missiles. Thus, the shadow of

weapons of mass destruction is looming large on India from across its borders in the north and the west.

Pakistan's leading nuclear scientist, Dr. Abdul Qadeer, said on 16 August, 1997 that despite criticism from western world his country would go ahead with its nuclear plan which would act as perfect deterrent against India. He said, "Whatever the West has said about, this programme has proved to be a blessing for us. The deterrent capability of Pakistan's nuclear plan has been proved by the fact there has been no war between India and Pakistan since 1971." America has also been going ahead with its Pressler amendment programme and increasing economic aid to Islamabad.

In a situation of nuclear proliferation in the subcontinent, India's stand on CTBT and nuclear option is quite understandable. Her rejection of CTBT in its present form became imperative because India's 970 million people, constituting one-seventh of the world population, cannot be left exposed to missile and nuclear blackmail and danger. The former Indian Prime Minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, has stated it publicly: "deterrence has now become more relevant than ever before." India has vast deployable capabilities but they need to be converted into deployed and operational ones. It is no use remaining a sleeping giant. Agni tests need to be revived and its range further increased. India can effectively deter aggression by Pakistan and China by developing its own IRBMs with nuclear warheads. India can no longer afford to take security risks and should be fully prepared to face the new challenges posed by these new developments. India should be powerful enough to punish suitably and in an exemplary manner the aggressor. For this purpose it is imperative that India's deterrents are made deployed and operational in near future. It will generate lot of confidence in our armed forces and inspire the public with much needed sense of security and safety of the national boundaries.

On 18 May, 1974, India conducted its only nuclear test at Pokhran in Rajasthan. But since then nothing has been done to exercise the nuclear option and it still remains neglected and unconsummated despite India's exposure to nuclear and missile threats from Pakistan and China. Our capacity and capability to develop nuclear weapon system remain unused and unemployed and it exposes the hollowness of our security policy and hypocrisy of its planners. It is high time that we flex our nuclear and missile muscle to deter the potential aggressor. India's restraint in regard to exercising its nuclear option is totally

unwarranted and it has caused huge waste of political capital and money. Time is the essence and in the field of nuclear weapon system and technology things become obsolete very soon unless they are updated and up-graded with the passage of time. This continued hesitation in going nuclear is likely to prove very costly.

We have the delivery system in the form of Prithvi and Agni missiles but the nuclear warheads, the missiles are to carry, are not there. And no nuclear warhead, worthy of its name, can be developed without trials and tests. By putting more tests of Agni on hold India has further compounded the problem and there is much confusion on matters of strategic importance and security.

It is sad to think that we are committed to nuclear option but not to exercising the option and developing a suitable nuclear deterrent to match the threats from some of our immediate neighbors. It reflects the myopic vision and blindness to ground realities of our leaders and policy planners. The Agni programme, which has opened new avenues of hope and confidence in regard to defence and security, should be revived and the test-fires continued till Agni becomes operational. The country also urgently needs the testing of nuclear warheads for its missiles to counter any regional and sub-continental threats.

Nuclear nations are not ready for a nuclear weapon free world. They find these weapons now even more important than ever before. The CTBT has been signed without linking it with any time bound disarmament programme. Moreover, there are many loopholes in the treaty which allow the nuclear nations to continue their sub-critical tests. The situation warrants that India makes her own nuclear deterrents and produces missiles which can penetrate far into the hostile neighbour's heartland. It means that Indian IRBMs must have the penetration range up to 3000 km. and 4000 km.

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14. BIMSTEC

Abstract: Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is more a region to region co-ordination in the field of energy production, sharing know-how—technology, free trade and elevation of life standard of common people. Regional integrity is the base by virtue of which combating terrorism is the prime motive of the BIMSTEC states. So far three meets

have taken place since its inception to achieve its prime goals for the all-round development of the respective regions by sharing sources from one another. The 1st BIMSTEC Summit was held on 31st July, 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

BIMSTEC members include People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Bhutan, Republic of India, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Kingdom of Thailand. The third summit is a success in the sense that its future course of action will achieve BIMSTEC's goals and aims and strengthen friendly coordination amongst the states. The members met in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 4 March 2014 for the 3rd Summit Meeting.

Reaffirming the aims and purposes as contained in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration, the first BIMSTEC summit declaration (Bangkok, 31 July 2004) and the second summit declaration (New Delhi, 13 November 2008), the thrust is to recognize the close relationship and deepening engagements among the member states given the geographical proximity as well as the rich historical linkage and cultural heritage. This is quite convincing that the member states, endowed with abundant natural and human resources, have got considerable potential for economic and social development through mutually beneficial cooperation in identified priority areas. The need of the hour is that these members recognize the global and regional cooperation and continue to generate increased linkages and inter-dependence within the economies and societies of the respective states. New and emerging challenges of the region vis-à-vis global issues are to be dealt with which provide greater opportunity to further leverage regional cooperation and respond to upcoming challenges. The most striking of them are the threats posed by climate change on the lives and livelihoods of people across the regions in particular and surroundings.

Rise in population poses several challenges especially health issues apart from improvement in necessary infrastructure to meet out the basic pressing demands of the people. Education sector on the other hand is another major area where micro issues like cost effective education system and development of knowledge economy are to be taken.

Spread of terrorism helter skater across the regions is a major threat on the path of development, peace and harmony. No country in the

world can remain unaffected what the threat that terrorism poses to peace, stability and economic progress in the regions. BIMSTEC members emphasize the need for closer cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism and transnational crimes. Further by recognizing the special challenges faced by the least developed member states by support and developmental processes, the members need to undertake to address these issues on priority basis.

Resolutions have been made with commitment to increase efforts in accomplishing the founding aims and purpose of BIMSTEC and were reaffirmed in the third summit. Making decision to move forward towards finalization of score of agreements on issues related to trade will provide a healthy platform. Agreement on dispute will pave ways for better and smooth functioning of various trade agencies in the regions. Reaffirming cooperation and expediting mutual assistance in customs matters under the framework will be an added opportunity for the settlement of various obstructions. It's remarkable that BIMSTEC *Free Trade Area (FTA)* could be a strategic and a possible way for the attainment of growth and development. A direction in this regard to set up a BIMSTEC *Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC)* to expedite its work for the conclusion of the agreement on trade in goods by the end of 2014 will certainly improve the all-round developmental programs. The continuation of such efforts for early finalization of the agreement on services and investments will positively fetch good results. Expansion of skills and technology by cooperation and collaboration is bound to improve the quality of infrastructure. Member States through collaborations and partnerships can target towards micro, small and medium scale enterprises and decide to accelerate efforts for the early finalization of the *Memorandum of Association on the Establishment (MAE) of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (BTTF)*.

Energy sector is all time issue not only for one region or the other but an everlasting issue which needs to be taken on priority basis. Sustainable development at par is quite possible by having a very clear policy on the production and sources of energy. To underline the need for enhancing regional cooperation in the energy sector, the third BIMSTEC *Energy Ministerial Meeting in Nepal (EMM)* in 2014 and the forthcoming EMM in Bhutan in 2015, will explore several possibilities for environment friendly energy production programs. India can take the pride by playing its role as the BIMSTEC Energy Centre

in Bengaluru.

Tourism is a booming sector for the entire regions of BIMSTEC states. Progress made in implementing tourism cooperation programs and following up the plan of action on tourism is a necessary step towards domestic growth and development. Apart from generating substantial job opportunities, it adds to economic growth of the region.

Fisheries other than traditional one are the other area of attraction which needs to be addressed. By mutual cooperation in the area of fisheries, including inland fisheries, conservation of the sources and management by sustainable use of marine resources in the Bay of Bengal region will be of massive benefit.

According to an estimate, more than 60% of the Indian population still depends on agriculture as their prime source of income and livelihood. Use of advance technology in agriculture sector is the other very important field of enhancing research particularly the use of high yielding seeds and lesser use of fertilizers and pesticides. Such programs improve the life style of the agrarian society which is the backbone of the economy. A sincere effort with commitment is required to continue and enhance cooperation in the field of agriculture, including crops, livestock and horticulture.

There are some micro level upcoming issues in the regions like cultural cooperation among the member states. Mutual understanding amongst the members can contribute towards the promotion of socio-economic development driven by cultural industries. Enhancement in the health sector, including the traditional medicine by intensifying efforts to promote activities of the *BIMSTEC network of national centers of coordination (BNNCC)* for the promotion of traditional medicine will ease and facilitate a number of common problems. Setting up of the BIMSTEC network of policy think tanks can accelerate the functioning and adopting several constructive future programs. This can be amicably materialized by organizing short-term activities such as workshops, seminars, and exchange programs, including audio visual programs, on building public awareness on BIMSTEC.

Thoughtful implementation of BIMSTEC poverty plan of action needs to be initiated and adopted. Realization of such action plan at the second BIMSTEC ministerial meeting on poverty alleviation held in January 2012 in Nepal will show remarkable results. In order to carry forward the mission, Sri Lanka will be hosting third ministerial meeting

on poverty alleviation during the first half of 2014.

Rise in terrorism is not confined to a particular region or country. Regional integrity becomes a soft target by terror activities. Cross-border terror is a severe threat to constructive programs undertaken by the respective neighbors and the regions. BIMSTEC members need to identify sensitive issues in this regard by cooperation between law enforcement agencies of member states in combating terrorism and transnational crimes. There is an urgent need for expediting the ratification for entry into force of the BIMSTEC convention on cooperation in combating international terrorism, transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking. Mutual assistance in criminal matters will certainly help improve peaceful programs.

Exploring collaborative initiatives amongst the member states towards addressing the adverse impacts of climate change in the region is on the agenda of BIMSTEC meeting. Efforts are on to intensify cooperation in all areas of activities including strengthening institutional mechanisms. Signing of a memorandum for the establishment of BIMSTEC permanent secretariat in Dhaka and understanding of the *BIMSTEC cultural industries commission (BCIC)* and BIMSTEC cultural industries observatory (BCIO) are the major steps. Appointment of Sumith Nakandala of Sri Lanka as the first secretary general of BIMSTEC is a step forward for the operationalization secretariat.

The prime minister Man Mohan Singh over the second summit on November 13, 2008, in New Delhi stressed several issues of immediate importance. The momentum of organization rests in collective efforts of the members. BIMSTEC is an opportunity what the members should seize together. The political will is the binding for achieving purposeful and fruitful developmental programs. In the field of trade and commerce alone a substantial growth in the combined GDP has increased two and half times to reach 1.7 trillion US dollars. There is much greater connectivity between the member states like more trade and investment and more people to people exchanges. The winds of democracy have swept across countries. Globalization and economic interdependence has offered opportunities for growth and prosperity although the downside, as the recent international economic and financial crisis has shown is inevitable.

Alongside the successful functioning of other organizations, regional integration has increased dramatically. ASEAN Summits are now held

annually. The East Asian Summit process has begun. SAARC has been revitalized but at the same time, new trans-national challenges have emerged such as climate change, energy and food security are obstructing developmental efforts. Terrorism and threats from the sea continue to challenge the authority of the state. Delhi summit provides an opportunity for the members to give a new strategic thrust to BIMSTEC in the backdrop of these changes. There are a few cross-cutting issues. One; there is a need to undertake a comprehensive review of the activities. Focus on the preparation of a blue print for future activities should be given in the areas related to common priority. These areas should have the maximum potential for producing visible results and strengthening the common vision of the region. BIMSTEC is the bridge between South Asia and South East Asia. People of the regions belong to the Bay of Bengal community. Nature and geography have bound together by land and by water. Thrust should be given that it reflects on how best to create opportunities for growth and prosperity centered on the riches of the Bay of Bengal, keeping in mind also the dangers posed by the sea. Transport infrastructure and logistics would be a key. There is a need to coordinate on issues of maritime transport such as construction of a deep-water port to service the region, inter-modal connectivity, cooperation among port authorities, shipping and logistics networks.

To examine that cooperative mechanisms is active to exploit marine resources. The devastating tsunami in 2004 highlighted the imperative need for collective action, and a review of approach to disaster management. India has set up a *Tsunami Early Warning Centre*. By sharing extended information, exchange of data among BIMSTEC countries can minimize loss of property and lives. This can also include training facilities for capacity building. In the field of education, India is already in the process of establishing the Nalanda University as an international university of excellence. The 300 scholarships that India had offered in 2004 under the ITEC program for BIMSTEC countries have had a utilization rate of more than 80%. Each of the country is an important halt on the tourist map. There are Buddhist circuits. These can be popularized much more and other innovative packages can be worked out by tourism boards and jointly promoted. Considerable progress has been made in the negotiations on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement for trade in goods.

The 21st century belongs to Asia. It is going to be the engine of the world economy. BIMSTEC is an important part of the wider Asian community. It has the potential of playing a vital role in the Asian community of nations linked by effective road, rail, air and shipping services across which there would be free movement of people, capital, ideas and goods.



15. Globalization and its Ill-effects

Abstract: With the arrival of globalization on world scene, many new serious issues have cropped up. Brain drain, migration of talented people to overseas, pollution and spread of diseases are some of the by-products of globalization, to name a few. As a result of globalization large numbers of industries were set up across the globe. Rapid destruction of forests caused serious threat to both flora and fauna. Many species of plants and animals have become extinct and many are endangered. If this pace of globalization continues unabated, the day is not far when we shall have to witness dramatic environmental changes in the form of degradations. In order to catch globalization by its forelock, some programmes have been introduced like Vanmahotsav and Montreal protocol. Apart from this, strong stringent laws have been imposed against deforestation.

Globalisation is an universal phenomenon which was introduced with the aim of integrating societies, economies and cultures through a common link of trading policies, technology and communication. With the advent of globalisation though the standard of economy has improved, it also brought many new issues into concern. Brain drain, pollution and spread of diseases are the major problems the world is facing today. For a large extent the factor behind this is globalisation. Each day we could hear new forms of pollution and hundreds of people are becoming victims of this.

As a result of globalisation large number of industries was setup all over the world. For setting up of industries newer areas had to be discovered. People started destroying large forest lands. Rapid destruction of forests caused serious threat to both plants and animals. Many species of plants and animals have become extinct and many are endangered. Reports reveal that a major portion of forest area is shrinking. This can create far reaching consequence on the environment. Due to decline in the number of trees, the temperature

of earth is going high. This phenomenon is termed as Global Warming. Many environmentalists have come forward raising this issue, but still nobody could find a way to tackle this problem. Rise in temperature causes the ice field of polar region to melt which increases the level of the sea. This is a major threat to the entire inhabitants of coastal areas.

The next problem to be taken into account is the industrial waste. Each industry produces a huge amount of harmful waste material every day. Many of them have no proper means of waste disposal. They either dump the wastes into the sea, river or the lands of river banks. This way, the land and water is being polluted. Many of the water resources have been contaminated and become unfit for drinking. Even massive quantities of fish are dying. Scarcity of drinking water has turned out to be fierce. Also the outlet gases from industries are highly dangerous which includes poisonous chemicals like sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and toxic metals like lead and cadmium etc. This adds to air pollution. Air pollution has far reaching effects on human health. Mostly it affects the respiratory system and the cardiovascular system. Inhalation of polluted air negatively affects the functioning of lungs and other organs of our body. It can lead to minor breathing problems to severe respiratory disorder as the degree of exposure to pollutants increases.

Sulphur oxides react with atmospheric water producing sulphuric acid and thus forming acid rain which causes heavy destruction to historical monuments. Such incidents have already been reported in case of the Taj Mahal. Another harmful chemical which appeared on the scene in recent times is chlorofluoro carbons (CFCs) which is used primarily for many industrial, commercial and household applications. CFCs were found to be the major reason for the depletion of ozone layer. It can in turn be very destructive for the living beings as it protects our earth from the harmful radiations from the sun which can lead to serious skin diseases. Over a few decades, the agricultural production has increased tremendously with the use of hybrid varieties of plants and highly effective fertilizers and pesticides/insecticides. Such chemicals are hazardous to human well being. Strong evidences at large scale of neurological defects have already been reported.

This pace of heavy industrialization in the name of globalization will foster heavy consequences leading to dramatic climate change

worldwide. In a situation like this, there is an urgent need to adopt certain eco-friendly techniques to bring down the side effects of globalisation. Of course, some programmes have been introduced like Vanamahotsava and Montreal Protocol. Vanamahotsava aims at forestation and the launching of programs for plantation of trees. General awareness movement about the importance of trees and forests under the Vanmahotsava can save and protect our environment. Implementation and execution of laws on other hand will be of tremendous benefit for safeguarding forestation. The Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by bringing down the use of CFCs and replacing it by some less harmful chemicals. It's the duty of each and every citizen to save our mother earth by launching several community services and combined effort.



16. Role of Media in the Modern World

Abstract: Media plays a very prominent role in shaping the society. The original role of the media was and still is to give to the public all relevant information about various events in the country and the world. Now the written media includes a host of publications, dailies, fortnightly, weeklies, monthly all giving information about events with supplement of suggestions and comments by learned people. Today, the print media has acquired such proportions that there is absolutely no avenue of knowledge or information that is left out. Thus, the media, whatever it is print or the electronic, its importance at least in the modern world cannot be denigrated. While we are sitting in our drawing rooms at home, we can get all the information of all happenings around the world. We get a sea of knowledge and all the information, relaxing at home. If the common man loses faith in the truth of the media, it will be a bad symptom and a bad day for all.

The importance and the impact of the media, written or electronic cannot be marginalized in the world of today. In the modern world of quick communication and quick information, media plays a very crucial role. The original role of the media was and still is to give to the public all relevant information about occurrences in the country and the world. Today, the written media includes a host of publications, dailies, fortnightly, weeklies, monthly all giving information about events with

supplement of suggestions and comments by learned people. At the moment, the print media has acquired such proportions that there is absolutely no avenue of knowledge or information that is left out. Multifarious avenues are being touched upon, whether it is local, national or international. All avenues of news, business, health, sports, films and entertainment are being dwelt upon at great length. Advantage of media in spreading of news, knowledge and information through the length and breadth of the world is part and parcel of daily social life. In these days of awareness, even the remotest villages of India get at least one daily newspaper in their local language. This keeps them abreast of the latest news and happenings of the world. Moreover, written media is the cheapest medium of collecting all important information of the district, city, country and the world.

Next in importance come the electronic media i.e. the radio and the television. It can be treated as second to the print media because it is more expensive and therefore less common in far flung areas of the country. With so many channels on the radio and the television there is no information that is left untouched. This media especially caters more to urban areas as it is more expensive to buy and then to maintain. Thus, the media, whether it is print or the electronic, its importance at least in the modern world cannot be denigrated. While sitting in drawing rooms at home, we can get all the information of all happenings around the world. We get a sea of knowledge and all the information just relaxing at home.

So much so good, but what we notice today with the freedom of the press taking new proportions, media is becoming slightly out of control and also partial. The latest trend in the media is that it has become tainted with signs of extreme partiality. It is at times overstepping its limits and to some extent misusing its freedom. Its role is to give information of what happens and not to add its own partial views to the information. It should remain restricted only to reporting facts as to when and how they occur and leave the readers to form their own opinions. However, this is not truer of the modern trends of the media. They get news and paint them as per their own personal leanings and beliefs. In other words it is not correct reporting as it is likely to colour the views of the readers or viewers. The task of the media is just to report and not colour the views of the people.

Media has now been influenced by other powerful sectors particularly for obvious political leanings. Such practices should be

curtailed down and never allowed to grow. The principal role of media in a democratic set up is to establish a faithful link between the people and government. If a report is not correct or painted the common man gets a wrong picture of facts. This way, media is harming itself and tarnishing its image in front of the common man. If the common man loses faith in the truth of the media, it will be a bad symptom and a bad day for all. It would be good if the media restricts itself only to passing on correct and exact information only without any discrepancies or biased comments. Political masters should be treated the way they want to. They are to be heard and seen only. Media is just to establish a faithful and reliable relation between the people and the governance.



17. Capital Punishment

Abstract: From the study of history, we can see the prevalence of capital punishment since time immemorial which includes death by hanging the offender in public, lethal injections, electrocution etc. The punishment has since been abolished by almost 139 countries of the world and amongst those who retain it, partially or wholly include some Asian countries including India. The reasons in favour of retaining capital punishment include safety (of society), deterrence and costs (of maintaining such criminals in the prisons). It can be seen that capital punishment is an appropriate penalty for many offenders who are perpetrators of the inhuman act of killing people with utmost impunity and disregard for human life. The use of capital punishment is also viewed as a means of vengeance for the victims or families of the victims of such barbaric acts. But this is far from being the aim of capital punishment as it is not always possible to hand out the sentence in every instance where the family or the public at large believe that it is the most suitable punishment. A good example of the same is the Indian case involving Dara Singh who burned Graham Staines alive, an Australian missionary and his 8 year old son in 1999. The Supreme Court, dismissing the CBI's plea for death sentence said that the case did not fall within the framework of 'rarest of rare cases'.

The debate whether the death penalty should be abolished or not is one of most long lasting and impassioned debates going on in the civil society and politically in India. Some subscribe to the "eye for an eye" or "life for life" principle while others believe that death sentence is wrong. Former chief justice of India and now **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** Chairperson K G Balakrishnan has favoured

continuance of this provision, but he seems to have forgotten the other side. Most supporters of death penalty believe that it is justified on one or more of the following grounds: as means of revenge/justice, as a deterrent to others, to prevent any danger of re-offending and it is cheaper than life imprisonment where criminal will stay whole life in prison on tax payers' money.

Some human rights organizations oppose the death penalty on one or more of the following grounds: killing someone is always inhuman and it is like murdering legally. Life without parole is just as effective a way to prevent someone re-offending as finishing them. Saving money can never be a justification for taking someone's life and mistakes. In India, death sentence was last carried out in 2012 when Ajmal Kasab was hanged on 21st November in Pune.

In my view if we look at our national crime statistics, death penalty has not proved to be a deterrent. The reality is that the death penalty is a barbaric exercise in which no civilized society should participate. Capital punishment is a flawed aspect of the judicial system in our country. The death sentence to the terrorists evades logic as a fidayeen (suicide attacker) like Kasab and Afzal Guru would only embrace death as their means to martyrdom. These people are already prepared to die for beliefs. Besides this, their execution will not guarantee end of further terror attacks against the country but would rather be used by the extremist masterminds to instigate violence and more hatred against India.

The death penalty has no place in modern society. Nobody is surprised that it's still used in India, China and the United States. There is a punishment worse than death; make the convict endure endless discussion about capital punishment. The rigorous life in prison would be a far worse punishment than a swift death. In case of terrorists; they took the job fully prepared to die for their cause. We have to reform our laws especially for death penalty. Our laws should be such that a punishment should be so rigorous that it should remind not only to the offenders/ terrorists/culprits but also it should be a living example for the people around him about his inhuman acts. Each day and night, he should regret his acts of crime and at the same time it should act as deterrent.

From the study of history, we can see the prevalence of capital punishment since time immemorial which includes death by hanging

the offender in public, lethal injections, electrocution etc. The punishment has since been abolished by almost 139 countries of the world and amongst those who retain it, partially or wholly include countries like India, Pakistan, China, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, and the USA. The reasons in favour of retaining capital punishment include safety (of society), deterrence and costs (of maintaining such criminals in the prisons). It can be seen that capital punishment is an appropriate penalty for many offenders who are perpetrators of the inhuman act of killing people with utmost impunity and disregard for human life.

Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code says that a person committing murder shall be punished with death or life imprisonment and shall also be liable to fine and Section 303 of the Indian Penal Code reads thus: Whoever, being under sentence of [imprisonment for life], commits murder, shall be punished with death. The sparing use of this sentence in the country is also in conformance with its obligation of judicious use of this penalty as a party to the **International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**. The country's judiciary uses this punishment upon an unequivocal establishment of the culpability of the offender/ offence in a case before it which the court believes truly, falls within the definition of the 'rarest of rare case'.

It is, however, interesting to note that despite the punishment being handed down by the courts, both the lower and appellate ones, not many have been carried out.

India has been hesitant in abolishing capital punishment and had even voted against a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2007 calling for moratorium on the death penalty. This action is justified and even people's consensus is in favour of retaining the same with over 70% of the public voting for continuing the usage of death penalty as a means of punishment. Although nothing is more inhuman than taking away the human life. Capital punishment meted out to offenders who show no remorse for their barbaric actions may set an example in the society of the consequences of such an act and incite fear in the minds of anyone contemplating a similarly hideous act. The liberty of life of a person cannot be at the cost of another or in most cases several others in the society. Therefore, capital punishment meted out to serial killers, rapists and terrorists who have no consideration for human life and are blinded by lust, power and misguided by unethical considerations restores the people's faith in the judicial system. However, the judiciary has an obligation to be prudent in the use of this sentence

and act upon a well founded and unbiased judgement in its decisions.

To conclude, every act performed in moderation always results in greater good for oneself and the people around.



18. Effects of Economic Migration

Abstract: Generally, it is assumed that migration typically flows from developing countries into the rich countries of Europe, North America and Australasia. Yet the fact is that most movement in the world does not take place between developing and developed countries; it does not even take place between countries. The overwhelming majority of migration takes place within a country. Most migrants, internal and international, reap gains in the form of higher incomes, better access to education and health, and improved prospects for their children. Despite the range of adjustments and obstacles typically involved in moving, most of them are happy in their destination. Once established, migrants are often more likely than local residents to join unions or religious and other groups. In general, however, people move of their own volition, to better-off places. More than three quarters of international migrants go to a country with a higher level of human development than their country of origin. Yet they are significantly constrained both by policies that impose barriers to entry and by the resources they have to enable their move. People in poor countries are the least mobile. For example less than one per cent of Africans have moved to Europe. Indeed, history and contemporary evidence suggest that development and migration go hand in hand.

We live in an unequal world. Huge differences can be found in human development across and within countries. For many people in developing countries moving away from their home town or village can be the best sometimes the only option open to improve their life chances. Human mobility can be hugely effective in raising a person's income, health and education prospects. But its value is more than that because being able to decide where to live is a key element of human freedom.

When people migrate whether within or across international borders they embark on a journey of hope and uncertainty. Most people move in search of better opportunities hoping to combine their own talents with resources in the destination city or country so as to benefit themselves and their immediate family who often accompany or follow them. If they succeed, their initiative and efforts can also benefit those

left behind and the society in which they make their new home. However, they may face loneliness as they would have left friends and family behind. They may feel unwelcome among people who fear or resent newcomers may lose their jobs or fall ill and thus is unable to access the support services they need in order to prosper. It may result in a failed migration.

Generally, it is assumed that migration or brain drain typically flows from developing countries into the rich countries of Europe, North America and Australasia. Yet the fact is that most movement in the world does not take place between developing and developed countries; it does not even take place between countries. The overwhelming majority of migration takes place within a country.

The 2009 Human Development Report estimates that approximately 740 million people are internal migrants almost four times as many as those who have moved internationally. Among people who have moved across national borders just over a third moved from a developing to a developed country fewer than 70 million people. Most of the world's 200 million international migrants moved from one developing country to another or between developed countries.

Most migrants, internal and international, reap gains in the form of higher incomes, better access to education and health and improved prospects for their children. Despite the range of adjustments and obstacles typically involved in moving most of them are happy in their destination. Once established, migrants are often more likely than local residents to join unions or religious and other groups. Yet, there are trade-offs and the gains from mobility are unequally distributed. People displaced by insecurity and conflict face special challenges. There are an estimated 14 million refugees living outside their country of citizenship, representing about 7 per cent of the world's migrants. Most remain near the country they fled typically living in camps until conditions at home allow their return, but around half a million per year travel to developed countries and seek asylum there. A much larger number, some 26 million, have been internally displaced.

They have crossed no frontiers, but may face special difficulties away from home in a country riven by conflict or racked by natural disasters. Another vulnerable group consists of people—mainly young women who have been trafficked. Often duped with promises of a better life their movement is not one of free will but of duress, sometimes

accompanied by violence and sexual abuse.

In general, however, people move of their own volition, to better-off places. More than three quarters of international migrants go to a country with a higher level of human development than their country of origin. Yet they are significantly constrained both by policies that impose barriers to entry and by the resources they have accessed to enable their move. People in poor countries are the least mobile. For example, less than one per cent of Africans have moved to Europe. Indeed, history and contemporary evidence suggest that development and migration go hand in hand. The median emigration rate in a country with low human development is below four per cent compared to more than 8 per cent from countries with high levels of human development.

Demographic trends—an aging population in developed countries and young, still rising populations in developing countries and growing employment opportunities combined with cheaper communications and transport have increased the ‘demand’ for migration. However, those wishing to migrate have increasingly come up against government-imposed barriers to movement. Over the past century, the number of nation states has quadrupled to almost 200, creating more borders to cross while policy changes have further limited the scale of migration even as barriers to trade fall.

Barriers to mobility are especially high for people with low skills despite the demand for their labor in many rich countries. Policies generally favor the admission of the better educated for instance by allowing students to stay after graduation and inviting professionals to settle with their families. But governments tend to be far more ambivalent with respect to low-skilled workers whose status and treatment often leave much to be desired. In many countries, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and service sectors have jobs that are filled by such migrants.

Yet, governments often try to rotate less educated people in and out of the country. An estimated 50 million people today are living and working abroad with irregular status. It is because low-skilled migrant workers generate much controversy in destination country. It is widely believed that these migrants fill vacant jobs; they also displace local workers and reduce wages. Other concerns posed by migrant inflows include heightened risk of crime, added burdens on local services and the fear of losing social and cultural cohesion. But these concerns

are often exaggerated.

Migrants, however, boost economic output, at little or no cost to locals. Indeed, there may be broader positive effects for instance when the availability of migrants for childcare allows resident mothers to work out-side the home. As migrants acquire the language and other skills needed to move up the income ladder, many integrate quite naturally making fears about inassimilable foreigners—similar to those expressed early in the 20th century in America about the Irish for example, seem equally unwarranted with respect to newcomers today. It is also true that many migrants face systemic disadvantages, making it difficult or impossible for them to access local services on equal terms with local people. And these problems are especially severe for temporary and irregular workers.

In migrants' countries of origin, the impacts of movement are felt in higher incomes and consumption, better education and improved health, as well as at a broader cultural and social level. Moving generally brings benefits most directly in the form of remittances sent to immediate family members. However, the benefits are also spread more broadly as remittances are spent—thereby generating jobs for local workers and as behavior changes in response to ideas from abroad. Women, in particular, may be liberated from traditional roles.

However, over the longer term, the flow of ideas from human movement can have far-reaching effects on social norms and class structures across a whole country. The outflow of skills is sometimes seen as negative, particularly for the delivery of services such as education or health. Even in this the case, the best response is policies that address underlying structural problems such as low pay, inadequate financing and weak institutions.

However, international migration, even if well managed, does not amount to a national human development strategy. Migration is at best an avenue that complements broader local and national efforts to reduce poverty and improve human development.

International cooperation especially through bilateral or regional agreements can lead to better migration management, improved protection of migrants' rights and enhanced contributions of migrants to both origin and destination countries. Some regions are creating free movement zones to promote freer trade while enhancing the benefits of migration such as West Africa and the Southern Cone of Latin

America.

The expanded labor markets created in these regions can deliver substantial benefits to migrants, their families and their communities. Governments should create a new global regime by reducing restrictions on movement within and across their borders, so as to expand human choices and freedoms.



19. Honour Killing in India

Abstract: Youngsters in certain parts of India today cannot choose their partners. If they still do and the choice violates the norms set down by the caste panchayats, the consequences can be death. This kind of killings should be seen in a wider context. There are many gruesome murders in the name of honour in the recent months. Most victims of honour killings reported from various parts of the country are young people who choose to love or marry outside their caste, sub-caste or religion. Many caste groups, communities and families in several parts of the country still seem violently opposed to the right of young adults to choose a life partner. Marriage is turning out to be lethal for these young couples. The agitated family members stooped to that extent where they are ready to kill their child for falling in love across boundaries of caste or religion.

Honour killing in India is a social phenomenon deeply rooted in the veins of pseudo and primitive culture. Such events are rampant in some particular regions including the NCR. Score of such evil deeds had been taking place but the saddest part of the story is that government and the police force failed to confront this issue. In the name of preserving social order and saving the honor of their community, caste or family, perpetrators justify their stand in favor of such heinous acts. A section of people are involved with commitment to support this act. Most unfortunate part of the story is that honour killing has got support from elite class including political leaders and government officials.

Honour killing is defined as a death that is awarded to a woman of the family for marrying against the parent's wishes having extramarital and premarital relationships, marrying within the same *gotra* or outside one's caste or marrying a cousin from a different caste. Honour killing is different from the dowry deaths that are also a very common practice in India as in case of dowry deaths, the perpetrators of that action claim that they have not been given enough material rewards for accepting

the woman into the family. In that case there is a lot of harassment from the in-laws and more times than one, it has been noted that the wife commits suicide rather than being killed by the in-laws. Though it has to be said that she has been mentally killed, if not physically. People have had a tradition of honor killing.

In Haryana, the number of honour killings escalated to an unprecedented level. The state remained a mute spectator to these unruly acts. The role played by the media was laudable which raised their voice by setting a stage for a national debate on this issue. But that wasn't enough to address the gross violations of these communities.

When we look at these incidents, we find that these issues are plaguing the communities in rural India, especially in the villages of Haryana, UP and Rajasthan.

The need of the hour is not only to protect the runaway couple but also to put an end to these vulnerable acts. The government should make an effort in educating people and formulating the rural policies thereby strengthening the rural governance.

The various cases of Honour killing in India have been reported from North India especially Punjab, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan. Honour killing is also known as customary killing means killing the member of one community by members of same community or social groups as the victim has brought some disgrace to the family. It is mostly directed towards girls and women.

Honour killing is not only in case of women. In practice it is also applicable in males as well. For example during the year 2002 in Pakistan, it is estimated that 245 women and 137 men were killed in the name of Karo-kari in Sindh. The Manoj-Babli honour killing case was the honour killing of Indian Banwala and Babi in June 2007 and the successive court case convicted defendants for an honour killing. The killing a khap panchayat (khap), a religious caste-based council among village in Kaithal district, Haryana.

Bhagalpur in the northern Indian state of Bihar has also been notorious for honour killings. Recent cases include a 16-year-old girl, Imrana from Bhojpur who was set on fire inside her house. Moreover it is sad to see that they do not feel guilty to perform this dirty act.

In 1990 the National Commission for Women set up a statutory body in order to address the issues of honor killings among some ethnic groups in North India. This body reviewed constitutional, legal and other provisions as well as challenges women face. The NCW's activism

has contributed significantly towards the reduction of honor killings in rural areas of North India. In June 2010, the Supreme Court of India issued notices to the central government and six states including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan to take preventive measures against this social evil.

Efforts should be made to sensitize people on the need to do away with social biases. But equally, it should be made clear that there is no escape for those who take justice into their own hands.

More than 1,000 young people in India have been done to death every year owing to 'honour killings' linked to forced marriages and the country needs to introduce stringent legislation to deal firmly with such crime. Participating in International Child Abduction, Relocation and forced marriage and marrying a partner of their own choice who is not acceptable for the family of the girl.

It has been pointed out that the total figure for India would be about the same as estimated for Pakistan which researchers suggest has the highest per capita incidence of honor killings in the world. It has been suggested that the ministries of home affairs, law and justice should prepare grounds to amend the Indian Penal Code (IPC) especially when dealing with honor killing. This demand is gaining popularity countrywide with the objective of stamping out this social evil.

Sociologists believe that the reason why honour killings continue to take place is because of the continued rigidity of the caste system. Hence the fear of losing their caste status through which they gain many benefits makes them commit this heinous crime. The other reason why honour killings are taking place is because the mentality of people has not changed and they just cannot accept that marriages can take place in the same *gotra* or outside one's caste.

There are various misconceptions regarding the practice of honour killing. The first misconception about honor killing is that this is a practice that is limited to the rural areas. It has also been seen recently that even the metropolitan cities like Delhi and Tamil Nadu are not safe from this crime because 5 honour killings were reported from Delhi and in Tamil Nadu; a daughter and son in law were killed due to marriage into the same *gotra*. So it can be seen clearly that honour killing is not isolated to rural areas but also to urban areas and as already pointed out, it has a very wide geographical spread. The second misconception regarding honor killing is that it has religious roots. Even if a woman commits adultery, there have to be four male witnesses with

good behaviour and reputation to validate the charge. Furthermore only the State can carry out judicial punishments, but never an individual vigilante. So, we can clearly see that there is no religious backing or religious roots for this heinous crime.

What can we do to prevent such a thing from happening? Firstly, the mentality of the people has to change. When we say that the mentality has to change, we mean to say that parents should accept their children's wishes regarding marriage as it is they who have to lead a life with their life partners and if they are not satisfied with their life partner then they will lead a horrible married life which might even end in suicide. Secondly, we need to have strict laws to tackle these kinds of killings as this is a crime which cannot be pardoned because humans do not have the right to write down death sentences of innocent fellow humans.



20. Tackling Terrorism

Abstract: In today's context Terrorism should be redefined to mean as an act where a group of persons tries to put pressure on any authority by violent means to achieve their desired aim. A terrorist group called Taliban was originally created and supported by USA against USSR during the cold war era in Afghanistan. However, while Taliban lost their role against USSR, politicians in Pakistan, as a matter of state policy, are now encouraging and supporting them to inflict thousand cuts to bleed India to death. Terror attacks in J and K and other places by its offshoots like IM etc., are a result of such policies. There is a need to have a firm discussion on Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan where actual LOC could be considered as demarcation between the two neighboring countries which can coexist and prosper like U.S. and Canada. This is rather important but lot of political will on both sides is required. To tackle Maoist menace in India, we need to understand the background of Maoists and the reasons why they are responsible for their acts. As a matter of fact in the past the protest against land acquisition, forest rights or exploitation of their mineral wealth for private gains or negligence of their cultural or economic interest, are silenced with state violence.

George W. Bush in his presidential speech philosophized terrorism by saying “We don't create terrorism by fighting the terrorist. We invite terrorism ignoring them. His vision has become anachronistic. “In today's context terrorism should be redefined to mean as an act where

a group of persons tries to put pressure on any authority by violent means to achieve their desired aim .It is a method of clandestine combat in which random or symbolic victims serve as an instrumental target of violence. These instrumental victims share group or class characteristics that form the basis for their selection for victimization.

How handicapped do we feel against perpetrators when we are reminded of such attacks in U.S. on 9/11, Israel 2002, Mumbai 26/11 or Bali 2003. In its wake they left humanity stunned and scared even more than during the period of world war and filled the heart of millions with fear psychosis, revenge and greater social bias. Causes of terrorism are not far to find. Religion and cultural differences, freedom from despots, need for democracy, economic disparity and deprivation of populace by the States, short sightedness of politicians, over ambition of state to dominate the World, are some of them. However, today, Islamic countries are generally blamed for growing terrorism in the World. The reason for this state of affairs lies in World's medieval history.

The Great Ottoman Empire was an Islamic state which practically ruled Europe, Northern Africa, Middle East and South Asia before the European powers regained and started colonizing these countries. This led to the decadence of Islamic empire and created cultural and religious rivalry between Christianity and Islam. However, we restrict to terrorism in India only. India is facing greater problem of terrorism mostly encouraged and supported by the neighboring countries. A terrorist group called Taliban was originally created and supported by USA against USSR during the cold war era in Afghanistan. However, Taliban lost their role against USSR, politicians in Pakistan, as a matter of state policy are now encouraging and supporting them to inflict thousand cuts to bleed India to death. Terror attacks in J & K and other places by its offshoots like Indian Mujahddin etc. are a result of such policies.

Militants supported by Pakistan often sought oppression of Muslims in Kashmir as an example. In the case, complex historical, political and economic factors are quoted to sustain conflict in Jammu & Kashmir. Further, there are indigenous groups supported by neighboring countries in other Indian states which encourage terrorism and are allowed to go scot free for short terms political gains in India. Terror groups are continuously growing with the active assistance of neighboring countries. It may become vicious if they get new instruments of terrorism like biological weapons or dirty bombs.

This menace in India is further accentuated by economic negligence of tribal and marginal farmers by successive Centre and States governments over the years. Maoists have partially challenged the state's authority in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh etc. forcing even Prime Minister to state that today Maoists were the greatest enemy to Indian democracy. Nevertheless, the cure of this problem is to be found without loopholes. To fight against terrorism, all countries need to be united and adopt a seamless antiterrorism policy.

To tackle terrorism on Indian soil, plan of action needs to be divided into two parts, first to tackle the international terror groups like Taliban and IM operating in India, specifically with reference to JandK with the overt or covert support of neighboring country where the punishment need to be quick and apolitical and, secondly, to control Maoist menace where a long term strategy is to be developed in unison with state governments. As India is surrounded by terror funding/sheltering countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China there is a need for non-porous mechanism to combat terrorism. It is necessary to have strict international system of inspection and control especially in those states which are encouraging terrorism as a state policy.

Civic society with a particular emphasis on involving women beyond the state be developed. There are thousands of under-resourced groups involved in everything from literacy to human rights to micro-credit that should be assisted with or without the consent of local governments to effectively check the menace. We ought to develop better ties with Islamic countries of Middle East, Iran, Saudi Arabia etc. If we cannot politically negotiate with existing militants or their supporters in India, we can at least stop the next wave of recruits which may put stop to terrorist activities in future. Policy of appeasement should be shunned in favor of national interest for years to come.

There is a need to have a firm discussion on Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan where actual LOC could be considered as demarcation between the two neighboring countries which can coexist and prosper like U.S. and Canada. This is rather important but lot of political will on both sides is required. To tackle Maoist menace in India, we need to understand the background of Maoists and the reasons why they are responsible for their acts. As a matter of fact in the past the protest against land acquisition, forest rights or exploitation of their mineral wealth for private gains or negligence of their cultural or

economic interest, are silenced with state violence. While their violent struggle has not helped Maoist at all but they are not terrorist. It is a short term approach and negligence of their interest by the states which has resulted into present impasse. To curb Maoists' menace, a long term strategy to mitigate their hardships is warranted. They must be brought into the main stream and not be left in isolation. Their environment, land and forest rights are to be preserved and perpetuated by the State and their commercial exploitation by the industry in the name of development and export be stopped forthwith.

In addition to existing firefighting operations being carried out with or without cooperation of affected states, an immediate survey of the villages of the affected states to ascertain whether they are equipped with all-weather roads, electricity, drinking water, irrigation, health facilities, education, agricultural extension, housing and employment opportunities should be carried out. Another potent step in ameliorating this menace is to give them an identity by widely circulating write ups of tribal school students about their customs, songs, art and rituals in their dialect in these states as it will not only give them an identity but will help them absorb the benefits of development initiative. These facilities must be provided either by the state or by the industrial beneficiaries. If the prescription is adopted along with short term firefighting operations already in place in affected areas, they should check the growth of Maoism and bring out tribal into main stream in the long run.

The above steps are definitely intimidating and may not end the threat of terrorism and Maoism in short term, but central to our efforts must remain a simple fact that violent Islamic militancy or Maoism are not inevitable and can be managed in India with greater involvement and coordinated efforts by both Central and State governments without vote bank politics with long term goals in mind.

Governments should never forget that fighting terrorism is like being a goal keeper. We can make a hundred brilliant saves but the only shot that people remember is the one that gets past us.



21. Indian Diplomat Row in US

Abstract: A serious diplomatic row broke out between India and the US over the

arrest of Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade in the New York on 12 December 2013. The 39-year-old Ms Khobragade, Deputy Consul General at the Indian Consulate in New York, was publicly arrested and handcuffed. She was also allegedly stripped searched and kept in a cell with drug addicts. However, a spokesperson for the US State department said that standard procedures were followed during Ms Khobragade's arrest. The US charged the diplomat of allegedly presented a fraudulent document to the US Department of State in support of a visa application for an Indian national employed as a babysitter and housekeeper at her home in New York. This actually was a violation of the US laws and therefore the Indian diplomat was arrested. An outraged Indian government took a series of measures in retaliation. Security barricades outside the US embassy in New Delhi were removed. New Delhi downgraded the special privileges given to American diplomats in India. US diplomats in consulates across India were asked to surrender identity cards issued to them and their families, which entitle them to special privileges. India also withdrew all airport passes for consulates and import clearances for the embassy. India has asked for several other details.

The Indian diplomat in the U.S, Devayani Kobragade .She hired an Indian maid and was found to be paying her much below the U.S. daily wage salary. The diplomat had given misinformation about the salary of her maid. This was detected by the US police and they arrested the Indian diplomat, handcuffed her, strip-searched her and detained her in a room with sexual workers, drug peddlers etc for 24 hours.

This news through media and social network spread like a wild fire and created widespread resentment among general public of the entire country. This incident sparked a standoff between India and the U.S. India too immediately took steps to counter the aggressive attitude of the US towards Indian diplomat. It was done by removing high security zone status given to the US embassy in New Delhi. It also asked the US embassy staff to surrender the diplomatic status card within 24 hours that gave immunity to them from being searched at the airports.

This stray incident continued for some time but soon both the countries realized that this may hamper not only the diplomatic relationship but also Indo-US partnership going on in various sectors. Both the countries recognised the necessity to deescalate the tension and find an amicable solution through negotiations.

The American state department that initially remained defiant later accepted India's point of view that the diplomat enjoyed diplomatic immunity and allowed her to move from their country. This diplomatic

row could have been resolved through the conventions that endorsed by Vienna conference in 1963. Each country is bound to follow the conventions laid down in Vienna conference. These conventions should not have been violated at the first place as every country is to oblige honour these conventions.

This matter was mishandled by the US police without acknowledging the fact that the Indian diplomat enjoyed diplomatic immunity. This diplomatic row between India and US should have been resolved through the conventions laid down in the Vienna conference. It was unfortunate that none the less has an isolated one. It has no bearing on the robust India -US relationship. The diplomatic row suggests that it is an argument not between individuals but two nations and can be resolved only by the two countries. Individuals can only have personal opinion on such issues. However, this is not the first time such case is made out against officials at Indian Consulate in New York. Earlier, it was Neena Malhotra who was asked by the court to pay \$1.5 million to her domestic worker. Then it was Prabhu Dayal, Indian Consul General in New York who was charged in similar lines.

These are not isolated cases or India specific cases as there have also been various other foreign diplomats who have been accused for underpaying their domestic worker. Various countries have tried to resolve such issue in different ways. Mauritius waived diplomatic immunity for its Ambassador who was charged with failing to pay minimum wages. An Italian consulate official was sentenced to probation and fine. These examples clearly show that the issue of diplomats being accused is not limited to any specific country.

Indian government tried to resolve the issue in a manner acting tough showing its protest against unsavory behavior resorted by the U.S government against the Indian diplomat. Indian government curtailed various facilities enjoyed by the US consulate staff stationed in India. The issue hogged global limelight and US had to mellow down its stand.

US secretary of state expressed regret the way Devyani was treated in New York. Later the US government issued her G1 visa granting full diplomatic immunity. All this paved the way for Devyani to return to India. The issue was thus resolved but the case against her will remain in abeyance till US withdraws charges against her or she returns to the US to face them.

In such situation, the right course could have been to follow the

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The set articles laid down in the convention special Article 29 clearly states that Diplomats shall not be liable to any formal arrest or detention. Article 31 gives diplomats immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State. The US had unnecessarily dragged its feet into such a controversy. It could have avoided such unpleasant situation that momentarily strained India-US relationship. Nonetheless, this isolated case may have little bearing on warm relationship between the two countries.



22. Communalism and Terrorism

Abstract: In the post-Independence India two main groups that have resorted to communalism for achieving their vested interests are foreign agencies for hampering the stability of the Indian State and second the political parties for achieving their political motives. Since the formation of ISI with objective of destabilizing the Indian State, it has made every effort in supporting the terrorist outfits for carrying out terrorist activities in the country. This has resulted in 1992 Mumbai Bomb Blasts, 2006 Mumbai train bombings and 26/11 to be the major of the many attacks carried out by the ISI. These attacks may or may not result in immediate communal violence but essentially it has created a rift in Indian society which has multiple religions. It creates an atmosphere of mistrust and hampers communal harmony. Political parties in order to attract the vote bank of a particular community frame election agendas like giving reservations in education, employment or in any other sector but this creates a feeling of neglect hatred in other communities. In this volatile atmosphere of mistrust and animosity, a small unprecedented incident is capable of igniting communal riots. Hundreds of lives have been lost in India in such riots. The grieved are victimized by the agents of terrorist outfits and suitable candidates are brain washed and absorbed in the groups for further training. Hence this is a vicious circle wherein terrorism fosters communalism which in turn provides support to terrorism.

Communalism is a black spot in the name of secular India. The cancer of communalism is eating into the vitals of our nation. Every year, we have communal riots in one or another city of the country. Cities like Aligarh, Moradabad, Kanpur and Ahmadabad have witnessed frequent communal riots. The root cause of communalism is religious intolerance. It is fanned by religious fanatics who spread communal hatred in order to feather their own nest. Terrorism on the other hand

is an act of violence by some individuals with the aim to create fear, anxiety, panic and disturbance in the minds of the common people.

Terrorist believe in destruction, death and creating lawlessness. They use such methods to exert pressure on the governments to concede their demands. Government is using counter terror methods to control terrorism. Sometimes, communalism and terrorism are interlinked. Communalism is invariably due to religious intolerance. Sometimes it takes the shape of religious terrorism, whose cause could be religious persecution. In India people are suffering from both communalism and terrorism.

Generally people belonging to different religious faiths when stay together tend to develop a sense of uneasy relationship with people belonging to other religion. Some religious groups develop a feeling of being persecuted. They want to assert themselves through acts of terror. There are many such cases in India that have communal angle to terrorist acts. The perpetrators of communalism and terrorism lack a rational, scientific and democratic approach towards the society. They are bigoted lot who believe in acts of violence. It is high time that those who divide the society through acts of communalism or terrorism should be brought to justice. The government should enact strict laws to combat this problem and people should cooperate in its eradication. In case of terrorism, enacting laws and increasing counter insurgency methods could be the solutions. Communalism on the other hand can be tackled in many ways.

We must understand, dividing the country in the name of caste color, region, and religion, nationalities etc. are all act of communalism. The disease of communalism runs deep into our society and needs to be eradicated from its roots. It's a shame for our country that even after decades of independence and professing to be a secular nation, communalism still prevails in our society. Both communalism and terrorism is a result of the state of mind which can be eradicated by certain actions of the government and the people. The government should introduce anti communal laws in the country. Further, it should introduce anti communal lessons in the school syllabus. It is imperative to develop a sense of universal brotherhood in the country. The message of *Universal Brotherhood (UB)* should be given prime importance. If secular India has to be developed, it has to build on the edifice of universal brotherhood.

Communalism and terrorism despite having distinguishable definitions and have different contents shows similar pattern of regularity which can be termed as 'form.' In short, both take the form of violence of various natures as the consequence; unleashing fear and hatred in the minds of the people. Both are inter-linked to each other and cannot be seen as two set of different phenomenon independent of each other. This is particularly true in the Indian context today and is very much relevant.

What communalism, in common parlance does is that religion (most commonly) or language, caste, ethnicity, etc. is used by its propagators as a means to achieve desired political goals. While terrorism is a phenomenon in which unjustifiable criminal acts are committed by terrorists to provoke a state of terror in the general public to achieve any targeted goal(s). Terrorism often uses the languages of religion, ethnicity, a particular ideology, etc. to justify terrorist acts in India. Thus, most of the religious fundamentalism based terrorist attacks in India has more or less finds its connection with communal-riots that often targets minorities. Hence terrorism seems to be an appropriate tool to retaliate against those communal mongers and seemingly supporters by those who had become the worst victims of communal-riots and communalism and yet hadn't given deserved justice.

What precedes what is a matter of debate, however, the circular reasoning that communalism and terrorism are inter-linked and goes in a cycle is a well-established fact that can be explained by relevant examples. The 1992-1993 Mumbai (then Bombay) riots preceded the March 1993 terror attack. The BN Shrikrishna Commission, appointed to inquire the riots, noted, "the blasts seem to be a reaction to 'the totality of events' at Ayodhya and in Mumbai in December 1992 and January 1993." The Commission also added that the then communal frenzy Shiv Sena leader, Bal Thackeray, and his party (Shiv Sena) played a pivotal role to charge up the Hindus by inciting communally charged propaganda against Muslims.

The Commission added that the subsequent Mumbai terror attacks was conspired mainly by the Muslims which is believed to be planned by international terrorist Dawood Ibrahim and his associates. According to official figures, 257 people (mostly Hindus) died in the terror attack while 900 people (mostly Muslims) died in the riots.

On December 6, 1993, dozens of trains were bombed by suspected Indian Mujahideen jihadists. Many of them had trained in Pakistan.

The blasts marked the first anniversary of the infamous Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya. Similarly, post-Godhra Gujarat showed a sharp increase in the recruitments of jihadists by invoking the killings, rapes and injustice done to Muslims and minorities. Thus every communal riots fuels terrorists groups to recruit more cadres. The recent controversial comment by the Congress Vice-President, Rahul Gandhi, on the ISI attempting to recruit the Muzaffarnagar riots victims is just the tip of an iceberg.

Other forms of communalism that are relevant in India are ethnic based communalism which are prevalent in the North-eastern states like Manipur and Nagaland where there have been cases of ethnic riots among major ethnic groups (Nagas and Kukis in Manipur) and resultant rise of terrorism as a retaliatory measure against each other; linguistic communalism of Shiv Sena and MNS in Maharashtra; and caste-based communalism which is relevant among mainly Hindus both in Northern and Southern India.

In this light, there is a link between communalism and terrorism. Communalism breeds terrorism and terrorism also gives incentives to communal-mongers to incite riots and pogroms at the same time in retaliation. The judicial system of India, particularly the Supreme Court, has acknowledged the link and given fair judgment in many cases. But our judicial system has limitations in delivering justice to victims. One main reason is its abysmally slow process. As for the Indian state, it should act against both the rioters and attackers equally to give a real sense of equality before the law. It must ensure that our education system imparts only liberal, secular and progressive education to all the citizens. As far as communalism is concerned, we must uphold the secular ethos that is enshrined in the Constitution in words and deeds. Diversity is a reality in India and we must appreciate the diversity and its beauty. If terrorism is to be uprooted, we must be clear of one thing-bridging the gap of trust and harmony between various communities and prevent, if any, fracture of Indian society based on communal lines.

Communalism with reference to Indian subcontinent is creation of differences based on identity which may result into violence. The history on communalism can be traced back in times of British rule which through its policy of divide and rule created a division in the Indian society. Partition of Bengal is an important example. The Indian politicians too have been keen on using communalism to serve their purposes. Terrorism in India is perpetrated by ISI of Pakistan in the

form of proxy war that initially was limited to the state of Jammu and Kashmir but with the passage of time has covered whole of India.



23. Censorship on Networking Web Sites

Abstract: Just to make the point clear that censorship on networking websites has many ideas involved, let us remind ourselves of one Indian mythological and one Indian historical event for the same. Lord Krishna told Arjuna that Karma is greater than anything else in the whole universe. This conclusively leads to destruction of the evil in that era. Now connect it to present situation. Condemning publicly the acts of people/group of people/government though not ethically good but practically necessary. Unless they shall know that they are wrong, they are bound to be wrong in future as well. Today is the era when we forbid a thing and we have to explain the whole world around our very action. Besides, people are determined to know that if found guilty of hiding one's selfish deeds behind that there will be a mass condemnation for that. That was the reason, the present telecommunication and Information and technology minister—Kapil Sibal faced such a bitter reply from the common masses as well as from the owners of networking websites. The censorship demanded by him and his ministry was totally for the selfish ends of their political party. They were unable to present a single valid reason behind their demands for which they have been for long.

Networking websites—a place where all meet virtually and talk, discuss, comment about almost everything a human does. Networking websites have undergone a drastic change in terms of personality as well as soul from the times they have been introduced. Well this is wonderful as well as ironical that a mere website being given attributes as personality and soul. But this is the practical picture of networking websites in the market today.

Networking websites have laid down the platform which can be used for arrival and departure of anyone's train. In simpler words, we have the whole world to talk to, discuss with, question on, appreciate, change, and know of and what not on these networking websites.

This was the gist of networking websites. Now the concern is to discuss and justify/question the censorship on networking websites. To everyone's surprise, censorship on networking websites does exist since the time they were introduced but not in the terms of what it is for news today. Censorship of these website is strongly necessitated for it

is used world widely by all people be them, young, old, rich, poor, male, female, sensitive, harsh, all in all by a variety of people. As per a survey made by an American newspaper, if the posts of these websites are not closely watched and censored as per need arises, there shall be thousands of illegitimate posts on the walls of these websites which are not supposed to be there publicly similar to the banning of illegitimate poster on the physical walls.

Just to make the point clear that censorship on networking websites has many ideas involved, let us remind ourselves of one Indian mythological and one Indian historical event for the same. Lord Krishna told Arjuna that Karma is greater than anything else in the whole universe. This conclusively leads to destruction of the evil in that era. Now connect it to present situation. Condemning publicly the acts of people/group of people/govt though not ethically good but practically necessary. Unless they shall know that they are wrong, they are bound to be wrong in future as well.

The historical event that is against of censorship on networking websites in terms of censorship of right to speak is what happened during struggle of independence, when newspapers were banned and meetings of group of people were totally not allowed. This led to nothing but growth in anger of common masses which can be the reason of downfall of entire empire and the history is full of such examples.

Today is the era when we forbid a thing and we have to explain the whole world around our that very action. Besides, people are determined to know that if found guilty of hiding one's selfish deeds behind that there will be a mass condemnation for that. That was the reason, the present telecommunication and information and technology minister –Kapil Sibal faced such a bitter reply from the common masses as well as from the owners of networking websites. The censorship demanded by him and his ministry was totally for the selfish ends of their political party. They were unable to present a single valid reason behind their demands that were digging into censorship.

The censorship in news right now was very much similar to the case where someone is declined to the right of speech and right to life as well. If in a *democratic country*, there is such a violation of fundamental rights and people have no say, the downfall can be easily foreseen. However, coming back to censorship on networking websites in general it is a necessary condition to apply. But the care must be taken that originality and facts don't get lost during this fragmentation.

It can create revolution in its own way, is allowed it should be allowed to. Change in itself is generally for the betterment. To ensure its betterment, there should be censorship.

Above all, excess of everything is bad. It is either censorship or freedom of speech.



24. Are Scientific Inventions Making us Happier?

Abstract: As Dr.M.Swaminathan, the father of green Revolution in India put in his words, “Technology is neutral to people. It depends whether the technology is relevant”. Any contribution in this field can have its own pros and cons depending upon the applicability of the same. There is no denying the fact that scientific innovations are in themselves manifestations of the seamless evolution of humans, be it social, economic, political or psychological. They may, prima facie seem to pave a road for progression. However, physical science divides the world into two halves. One half is that which aids the swinging motion of the delivery mechanism in their favor or the so-called “haves” while the other half is composed of those who resist it, the “have-nots”. The higher orders of scientific advancements in medicine, defense, space, etc. have an extremely low level of direct infiltration within the lower echelons of society.

Since the dawn of human civilization, homo sapiens, the wisest of all apes, have tried to exploit the resources of nature and put them to their own use. There are two key words which together constitute this question are – science and happiness. The topic concerned is ideological thus thoughts not facts would form a better armor against it.

Happiness, though an abstract and incomprehensively defined human emotion has always remained the goal of humanity. Happiness is sometimes achieved, sometimes earned. It is sometimes brought by bearing pain also. Happiness is measured and its measurement has no universal standards. However standards develop, as a part of zeitgeist, much like fashion, but still as fashion doesn't engulf all the spirits of the society. What is happiness is one's own quest. A religious person would point to God as its only source while Buddhists say there isn't anything like that in reality. What is Happiness, finds itself answered, but that answer however is subject to changes in either space or time or both.

Scientific pursuance by man to understand the universe and an effort

to utilize its resources in the best possible way is to continue its unabated survival on the face of this planet. An early man of Stone Age had a limited science. His only reason to exploit his faculty of cognition was merely his family's survival. Later on as generations passed, communities grew. This change insisted early humans to migrate to tough terrains and cold regions made them learn wearing animal skins. As years passed the wheel followed, so did the weaving, harnessing sun's energy in the form of agriculture came as the next step. All scientific inventions till then had a sole aim of healthy survival.

Scientific inventions till industrial revolution were either innovations in traditional methods of continuing sustenance or were for fulfillment of luxurious demands of kings and nobles. Next step in the timeline of human civilization was industrial revolution which started as a result of two initiatory forces one of them was increasing population while the other was desire of attaining power. Though monarchy died, the rule of the people came, the role of scientific inventions still was the same – survival and that too a luxurious one, but as enlisted these two initiatory forces, the second one grew gradually in dominance. The world wars were a result of both these initiatory forces. One was fear of not having resources and other was ideological differences. As deeper investigations in the reasons is made, the anarchy and unrest which still prevails in many parts of the world is basically a result of these two forces.

The resources on the surface of this planet are still enough for continued survival of human race, but time still witnesses unrest and war on resources, moral deterioration and selfish nature is a fitting explanation to continued acts of violence in the post-world war era. Thus endangered status of survival of mankind cannot be attributed to scientific menace, moral crisis form a greater part of it. Increasing stress levels, urban lives are not creations of science, they are a product of evolving human consciousness assisted by science. This is a general observation that morally weak persons don't enjoy true pleasure of life and hence happiness cannot be attained by murder of those moral values which human institutions have developed through these ages of evolution.

Use of polythene bags degrade environment, but it reduces use of leather, cotton or paper bags. None of the latter is assumed to be safe, though they are harmless to environment. If whole population on earth

submits to these methods, deforestation will reach a newer high, a step too far. Another fact is that these are non-recyclable as well because they are degradable, they grow old fast, and polybags promises us longevity. Then there comes man and his ignorance. Mother earth is left to her own and most of such non-biodegradable products of science are rendered without recycling. What could be a wonder of science emerged as an evil. These lines are a Hindi translation to a Sanskrit verse. It means that the prerequisite of happiness is a healthy body, and then follows the wealth in house. No doubt, medical sciences enabled humanity to combat viruses which in dark ages caused fatalities in millions. Products of medical sciences, from magical potions of ancient world to ultra-modern MRI scan, the achievements in this field have been tremendous and in fact gradually improving. However, developments made in second half of 20th and 21st century is actually against the diseases which came as a result of human disturbances in nature and not nature's devils.

This fact incites a very intriguing question. Are scientific inventions really helping us in our endeavor of providing a healthy survival of humankind? Science in such a case acts as both, the angel and the demon. Even if we accept science's heroic role of savior in form of medicine, its practical as well as ideological contribution to happiness is still under doubt. The happiness is not a function of wealth. It comes from within .As Buddha said, it is really difficult to understand what makes individuals happy. Science is a boon for prolonged survival, but its advent doesn't really guarantee happiness.

Thus science acts as a tool for better living, for happiness. But scientific inventions alone don't make us happy. But science when put to use in destructive manner is rendered worthy of that position as well .But still scientific inventions are never meant to destroy, they are nothing but medium of expression in such cases. Thus their destructive action is a result of morally degraded human society only. Saint Kabir, the *pioneer of bhakti movement* said, 'I wandered in search of evil, but couldn't find it; once I searched within, I found it.



Environment

1. Environment: An International Security Issue

Abstract: Everyone knows that the protection of the environment is a major responsibility in today's scenario, but is it a matter of international security? There are different opinions. Some believe that protecting the environment is a security issue whereas others opine it to be a mere exaggerated one. The purpose of this essay is to assess the environment on the international security scenario and take a look at the recent developments going on to handle the menace.

Environmental pollution has attained voluminous proportions and a grave need to accept the responsibility. Industrialization and globalization are no doubt the major causes of this massive exploitation of resources as well as spoiling the balance of nature. The seas and oceans are being poisoned by chemical products, oils, industrial and human waste. An even greater problem is the disposal of atomic and nuclear waste, unsafe to dump into the sea and even more unsafe to bury under the land.

The destruction of the rain forests by cutting (an estimated fourteen acres every minute) is constantly decreasing the production of oxygen and rainfall necessary for life, while other forests in Europe and North America are being poisoned by acid rain. Apart from these effects, other effects include green house effect and the El-Ninos. The 'green-house' effect is a result of excessive hydrocarbons and carbon-dioxide increment in the atmosphere. The green house effect is contributed mainly by car exhausts. Global warming and the melting of the polar ice-caps and glaciers, causing raised ocean-levels and un-seasonal and adverse weather patterns, is known as the El-Niño.

With increasing frequency we are informed of industrial accidents, some of which, like the chemical-insecticide disaster in Bhopal, India, killing thousands of people, resemble the sudden plagues of the middle ages. Another disaster, caused by cumulative chemical poisoning, took place at the Love Canal; New York State; USA, where a toxic chemical dump was insufficiently buried. This led to serious birth defects in infants which, in the event of the infants surviving, could be transmitted to future generations. In Minamata, Japan, villagers developed brain

and nerve damage and died as a result of eating fish already poisoned by methyl mercury, dumped into the sea from a nearby factory.

The amount of environmental damage that was caused in the Gulf War of 1990-91, when over a thousand oil-wells were set to fire and tons of sticky black crude-oil was tipped into the sea, caused incalculable damage and has been and still is a major factor in the acceleration of the 'green-house' effect and the changing of global climate. The acid rain that rained as a result had sulphuric acid in it. This rain could be observed for thousands of miles around that area, wherever the wind blew the smoke-pollution.

More recently, the bombing of fuel storage facilities and chemical plants and factories in Serbia and Kosovo has had a direct and immediate impact on the world's climate and environment, with freak tornados creating havoc in central U.S.A. Now, Eastern U.S.A. is experiencing the worst heat-wave and drought. Indonesia has an onslaught of tropical cyclones, of far greater strength and ferocity than usual. Heat-waves through central Europe and Russia are causing forest fires and Britain is encountering tornados and tropical storms, the likes of which have rarely been encountered there before.

The animal food chain has been broken by the extinction of animal species. Huge sections of the seas and oceans are being rapidly fished-out. Large parts of the world, such as the Sahel Belt across mid-Africa, are in a state of starvation with little possibility of cure except permanent aid given by other countries. The slaughter of most of the worlds' remaining wild animals has decreased their population by 90% of what it was only 50 years ago.

Politics of global environmentalism may be a fairly new aspect of International Relations, however, environmental problems have always been a part of our lives. People began to understand their role in environmental degradation only recently. It was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s that worries about accelerating damage to the environment started to articulate. The first United Nations Conference on Environment was held in Stockholm in 1972 and it was there that the environment was referred to as a security issue for the first time by the several scholars that were present there.

Some issues that were raised were meeting the global challenges of bio_diversity loss and bio_safety, de_forestation, air and water pollution, climate change and chemicals management and the likes. It was realized

that tackling these issues requires real commitment and effective co-operation at the international level.

The climate changes that will result from global warming are difficult to predict. The weather is determined by so many factors that it is often compared to chaos by scientists. If temperature rises significantly, some portion of the polar icecaps would melt, raising global sea levels.

The rise in sea levels would be disastrous for some places. Islands would disappear, meaning millions of inhabitants of islands the world over would have to relocate. Flooding would occur along coastlines all over the world, displacing more people and ruining cropland.

In the case of major global warming and melted icecaps, some cities, like Mumbai and Holland might simply cease to exist. Global warming, if uncontrolled, could cause a major catastrophe.

These facts about the state of environment do create an image of all that is to come in the future. The overall scenario hence, points out that this issue can no longer be handled at the local or national level, but needs immediate international attention.

With this arises the subsequent and the most important step- what next? But, before digging into the solutions, it becomes advisable to analyse the situation more in depth, so as to distribute the responsibility more judiciously. The difference between the roles of developed and developing nations has come into light, considering the pace of industrialization and progress.

As the World Resources Institute (WRI) highlighted (2003), there is a huge contrast between developed/industrialized nations and developing countries in greenhouse emissions. For example, in terms of historical emissions, industrialized countries account for roughly 80% of the carbon dioxide buildup in the atmosphere to date. Annually, more than 60% of global industrial carbon dioxide emissions originate in industrialized countries, whereas only about 20% of the world's population resides in these countries.

This difference was recognized as a principle of common but, differentiated responsibilities when the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change was formulated and then signed and ratified in 1992 by most of the world's countries. The principle recognized the following:

The largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries. Per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low. The share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs.

Furthermore, the need for developing countries to reduce emissions ultimately was also recognized, but through a different way: The rich countries were to help provide means to them for switching over to cleaner technologies.

There are concerns, however, that many developing countries are following the same path to development that the current industrialized countries have, which involved many environmentally damaging practices. Ironically much of the advise and encouragement for this comes from the western economic schools of thought. There is therefore, an urgent need to focus on cleaner technologies and an alternative path to a more sustainable form of development.

Researchers often comment that “if we follow the present course” then there will be disaster ahead. In fact, problems have already started arising due to global warming. Yet, rarely throughout history has the use of a resource remained constant. Many economists remind us that over time, more efficient and innovative ways emerge, so therein lies the hope of more meaningful courses for environment protection to come up. While some are overly optimistic that all the world’s problems will be solved because humanity always figures out an answer, many are usually wise to be cautious, given our violent histories.

This does provide a fair idea about the extent and implications of the growing environmental damage. Not only this, it also shows the various possibilities the future can bring, depending on how we face the challenge. While it may seem a huge task to change our ways, the bigger picture is here and, obviously, the choices are clear.



2. Pollution Hazard

Abstract: Pollution – the most clichéd word heard nowadays. A lot has been said and written about this process of contamination and still continues to be done. But the question is whether the corrective measures outweigh the deterioration or not. If there is a hope of a cleaner environment for our generations to come or are they going

to inherit a dirtier, unhygienic world from us - is what only time will tell. This essay delves deeper into understanding pollution and social and individual initiatives towards a pollution-free environment.

Pollution can be defined as the contamination of the natural environment resulting into disorder, instability, discomfort or harm to the ecosystem which includes the living organisms or the physical systems. The Blacksmith Institute lists the world's worst polluted places ever year. The ten top nominees of 2007 were located in Azerbaijan, China, India, Peru, Russia, Ukraine, and Zambia.

World Environment Day 2015 found 10 most polluted cities in the world . Ahead of World Environment Day, it observed that the Indian cities like **Delhi**, (annual mean PM_{2.5}, ug/m³: 153), **Patna** (annual mean PM_{2.5}, ug/m³: 149), **Gwalior** (annual mean PM_{2.5}, ug/m³: 144) and **Raipur** (annual mean PM_{2.5}, ug/m³: 134) have got the highest levels of pollution.

Pollution degrades the Earth's environment in numerous ways. Pollution can have many forms. Some of these are air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, soil pollution, radioactive or nuclear pollution, light pollution, chemical pollution and the likes.

The occurrence of wastes in the atmosphere due to one or additional contaminants in excess and for long periods is damaging human, animal and plant life. It weakens and destroys the defensive ozone layer of the atmosphere, which plays a radical role in climate change.

Industrialization and modernization have led to the contamination of the atmosphere over the decades. Factories, population explosion, vehicle emissions and urbanization are some of the critical factors responsible for air pollution. Some of the industries which release a great deal of pollutants into the air include thermal power plants, refineries, steel, petrol chemicals, cement and mines.

There are other causes too, which gives rise to air contamination and not all of them are within human control. Smoke given off by forest fires and dust storms originating in desert areas add to chemical and particulate pollution of the air. The source of pollution may be at one place however the effects of pollution may be felt in another. The culprit is arial transport that can carry pollutants from one area to another.

Soil contamination refers to the introduction of toxic wastes into soil, mostly foreign chemicals or substances that are present in concentrations more than normal which may have harmful effects on life. However, this

kind of pollution is also caused by sources other than the ruthless addition of industrial chemicals such as precipitates, undeveloped waste waters, industrial waste products and radioactive waste.

Soil is polluted when the natural soil background is contaminated by the presence of synthetic or man-made chemicals in the natural soil background. This contamination normally occurs from the damage of underground storage tanks, leaching of wastes from landfills, use of pesticides, unsafe oil and fuel disposal and percolation of contaminated water to subsurface strata, or direct discharge of industrial wastes to the soil. The most common chemicals which form a part of the contaminants are pesticides, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, solvents, and etc. More the degree of industrialization and intensities of chemical treatment more is the extent of deterioration.

What's more, the damage doesn't stop here. Soil pollution can also cause water pollution if poisonous chemicals flow into groundwater, or if contaminated overflow water reaches water bodies like streams, ponds, lakes and other sources of water. Soil pollution is also a natural contributor to air pollution as it releases explosive compounds into the atmosphere. The untreated chemicals decay in the soil and release sulphur compounds including sulphur dioxide, causing acid rain. Sewage sludge may be rendered incapable of supporting life, if repeatedly exposed to such deterioration caused by the introduction of lead and other heavy metals.

Noise pollution is a kind of energy pollution in which infuriating or off-putting sounds are the pollutants and are capable of being heard. Unlike the other forms of energy pollution such as heat and light pollution, noise pollution, contaminants are not substantial particles, however waves that interact with naturally-occurring waves of similar type. Thus, the concept of noise pollution is open to debate and there is no clarification as to which sounds may add up to noise pollution.

Prolonged or continuous exposure to noise levels higher than eighty-five decibels can damage inner ear cells and pave the way to hearing inability. Therefore, sound of any kind, if it is above eighty five decibels is considered to be a part of noise pollution.

Transportation is one such factor which potentially introduces noise pollution into the atmosphere. This is so especially in rural areas, where the noise produced by the trains and airplanes can upset the natural way of life, thereby affecting animals in areas around train tracks and airports. In urban areas, the noise from heavy transportation and even

amusement noise (like loud music) can cause sleep interference for humans and animals, hearing loss and in some cases even mental flux. Sudden increases in volume and even low levels of continuous noise can be disturbing and can have an adverse effect on health. The dominant source class in this category is of motor vehicles producing about ninety percent of all unwanted noise worldwide.

Although most developed countries have measures in place to safeguard the environment from harmful noise, no nation has a single body to control noise pollution. Transportation, entertainment and industry noise is more often than not regulated by the related ministry. This results in inadequate efforts to check noise pollution and the deteriorating influence, remaining unnoticed, adds on and assumes alarming proportions.

Motor vehicle emissions are one of the leading causes of air pollution. The world leaders in air pollution emissions are China, Mexico, Russia, US and Japan. Principal stationary pollution sources include chemical plants, oil refineries, coal-fired power plants, metals production factories, nuclear waste disposal activities, petrochemical plants, large livestock farms (dairy cows, pigs, poultry, etc.), incinerators, plastics factories, PVC factories and other heavy industries. Contemporary practices like the burning of natural vegetation, land clearing or spraying of pesticides and herbicides are a cause of agricultural air pollution.

The amount of hazardous wastes generated each year goes up to approximately 400 million metric tons. Out of this, about 250 million metric tons is produced by the US alone. Recently China has overtaken America in the production of CO₂, which constitutes about 25% of the world's CO₂.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a report in February 2007, comprising of the work of 2,500 scientists from more than 130 countries, stating that humans have been the primary cause of global warming since 1950.

Mitigation of Climate Change 2014 was the third part of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Climate Change 2013/2014 was prepared by its Working Group III. The volume provides a comprehensive and transparent assessment of relevant options for mitigating climate change through limiting or preventing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, as well as activities that reduce their concentrations in the atmosphere.

Next **United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21** or **CMP11** will be held in Paris, France in 2015.

Although humankind has been alleged continuously taking pollution to enormous levels, yet it is necessary to know that pollution can also be the consequence of a natural disaster. For example, hurricanes cause petrochemical spills from ruptured boats or automobiles and water contamination from sewage. Larger scale and environmental damage is not uncommon when coastal oil rigs or refineries are involved. Catastrophes may also lead to large scale environmental damage destroying nuclear power plants or oil sources producing potentially widespread releases.

Efforts at individual level as well as the community level are called for if this menace has to be curbed. Societies as well as the governments must play a significant role in environmental protection by creating awareness and educating people about the pressing need to manage and conserve natural resources. Adopting and popularizing renewable energy sources and promoting reuse and recycling wherever possible will help reduce the production of waste. Initiatives like utilizing solar energy, wind energy, saving electricity and water, care in disposing biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste, using eco-friendly products rather than polythene, maintaining clean and hygienic surroundings are some steps which can eventually lead to environmental protection at the bigger level. Individual and social consciousness collectively can bring about the desired changes transforming the world into a safer place for the generations to arrive.



3. Radiation – A Man Made Evil

Abstract: Radiation or energy waves are all around us. Radiations are created by electromagnetic fields created by different sources. These sources include both natural and man-made sources. Radiation from natural sources cannot be reduced, but radiation from man-made sources can not only be controlled but reduced also. In this essay, we will try to understand radiation and also evaluate its harmful effects.

Man consistently thrives for a more comfortable life. For this purpose, he keeps on inventing and discovering and improving on his innovations and discoveries. But, during the process, man has created a phenomenon called radiation.

Radiation is energy that is transmitted in the form of rays and waves from one body to the other. Radiation can come from natural as well as manmade sources. Natural sources of radiation include the sun and man-made sources of radiation include almost everything that uses electromagnetic waves to function. Examples of these include microwave ovens, mobile phones, nuclear reactors, power lines, radio antennas and the likes.

Radiation can be classified into two categories – ionizing and non-ionizing. Ionizing radiation is the stronger radiation. This has the ability to detach electrons from atoms or molecules, thus ionizing. Ionizing radiation can be seen in radiation that is emitted from X-rays, Earth's crust, ultraviolet rays and the likes.

On the other hand, non-ionizing radiation is that that does not have the strength to ionize. This is the weaker of the radiation. This can be experienced from sources like microwave ovens, mobile phones, mobile phone towers, radio waves, infrared lights and the likes. In either of the cases, exposure to unlimited or excessive amounts of radiation can cause a lot of problems. What scientists consider to be a safe limit of exposure is between 0.5 – 2 milligauss of radiation, but the electric appliances that we use are much beyond the safety limits.

Several researches and studies conducted on lab rats have proved that exposure to high measures of radiation can cause a lot of problems, including brain damage. Our body cells are very sensitive and they can react to even the slightest stimuli. This is the reason why our bodies react to external sources of energy including radiation. It is also found that our body can react in an abnormal way for up to 3 hours even after the source of radiation has ended. And this time estimate has resulted from exposure to radiation for just 2-3 minutes.

Some scientists believe that only high amounts of radiation that really effects your body can actually harm you, but this is not the case. Even if, a person is exposed to lower limits of radiation, but for a long and continuous period, the long- term effects of radiation can be serious and have important consequences.

Long-term effects of exposure to radiation include damage to the body's natural defense and immune system and slowing down of blood cells carrying blood and oxygen. Some long -term effects are so long lasting that they may even appear in the next generation. Short -term effects of exposure to radiation can include depression, mood swings,

irritableness, low energy levels, headaches, reduced concentration power, loss of memory and anxiety. Let us take a quick look at the different sources of radiation and how they affect us.

The most common source of radiation that can be found today on almost everybody's person is the mobile phone. In fact, for some people, all business is conducted on the mobile phone and their mere existence depends on the cell phone. Even people, who do not use the cell phone to such an extent, are prone to harmful effects which are caused as a result of radiation from mobile phones. When a cell phone is used, the heat generated from it is observed by the body, especially by the brain and the eyes. The brain has the ability to distribute the heat all around the body, but the eyes do not. This is the reason, why mobile phones are a known cause of cataract in many people. Other harmful effects from the mobile phone include headaches, memory loss, restlessness, skin tingling, fatigue, lack of concentration, neck growths, tumors and cancer.

Another device that can cause harmful effects because of exposure to radiation is clock radio. Clock radios emit very high fields of electromagnetism. It makes you feel more tired. It also damages the immune system and makes you take longer to recuperate from flu, common colds and other infections.

Hairdryers are also products of daily use that can cause serious damage due to radiation. High electric currents produce heat. This heat has a higher configuration near the handle and when the settings are set at a higher temperature. Use of hair dryers around metal hair clips also increases the electromagnetic field. Our bodies need melatonin to repair itself. This melatonin is generally produced after 7 pm. Therefore, it is always advisable to not use hairdryers after 7 pm as it interferes with the body's ability to produce melatonin.

Computers also produce an electromagnetic field that is harmful for the body. Though, most modern day computers give off relatively low levels of radiation, they can still harm you. Laptops also emit this field and can be a source of dizziness and faint spells, especially when used while being plugged in.

Other products that are known to harm the body include metal beds, electric kettles, photocopiers and underwire bras. Metal beds tend to concentrate ions from the electromagnetic fields created by electronic appliances causing insomnia and restlessness. Electric kettles also cause

radiations that can cause eye problems, tremors and headaches. The motor of photocopiers are also known to create health problems in people. The metals used in underwire bras divert the radiation from outside the body to inside the body, thereby increasing the incidence of breast cancer. Apart from the appliances, it is also important to understand the effects of radiation on particular body parts. Let us take a quick look at how the different body parts are affected by radiation.

The body part that is most affected by radiation are the hair follicles. Exposure to radiation can lead to temporary or permanent hair loss, depending on the amount of exposure a person endures. Generally, it takes three to six months for the lost hair to grow back. A scalp that is exposed to radiation becomes tender and pink. Gradually, the scalp might become dry and itchy.

The brain is generally a tough body part. Still, exposure to radiation can kill nerves and small blood vessels in it. As each part of the body has a function to perform, the death of nerves and blood vessels can result in seizures and thus immediate death. Other problems include personality and mood changes, under developed intellect, memory problems, bewilderment, cognition problems, verbal memory problems, reduced psychomotor functioning and the reduction of speed of processing information.

The blood system is also affected as a result of exposure to radiation. The count of white blood cells is reduced in blood. This makes a person more susceptible to infections and flu. If these symptoms continue for a long period, they can result in the contraction of leukemia or lymphoma.

Radiation also affects the gastrointestinal tract. Damage to the gastrointestinal tract lining can cause bloody vomiting, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea including others. Radiation causes blood vessels in the colon and rectum to bleed easily. This causes blood to flow in stool. Radiation also destroys cells that ultimately cause loss in immunity and also changes in the DNA and the RNA. Exposure to radiation also causes inflammation of the large or small intestine along with scarring and blockage of the small intestine up to seven years after exposure.

Exposure to radiation can also destroy the reproductive tract. This happens because radiation destroys all cells that divide quickly. Long-term exposure to radiation can result in sterility. Pregnant women

exposed to radiation are known to give birth to children who have serious birth defects, leading to their deaths even.

Though generally, a person is effected by the ill effects of radiation only when he /she is exposed to it for a long period, but the short- term effects of the same can also not be ignored. Radiation is known to cause defects that are permanent and may even lead to the defects being percolated to the next generation. We live in a world that has many radiation fields. We need to therefore, be careful in order to protect ourselves from the harmful effects of radiation, which is largely man-made.



4. Soil Erosion

Abstract : Conservation of land is essential for survival and continued availability of food-grains. Soil-erosion is a worldwide phenomenon but it is worst in the developing countries. Water and wind are the major sources of soil-erosion which wash or blow away the top soil, the valuable substance which helps plants and vegetation to grow. In India about 175 Mha land is already degraded because of erosion. Conservation of land and other natural resources need to be addressed immediately. Several steps have been taken to stop soil erosion and conserve natural resources but they are not adequate. More efforts on various levels need to be taken to conserve land, increase agricultural productivity and develop new technologies in water and soil management etc.

Conservation of soil and water is essential for human survival. Without the conservation of these two natural resources, growth in the production of food production will not go up and shrinking of cultivating land will rise. Already, all the available land for agriculture is being exploited and there is not much scope of further expansion. Nearly one third of the total land area of the world is arid, about 11 per cent is under ice-cover and another 10 per cent is tundra. Conservation is the need of the hour to ensure continued availability of food-grains, fruits, vegetables and such other supplies. Water is life. It is an essential natural resource needed in homes for drinking, bathing, washing, cooking and in fields and farms for raising crops and keeping animals.

When the land is stripped of its green cover, soil is lost and damaged by erosion. Nearly 26 billion metric tonnes of topsoil is being eroded every year. It takes from 200 to 1000 years to form 2.5 cm of topsoil

under normal agricultural conditions. It is estimated that from 20-300 tonnes per hectare, soil is lost annually. Topsoil is lost many times faster than its recovery. The erosion is called the silent theft. A single rain or storm can erode centuries old accumulated soil from a field stripped of plant-cover. Soil is that valuable substance which causes plants and vegetation to grow. Soil is the life-giving substance. Ultimately men and animals, all depend on plants, grass, grains etc. If this vegetation and plant supporting soil is blown or washed away, the land becomes useless from the agricultural point of view because the sub-soil, underneath it is not potent enough to support plant life. Without this vital cover of topsoil, the land becomes arid, barren and useless.

Water and wind are the two major agents of soil-erosion which wash or blow away the top-soil. Poor agricultural practices which strip the land of its vegetative cover are the cause of soil-erosion. As a result of erosion about 430 million hectares of arable land had to be abandoned during the last 4-5 decades. This degradation of land caused by erosion is a very serious problem. In the developing nations of Asia, Africa and South America, the problem is the worst. Soil erosion is affecting 15 per cent of the Earth's cropland area. The shrinking forest cover results in flash floods and erosion of the land. There are storms as well across the denuded area of land and the soil is blown away constantly. Soil erosion is likely to continue in coming years. At the present rate of erosion there would be about 30 per cent loss of the global soil inventory by the year 2050.

Erosion by sea water and desertification has made the situation worse. Desertification is there on a vast scale. Nearly 21 Mha of productive land is lost every year because of this factor alone. At the present rate of desertification about 1.2 billion people would be affected by the turn of the century. The global warming, because of greenhouse effect, will make the sea-level rise above present level by 20 cm by 2030 and 30 cm by 2050 leading to inundation of large areas of land. Glaciers and icecaps have started melting and causing thermal expansion of the oceans. India has a vast coastline and erosion by sea and has caused losses on a vast scale. About 175 Mha land in the country is already degraded. The land under agriculture is 143 Mha, 56 per cent of it suffers from varying degrees of degradation. Of the total of 75 Mha forest land, 40 Mha suffers from degradation. It emphasises the abuses of our natural resources in the past and even in the present. Conservation is one of

the major human problems and must be addressed immediately and effectively. Earth is the only known living planet because of its varied natural resources which support and sustain life. Without these natural resources like water and soil, the Earth would have been another dead, desolate and deserted planet like Mars or Jupiter. Water, soil, forests and wildlife are our valuable natural resources and must be preserved at any cost.

Soil conservation is one of the most important inputs of increasing agricultural output. In India many efforts are being made to check soil erosion and the emphasis has been on development of technology for problem identification, formulation and implementation of problem-oriented schemes, enactment of appropriate legislation and constitution of policy co-ordination bodies. The main objectives of soil and water conservation schemes in the country are : to minimise process of erosion and land degradation to restore degraded lands; to ensure availability of water and soil moisture; to create micro level irrigation potential through water harvesting; to ensure rebuilding of internal fertility of soil through organic recycle, etc. The various programmes aim at conservation of soil and water mainly on agricultural lands. These programmes provide an overall perspective of problems like water and wind erosion, degradation through waterlogging, salinity, ravines, torrents, shifting cultivation, coastal sands in addition to declining man-land ratio. Major Central schemes aim at checking pre-mature siltation of multi-purpose reservoirs, mitigating flood hazards in productive plains, resetting of shifting cultivation and restoring degraded lands.

A Centrally-sponsored scheme of soil conservation in catchment of river valley projects was launched during Third Plan. Another scheme of integrated watershed management in catchments of flood-prone rivers was launched during the sixth plan in eight flood-prone rivers. By the end of the seventh plan an area of 2.40 Mha out of the total treatable area of 17.99 Mha in the catchments of River Valley Projects was treated, which comes to 13.31 per cent of treatable area. Similarly, in the case of flood-prone River Scheme till the end of the seventh plan an area of 0.36 Mha, out of the treatable area of 4.37 Mha was treated. A scheme for reclamation and development of ravine areas had been launched in 1987-88 in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. A scheme for reclamation of alkali 'Usar' soils was also launched during the seventh plan which is continuing in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. It was introduced

to improve physical condition and productivity status of alkali soils for restoring crop production. Gujarat was added to the scheme in 1889-90. For controlling shifting cultivation, a pilot scheme was implemented in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram in 1986-87. This scheme was then extended to many States including Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and all the north-eastern States.



5. Wildlife Conservation

Abstract: Forests and wildlife are part and parcel of our precious and fragile environment and need protection and conservation. There are a couple of acts which prohibit exploitation of endangered species of animals, birds and plants and yet the poachers are on the prowl and illegal hunting and killing of animals is on with impunity. Because of fast shrinking forest-cover and habitat, sometimes wild animals like hyenas, tigers, wolves and leopards turn man-eaters and attack villages. The large scale and indiscriminate destruction of forests has created a dangerous situation and alarm bells have started ringing. Forests and wild life are very valuable and renewable sources of nature and need to be preserved, protected and expanded at all costs.

Protection and conservation of forests and wildlife are essential to maintain Earth's health and environment. The Earth is the only known living planet and it is because of its special environment and ecology which are life-supporting. Forests are part and parcel of our environment. They are one of the most valuable resources and gifts of nature. They play a key role in the maintenance of climate, rain-patterns, water and soil conservation. They are the natural home of many types of animals, birds, reptiles, insects etc. They supply timber, fuel, medicines, wood for paper-pulp and raw materials for many industries. The increasing depletion and destruction of wildlife is a source of great concern. One out of every seven persons of the world live in India. India has 16 per cent of the world's population with only 2.4 per cent of its land area. There is much pressure on our natural resources including forests. In these times of increasing consumerism and nature-hostile activities, the forest-cover is depleting and deteriorating very fast.

The conservation of wildlife which includes native plants and animals depends on protection of forests. Wildlife is the direct product of the land resources and habitat conditions. The neglect of forests means

the destruction of the wild animals. Wildlife, like we human beings, needs food, water, and shelter. Destruction of forests, wetlands, marshes, ponds, grasslands etc. eliminates their sources of food, water and habitat. The National Wildlife Action Plan launched in 1983 provides the framework of strategy as well as programme for conservation of wildlife. The protected area network till 1993 consisted of 75 national parks and 421 sanctuaries covering 4.5 per cent of the total geographical area, which was proposed to be increased to 5.1 per cent. The wildlife Protection Act, 1972 governs wildlife conservation and protection of endangered species. The Act prohibits trade in rare and endangered species. India is a signatory to the **Convention on International Trade of Endangered species of Wild Flora and Fauna**. Under this export or import of these endangered species is subject to strict control. Commercial exploitation of such species is prohibited. **The Wild Life Protection Act, 1972** has been suitably amended to make the provisions more effective. Endangered species of plants and animals have been brought under the purview of the act.

India has a very rich flora and fauna but many plant and animal species are already extinct and many other are on the verge of extinction. In spite of various acts and rules-regulations against exploitation of wildlife, the real conservation has still a long way to cover. India is a huge country and sub-continent and one of the major wildlife producing countries of the world and yet there is a skeleton staff to safeguard the interests of wildlife. Poachers are on the prowl even in sanctuaries and protected forest areas. They have become fertile hunting grounds for illegal hunting and killing of animals. The rich and influential people and traders in animal-skins, horns, etc. have been indulging in hunting, killing and trading of wildlife with impunity. They carry telescopic rifles and other weapons, use traps and poisoned food and kill the animals.

As a result of ecological imbalances and depleting forest-cover, the wild animals come out at night in search of food in the villages and attack human beings and domestic animals and fowls. In some parts of Uttar Pradesh the hyena and wolf-menace was very much in the news. Many children were killed by the wolves and hyenas. Similarly, in Pauri Garhwal district of Uttaranchal some leopards turned into man-eaters. Faced with the scarcity of animals for prey in the forest and continuing attacks from poachers, they become man-eaters. On occasions, the villagers injure more animals than they kill and so the injured animals

turn into man-eaters and attack villages at night for food. When a human killing takes place, every leopard or tiger is regarded as man-eater and there is indiscriminate killing. Consequently, the number of these felines is decreasing fast.

There is mindless destruction of forests for timber, firewood and fuel. Every year there is a loss of about 1.3 hectares of forest area in India because of large and indiscriminate clearing of forests for cultivation, quarrying large dams and irrigation projects. Then there is intensive and indiscriminate logging for commercial purposes by contractors and timber-merchants. Over-grazing has also taken its toll. The result is serious ecological imbalance and environment degradation. There is much pressure on forests and the relation between men and forests has reached the lowest depth.

Conservation of forests and wildlife is also important from aesthetic point of view. They make life beautiful and colourful. Without them human life will lose much of its beauty, charm and meaning. Their proper protection and conservation also means a continuous and adequate supply of food, fodder, medicines, timber, etc. Forests and wildlife and renewable resources need to be diligently protected, preserved and increased in a planned way. There is a need to spread the awareness about forest and wildlife conservation. Social forestry can be taught in schools as a subject. More and more trees should be planted, protected and seen growing and maturing. There should be a ban on mobile zoos, and animal rights activists should come forward to wage a war on behalf of the mute and innocent animals.

The destruction and degradation of forests in upper regions like Himalayas causes such other ruins as erosion of top soil, erratic rainfall, and recurring floods. Deforestation is a great social and national evil and should be checked on priority basis. It results in loss of productivity and environment degradation among many other harms. Encroachment on forests should also be checked and, if possible, banned. Non-government agencies, village communities, tribals etc. should be involved in social forestry and regeneration of degraded forest lands. They should be allowed to share the benefits of these schemes in a judicious manner. The forest and wildlife conservation laws should be made more stringent and practised scrupulously. Veerappan's continued bloody trade in ivory and sandal-wood trade upsets all concerned. Throughout the Nilgiris, it is now almost impossible to spot a large

tusker. The full blown assault on forest and wildlife saddens all the Indians and wildlife lovers in foreign countries.



6. Natural Resources: The Real Capital

Abstract: Rapid and radical changes in our surroundings indicate disorder and imbalance in ecology. These are dangerous trends and need to be checked and reversed. Indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, industrial development and rapid growth of population have resulted in widespread pollution and degradation. In our own country the pollution levels have reached beyond biological endurance forbidding ecological disaster. Massive deforestation, soil-erosion and loss of green cover cause recurring floods, droughts and loss of precious flora and fauna. Some measures have been taken of late to check pollution and increase forestation but still much needs to be done. India's rich bio-diversity must be preserved at any cost. Greater environmental awareness and literacy should be achieved. Deterioration in eco-system also endangers food-security and agricultural productivity. Food-shortage, water-scarcity and ecological degradation go hand-in-hand. Industrial growth, technological expansion and upgradation are essential for India's progress but not at the cost of harmony between man and nature and ecological health. We have to preserve our valuable natural resources and stop their fast depletion.

The relationship of men, animals and plants to their natural surroundings is of fundamental importance. Any fast perceptible change in their interaction and relationship is harmful and indicative of imbalance in nature and environment. In olden days, if there was any change in this respect, it was gradual, rational and in harmony with the balance and universal values. But since industrialisation began, there have been drastic and violent changes in our surroundings in violation of human values, balance in nature and harmony of relations between animals and nature. These changes as a result of rapid industrialisation and advancement of science and technology have been so radical and rapid that they have created ecological chaos and disorder on an unprecedented scale. Material affluence and gross consumerism have almost brought the entire humanity on the brink of disaster and a point of no return. These dangerous trends have set the alarm bells ringing and ushered in degradation in the quality of biological life world-wide. Early on in the industrial revolution and its rich benefits, it was forgotten that the natural resources, though in abundance, were neither limitless

nor renewable. It was taken for granted that the bounties of nature were endless and for ever and so began a tragic chapter of their indiscriminate exploitation and destruction.

In our own country, this process of indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources all these years have created ecological insecurity and rapid degradation of animal and plant life so much so that the very survival of the nation is at stake. The explosive population and industrial growth have unfolded an age of untold suffering, diseases and disasters. The level of pollution in air, water, soil etc, have reached record levels and well beyond biological endurance. According to the report of Tata Energy Research Institute the sub-continental environment is losing its green cover at such a fast rate that ecological disaster is imminent, if it is not checked immediately. It does not suit well for sustainable development and economical growth. For example, 57 per cent of our total land area has been degraded which may result in financial loss of Rs. 23,200 crore. Over 120,000 million tonnes of annual soil-erosion affects over 9 million hectare area with recurring floods and far greater area with drought in succeeding years. This will drastically damage our target of food-production.

There has been widespread degradation of our forest wealth. The environmental pollution and ecological imbalance has resulted in the loss of precious flora and fauna. About 10 per cent of the flora is threatened with extinction. The situation has already become grim with the loss of hundreds of species of plants and animals. With only 2 per cent of land mass, India supports the second largest population of the world. It is the need of the hour that this precious ecological bequest is passed on in its healthy form to the future generations.

The decision to ensure green-coverage for one-third of the country is a welcome step. Steps are also being taken to increase green-cover over 28 million hectares of wasteland. Measures have also been taken by some States to ban the commercial felling of the trees and promotion of social forestry among villagers which would help regain ecological balance and health and save the land from environmental pollution, degradation of land, recurring floods and droughts. Identification of about 12 areas in different parts of the country for declaring these as biosphere reserves is also encouraging. These biosphere reserves would go a long way in the preservation of our forests and animal species. June 5 is observed throughout the world every year as the World Environment

Day with much fanfare but still much desired is left undone. Our seas and rivers are dying, our hills stand denuded and about 40,000 people are dying prematurely every year, 7,500 persons in the capital city of Delhi alone.

An all out global effort is needed to stem the rot in environment. All our efforts may prove an exercise in futility unless simultaneous efforts are made to improve the ecological health of the earth. Environment has no fixed national boundaries and a polluted environment in one country, region or continent is bound to adversely affect many others in vast and distant regions. The recent widespread bush and forest fires in Indonesia and the resultant smoke and smog has engulfed the entire south-east Asia including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines. Hundreds of people have died and hundreds of thousands are suffering from breathing and lung problems. These forest fires are partly man-made as the timber merchants in Sumatra and Kalimantan forests often resort to fire to clear the land quickly and cheaply. About 800,000 hectares of Indonesian forest land is estimated to have been destroyed by this vast fire. It is said that it may take 20-25 years for this fire-degraded land to recover. Thousands of firefighters struggled to control the bush fire: and President Suharto called it a national disaster. Forest officials in Jakarta warned of a catastrophic ecological disaster if peat and lignite coal beneath the rain forests of Kalimantan on Indonesian Borneo Island, and Sumatra caught fire. The prolonged absence of rainfall and drought-like conditions have further worsened the situation.

Poaching coupled with indiscriminate commercial and industrial expansion threaten the Indian wildlife. A member of the Indian Board of Wildlife and the Steering Committee of Project Tiger has identified 50 wildlife hot spots. These sanctuaries and national parks are the best water catchment areas. The water security of the sub-continent will be at risk if these areas are degraded or lost. India's network of parks and sanctuaries is being dismembered by government design and sanction, almost invariably for short term gains. India's wildlife species might become extinct because of the rapacity of developers than the avarice of the poachers it has been observed.

A plan on India's bio-diversity policy has been presented. Based on this blueprint, the country's first Biological Diversity Conservation Bill is to be prepared and presented to the Parliament. It will be one of the first biological diversity conservation legislations of the world. India

is one of the 12 mega-diversity regions of the world and has 7 per cent of the world's flora. So far 49,000 plants and 81,000 animals have been catalogued. The bill would seek to protect biological resources of the country from use by foreign individuals, institutions and companies without sharing the benefits of the resources. A national bio-diversity fund and a State bio-diversity fund have also been proposed.

India can no more ignore or cold-shoulder environment and ecology and the major ecological changes affecting the human, animal and plant life. Pollution control measures should become active part of our individual and social awareness. Greater ecological awareness and environmental literacy should be achieved by involving the public, the non-governmental agencies, corporate houses, social groups, gram panchayats, students and others in the movement. Mere legislations and rules will not do. The participation of the public is a must for success of any movement. It is the need of the hour that environmental protection, wildlife-conservation, Project Tiger etc. do not remain a fashion and slogan-shouting, but a realisation and translation into reality.

The deterioration of eco-system has many dangerous dimensions. It also slows down food-production and creates food-shortage and scarcity. According to Lester R. Brown, President, World Watch Institute, "Food prospects are affected by all the global trends of environmental degradation, including deforestation, the build-up of greenhouse gases, soil-erosion, air pollution and the loss of plant and animal species. Water scarcity, a matter of growing concern for many governments, is often considered separately from food scarcity, but 70 per cent of all the water pumped from underground or diverted from rivers is used for irrigation. If we face a future of water scarcity, we also face future of food scarcity."

Due to massive over-pumping, water level is falling in major food producing regions, including Punjab, the breadbasket of India, Central and Northern China and the southern great planes of the US. As countries press against the limits of their water supplies, cities typically satisfy their growing needs by taking water from agriculture, the report says.

The trends worldwide are worrisome. While India continues its efforts to safeguard the nation's bio-diversity and ecological security, regional and international co-operation, advice, expertise and help must

become an integral ingredient of our efforts for restoring the ecological health and environmental balance.

Undoubtedly, industrial growth, technological progress and expansion is a must for India but the age-old harmony between man and nature is equally important. Without this balance and harmony any productivity and progress would be counter-productive. Therefore, it is imperative that we strive for greater and abiding coherence, harmony and friendliness between nature and our way of life, that we check the rapidly increasing consumerism and thereby stop the depletion of valuable and limited natural resources. We have to increase the comforts and conveniences but at the same time we have to see that we do not lose our soul and the rapport between ourselves and the nature.



7. Water Crisis

Abstract: Water is an essential ingredient of all kinds of life. Earth is a unique living planet because it has water. There is not enough to drink and many towns, cities and villages often face acute shortage of water. To alleviate the drinking water situation, a mission was started in 1986 but many of the schemes under the project remain non-functional and thousands of localities use contaminated water. Maintenance and operation of water mission is a main problem to be solved. Another major problem to be tackled is water harvesting. India is one of the wettest countries of the world but the water harvesting is very poor. Experts say that traditional and local water harvesting system should be revived and encouraged as in that lies the water wisdom.

Water is one of the essential ingredients of life. It is life and without it there cannot be life at all. Earth is the only living planet because there is water. The other planets like Mars, Jupiter, Saturn etc. are dead, deserted and lifeless because they lack water in any form. The moon is also a dead piece of land only because there is no life-supporting water. Presence of water means also the presence of other ingredients of life. The total replenishable, ground water resources in the country have been estimated at 45.22 m.ha per year. Of this 6.94 m.ha is for drinking, industrial and other uses leaving 38.28 m.ha for irrigation.

Water is essential for all kinds of life—men, animals and plants. Water exists either in the atmosphere in the gaseous form or on the

earth in liquid and ice-form. We depend for our needs of water upon a very small percentage of less than one per cent water stock found in rivers, fresh water lakes and in the subsoil. This source of water is replenished by the very meager stock of 0.01 per cent mobile water found in the atmosphere in gaseous and vapour-form. Much of it falls on the ground as rains. Thus, the cycle of evaporation and precipitation goes on and on. Oceans and lakes are full of abundant water but we cannot use it directly because it is highly brackish and full of impurities.

There is often scarcity of drinking water. There are droughts and famines causing untold misery, death and destruction. Today there are thousands of villages and towns facing an acute drinking water-shortage. Even in cities with huge water-supply plants there is not sufficient water and their supply is often limited to a very short period of the day. With the rapidly increasing pressure of population on our water resources, more and more villages, towns and cities are facing the problem. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had to launch a **drinking water mission and programme in 1986 to meet the drinking water requirements**. Then drinking water was available to only 30 per cent of the country's population and today theoretically, it is available to 91 per cent. But the investigations have shown that a large percentage of drinking water schemes remain non-functional for a very long time of the year and so the safe and potable water is not available to the people. It is estimated that today over 100,000 localities use and drink contaminated and poisoned water with high salinity, arsenic fluoride, iron and other pollutants. Water quality for drinking purposes depends on proper operation and maintenance of water plants, distribution system, hand pumps etc. The budget allocation for drinking water programme was quite good at Rs. 2,000 crore for the year 1996-97 over the last year's Rs. 900 crore, but again operation and maintenance were neglected. The experts say that there is an urgent need for technical expertise and more funds. Funds to the tune of Rs. 20,000 crore are needed to sustain drinking water system in the country for the next 5 years. They opine that communities should be increasingly involved in sustaining the water resources created for them.

The other front where the problem needs to be tackled is **rain water harvesting** which is very poor in the country. There is more than sufficient precipitation to meet our population's drinking water demand. The average rainfall the countrywide is estimated is to the tune

of 1,170 mm. Even if rain water over 3.15 m.ha of land area is harvested it would be enough. India is one of the wettest countries of the world and yet famines, droughts, drinking water crises are galore and more and more localities are finding it difficult to meet their water requirements.

A team of scientists and researchers of **Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi** has made detailed study of the problem, its dimensions and solutions. They have emphasised the need of traditional wisdom of water harvesting. They have given many details and data and proved how useful it can be to make use of our time-tested, age-old and traditional water harvesting system. These traditional methods of water harvesting have been in constant practice from time immemorial in the country, among various communities and villages. They evolved highly decentralised system of water harvesting suited to local conditions. We need to return to the same wisdom and revive the old water harvesting system and structure.

Heavy showers are not uncommon in the country. It receives rain for about 100 hours each year spread over about 50 days in a year. Cherrapunji in India is the wettest place in the world which receives annual rainfall of about 15,000 mm and yet the village often faces drinking water shortage because of widespread deforestation resulting in drying up of water sources soon after torrential rainy season is over. On the other hand, Jaisalmer in Rajasthan has just about 100 mm of annual rainfall and yet this desert town was able to collect enough water for its use. But it too has started facing the drinking water shortages of late since government water supply system has begun tapping of limited ground water neglecting traditional wisdom of water harvesting. These examples show that man should learn to live in harmony with his environment and learn to respect and harvest wisely water he receives. Man individually and collectively should resort to traditional harvesting systems and harmonise them with our new technologies and knowledge. We need to increase our efficiency in collecting, storing and distributing rain water which is in abundance. The experts say that during the **drought of 1987**, one of the worst droughts, the people of the driest areas in Rajasthan had enough water to drink only because they had used traditional local method of kundis. But those regions who had given up their local kundi system for the tap-water faced acute shortage of water and the people were obliged to revive and restore their old and traditional methods to quench their thirst.

The problem of over-exploitation and pollution of our water resources is really grave. According to a UN report two-thirds of mankind will suffer moderate to severe water crisis within next 30 years if remedial steps are not taken. World Bank report estimates 5 million deaths from unsafe drinking water and investments to the tune of \$ 600 billion worldwide to repair and improve water delivery system.



8. Bio-Diversity

Abstract : The assemblage of plant and animal life constitutes bio-diversity. The earth is a unique planet because it is the only known living one with rich bio-diversity. There might be hundreds of thousands of living things which still not known and catalogued. India herself is one of the mega-countries of bio-diversity as she is very rich in flora and fauna but many of them are extinct and many others are on the verge of extinction. Biological diversity is one of the most valuable assets of the earth and the result of millions of years of evolution since life first appeared here. Man is the crown of this bio-diversity but unfortunately also an instrument of its destruction and depletion. The impact of rapidly increasing human population has been disastrous on bio-diversity.

Bio-diversity means the total number of variety of species in a particular region and environment. It consists both of flora and fauna, that is, plant and animal life. Thus, bio-diversity reflects the assemblage of plant and animal life in a given place and environment. It is an all-inclusive term and includes all kinds of living beings and things which means infinite living variety in nature. The earth is the only known **living planet** and so really unique. It is the only planet that has life and sustains it. As far as the variety and diversity of life is concerned, it is mind-boggling and endless. There are over 400 thousand known and described species of plants and 1.3 million that of animals in the world, and many more are being added every day to the list. Perhaps there are millions of insects, micro-organisms, birds, plants and animals awaiting discovery and description specially in the tropical regions parallel of latitude 23⁰ 28' North and South of the Equator. A rough estimate suggests that there might be from 3 million to 10 million varieties of animal and plant life on the earth. It only means that what we know about our bio-diversity till today is just like a tip of the ice bag.

India alone accounts for some 126 thousand varieties of animal and plant life. India is one of the 12 identified mega-centers of bio-diversity. So far about 45 thousand species of plants and 81 thousand species of animals have been identified and described. The great variety of Indian flora includes some 15 thousand flowering plants which is about 6% of the global total. And the Indian fauna consists of 7.6% of species of mammals, 4.5% of bird species, 45.8% of reptilians, 55.8% of amphibians, 2,546 fishes, 40,000 insects and 5,000 mollusc species. Many of these species are endemic and found only in particular floristic and fauna regions. But unfortunately about 1,500 plant and 300 animal species are now threatened and endangered and hundreds extinct. A plant or animal species become endangered when its numbers are so few that it is on the verge of extinction. For instance, the rhino, the tiger, the gharial, the musk deer, the bear are some of the endangered species in our country.

The rich, varied, colourful and so enchanting bio-diversity is one of the most valuable possessions of the earth. It is the result of millions and millions years of evolution and diversification of species. Millions of years ago, tiny specks of protoplasm, the physical basis of life, or basic building blocks of life, appeared and with it began the evolution of the plants and animals. These were unicellular living things. Most of the plant species have developed from algae. These earliest species of plant life reproduced either by simple cell-division or by means of spores. Gradually they developed flowers and there were seeds. The animal life began in oceans some 500 million years ago. And for a long time to come there was life on the land. The process of evolution continued marked with the gradual change in the characteristics of the organisms and finally man appeared on the scene some 50,000 years ago. But today man, the crown of the biological hierarchy, has become the instrument of annihilation and destruction of bio-diversity. It is mainly because of him that biological diversity is under threat and so much pressure. Increasing human population has had a great adverse impact on the environment and bio-diversity. Today, India's estimated population is over 1.22 billion. This boom in population has necessitated more space for villages, towns and cities and more land for agriculture, factories, dams and other projects. Modern methods of agriculture, manufacturing and systems of transportation have caused considerable damage to our environment and biological diversity.

Over 75 million years ago gigantic dinosaurs roamed over the earth but soon they became extinct because they could not change themselves to the changing environment and circumstances. The same fate waited the mammoth, the dodo and other species. In this process of natural selection and biological evolution a few of the species which could not adopt themselves to their environment perished but the diversification prevailed and the number of plant and animals species continued to increase. But in recent centuries the rate of extinction of species has increased alarmingly because of human impact, pollution, loss of forests and habitats, hunting etc. For example, India has created nearly 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries to protect and preserve wildlife and to conserve forests. It accounts for 19 per cent of India's forest cover and 4.3 per cent of her land mass and yet wildlife is not safe and more and more animals, birds, reptiles, insects, bushes, herbs, plants and trees are becoming extinct every day. India has emerged as a major supplier of tiger bones, rhinos horns, reptile skins, live mammals, birds, reptiles etc. to the world-wildlife market which is roughly valued at US \$20 billion.

It is roughly estimated that since the year 1600 till early 1980s as many as 115 mammals and 171 birds besides countless species of reptiles, amphibians and fishes have become extinct and many more are on the verge of extinction. As far as plants are concerned over 5 thousand species have become extinct and over 15 thousand have become endangered during this period all over the world. The loss would have been far greater and higher. And it does not include the extinction of hundreds of unnamed and unknown species. It is believed that now there is a loss of about 50-species every day which is likely to increase with the ever increasing pollution and destruction of green-cover. About 50 to 59 per cent of the species live in tropical forests and these areas have now become the most endangered ecosystems. If the present trend of destruction of bio-diversity continues, it is feared that within next 45-50 years, a quarter of the world's species may become extinct. Some of the tropical marine and mangrove areas under great threat include the Sunderbans of India and Bangladesh, Niger delta in Nigeria, lakes and rivers in Tanzania and Kenya, Gulf of Thailand, delta of Indus in Pakistan and the areas those of Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Queensland (Australia), US (South coast from Texas to Florida), Panama, Ecuador and Caribbean.

The decrease in bio-diversity has grave short and long term impact because the loss caused by it is irreversible. Moreover, the species loss has a cumulative effect. The loss of one plant or animal may result in the loss of 30 or more of other dependent organisms. The various ways in which we destroy bio-diversity and harm environment include destruction and over-exploitation of forests for fuel, timber, fodder, grazing, urban expansion and industrialization, unlimited consumerism, over-fishing, mining, quarrying, blasts, sedimentation of shallow coastal waters, dredging, oil-production, oil-spills, coral-mining, use of pesticides, plastics and chemical fertilizers, pollution, collision and grounding of tankers, leaks of toxic gases and the chemicals, nuclear tests and disasters, man-made forest fires, explosives, acid rains etc.

Pollution is the biggest threat to bio-diversity. It has already reduced and decreased biological diversity to a great extent. For example plastic pollution is now a world-wide phenomenon. Plastics are non-bio-degradable material and cannot really be re-cycled but only 'down-cycled'. With every down-cycling the quality of plastic deteriorates. When plastic is burnt, it releases toxic substances in the atmosphere. Many stray cattle and other animals die a slow and painful death because they swallow plastic and polythene bags while foraging the garbage and dustbins for food.

Environment is in grave danger and so are life and bio-diversity. There has been immense harm to biosphere which supports life and growth. There is too much addition of pollutants to the environment and ecosystem causing a great imbalance in nature. This imbalance in biosphere has not only deteriorated the quality of life but also threatened the bio-diversity and very survival of living things. Biosphere and life are the two sides of the same coin. If one is destroyed, the other is automatically harmed and ruined. The ever thickening blanket of carbon emissions is one of the greatest dangers to biosphere and bio-diversity. Consequently, 1998 was recorded as the hottest year. The world is heating up dangerously. Similarly, Argentina's National Weather Service (SMN) has found that 1998 had seen the biggest ozone hole ever recorded over Antarctica. The hole spread over 10-million square kilometres for more than 100 days, and showed a short fall of 40 per cent compared to average values before 1976, which is regarded as the base year for measuring atmospheric ozone layers. Ozone is a very vital absorber of biologically active solar ultra-violet radiation. Its presence

maintains a delicate balance in the upper atmosphere. Its absence causes skin cancer and reduces the useful life of certain plants and animal species.

Water pollution has also increased alarmingly all over the world. Sewage and industrial wastes have fouled our seas, rivers, lakes, ponds and other sources of water. Even the water-underground and above in the atmosphere has become contaminated and therefore there are acid rains.

Nuclear tests, explosions and accidents are also great threat to our biosphere and bio-diversity. They release very large quantities of radioactive material in the atmosphere and their evil effects last for many centuries. They poison water, soil and air and thus endanger bio-diversity.

The decrease and destruction of bio-diversity also stem from rivalry between nations to have ownership and over exploit biological resources. Each and every nation tries to corner the biggest chunk of such resources and the developed and powerful nations always carry the day.

In recent years there has been increase and widespread awareness about the protection and preservation of environment and bio-diversity. There has been many international and national conventions, protocols and agreements in regard to the conservation of biosphere, environment and bio-diversity. Some of these include Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil (OIL POL), London 1954; Prevention of Marine Pollution by dumping of Wastes and other matter Convention, 1972; Law of the Sea Convention, 1982; Banning weapons tests in the Atmosphere, Outer space and Under Water, Moscow, 1963; Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the Sea-Bed, Ocean Floor and Sub-Soil, 1971; Wetlands of international importance Convention, Ramsar, 1971; International Trade in endangered species Convention, Washington, 1973; European wildlife and natural habitats Convention, Bern 1979 and Biological diversity Convention Rio de Janeiro, 1992.

There are many international, national and international agencies, organizations and associations which are engaged in overseeing the conservation of natural and biological resources and they have prepared many plans and programmes like World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP), Climate Application Project (CAP), Global Atmospheric Watch (GAW), Earth Resources Satellite (ERS) etc.

The ultimate analysis of life is one and the degradation of one type of species of living beings also means degradation and ruination of other species. Risk and danger to bio-diversity also endanger our health, peace, balance and overall quality of our life. Every expression of life, from very tiny organisms and planktons to human beings, is sacred and valuable and must be preserved and protected. They all form close links of the one and same chain of existence. If one link is broken or destroyed, the other links cannot remain unaffected.



9. Global Warming

Abstract: The year 1998 has been the hottest on record so far. The 1990s have seen the three hottest years. The average temperature has risen by 0.2°C in the recent decades. As a result of global warming there have been huge and unprecedented floods, storms, cyclones etc. resulting in destruction on vast scales. In recent years the concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane etc. have increased alarmingly. These greenhouse gases cause global warming and rise in earth's temperature. Therefore there are changes in climate, weather and rain patterns. These greenhouse gases do not let the sun's re-radiation escape from the earth and so there is greenhouse effect and warming. They work like a glass house as they accumulate with particulates in the atmosphere because of the burning of fossil fuels. The presence of Chloro Fluoro Carbons (CFCs) in the atmosphere has drastically depleted the vital cover of ozone.

The year 2014 has been the hottest year on record since 1880 according to an analysis by NASA scientists. It has set a new record of a high temperature by a big margin. According to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA, the average global temperature during 1998 was 0.18°C warmer than that of the previous record in 1995. And the average global temperature in 1995 was 15.39°C which broke the previous record of 15.38°C of 1990. It shows a steady rise in the global temperature since 1970s. The ten most hot years in the last 130 years have all been in 1980s and 1990s. And out of these 10, the three hottest years were in 1990s.

This inordinate warmth has begun to hit the earth and the entire living world. It is estimated that average temperature has risen by 0.2°C every decade. The threat of the global warming is real and immense. A lot of imbalance has been created in nature by human activities. Consequently there have been unprecedented and unexpected

devastations, storms, etc. in various parts of the world specially in the coastal and low-lying regions.

The sea-levels have been rising throughout the globe all these years causing violent storms and cyclones here and there. For example, a cyclone with winds of 270 km per hour wreaked havoc in Bangladesh in 1991 razing more than a million houses and claiming over 1,40,000 lives. During the 1990s Europe, America, Australia etc. have experienced the worst type of storms, hurricanes and tornadoes. Because of global warming temperatures rise, oceans and seas become warmer, and release more energy in the atmosphere which leads to violent storms and very huge losses in terms of man and material. It is estimated that there has been rise in ocean temperature by 1°C per decade. In the recent decades the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased to 350 ppm (parts per million) from a preindustrial level of 275 ppm. Concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane remaining relatively constant up to the 18th century, have risen sharply since then due to human activities. Concentration of nitrous oxide have increased since the mid-eighteenth century, especially during the recent decades. Before the 1930s there was no trace of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCS) in the atmosphere.

The trapping of green house gases in the atmosphere is mainly responsible of these dangerous trends of global warming. They raise the earth's temperature which in turn generates destructive storms, cyclones, droughts, floods, forest fires and such other havocs. Widespread human activities such as burning fossil fuels release carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in a very huge quantity and result in green house effect. Then there is a chain reaction. The polar ice begins to melt, the sea levels begin to rise and there are floods and storms.

There have been drastic changes in the earth's climate and weather patterns because of environmental pollution and emission of green house gases. The green house effect contributes to the warming of the earth and rise in its temperature. The greenhouse effect can be generated in a green house. A greenhouse is a glass-house in which plants etc. are kept and grown. The solar radiation enters the green house through its glass covering and is absorbed by the plants, vegetables, etc. But the long wave infrared radiation can not escape back through the glass into the atmosphere and remains trapped. Consequently the temperature inside the greenhouse rises. The similar effect happens to the earth. The earth's atmosphere allows much of the sun's radiation to warm the earth's

surface. The warm earth re-radiates electro-magnetic radiation but some of it is absorbed by gases in its atmosphere and there is global warming and environmental pollution. These gases work as a glass-cover and do not permit the radiation to escape. They have accumulated along with the particulates in the atmosphere all these years because of undesirable and excessive burning of fossil fuels.

The green house gases include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, chlorine, methane and nitrous oxide. In recent years the amount of these gases has increased alarmingly as a result of the widespread burning and combustion of fossil fuels. Coal, oil, natural gas etc. are the fossil fuels. It is estimated that about 55 per cent of global warming is because of absorption of solar radiation by carbon dioxide and the remaining 45 per cent mainly by methane absorption and by damage to the ozone layer as a result of the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the atmosphere.

The size of the hole in the ozone layer observed over Antarctica in 1998 was the largest ever measured and lasted a month longer than the preceding year. Argentina's National Weather Service found that the area covered by low ozone values, that was continuously longer than 10 million square km for more than 100 days, was greater than the one observed during the 1996 season. It was observed that the average amount of ozone during the months of September-October and November showed a shortfall of 40 per cent compared to average values before 1976. That year is considered the base year for measuring atmospheric ozone. The hole started to appear 15 days before the usual time, lasted 2-3 weeks longer and showed the longest duration of areas that had very low ozone. Ozone is a very minor constituent of the earth's atmosphere but is very effective absorber of biologically active solar ultraviolet radiation. This depletion of ozone layer has increased the radiation of ultraviolet rays on the surface of the earth which is very harmful for all living creatures. It causes skin cancer in human beings.

It is estimated that about a billion tons of pollutants are being released every year into the atmosphere. The blanket of carbon emissions is ever increasing and thickening. It has resulted in over 30 per cent more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere today than 200 years ago. Advanced and highly industrialised countries produce more than half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions.

The highly active yellowish gas nitrogen oxide is emitted in the air when fossil fuel is burnt at high temperatures in motor engines and factories. Deforestation and destruction of vegetation has reduced the amount of absorption of carbon dioxide by plants from the atmosphere. Plants use and absorb carbon dioxide and manufacture carbohydrates. The indiscriminate industrialization and felling of trees for timber, fuel and human habitation have further aggravated the problem of global warming and environmental pollution.

Emission of green house gases in such large quantities cause many kinds of respiratory and skin diseases. They also help in the increase of such diseases as malaria, dengue and cholera. In some regions of the world the effects of global warming are now being felt very acutely in the form of climatic and weather changes, droughts, famines, epidemics, destruction of wildlife, huge forest fires, devastating floods, soil-erosion, acid rains and the turning of the fertile soil into arid land.

Global problems need global co-operation and solutions. The problem of global warming is a worldwide problem and calls for a determined and combined efforts by all the nations of the world. The need of the hour is to reduce the emission of green house gases. Alternative fuels should also be searched and developed besides creating more efficient automobiles. The use of renewable sources of energy should be encouraged and developed on a large scale. Wind power, solar-energy, tidal power, hydroelectricity are some of the well known renewable sources of energy. They are not only clean but also freely available and in abundance in nature. They can be exploited to our great advantage. We need to redefine and redesign our energy needs in order to reduce the global warming.

We need to have greater respect for the earth and its environment. It is high time that the people of the world realise the gravity of problem and make determined and combined efforts to reduce global warming appreciably. It is feared that global warming might drive millions of people from their hearths and homes in the new millennium specially in such low-lying Third World countries as Bangladesh. The imminent melting of ice-caps and rise in sea-levels may threaten islands unless we immediately stop the emission of green house gases in the atmosphere. In view of the possible threat to their very existence a number of island nations have formed their own association called Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Unless some serious and

meaningful efforts are made on national and international levels to check the menace of global warming, the future appears bleak and foreboding.



10. Agitation Behind Kudankulam Project

*Abstract: The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project has a cheered history. It is situated on the Gulf of Mannar coast, 25km from the Pilgrim town of Kanyakumari, 2.5km north-north east of the project site. On November 20, 1988, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev signed an **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** to construct two VVER-1000units at kudankulam. But the project was a limbo for 10 years because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The project came back to life when a supplementary agreement to the earlier IGA was signed in New Delhi on June 21, 1998 by the Russian Minister for Atomic Energy, Yevgeny Adamov, and the AEC chairman, R.Chidambaram. Russia was to provide the design and supply all equipment and subsystems for the two reactors. NPCIL was to build them. The fuel for the reactors is enriched Uranium and Light water functions as both moderator and coolant. India received a “binding commitment” from the Russian Federation that it will supply enriched fuel for lifetime of the reactors. The Estimated project cost was 13,171 Cr.*

Kudankulam nuclear plant has faced protests by the local people right from the day the project was signed in 1988. These protests have later intensified and the fear of the people has grown manifold following the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan. The fears of the locals are very much justified as they try to draw similarity between Fukushima and Kudankulam power plants. Both Fukushima and Kudankulam plants are located very close to the sea. Both are seismic areas as this is the same place that faced the wrath of the killer tsunami in 2004. They also fear that discharge of hot water into the sea might destroy the rich fishing grounds which in turn affects their livelihood. These things are more than enough for locals who are mainly fishermen to express their opposition to the plant. It has prompted fears in the mind of the people that another earthquake in this region might cause damage to the nuclear plant which would eventually expose them to radiation.

Consequence of coolant circulation failure in the background of a catastrophic natural event by doing this, the challenge to Kudankulam can be converted into an opportunity to set a new course on nuclear safety in India. A second reason underlying the public's sharpened

opposition is the fact that the first two units of the Kudankulam project have never been put through the *Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)* process under which a comprehensive EIA report is prepared, made available to the local people in advance, and a public hearing is held, at which those affected can record their opposition. The EIA procedure is far from sound, and has been considerably weakened. All these needs to be corrected and measures need to be taken to put first 2 units through EIA process. Also the EIA report should be available to the public in advance and public hearings that record their opposition should be held. Their concerns must be duly addressed.

Along with this PM Man Mohan Singh has also directed the department of atomic energy to maintain close contact with the local people, the local authorities and the state government. In the backdrop of protests in Kudankulam and Jaitapur, scientists have also revisited designs of future nuclear reactors to ensure they conform to tests of robustness against earthquakes, flooding and extended station blackout. Along with this, PM has also asked AERB to review the safety measures and has held meetings with the departments concerned and authorities to discuss the issue. Four committees have been formed to go into additional security measures after the Fukushima tragedy. In the backdrop of protests scientists have also revisited designs of future nuclear reactors to ensure they conform to tests of robustness against earthquakes, flooding and extended station blackout. Measures need to be taken based on the outcome of these tests and the measures taken must be publicly announced so as to win the confidence of the localities. Since the activists are not aware of all the precautions and arrangements that are already in place, they protest. The state government through its awareness program, camps and workshops should convince people about the safety measures in place in the power plant as they also derive benefits from the power plant. They should also educate people regarding the geographical conditions of the place and the level of seismic activity in these areas where the nuclear power plants are located. Kudankulam is located in seismic category zone 2 which has a low probability of earthquakes according to seismic classification of India. This should be compared with safety measures taken in nuclear plants located in higher seismic zones such as in Japan. The fears of the people that letting condenser water into the sea affects fish and marine life must also be addressed. Awareness meetings held in the villages should focus

on these and it is the responsibility of the leaders of the groups protesting against the plant to convince other members. The benefits of the nuclear energy for the state and for themselves must also be explained. All these would help the protest die down and ensure local co-operation in building the plant. This in turn helps India achieve its intended target of harnessing nuclear energy by 2020.

After 9 years of cutting-edge civil and engineering work with no protests from nearby villages the first unit was ready for commissioning. Dummy fuel was loaded into the reactor and a hot run completed. The hot run entailed operating the entire reactor systems at the temperature at which the reactor would operate. After the hot run, the reactor was “cooled down”. After this, plans were afoot to remove the dummy fuel, load the reactor with real fuel assemblies and start the unit in December, 2007.

Incipient signs of protests were evident in August when the first unit was undergoing hot run. With the Fukushima accident fresh in their minds, residents of coastal villages, mostly fisherman, were perhaps nervous about the increased activity that the hot run entailed. What could have unnerved them, said KKNPP officials, were the blasts of steam released when the relief valves were being tested during the hot run. Besides, *Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL)* announced an evacuation drill of nearby villages in case of an emergency. In the meantime, the People’s Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) began an indefinite fast with 117 people at Idinthakarai. The core demand of the agitation was the closure of the Kudankulam project. S.P.Udayakuumar ,its coordinator and M.Pushparayan, a steering committee member, both of whom took part in the fast, said separately, “we have only one demand”, that is scrap the project.

Although Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in Japan in March,2011 was in the back of the minds of the protestors what fueled the agitation was the apprehension about a scheduled mock exercise of evacuation in case of an emergency. Many feared that this was a cloak for a permanent eviction of thousands of people living in a 30kms radius of the project. Fisher man, who formed the majority of the protestors, feared that the condensed water, which would be let into the sea once the first reactor attained criticality, would affect the fish yield and harm marine life. What worried them further was the security ring over a distance of 500mts from the beach preventing them from fishing there.

S.K.Jain, Chairman and Managing Director, NPCIL said he was confident that “despite the heightened apprehensions” of the villagers around Kudankulam after the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, “they will see reason and we will be in a position to convince them and allay their fears” about the Kudankulam VVER-1000 reactors. He said they were among “the best reactors in the world” and belonged to the latest generation 3+ of Light water reactors.

The reactors are in operation in Russia, Finland, Hungary and Ukraine. They are now under construction in China and Iran. Besides the indigenous reactors operating in India “has an impeccable record of safety which would be there for all to see.” Jain said there had been no agitation at all those fishing in the sea around nuclear power stations on any Indian coast, including kalpakkam and Tarapur. He asserted that the Russian VVER-1000 reactors, built by NPCIL in Kudankulam, were among the best in the world.

Each unit has a capacity of 1000MWe. Tamil Nadu’s share from this 2,000MWe would be 925MWe, Karnataka’s 442MWe, Kerala’s 266MWe and Puducherry’s 67MWe, 300MWe is unallocated .NPCIL will charge only Rs 2.50 a unit from the state utilities.

The VVEER-1000 reactors had many active and passive systems to cool the reactor core that is to prevent the fuel from melting and ensure that no radioactivity is released into the atmosphere. The reactor plant is placed inside the primary containment whose wall is 1.20 meters thick and made of reinforced, pre-stressed concrete. It is lined with leak-proof steel plates on the inside. The primary containment with a dome is encased in the secondary containment of thickness 0.60m of reinforced concrete.

Besides, the Kudankulam site is in seismic category zone II and an expected effect of the rising water level I the Gulf of Mannar due to any tsunami activity, the ground elevation of all buildings at the plant starts at 7.5m above *mean sea level (MSL)*, which is much above the expected tsunami levels. Each reactor building at Kudankulam has 154 hydrogen recombiners, which will absorb any hydrogen that would emanate in the reactor building from any possible electrolysis of water and prevent a hydrogen explosion from taking place.

The double-containment’s leakage rate was much better than what was specified. The Kudankulam reactors are safe and they go beyond what happened in Fukushima. The radiation will be confined within

the containment because it has many features for cooling and absorbing the hydrogen. Recently, the government had appointed a team of specialists from all departments to check everything and to spread awareness among people and leave no stone unturned to allay the people's fears about the project's safety. The massive shortage of power in India can be exterminated by starting this project.



Health and Hygiene

1. Baba Ramdev – The Emerging Face of Mystic India

Abstract: India has always been called the “Land of Snake Charmers”. It has been associated with the mystic and the mysterious. On one hand, India is known for its latest technology in medicine (stem cell research) and on the other, it is also known for the oldest form of medicine, the Ayurveda. Along with ayurveda, India is also known for Yoga and the most famous name associated with yoga is that of Baba Ram Dev. He has popularized yoga and has brought it till the drawing rooms of the common man. This essay takes a quick look at Baba Ram Dev, his philosophy, his objectives and his outlook on life.

Hailed as the face of the current yoga movement, Baba Ram Dev has devoted his life to its spread. He is the one who has dispelled the myths associated with yoga and has made it accessible for the common man. With free camps all over the world, Baba Ram Dev has insured that people not only understand the meaning of yoga but also include it in their daily lives.

Born as Ramkishan Yadav in 1965, in the Mahendragarh district of Haryana to Gulab Devi and Ram Niwas, Baba Ram Dev studied till the eight standard at Shahjadpur. At the age of 14, he joined a gurukul or a yogic monastery (School) in Khanpur village to study Sanskrit and Yoga. There, he earned a post graduate degree in Sanskrit Grammar, Yoga, Vedas and Upanishads. Once his studies were complete, he renounced worldly pleasures and took to *Sanyas* or monastic living. At the same time, he also changed his name from Ramkishan Yadav to Baba Ram Dev.

As a *sanyasi* or a monk, Baba Ram Dev first started offering free yoga classes to the villagers of the Jind district. At this time, he was associated with the Kalva gurukul. After teaching there for some time, he went to the Himalayas. He spent several years there and found many medicinal herbs and plants. From there he came and settled in Haridwar.

While in Haridwar, Baba Ram Dev was initiated into the ascetic order by Swami Shankerdevji Maharaj. After his initiation, he joined the order of swamis and delved into a deep study of the ancient Indian scriptures, like the Zgvedâdibhâcyabhûmikâ, Upanishads and the likes.

He was influenced by the writings of Maharishi Dayanand. He studied all his books, especially the *Satyartha Prakashaa*. At the same time, he also practiced intense self-discipline and meditation and mastered yoga.

In 1995, Baba Ram Dev, along with Acharya Karamveer and Acharya Balkrishna, founded the Divya Yoga Mandir Trust. This trust was devoted to the promotion of yoga not only in India, but all over the world. Baba Ram Dev started teaching yoga under the name of the trust and soon gained popularity all over the world. During the same time, he also established the Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar.

Baba Ram Dev believes that “because we have been created by God, He resides in our body. At the same time, he also says that all of us have a private temple of God in the form of our bodies and that it is our duty to keep our bodies disease free and thus thank God for giving us this body. We can do this with the help of yoga”. He also teaches that ‘the whole world is one family and that we should not discriminate on the basis of caste, creed or gender’. He also insists that we need to express feelings of love, compassion and affection towards our fellow beings including plants, animals, birds and other living beings. Only by doing these things we can truly worship our creator.

Baba Ram Dev is very clear on his ideologies. He has created a five point agenda for himself and has been working consistently towards that. His five point agenda is:

1. To motivate everybody to vote so that India has hundred per cent voting in elections
2. To promote patriotism and nationalistic thinking
3. To promote “swadeshi” and boycott “videshi”
4. To organize patriots all over the world
5. To make a healthy, disease-free, culturally oriented India in which everybody practices Yoga.

He proposes to complete his five point agenda with the help of Yoga. He has devoted his entire life to this five point agenda. He proposes to popularize yoga and make it the chief choice of the common man for treating themselves. He has achieved this to some extent and is also achieving it further. He does this by organizing free yoga camps all across India and even outside India. His yoga camps are attended by millions of people, who have learned yoga and have made it a part and parcel of their daily lives.

He talks about his agenda in all his camps and tells the public and the youth about his thinking. He plans to promote *swadeshi* or national products with the intention of getting back the hundred crores of Indian money that has gone out of India because of use of *videshi* or international products. He not only wants to get the money back but also wants to use it for the country's development.

He also wants India to be a totally corruption-free nation. For this, he wants to enter into the politics and promote a corruption-free way of operating and governance.

As a way to promote yoga, Baba Ram Dev has made the following vows to himself and the public at large.

1. God has chosen me for self redemption and for welfare of the world.
2. Life has got before it a very sublime goal of service to the nation and service of mankind.
3. I will never assess myself disparagingly.
4. I will maintain a perennial flow of noble sentiments in my life.
5. I will live as a cautious and vigilant representative of my Guru, God and nation.

He has also given the seven norms of good conduct. These include the following —vegetarianism, addiction-free living, living a healthy life, living a competent life, living a dedicated life, living a non-political life and committing to devote at least two hours every day to yoga and the promotion of national interest.

Along with the seven norms of good conduct, he has also laid down the seven norms of nationalism. These include nationalism, transparency, entrepreneurship, foresight, humanitarianism, spiritualism and humility.

He wants all Indians to follow these norms for a healthy and a productive life. He says that “if people are able to implement these norms in their lives, they will achieve instant success. He also holds that we should surrender ourselves into the hands of God. At the same time, we should also observe complete control on our body, senses and mind. If we are able to do this, then whatever happens in our lives would be for the good. This path will make us spontaneous, help in attaining success and laurels as well as accomplishing “Moksha” in our lives”.

It is believed in science also that the Yogic way of life can elevate the health of mind and body as well as the heart and soul. Baba Ram Dev, with the help of yoga, is known to have cured a number of diseases and medical conditions like diabetes, obesity, psychiatric illnesses, muscles problems and the likes. He uses yoga to coordinate all organs of the body. This perfect harmony can lead to self-development. He also propagates the use of ayurveda to cure all types of diseases. He says that as ayurveda is natural and does not have any side effects, it is one of the best ways to cure our illnesses.

Following the popularity of ayurveda, Baba Ram Dev has also launched his own natural ayurvedic medicines. These are available easily all over India and are priced very nominally so that even the common man can access these.

In spite of the phenomenal success that Baba Ram Dev has achieved, he is totally accessible. Millions of people can access him or meet him at his base in Haridwar or at the numerous camps that he organizes all over the world. He has also taken out CDs, DVDs and books for people who have not been able to make it to his camps or to his Yogpeeth. With his approach to yoga and ayurveda, Baba Ram Dev has become the face which was synonymous with yoga and ayurveda.



2. Obesity – A Growing Menace

Abstract: Over the last few decades, India has been a witness of changing lifestyles and more importantly changing eating habits. Although, the awareness about healthy living and holistic lifestyle has increased however, what cannot be denied is a simultaneously increasing popularity of fast food and processed food. The result has been obviously lack of nutrition and a lean towards obesity. Obesity, this is a growing health issue which has not only inflicted India, but has achieved global proportions now. Let's take a look at the extent and causes of the problem.

Obesity is an excess proportion of total body fat. A person is considered obese when his or her weight is 20% or more above the expected normal weight. Obesity is commonly measured as the BMI-body mass index of the body. It is a common medical condition in North America, Australia and Europe. On the other hand, Indians are

genetically susceptible to weight accumulation especially around the waist and 5 per cent of the population suffers obesity in India.

The ranks of Indian states with respect to obesity are:

Punjab: 30.3% Males, 37.5% Females.

Kerala: 24.3% Males, 34% Females

Goa: 20.8% Males, 27% Females

In 1997, an article in the Indian Express dated July 19th, stated that the incidence of obesity in India is 7-9 %. Although this number is small as compared to America and other countries, it is significant due to the sheer size of the population in India. With such large numbers, India has been requested to join the International Congress on Obesity (ICO) for further study on the risk and management of the overweight in a developing economy. With this, India would be one of the first nations from the developing countries in Asia to be put on the obesity map.

As far as the eating habits of the urban population of India is concerned, refined wheat and rice have virtually displaced coarse grains and millets as the staple cereal, substantially reducing the fibre content and micronutrients such as vitamin B-complex, zinc, chromium etc. from the diet. As the socio-economic scale of the population rises, cereal intake is replaced by the intake of sugar and fats. Convenience and fast foods find increasing acceptance, especially in context to globalization.

While a third of India's population still falls below the poverty line, the relatively affluent urban middle class has grown steadily, over 200 million.

A study of the prevalence of obesity in urban Delhi by The Nutrition Foundation of India shows that nearly every third male and more than half of the females from the 'upper middle class' in India are currently overweight (BMI>25). The prevalence of abdominal obesity in this group is even higher. If this population were around 100 million (half the number of middle class), it may be computed that there are roughly 40 to 50 million overweight subjects. This clearly paves the way for a situation that can get worse within a decade, and being obese would emerge as the single most important public health problem in adults. Obesity may not be a disease in itself but it is certainly the mother of important degenerative diseases in adult life. Prevention and control of this problem must; therefore; claim priority attention.

The easy availability of high calorie junk foods loaded with salt, sugars or fat, combined with our increasingly sedentary lifestyles, increasing urbanization and changing modes of transportation, has caused obesity to outgrow various other problems around the world.

According to The World Health Organization (WHO), globally in 2005, approximately 1.6 billion adults (age 15+) were overweight; at least 400 million adults were obese; and at least 20 million children under the age of 5 years were overweight.

The WHO also projected that by 2015, approximately 2.3 billion adults will be overweight and more than 700 million will be obese.

Childhood obesity is also an increasing concern for the WHO. The problem of childhood obesity is global and is steadily affecting many low and middle income countries, particularly in urban settings. Globally, in 2010, the number of overweight children under the age of five, is estimated to be over 42 million. Close to 35 million of these are living in developing countries. Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and are more likely to develop noncommunicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age.

Surprisingly, obesity also effects the poor as well, as the *Pan American Health Organization* (PAHO) highlights. “Restrictions in access to food determine two simultaneous phenomena that are the two sides of the same coin: poor people are malnourished because they do not have enough to feed themselves, and they are obese because they eat poorly, with an important energy imbalance ... The food they can afford is often cheap, industrialized, mass produced and inexpensive.”

That renders us with a “double burden” of disease. Simultaneous problems of infectious disease and mal-nutrition, are experienced with a rapid upsurge in chronic disease risk factors such as obesity and overweight, particularly in urban settings. It is not uncommon to find under-nutrition and obesity existing side-by-side within the same country, the same community and even within the same household. This double burden is caused by inadequate pre-natal, infant and young child nutrition followed by exposure to high-fat, energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and lack of physical activities.

With obesity comes increasing risks of lifestyle diseases like cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke) — already the world’s number one cause of death, killing 17 million people each year, diabetes (type 2) — which has rapidly become a global epidemic,

musculoskeletal disorders — especially osteoarthritis and some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon).

In addition, childhood obesity is associated with a higher chance of premature death and disability in adulthood.

So, who is the real culprit? Ranging from genetic factors to depression, the menace of obesity may be caused due to reasons. Genetic inheritance probably influences a person's chance of becoming fat the most. Genes enhance the storage of fat when food is limited and cause an increased risk of obesity when food is abundant and energy expenditure is reduced.

Munching between meals is a potential cause for obesity. Some people consume food faster, without enough time to chew, therefore tend to consume more food, also giving rise to indigestion. Responding to external cues to eat rather than internal hunger signals is also an invitation to obesity. People eat when it is mealtime or when they are surrounded by tasty foods instead of when they are hungry. They tend to overeat when they are depressed or in order to avoid wastage of food.

Sedentary lifestyle is one more important cause of obesity. Though obesity can occur at any age, this is more common during middle age when physical activity decreases and food consumption remains the same. Obesity is a symptom of hyperthyroidism, hypogonadism, and Cushing's syndrome. Obesity may follow due to damage of hypothalamus after head injury as it is not able to regulate appetite or satiety.

Of course, obesity is not an easy challenge to overcome, as today's commercial markets include a wide variety of tempting foods that are unhealthy, but appealing to the taste buds and eyes to a majority of population. However, with the consequences in view, it becomes imperative for us to accept responsibility and act wisely at the individual as well as the mass level. Introducing changes in eating habits and trying to lead a more active lifestyle will definitely help beat obesity slowly and gradually. Regulated and balanced diet is the key to a healthy body. Nipping obesity in the bud is also an important way to ensure that child obesity is controlled sooner than later. Introducing beneficial changes gradually, in our and our children's life can go a long way in building a healthy future not only for ourselves but for the coming generations too.

3. Steroids Define our Culpability— not Capability

Abstract: Steroids - the latest buzzword all over the world has been associated with a lot of myths and misconceptions. These were developed keeping in mind the medicinal benefits that these offer. But as time passed, anabolic steroids were developed and misuse of steroids started. Misuse of steroids can be seen in various spheres of life, the main being in sports. Long term use of steroids has many serious effects. In spite of knowing these, the widespread misuse of steroids is still prevalent. In this essay, we will try to see the brief history of steroids and how their misuse has affected us.

Steroids are organic compounds containing a specific arrangement of four cycloalkane rings joined to each other. Examples of steroids include the dietary fat cholesterol, the sex hormones estradiol and testosterone and the anti-inflammatory drug dexamethasone. Some more examples are Betamethasone, Cortisone, Dexamethasone, Hydrocortisone, Methylprednisolone, Prednisolone, Prednisone and Budesonide among hundred others.

Seeing these examples, we can say that corticosteroid drugs also known as glucocorticoids called “steroids” for short, are potent chemical substances which reduce swelling and inflammation quickly. These drugs are closely related to cortisol, a hormone produced on the cortex of the adrenal glands.

Corticosteroids are advised as a low-dose or short-term treatment when possible, to reduce side effects. These steroids are not the same as “anabolic steroids” which are actually performance enhancing drugs that are used and abused in sports.

Steroids are prescribed in widely varying doses based on the indication and goal of treatment. These are used to control inflammation in diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, polymyalgia rheumatica, lupus and vasculitis among others.

At high doses or with long-term use of steroids, chances for serious side effects and adverse reactions increase. Doctors hence, prescribe short-term, high-dose intravenous steroids in some situations, or give shots or injections with other drugs locally into a specific joint for relief.

The positive and negative effects of steroids have been studied for long. They have been known to enhance body and muscle size dramatically and quickly when used as workout supplements. On the

other hand, they have also been known to give rise to significant psychiatric symptoms, such as aggressiveness and violence.

Intake of steroids also, leads to an increased appetite, increased bone growth and the formation of muscles cells, which increases strength. Due to these positive effects, steroids are coveted and utilized by body builders and athletes across the world, in spite of much controversy over their use. Other effects of steroids that can be seen as positive include short term muscle weight gain, reduction of fat mass and increase in strength from as much as 5-20%. Lean muscles mass is the area most positively affected, especially when steroids are taken along with doing workouts.

In addition to these, the negative effects noticed in humans because of taking anabolic steroids are enhanced sexual desire, but a suppression of sexual hormones and a reduction in sperm production. These drugs also cause infertility in men, an enlarged clitoris in women and adverse fetal development in pregnant women. In both the genders, steroids can cause stunted growth. In large doses, steroids increase cholesterol, risk of cardiovascular disease and artery disease and the presence of acne.

Corticosteroids can result in serious side effects including:

- increased appetite and weight gain
- deposits of fat in chest, face, upper back and stomach
- water and salt retention leading to swelling and edema
- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- osteoporosis
- cataract
- acne
- muscle weakness
- thinning of the skin
- stomach ulcers
- mood swings
- psychological problems such as depression

Drugs commonly known as steroids can be classified as anabolic steroids and corticosteroids. Corticosteroids, such as cortisone,

dexamethasone etc. are drugs prescribed by doctors to control inflammation in the body. These are different from the anabolic steroids that are often linked with banned use in sports.

Anabolic steroids are synthetic versions of testosterone - the male hormone. These are legally available only by prescription to treat a variety of indications that cause a loss of lean muscle mass.

Non-medical use of anabolic steroids is banned by most of the major sports organizations. The Anabolic Steroid Control Act, in January 2005, was amended with the Controlled Substance Act that categorized anabolic steroids and pro-hormones (a precursor to a hormone) under controlled substances. Still, some athletes continue to use them illegally despite evidence showing serious health problems. A prevalent abuse can be seen in bodybuilders, who are most likely to participate in steroid abuse. Steroid abuse in other sports is there, but the prevalence varies greatly based on the sport and the individual.

Steroid abuse may also happen when people start taking steroids for reasons other than prescribed medications. These may include improving appearance or enhancing performance by athletes and bodybuilders.

Studies even suggest that steroid abuse is high among adolescents, starting very young. Adolescents often use them to help them to boost their performance in sports activities. Furthermore, steroid abuse is more prevalent in adolescents who indulge in drinking and driving and using other drugs. It has also been found, that steroid abuse is more prevalent among males than females.

Steroids are ingested in the body either as tablets or injections. Steroid abusers generally consume 10 to 100 times higher doses than what is medically prescribed for legitimate use. There are several patterns that can be used. Some of these patterns are cycling, stacking and pyramiding. The most common dosing "cycling" is done in periods of weeks or months, with a short break in between. "Stacking" means the use of several different steroids at the same time. "Pyramiding," refers to gradually increasing the number, the amount or the frequency of steroids to reach a zenith and then gradually decreasing the amount and frequency of the drug.

Effects of anabolic steroid abuse in men include infertility, breast development, shrinking of the testicles, male-pattern baldness, severe acne and formation of cysts. Effects of anabolic steroid abuse in women

are deeper voice, enlargement of the clitoris, excessive growth of body hair, male-pattern baldness, severe acne and formation of cysts.

Withdrawal symptoms are generally experienced by athletes who use steroids and then they quit. The common symptoms consist depression, mood swings, loss of appetite, fatigue and irritability, insomnia and aggression. Untreated depression can even lead to suicide attempts.

The use of performance enhancing drugs is very old. The earliest known use of these drugs was as early as the original Olympic Games and efforts to increase testosterone were documented as early as around 776 BC. Present day athletes consume performance enhancing drugs (often called "PEDs") and Anabolic Androgenic Steroids (AAS).

World Weightlifting Championships of 1954 witnessed the first incidence of confirmed steroid abuse in sports when the Soviet athletes were given testosterone injections. The Soviet team was not penalized for these actions, as there were no rules in place to address this new problem.

In the late 1960's the East Germans began a statewide doping program. For the next 20 years they dominated virtually all sporting events following which the World Health Organization filed an official complaint against AAS. This led to the International Olympic Council's complete ban of such drugs during international competition. Unfortunately this action did not deter athletes then and appears to have little impact today.

The most common reason for steroid abuse in sports is the desire to win. Steroids are now widely used towards college scholarships and achieving professional ranks. Steroid abuse might be even worse at such levels than in professional sports. These drugs are also preferred when faced with the pressures felt at student levels.

Perhaps a disheartening fact is that AAS abuse crosses so many barriers including age, race, gender and class that it is very difficult to control it. The only effective way to control the use of steroids in the younger generation is through awareness programmes highlighted the effects of long term use of steroids.

It would, obviously, be a clear conclusion that these so called wonder drugs are certainly not an achievement to be proud of, considering the widespread misuse across the world. Enhanced performances and great looks might be a result of this abuse, but in any case the disadvantages

cannot be denied. Moreover, coming out with flying colors as a result of steroid abuse definitely does not show our capability; rather it shows our culpability.



4. Community Health

Abstract: Is health an individual affair? May be and maybe not. Health is not entirely individual; it is relative to the individual's context, which in turn is fashioned out of the interactions that exist between members of any defined collective group whose health is defined by the health and context of its members. Certain conditions like genetic disorders, cardiovascular conditions and allergic reactions seem to have contextual antecedents. And these contextual factors or facilitators tend to accumulate from; probably; before conception, birth, throughout adult life. This essay ponders the existence of a relation between individual health and community health and more importantly, whether the individual health depends on community health.

“Population health” is a relatively new and a rather fashionable term in the medical field. This term calls upon images of non-individual health, at least in its literal meaning. Unsurprisingly, there is also “individual health” which is often seen as the complement of population health. Are population health and individual health merely opposites? Do both individual and population health stand for core descriptions of health with regard to the individuals and societies? As both these health forms are different and require different fields of expertise, they are rarely studied together. The different specialization needed to tackle both these forms is also a factor that has led to both these terms being discussed individually. Arguably, the origin of public health ethics as differentiated from clinical ethics also rests on this dichotomization of medicine. Is it possible to study the relationship between individual and population health entirely in terms of the individual or the collective? And if at all, could the same concept of health be easily mapped onto the population level as at the individual level?

This article stresses on the fact that neither individual nor population health is identifiable or even definable without taking into consideration the other. For example, an individual's health cannot be seen only as an individual's health. This is because an individual's socio-economic circumstances and other health determinants like where they

were conceived, born, bred and how they shaped and were shaped by their environment and communities should also be taken into consideration. The “what” and “how much” of individual and population health cannot be explained until we understand the cumulative trajectories of both. Indeed, the complementary relationship between individual and population health brings out the important social causal inferences.

The relationship between individual and population health is to some extent built on the broad division of medicine into public health and clinical medicine. Potential loopholes of current opinions include seeing both these types as absolute and independent concepts. The fact is that the relationship between individual and population health is largely relative and dynamic. Their interrelated dynamism derives from a causally defined life course perspective on health determination starting from an individual’s conception through growth, development and participation in the collective till death, all seen within the context of an adaptive society.

Human biology is subject to numerous factors like micro-organisms, radiation, accidents and so on. Individuals are born; they develop from childhood, adolescence through adulthood, learning the language and inheriting ways of life of their parents, imbibing their tastes, experiences and interacting with other people. They are continuously molded by their context. Epidemiology studies long-term effects on later health or disease risk of physical or social exposures during gestation, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and later adult life. It aims to elucidate biological, behavioral and psychosocial processes that operate across an individual’s life course, or across generations, to influence the development of disease risk.

An individual’s health, propensity to fall ill and the chances to die young – all depend on the individual’s family’s social class, education, wealth, behavioral pattern and other childhood factors. Even cognitive and psychosocial developments are important determinants in individual health. If lifetime circumstances so evidently manipulate health and well-being and also consequent social and other life situations in such increasing ways, how can the health of people be seen as individual or concentrated organ functioning given normal environment or circumstances?

One might ask if the link between individual and population health could then be perceived to signify that unhealthy individuals are unlikely

to be found in healthy populations and vice versa. Presence of incongruity between individual and population health may be best understood by considering a possible categorization of this health relationship into four categories:

Immune: Under this health relationship, individual health remains good irrespective of the population health or context.

Causative: Under this health relationship, individual health is boosted in favorable population health or context.

Preventive: Under this health relationship, individual health is compromised when population health or context is unfavorable.

Doomed: Under this health relationship, individual health is compromised irrespective of the population health or context.

Immune and doomed categories would be rare under our considerations and in real life. They would include genetic diseases (doomed) which move on independent of what is done or experienced in the collective or medicine. The other two types would be far more realistic and common.

This shows that neither individuals nor groups can be understood in only cross-sectional, one-time views. Throughout their lifetimes, individuals age across generations of evolving, defining and being defined through cumulative and adaptive experiences, happenings and past. In all these cases, individuals still retain their individual, distinctive characteristics that evolve over time.

Another description of good health is in terms of well-being. According to Wilkinson, well-being is a concept meant to “recognize the social, cultural and psychological needs of people, their family, institutions and communities”. From this definition, the complexity of the concept is clearly seen. It indicates a necessity to consider the different aspects of a community, such as quality of life, as well as economic and social structures.

The concept of community well-being is one of the guidelines for community assessment (along with other concepts, i.e. local community quality-of-life studies, community capacity or community health). As Kusel and Fortmann present it in their works on the forest communities in Canada, the concept revolves around understanding the contribution of the economic, social, cultural and political components of a community in maintaining itself and fulfilling the various requirements of local residents.

The studies of collective well-being use several approaches. Some studies focus on certain factors influencing well-being, like poverty or economic development. This is supported by the study of Cook in 1995. Other studies focus on general well-being and try to look for factors forming well-being in the communities. This opinion is stated by Kusel and Fortmann. These studies build on a mix of social indicators, data collection and historical information in the communities, regarding how people themselves construe different aspects of their lives.

In spite of the differentiation of the approaches, what is common for all of them is the use of social indicators as one of the main criteria of well-being assessment. The selection of indicators reflecting individual/community well-being, is according to the purpose of the assessment. For example, locally generated lists may be different from public service generated lists. However, there are some widely accepted sets of indicators that dwell on aspects of individual/community well-being that are easy to generalize, quantify and compare. These sets normally comprise of such indicators as poverty, education, unemployment, personal physical and mental health among others. They also may include suicide, crime, divorce and other kinds of social dislocation.

To conclude, it can be said that as both the individual and collective aspects of health are inseparable, individual health does depend on community health and vice versa. These two sides of the coin will always be found together. They would coexist and co-influence. This concern is the type needed throughout life to build a context worthy of individuality, freedom and collective well-being and health.



5. Coffee, Caffeine and Health

Abstract: Are you one of those who just can't seem to get up from the bed without your cup of coffee? Do you get the energy to face the day only after feeling the piping hot liquid gold course through your veins? But, at the same time, you wonder what exactly are you pouring down your throat. Is this cup affecting your health adversely? Or is it actually your friend? Then you're probably at the right place. Here's some valuable information on what that cuppa brings to you every morning or in fact what it does not.

A cup of piping hot coffee, just the way you like it, right in the morning, even before you open your eyes! What more could you ask for? If this is how you feel about your first cup of coffee everyday, then it is important for you to know about coffee itself and also understand the affects or more correctly effects of this extremely powerful beverage on your system. Let's take a quick look at this magic potion.

Coffee plantation is believed to have started near the Red Sea in the 7th century and spread throughout the Yemen region of Arabia by the 16th century. Europeans were the ones who got exposed to coffee and quickly acquired a taste for it. A few years later, the Dutch introduced coffee in Java.

Today, coffee is found in most regions around the world and slowly, each region has added their own flavor to it giving rise to numerous types of coffees all over the world. The credit of inventing instant coffee goes to Mr. G. Washington, an Englishman living in Guatemala, who came up with idea in 1906. The French introduced the first Espresso machine in 1822, but it was the Italians who perfected and distributed it around the world.

Ever wondered what actually is coffee? Here is the answer. Coffee is the seed of a cherry produced by a tree belonging to genus *Coffea*. The seeds of this cherry are what we see as coffee. One *Coffea* tree can yield about 1kg (2lb) of coffee per year.

As coffee trees were planted in different geographical locations, various species of the same product developed. There are more than 25 species of coffee, the 3 main commercial types (varietals) being Robusta, Liberia and Arabica. Arabica represents 70 per cent of the total production of coffee all over the world.

There are a number of terms associated with coffee. We might know the context in which they are used, but do we actually know what these mean?

Cappuccino: The word "cappuccino" comes from the 16th century Capuchin order of friars, whose hoods were called cappuccinos. A cappuccino is a coffee topped with steamed milk.

Barista: A barista is an expert in the preparation of espresso-based coffee drinks. Top Baristas compete annually in the World Barista Championship.

Demitasse: A demitasse is the small cup in which an espresso (sometimes referred to as expresso) is served.

Mocha: Mocha is a superior dark coffee made from beans produced in Arabia.

Decaffeinated Coffee: Decaffeinated coffee is that that does not have caffeine in it. Caffeine is removed from the coffee by treating the green beans with chlorinated hydrocarbon solvents.

Instant Coffee: Instant coffee is prepared by mixing ground and roasted coffee with hot water. The water is then evaporated by spray dryers and high pressure, leaving only the coffee powder. In some coffee products, coffee is replaced with chicory (a wildflower herb), fig, date, malt, or barley, remotely resembling real coffee.

The main ingredient in coffee that gives us that jolt is caffeine. Caffeine is medically known as trimethylxanthine. It is a central nervous system stimulant. Caffeine is found naturally in coffee beans, tea leaves and chocolate. It is also a popular added ingredient in carbonated beverages and some over-the-counter medications such as cold remedies, diuretics, aspirin and weight control aids.

Caffeine releases adrenaline, the “fight or flight” hormone, from the adrenal glands by stimulating the central nervous system. This is done by blocking adenosine, a neurotransmitter responsible for calming the body. This results in an increase in heart rate, dilating of pupils, tightening of muscles and release of glucose into the blood stream for extra energy. Caffeine also increases dopamine - a chemical which heightens the feeling of pleasure in the brain. It is believed that the release of dopamine is the main reason that leads to caffeine addiction.

Different types of coffee have different caffeine content in them. A cup of drip brewed coffee has the highest caffeine content with almost 115 mg of caffeine. On the other hand, instant teas and prepared iced teas, with or without caffeine, may be too highly processed to contain any caffeine. An espresso and percolated coffee has about 80mg of caffeine, while instant coffee has about 65mg. Decaffeinated coffee contains about 3 mg of caffeine. Caffeine content of tea is about 40 mg; while that of an ounce of chocolate is about 20 mg. Green tea has about half the caffeine (20 mg) as black tea (40 mg). Decaffeinated tea, like decaffeinated coffee, has about 4 mg of caffeine per cup. Also, the caffeine content of tea may vary from 20 to 90 milligrams a cup, depending on the blend of tea leaves, method of preparation and length of brewing time.

Caffeine is known to have an ergogenic effect on athletic performance. This has now been confirmed by various studies showing

that caffeine ingestion before any physical activity extends endurance. Other studies researching caffeine also show increased performance after caffeine consumption.

Performance-enhancing effects of caffeine have been well documented. In fact, seeing the dishonorable advantage that athletes could gain, the International Olympic Committee set the urinary coffee limits up to 12 mg/ml. This means that roughly 600 to 800mg of caffeine, or 4 to 7 cups of coffee, consumed over a 30-minute period would be enough to reach this level.

Good news for those on weight control diet is that coffee releases fat from fat cells and hence, has a possible benefit to them. Marathon runners have a cup of coffee prior to racing to prevent hitting the wall. The theory behind this is that glycogen, or sugars are broken down prior to the breakdown of fat. Once glycogen supplies are exhausted (after 2 hours of vigorous activity) fat comes more into play. Caffeine before a race may release fat into the blood stream quicker than the release of glycogen so that glycogen, and thus energy, does not run out suddenly.

Caffeine also forms an ingredient of some medicines as it increases the power of aspirin and other painkillers. On the other hand, withdrawing from caffeine also is one of the most common causes of headaches. Women who drink 2 or more cups of coffee a day also have an increased risk of developing osteoporosis. Drinking milk or yogurt can however, serve to replace the lost calcium. According to most of the studies high caffeine consumption may lead to impairment of fertility and may also cause premature or defected birth during pregnancy.

In spite of the positive effects of caffeine on psychological states and performances, there are numerous documented risks that must be considered when consuming caffeine, whether for enhancing performance or simply as a part of daily dietary consumption.

Caffeine leads to a dehydrating effect due to its diuretic properties. This is obviously, not recommended for fitness activities such as resistance training, as fluid is a requirement to facilitate muscular growth.

The effects of caffeine include restlessness, headaches and irritability as it also elevates heart rate and blood pressure. Over the long-term as the body gets used to particular amounts of caffeine, it may develop

resistance to caffeine and cause you to drink higher amounts to caffeine to produce the same effects.

One of the most important long-term problems is the effect of caffeine on sleep. The half-life of caffeine in the body is about 6 hours. That means 6 hours after having coffee one, half of the amount of caffeine consumed would still be found in your body. Even though you may be able to sleep after some time, you may not be able to obtain the needed benefits of deep sleep. What's worse, the cycle continues as more caffeine is consumed to counteract this deficit.

Though caffeine has some benefits in relation to exercise performance, the risks outweigh the benefits totally. Studies all over the world show that excessive consumption of coffee is the culprit for all the problems associated with coffee. Moderate intake would not affect the person to such an extent. So, if you still wish to take a cup of coffee before your day starts, please limit it to just a cup and no more.



6. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

*Abstract : AIDS is now an epidemic and pandemic disease. It has developed many new channels of transmission .A normal man does not feel safe and secure from the dreaded disease .Rise in the number of HIV patient world has turned into a global village making the problem more complex and terrible. AIDS was discovered for the first time in 1981 in Los Angles USA in some homosexuals. Later the same symptoms were found in drug-addicts and in those who had infected blood transfusion. Since it attacked and destroyed immune system in the body, the molecular biologists named it **Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV)**. What makes the early detection of the HIV difficult is that it takes an average 5 years to show up. This virus can remain dormant as long as 10 years. The disease is fatal and still incurable. The prolonged, expensive, regular and cumbersome treatment can help only prolong the life of AIDS patient by a few years. The social, implications make the matters worse and the patients often become victims of many types of mental and psychological complexes. There is still no proper awareness in the people about the disease, its prevention and care of the HIV patients.*

Nobody really now seems safe and secure from the sure and silent killer called AIDS not even the children, homemakers from traditional homes and conservative families. The fatal infection is no more confined

to high-risk groups and areas like truck-drivers, red light areas, roadside dhabas, immigrants, homosexuals, drug-addicts etc. In recent years the fateful disease and epidemic has developed many new channels and chains of wide transmission among all the sections of the society.

The HIV has developed from the virus that was found in a particular type of monkeys (chimpanzees) in Africa. This virus was identified as STLV1 but it did not cause any serious illness in the monkeys. Later this virus developed and mutated itself to enable it to infect human beings known as HIV. Both these viruses are similar in their genetic make up and destroy T-lymphocytes. It entered the human beings by monkey-bites because some African tribes used to eat the meat of these monkeys. Moreover, it might have happened when monkeys got killed for food. Initially this virus was in a milder form and not fatal. Promiscuity and almost free sex among the tribes of West Africa helped the virus to spread rapidly in Africa from where it spread to other countries and continents. With the passage of time the virus grew virulent and deadly and the disease epidemic. AIDS is the worst of the sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Other modes of the spread of the infection are drug-abuse and blood transfusion.

Millions of lives have already been lost since 1981, when the first report of AIDS came. Some young male homosexuals in Los Angeles, USA were then found suffering from the symptoms of AIDS. It was discovered that their immune systems were seriously impaired because of this newest and gravest disease and so they called it Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS. And it was logically believed that the disease was transmitted through sexual channels. Later the same symptoms were found in the drug-addicts and abusers who took the drug-doses intravenously. Then came a third group to light with the same symptoms. They happened to be the patients who had received infected blood-transfusion. Fortunately, in 1986 the American and French molecular biologists simultaneously identified the killer virus and christened it Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV). It is a retrovirus, which destroys the cells of the helper class of T-lymphocytes. The destruction of these vital cells results in severe damage of the immune system in the human body.

Unguarded sex and promiscuity is one of the major causes of the spread of AIDS. What makes the confusion most confounded is the fact that the symptoms of AIDS take an average 5-years to show up.

During this period an infected person can transmit the virus unknowingly to many others and then they still to others. And thus the fatal chain grows on endlessly and viciously.

Obviously, the virus can remain dormant for a decade in the lymph nodes of the host's body. This makes the early detection difficult and the disease most lethal. By the time the disease is detected and diagnosed and the victim tests positive, it is really too late because by then the count of helper T-cells begins to drop alarmingly from an average 1,000 cells per mill of blood to fewer than 500. Consequently, the patient's immune system is so destroyed as to expose him or her to such deadly diseases as cancer, tuberculosis, fever, malaria, diarrhea, skin disorders etc. More than one disease often occurs simultaneously and it makes the situation really very grim and alarming. This makes the treatment very specialised, expensive and prohibitive.

AIDS has so many grave social, family, ethical, cultural and human implications. The AIDS patients are often grossly discriminated against by relatives, society, friends and even the hospitals and doctors. They become victims of social ostracism and public scorn. Their isolation, neglect and ill treatment make them further weak and reduce their willpower to help themselves. Because of these many factors they are obliged to maintain secrecy about their illness. They are often consumed with guilt and are full of unbearable mental strain and frustration. People by and large, still think that AIDS infection can be transmitted by handshaking and casual contact with the infected people or mosquito bite. They lack proper awareness about HIV and do not possess accurate and complete information about the epidemic. We need to change our attitude to HIV patients. They should be treated with due consideration and compassion. Our approach to them should be positive, helpful and constructive. It is really bad to try to marginalize, isolate or ostracize HIV patients.

It is a big irony of our times that in so many cases people who are HIV infected get married and transmit the disease to their wives and children unknowingly. Women and children are the worst victims of AIDS and HIV without any fault of their own. It is estimated that some 8 lakh children were living with the dreaded HIV virus in 1998 and over 1000 children die daily due to it; and even more become infected every day. So far over 3 million children have died of AIDS and HIV since the detection of the disease in the early 1980s. In 1996 alone 4

lakh children became the victims of HIV. In 1997 over a million children were estimated to be infected by the deadly epidemic and over 90 per cent of these infected children were in the developing countries. They were born to HIV infected parents. According to the statistics of WHO 10 lakh children have been born to HIV positive parents since the AIDS struck the humanity. And a few hundred thousands have acquired the disease through blood-transfusion or sex. It is said that if AIDS is not checked effectively the infant mortality, because of AIDS, may rise to 75 per cent by 2010. And of the 1.5 million people who died of this fatal virus in 1996, 3.5 lakh were children. In India alone there are 4-5 lakh child prostitutes and they form a high risk group. The rate of infection among child sex-workers and street children is generally very high.

Sex education is a must to prevent HIV infection among children. The fear that giving education on sexual health to children will result in early sex and pregnancy is unfounded. Sex education does not encourage increased and early sexual activities. Researches have shown that quality sex education and programme help delay first intercourse and protect sexually matured and active young people from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Quality sex education includes, among other things, clear knowledge of the risks of unprotected sex, promiscuity and homosexuality. Experts are of the opinion that education and empowerment combined with the promotion of children's rights are the key to HIV/AIDS prevention and eradication.

Because of lack of proper awareness about AIDS there has been a sharp increase in the HIV cases in India. The situation in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur and Karnataka is alarming. The percentage of HIV positive cases in Maharashtra in 2012 were 3.5 lakhs.

The National Aids Control Organisation (NACO) has asserted that there is a wide gap between reported and estimated figures of HIV infections and full blown AIDS cases. India with 2.39 HIV cases, becomes the largest country to suffer from the epidemic. It is the need of the hour that people are properly educated and made aware about the problem so that they do not become the high risk group from AIDS/HIV point of view. It is high time that more and more people, social groups, NGOs and other agencies are involved in the movement for effective control of this deadly infectious disease. Lack of proper infrastructure facilities in hospitals and dispensaries for the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients is another area of major concern. Consequently,

not only the HIV/AIDS patients suffer but the doctors, nurses etc. also fall prey to the disease while undertaking cauterization, intercostals drainage (ICD), dressing of open wounds of AIDS patients and resuscitation of new-born babies.

AIDS is silent and painful killer. The suffering, deprivation, trauma, isolation and untold misery of an AIDS' patient can be well imagined. He dies a slow, lingering and painful death rejected and scorned by the society, relative, friends and even medical part-owners. We need to be more sensitive and responsive to this global problem at various levels of a city, state, country and the world. It is a global and colossal of problem and should be treated as such.

Different world governments, world-bodies like UN etc. should rise to the challenge and make combined and determined efforts to prevent the countries from becoming national hells of the dreaded epidemic called AIDS.



7. Rabies

Abstract : Rabies occurs in all continents with the exception of Australia. Several countries are currently free of the infection; among them are Guyana, Jamaica and Uruguay in Americas, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Japan in Asia, Great Britain, Scandinavian countries, Spain and Portugal in Europe. In India the population of dog is nearly 80 million as per census by the Agriculture Ministry which is the chief reservoir of infection.

Probably rabies is the most feared of all human diseases. It is also one of the most ancient diseases of man and animal. This acute viral infection is characterized by the inflammation of the central nervous system. All the warm-blooded animals are susceptible to this infection, which is transmitted mainly through the bite of rabid animals. When the disease occurs in man, the most characteristic symptom is fear of water technically known as hydrophobia. It develops due to painful spasms of muscles of deglutition. It is an extremely dangerous disease with a frequently long incubation period, highly distressing symptoms as a rule, a lethal outcome.

Rabies has plagued man since ancient times. Far back as 3000 year B.C., disease resembling rabies in dogs was identified. Features of disease in dogs as stated at that time were open mouth, running *salvia*,

dropping ears, tail hanging down and change in the tone of bark. The danger of contact with animals was also mentioned and it was recommended that these animals be killed with an arrow from a distance. Rabies in animals has also been described in detail by Democritus during 500 years BC and Celsius during first century AD. It was well established at that time that poison is transmitted to man from dog through bites and cauterization helped in destroying the poison.

The science of rabies received a sound experimental basis owing to the studies of the great Louis Pasteur who said "the microbe of rabies exists, it does not grow in broth." He was successful to propagate the microbe in rabbit brain. He prepared vaccine against rabies by girding the inflected spinal cord in a mortar with isotonic sodium chloride solution. July 6, 1885 is very significant in the history of rabies. Louis Pasteur administered the vaccine to three persons who had been bitten by rabid dog. The condition of Joseph, 9 years old child who had 14 dog bite wounds which could be cauterized 12 hours after injury, was hopeless. Pasteur tried his vaccine for the first time on him and Joseph has gone down in the history as the first person saved from death by vaccination against rabies. This discovery brought about revolution in the field of vaccination and has culminated in establishment of institutes bearing his name throughout the world.

In India, dogs are mainly responsible for maintaining the disease and transmitting it to human beings. Though dogs are moderately susceptible to this infection their large population (nearly 80 million as per census by Agriculture Ministry) makes them chief reservoir of infection. Jackals, foxes, wolves etc. maintain the disease Sylvatic areas. Mongoose also suffers from the disease and can transmit it. The possibility of rabies should always be kept in mind when wild animals which normally avoid human beings, lose their fear of man and appear tame or attack him.

If a patient is known to have been bitten by a rabid animal and the symptomatology is characteristic, there is little or no difficulty in making a correct clinical diagnosis. However, in some cases it is impossible to obtain a history of exposure, due largely to the failure of the patient or relatives to recollect a minor wound produced by an apparently healthy dog. At times, the clinical course of rabies may be very similar to that of poliomyelitis or encephalitis produced by other viral agents. The average incubation period is between 30-90 days. It is shorter in case the bite site is closer to brain.

Though the diagnosis of rabies in man can be done by the symptoms through the specific epidemiological history of the case, in case of doubt, methods as are used for the laboratory diagnosis in animals. In a broader term, anti-mortem diagnosis in man can be made by examination of corneal smear, spinal fluid and saliva and post-mortem diagnosis by examination of brain/spinal cord.



8. Genome Mapping

Abstract: The genome mapping seems to have demystified some of the mysteries of life. It is an epoch-making discovery, one of the most wonderful achievements. The genome mapping saw its successful completion in June 2000. It began in 1990 in 250 laboratories spread over 18 countries. The trans gene, a hereditary unit in chromosome, is a segment of DNA and contains instructions that determine individual nature and behaviour. It was Mendel, who for the first time, explained how genes pass from one generation to another. The structure of DNA was discovered in 1953. It revealed that the DNA resembles a rope ladder twisted around like a crook-screw. The human genome sequence is 3.2 billion-letter long, but 95 percent of its are junk. Dolly, the sheep was the first to be cloned followed by many other animals leading to the monkey ANDi, an extraordinary development. Genome mapping has revolutionized basic sciences of medicine.

The mystery of the Book of Life has now been decoded and unraveled with Genome Mapping. It is a milestone and an epoch-making discovery, an equivalent of landing on the moon. Bill Clinton, the then U.S. President termed it as “the most wondrous map even produced by the humankind.” And the British Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that it was the “first technological triumph in the twenty first century.” On June 26, 2000 a draft of the Human Genome map was completed by Francis Collins, the Director of Human Genome Project (HGP) and Craig Venter, the Chairman of Celera Genomics, a private American Company which contributed significantly in the completion of genome mapping. The declaration about the great success and achievement was made by Collins and Venter at White House press conference on one August day of June, 2000.

The **Human Genome Project (HGP)** began in 1990 in 250 laboratories of 18 countries. It was a very ambitious and prestigious project to map in detail the location of all human genes. The aim of

this, one of the greatest scientific projects, was to discover the base sequence of the complete human DNA molecule—all the genetic information of the human organism. The development of automated machinery to carry out the sequencing greatly accelerated the project. The sequencer machine was developed in California, U.S.A by Michael Hunkapiller. It was planned for a period of 15 years with an outlay of 3 billion dollars. It was a multinational project in which America, Britain, France, Japan, Italy and China played a major role.

The gene is a hereditary unit found in chromosome. It is a segment of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) that contains the instructions for the development of a characteristic inherited nature and behavior. It was the Austrian monk and biologist **John Mendel (1822-1884)** who for the first time discovered and explained the way genes are passed from one generation to the next during reproduction. He proved by showing pea plants how certain hereditary factors operate in all biological species. He called these factors “genes”. He also proved that these factors (genes) occurred in pairs. The chromosomes in which these genes are found, are themselves located in the nucleus of the cell.

The structure of the most famous nucleic-acid molecule, DNA was discovered in 1953. It revealed that the genes that the Austrian monk and biologist John Mendel had hypothesized are lengths of DNA which transmit hereditary instructions from one generation to another. However, his discoveries published in 1865-69 remained unrecognized till early 20th century. J.D. Watson and Francis Crick in April 1953 declared that DNA resembles a long rope – ladder twisted around like a cork-screw and that two sides of the ladder are made up of sugar and phosphates in repeated sequences. In 1990 James Watson was appointed the Director of Human Genome Research under National Institute of Health (NIH) of the U.S. Later he resigned and Francis Collins took over as director of the Project.

The 3.2 billion letter long human genome is a sequence of chemical bases arranged on twisted strand of DNA which carry digital information and instructions. These chemical molecules and symbols are designated by a four letter alphabet of A's, T's, C's and G's. A signifies Adenine, C signifies Cytosine, T signifies Thymine and G signifies Guanine. An A forms a pair only with a T, a C only with a G. Thus, A-T, T-A, C-G and G-C make a four letter alphabet which makes up the genetic code. But it is discovered that only 5 percent of it consists of

genes which are instructions to make proteins and the rest, 95 percent are junk.

The first major breakthrough in the genome research was the cloning of Dolly, the sheep. It shows how a new full fledged animal identical to the one from whom the cell is derived, can be developed and produced. This process involves the insertion of the whole DNA from a donor cell into the nucleus of an ovum from another animal. First, the ovum is identified and isolated and its nucleus removed and then the whole DNA from the donor is inserted. And the result is the identical copy of the donor. It is a process of a sexual reproduction that can be observed in bacteria and other unicellular micro-organisms. They divide by fission and the off springs are genetically identical to each other and to the parent.

In higher organism, such identical individuals can be created by cloning. Dolly, the sheep was produced in February 1997 by the scientists from the Roslin Institute, Edinburgh, Britain. There is a vast potential application of cloning in animal rearing and reproduction. Since Dolly, a few other animals including ANDi, the monkey have been cloned. ANDi was the first genetically modified monkey, a baby rhesus. This creation of a gene-clad monkey can quicken the development of treatment of such diseases as breast cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and AIDS. General Schatlen, the Head of the team which created ANDi said, "We are in an extraordinary moment of history of humans." The technique could lead to laboratory monkeys that carry human genes. They could enable medical researchers to make realistic models of human diseases. "We could easily introduce," said Schatlen, "for example, an Alzheimer's gene to accelerate the development of a vaccine for that disease."

Genome research has revolutionized basic sciences of medicine as it helps us in locating the genes responsible for a particular disease and in the determination of genetic code of the human genome. There is now no need to treat the symptoms but rather reach the roots of the disease and eradicate the same. We have now therapeutic regimens based on new types of drugs and treatments. Genes can now be made artificially and incorporated into living cells. Now, as many as needed, perfect copies of any gene can be cloned which can be used to replace abnormal genes to prevent or cure genetic disorders. Genetic engineering can also produce a big number of bio- chemicals which can be used as drugs and vaccines. We can have custom made drugs and medicines to

suit individual genetic makeup. It also marks the beginning of an era of predictive and regenerative medicines based on genetic mappings.

Gene therapy, the treatment of diseases caused by defective genes, has given a new hope in the fight of many deadly diseases. For example, a patient suffering from the lung disease cystic fibrosis can be made to lead a more healthy life by insertion of the right gene into him or her. The insertion of a functional gene in the patient eradicates the root cause of the disease. These new researches in genome mapping are also likely to further enhance life expectancy by many years.

Mapping the complete catalogue of all the genes of a plant opens up vast new opportunities. Mapping the genetic code of a plant throws open the gates of a new green revolution of super crops. The decoding of a plant's genetic structure would increase the yield many fold and make crops more resistant to pests and able to cope with droughts, floods, hail-storms and snowfalls. The genome has very wisely been called the 'book of life'. There are encoded secrets in it of life and creation.

DNA finger printing was developed by Alec Jeffrey in 1984 as a method of identifying people from their DNA. It has proved very useful in forensic science. The pattern of bands, unique to each individual is produced on photographic film by the action of radiation. DNA fingerprints can be used for paternity testing and has great forensic significance. Only a very little sample of blood, semen or any body tissue is needed to provide the DNA for the procedure.

Genome mapping has so well highlighted the fact that all human beings are essentially the same and there cannot be any social and radical differences. It reveals that 99.8 percent of all human beings have the same DNA, the principal constituent of 23 pairs of chromosomes that have genetic information. The genome research underlines the fact that all men and women are one. It proves beyond any shadow of doubt the universal brotherhood and unity of mankind. It asserts that the biological difference between individuals works out to be mere fraction of the three billion letters of the human genetic code. In the words of Craig Venter, the head of genome research consortium, "You and I differ only by 2.1 million genetic letters from each other. Probably only a few thousand of these account for the biological difference between us, which mean we are essentially chemical twins." Obviously, there is no scientific basis for social divisions, apartheid and discrimination. Actually, the human life is firmly rooted in universal fraternity. We all are members of the same family and population. Now we can teach our children with more

firm faith that human beings are 99.8 percent identical and the difference is only 0.2 percent that leads to all this diversity, and beauty. The mapping explodes the myth of superiority of any race or nation and also promises to unravel the mystery of human origins. The gene-power promises a brave new world of health, disease-free living in peace and international brotherhood.

The gene-power is so marvellous because it promises so many wonderful things but at the same time opens up a Pandora's box of problems related to ethics, morality and biological issues. This wonderful knowledge can be misused by racists, chauvinists and bigots. It may pose a great threat to bio-diversity. As with all knowledge, the genome-power can be used both for good and evil purposes. It is, in itself, neither a boon or a bane. It depends on our scientists, researchers and political leaders what direction they give it. If misused, it can lead to wide spread genetic discrimination, genetic blackmailing and an end to individual privacy and security. It is also said that gene therapy will benefit only the rich and affluent few because the costs of this therapy are so prohibitive. The genome discovery is unparalleled but it is not likely to benefit the vast majority of mankind in near future. The idea of producing human beings with desired nature and mental qualities through the manipulation of the genetic code is fraught with many risks and dangers. It would be sheer madness for man to try to play God and change the genetic code as he pleases. Plant genetics may help us in another green revolution of super crops but ecologists feel that it could have catastrophic effect on environment. They fear that genes from these new crops could pollinate other plants wreaking fundamental changes in wild life such as creating super weeds which are resistant to herbicides.

The DNA sequence data provided by the human genome project (HGP) has opened many new avenues and opportunities for Indian scientists, researchers and others. A number of initiatives have already been taken in this regard and six bioinformatics centers are being set up. These will help a lot in developing new drugs and vaccines to fight with dreaded diseases and in improving our health-care-system. Moreover, four molecular medicine departments are to be set up in immediate future. It is hoped that soon the genes involved in such diseases as thalassemia, coronary artery diseases, rheumatic fever etc. would be isolated and identified and new drugs and vaccines developed.

The mapping of the human genome has virtually started a biotech revolution in India. The ITI, Bombay has launched its school of bio-sciences and biomedical engineering. IIT, Kharagpur is going to start soon a full fledged three year medical science and technology course. The Karnataka government has set up an Institute of Bio-informatics and Applied Biotechnology (IFBAB) at Bangalore. Undoubtedly, bio-sciences in India are poised for the phenomenal growth and advancement in the years to come. Other states and institutions too are well prepared to make a good use of the current development and researches in genome mapping. "India has a unique resource material", says an expert on the subject, "for study and research. There are hardly any viral, bacterial, fungal or parasitic infections which do not occur in the country and we have people who successfully resist these while others fall victims." It is hoped that India would emerge as one of the world leaders in genomics as well as she is in informatics.

The million dollar question is: would we soon have the first **human clone**? A Massachusetts firm called Advanced Cell Technology has claimed to have cloned embryo. Michael West, the CEO of the firm said they were not trying to clone a human but to produce stem cells to cure diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, cancer, AIDS etc. A stem cell is a master cell which can be developed into any other type of cell, made invaluable for use in providing perfect match tissue for transplantation and the treatment of a disease. As such, an embryo cannot be regarded a person before 14 days. Thus, it is a 'the aquatic cloning' claims the CEO of the firm and not 'reproductive cloning'. But a few other researchers and scientists like Italian fertility expert Serverino Antinori have openly expressed their desire to clone a human.



9. Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption

Abstract : Amongst animal kingdom, human beings are more prone to addictions. Even civilized society accepts such habit formation and consumerism, on the other hand is busy enough to promote it by expensive advertisement. Medical scientists and health awareness organisations are tirelessly busy to educate the people about the dangerous consequences of addiction.

Someone, somewhere uses alcohol or tobacco, it is important to understand the risks. College students of big cities drink which is a

surest way to affect their abilities to learn and possibly their future. Drinking and driving is dangerously associated with risk of serious injury or death. Amongst them are the young people who are at the greatest risk. Tobacco use, is an addiction but a wide and general opinion is that it's use is a social status. Moderate use of tobacco is legal in so many countries of the world—though hotly debated topic. Should such addicts be regulated? 29% of the population of U.S become tobacco addicted before they are 18 years old. Of course, numerous health problems are obvious. Personal health and economic costs to society is an another global issue. Fact is : longer the use of alcohol or tobacco, the harder it is to quit.

The alcohol use patterns of college students and overall trends in consumption is a social burden to carry on. Physiological and behavioral, effects of alcohol, including blood alcohol concentration, absorption, metabolism, and immediate and long-term effects—all have become a social commitment and a medical challenge for a civilized society.

Alcohol is the most popular drug and it's use by young people particularly college students, is remarkably 84%. Culture and tradition on the other hand influence alcohol use on campuses. And, there are several reasons why college students are at particularly high risk for alcoholism and alcohol related problems in the U.S physiological and behavioral effects of alcohol is hazardous. The intoxicating substance found in beer, wine and liquor is ethyl alcohol or ethanol. It is produced in a process called fermentation. While hard liquors go through an another process called distillation. However, the behavioural effects vary with individual and the setting. **Blood alcohol concentration (BAC)** is the ratio of alcohol to total blood volume. It is used to measure the physiological and behavioral effects of alcohol. The in-depth medical study shows that about 20% of alcohol is absorbed through the lining of stomach. The other 80% is absorbed through the small intestine. It means liver and the small intestine are the worst victim of alcohol. Powerful moods like stress and tension cause the stomach to dump it's contents more rapidly. Alcohol is metabolized in liver where it is converted by alcohol dehydrogenate to acetaldehyde, which is a toxic chemical that can cause nausea and vomiting as well as liver damage. The most dramatic effects occur within the **Central Nervous System (CNS)** and the CNS depression can cause vital function depression and even death.

The long-term effects have recently been the subject of research for the medical scientists. Alcohol damages the left brain that affects written and spoken languages, logic, and mathematical skills. One of the most common liver diseases related to alcohol abuse is CIRRHOSIS of the liver, which is among the top ten leading causes of death in the U.S. Many different cancers are associated with heavy alcohol use, particularly cancers of esophagus, stomach, mouth, tongue and liver. Alcohol abuse can cause gastric irritation, inflammation of the pancreas, decreased enzyme production, and block the absorption of nutrients particularly calcium. Evidence has come which shows that alcohol can decrease the effectiveness of the immune system. Pregnant women are prone to fetal consequences. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy. FAS is the most common birth defect and the second leading cause of mental retardation in the U.S. It is the most common preventable cause of mental impairments in the Western world. Symptoms include mental retardation, small head, tremors, and abnormalities of the face, limbs, heart and brain. It is medically possible to say that alcohol can be passed to a baby through breast milk. Therefore, it is recommended to abstain from alcohol or to wait at least four hours to nurse after drinking. The stunning figure of death for all age groups from 5–45 is tragic accidents, 40% of which are alcohol related.

There are many theories on the causes of alcoholism. Biological and family factors, social and cultural influences (more in case of western world) and urbanization—all have an effect on alcohol use. It affects the family as well as the individual. The other gloomy side is the cost of alcohol to society. It is tremendous. Crimes, medical expenses, accidents and alcoholic treatment—all contribute to the cost. A data-research shows that \$ 184.6 billion was the alcohol related cost over a particular period of time.

Smoking society is equally responsible for social and physical hazards. More than 4,30,000 Americans die each year of tobacco—related diseases. Tobacco is the probable cause of 25 diseases. One in every 5 deaths in the US is smoking related. Consumerism and advertising by tobacco companies have been geared toward young people and women that leads to the financial casts of tobacco. Health costs, productivity costs, and other smoking related costs add to financial costs of about billion dollar a year. The seriousness of the problem is increased percentage of college students.

Smoking is the most common form of tobacco use. It delivers nicotine and about 4,000 other chemical substances. Nicotine and hydrogen cyanide impair the action of cilia cells in the lungs, making it nearly impossible for the lungs to clear and contributing to smokers cough. Many other gasses and chemical are found in tobacco, one of the most dangerous is carbon monoxide. Tobacco comes in several forms—cigarettes, cigars and pipes are used for burning and inhaling tobacco. Cigar smokers increases risk for cancers, heart diseases, and **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**. Biddies (hand-rolled) made in India look similar to a marijuana cigarette and are far more toxic than cigarette.

The other form of tobacco is chewing tobacco. It contains tobacco leaves treated with molasses and other flavorings. It is placed in mouth and chewed or sucked to release the nicotine. Dipping is a similar method where the tobacco is placed between the lower lip and teeth to stimulate the flow of saliva and release the nicotine. And the risks associated with smokeless tobacco are many. Leukoplakia, a white leathery patch inside the mouth, is a precursor to oral cancer. It is estimated that 75% of oral cancer cases results from tobacco use. Smokeless tobacco impairs the sense of taste and can cause tooth decay and gum disease.

Tireless efforts are on to facilitate the tobacco users and alcoholic to quit. Though quitting such habits is very difficult. In case quitting takes place—there are many benefits. The body begins to repair itself within hours. Carbon monoxide and oxygen levels return to normal; within days, mucous which is clogging airways is broken up and eliminated; within ten smoke-free years, an ex-smoker can expect to live out him or her normal life-span and risks for several cancers, and several types of heart disease drop considerably as well.



10. Human Heart

Abstract: Food culture and metamorphosed life-styles, according to a medical study, are more responsible for Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD). To our astonishments, the number of younger Indians with CVD problems is on rise. Urban males and females are more CVD affected then the rural males and females. What one can do is to manage stress and read up on the emotions of human heart.

90% of heart attacks occur in males. But in women smokers, heart attack occur about 16–19 years earlier than in non-smoking women. They also have up to 20 times greater risk if they smoke while taking oral contraceptives. A male smoker suffers a heart attack seven to eight years earlier than a male smoker. It is thought that certain hormones (like estrogen) may protect females till menopause.

Technology in medical science and latest research development have come up with solutions to prevent heart attack. But the cost on treatment is not that much affordable for a common man. However, life-style, if modified one can keep heart problems at bay. Indians are genetically more disposed to having cardiovascular disease (CVD) and the number of younger Indians with such problem is on rise. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), CVD accounted for death in India is more than the industrial nations. Population surveys have consistently revealed a marked increase in the incidence of CVD among urban India compared to the rural areas. A survey conducted by the Premier **All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS)** and WHO made a contrastive study on CVD diseases one in urban Delhi and the other in rural Haryana which revealed a prevalence rate of 10.9% in urban males, 5.5% in rural males, 10.2% in urban females, and 6.4% in rural females. Result is very clear : Urban males and females are more CVD affected than rural males and females.

How, then, one can prevent it or at least keep oneself at bay? More responsible is of course modern and metamorphosed sedentary life styles. Stress and bad eating habits are said to bring the rot into the system. Factors like hypertension which causes a strain on the heart in pumping blood, high cholesterol which coats the inner lining flow of the blood, and smoking etc. are some of the body's physiology leading to CVD. Tobacco, or alcohol users have nearly six-fold higher risks. Lack of exercise leads to obesity and fat deposition round the abdomen, medically called pot belly and diabetes—one or a mix of some of these make a fine cocktail for CVD. Above all, what exactly is CVD? The basic mechanics of heart attack begin with the heart muscles. A human heart is world's No.1 pump, nature have given. The heart functions in top gear when it receives adequate oxygen (O₂) and nutrients supplied by coronary arteries situated on it's outer surface. When life's excesses catch up, these arteries can get narrow due to deposition of cholesterol—a waxy-fat-like substance found in animal fat, egg yolk and other greasy

food. When cholesterol blocks one of the coronary arteries, a part of the heart muscles dies due to lack of oxygen (O₂). This is called a heart attack.

According to a study made by a professor of AIMS, public awareness programmes can be of tremendous help if taken seriously by the public. CVD – related problems can be kept under control. People across the country and their socio-economic category is also one of the factors in terms of low or high CVD-rate. The rich and educated are the early adopters, according to a study by AIMS. The urban middle class and poor are at greater risk. They stay in crowded dwellings where chances of infective, rheumatic heart disease spreading is higher. Also, they are not aware of the importance of regular exercise and eating right.

Thanks to the fast developing medical science and AIMS which have made every effort to keep CVD related diseases under control. Early detection and intervention are the definite possibility. Nevertheless, what a common distance can do is to manage stress levels, maintain distance from greasy fires and read up on the subject: **The human heart.**



11. Anorexia Nervosa

Abstract : Is any underlying fact that food obsession is a type of eating disorder? Although no organic cause of anorexia has been identified. So can it be psychological? Anorexia nervosa is a complicated disorder to diagnose. As far as it's effects are concerned then, it can have dangerous effects on all aspects of an individual's life. It can affect other family members also. It needs psychological as well medical intervention.

There are number of cultures. One of them is food culture. Unquestionably, modern society is health conscious, particularly the women. Body-care is now a passion for nearly all categories of women. 'Keep-fit' slogan has now become an indivisible part of the modern society. No matter, even, it is misconceived.

Is anorexia nervosa a disease OR a psychological disorder? It is often considered to be a type of eating disorder in an entire spectrum of eating disorders. And yes, it is also, and more importantly a psychological disorder. It is a condition that goes beyond out-of-control dieting. The

person with anorexia initially begins dieting to lose weight. Over time, the weight loss becomes a sign of mastery and control. The drive to become thinner is actually secondary to concerns about control or fears relating to one's body. The individual continues the endless cycle of restrictive eating, often to a close point called starvation. And the only feeling is to have a sense of control over the body. Later part of the sensitivity is that this practice becomes an obsession and is very akin to an addiction to any type of drugs or chemical substance. Anorexia is generally with *females*, but it does affect males as well. And what about young children and adults—in their case also, anorexia begins to manifest itself during early adolescence. There are some other symptoms. However, research within the medical and psychological fields continues to explore possible causes.

Some experts are of the view that possible underlying causes can relate to demands from society and the family. For many individuals, as this feeling prevails now much more than before, the destructive cycle begins with the pressure to be thin and attractive. A poor self-identity or image compounds the problem. Interpretation of other research is that this disorder can stem from a particular dysfunction often seen in *families of anorexia* patients. In this particular type of dysfunction, family members become so interdependent that each cannot achieve their identity as an individual. As a result, family members are unable to function as healthy individuals and are dependent on other family members for their identity. Part of this dysfunction includes a fear of growing up by the children of these families, *especially girls*. Restrictive dieting may prevent their bodies from developing in a normal manner, and, in their thinking, restricts the maturational process and maintains the parent-child relationship that the family has come to rely on. Although, no organic cause of anorexia has been identified, some evidence points to a dysfunction in the part of the brain called *hypothalamus* which regulates certain metabolic processes.

To diagnose 'anorexia nervosa' is a complicated disorder. Individuals with anorexia often attempt to hide the disorder. Denial and secrecy frequently accompany other *symptoms*. It is unusual for an individual with anorexia to seek professional help because the weight loss is not viewed as a problem. The actual diagnosis is not made until there are other medical complications. The individual is often brought to the attention of a professional by family members only after a marked

weight loss has occurred. When anorexia finally comes to the attention of the health professional, they often lack insight into their problem and may be unreliable in terms of providing accurate information. Therefore, it is often necessary to obtain information from parents or other family members in order to evaluate the degree of weight loss and extent of the disorder.

How to diagnose? There are four basic criteria to diagnose anorexia. First, individual's refusal to maintain body weight; second—there is an intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat; third—self-perception is grossly distorted, and weight loss is not acknowledged; and fourth—women who have already begun their menstrual cycle, at least three consecutive periods are missed (amenorrhea) or menstrual periods occur only after a hormone is administered.

What are the effects of anorexia? Effects could be dangerous on all aspects of an individual's life. It can affect other family members. Underweight can lead to depression and social withdrawal. Individual can become irritable and easily upset. Sleep can become disrupted and lead to fatigue during the day. Attention and concentration can decrease. Major depressive disorder can also be noticed in some anorexia affected individuals. Remarkable is that individuals with anorexia are food-obsessed. They become compulsive about eating rituals. They collect recipes, exhibit other obsessions related to food, weight, or body shape. Generally, they are compliant, eager to please and strive for perfection. Anorexia-families appear to be perfect. Physical appearances are unavoidable and consider them to be very important. Slow heart action (bradycardia), low blood pressure (hypotension) is frequent manifestations of starvation and are commonly associated with anorexia. Disturbances in the heart rate (arrhythmia) are very significant. Severe weight loss and starvation lead to the capacity of the heart.

Gastrointestinal complications like constipation, abnormal pain are associated with anorexia. Food absorption rate in the body is affected. Evidence of enzyme changes and overall damage to the liver have been found. Function of the kidney (renal system)—increased or decreased urination; dry flaky skin, loss of hair on the head, brittle-nails, tooth loss etc. are some diagnostically scale to identify anorexia.

What are the treatments? There is a variety of approaches. It depends solely on the resources available to the individual. Above all, treatments involve psychological as well as medical intervention. Patients should undergo treatment by a medical doctor, a clinical psychologist, or both,

depending upon the progression of the disorder. Both are the best treatment provider. An interesting part of the treatment is the involvement of the family members. Nutritional education will be found to be equally beneficial. Group counselling will assist the individual in the process of recovery.



12. Alzheimer Disease

Abstract: It's a disease found in elderly person. Loss of memory is the primary symptom. Communication skill gets affected very abruptly. It is a complex disease and there is not a single magic bullet to prevent or cure it. However, becoming well informed about AD can have high physical, emotional, and financial costs. Researchers are learning a lot about AD care giving, and studies are helping experts develop new ways to support caregivers. Programs that teach families about the various stages of AD and about flexible and practical strategies for dealing with difficult care giving situations provide vital help to those who care for people with AD.

A German doctor and scientist **Alois Alzheimer in 1906** explored the possibility of a disease, known as Alzheimer Disease (AD) and it is used in medical science by the same nomenclature. He noticed changes in the brain tissue of a woman who had died of an unusual mental illness. The symptoms were noticed as memory loss, language problems, and unpredictable behaviour. It occurs at an advance stage of age of a person. The physical-dynamics of this disease is that initially it affects the brain, which gradually weakens the memory and affects its ability. Simultaneously, the patient develops the tendency of getting hallucination. AD is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually even the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. In most people with AD, symptoms first appear after age 60.

AD is the most common cause of dementia among older people. Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning. A person is not able to think, remember things, and do reasoning—to such an extent that it interferes in daily life and activities. A recent estimate says that as many as 2.4 to 4.5 million Americans are suffering from AD.

The physiology of the brain is considerably affected showing the remarks or patches of protein and plaques within brain cells. The formation of blocks of nerve cells within the deformation affects the

protein. Slowly at one stage of the development, it causes the death of neurons, the chief carrier of information which travels en rout the spinal chord. The memory sense is abruptly affected and brings wrinkles to the brain cell. Tangles begin to develop deep in the brain, in an area called the entorhinal cortex, and plaques form in other areas. As more and more plaques and tangles form in particular brain areas, healthy neurons begin to work less efficiently. Then, they lose their ability to function and communicate with each other, and eventually they die. This damaging process spreads to a nearby structure, called the hippocampus, which is essential in forming memories. As the death of neurons increases, affected brain regions begin to shrink. By the final stage of AD, damage is widespread and brain tissue has shrunk significantly.

Some other symptoms have shown that early diagnosis is very difficult to trace in the patient. Even the family members of the victim are not easily reachable to catch the early development of Alzheimer. The partial loss of memory leads to confrontation in terms of communication with the victim. In addition, preferably it should not be as to why the patient (an individual) is getting weak memory or even losing it. Memory problems are one of the first signs of AD. Some people with memory problems have a condition called Amnesic Mild Cognitive Impairment (AMCI). People with this condition have more memory problems than normal for people their age, but their symptoms are not as severe as those with AD. More people with MCI, compared with those without MCI, go on to develop AD.

Other changes may also signal the very early stages of AD. For example, recent research has found links between some movement difficulties and MCI. Researchers also have seen links between some problems with the sense of smell and cognitive problems. Brain imaging and biomarker studies of people with MCI and those with a family history of AD are beginning to detect early changes in the brain like those seen in AD. These findings will need to be confirmed by other studies but appear promising. Such findings offer hope that some day, we may have tools that could help detect AD early, track the course of the disease, and monitor response to treatments.

There are cases that after 8 years of diagnosis, the victim can live for another 20 years after the proper diagnosis. In addition, the study has shown that there is not a particular reason behind the disease and as such what leads to Alzheimer. Nevertheless, it may be the aging factor

(somewhere around 85 or so forth). The figure for such cases is 50%. The other reason may be characterized as hereditary or cardiovascular disease or head injury that took place years back.

Forgetfulness is the main one which constitutes the main symptom. Inability to explain a particular topic or idea, did brushing of teeth or not, organization of presenting a thought whether at home or workplace—are the problems associated with the victim of Alzheimer.

How to deal with or handle a patient is a great matter of concern in the surrounding and for the family members. There are some special methods if followed will help a lot in the patient's daily affairs like:

The Australian study has come up with an observation that the pain/suffering of the patient couldn't be felt by others and it cannot be supplanted. Scientists are conducting studies to learn more about plaques, tangles, and other features of AD. They can now visualize plaques by imaging the brains of living individuals. They are also exploring the very earliest steps in the disease process. Findings from these studies will help them understand the causes of AD.

One of the great mysteries of AD is why it largely strikes older adults. Research on how the brain changes normally with age is shedding light on this question. For example, scientists are learning how age-related changes in the brain may harm neurons and contribute to AD damage. These age-related changes include inflammation and the production of unstable molecules called free radicals.

In a very few families, people develop AD in their 30s, 40s, and 50s. These people have a mutation, or permanent change, in one of three genes that they inherited from a parent. We know that these gene mutations cause AD in these "early-onset" familial cases.

However, most people with AD have "late-onset" AD, which usually develops after age 60. Many studies have linked a gene called APOE to late-onset AD. This gene has several forms. One of them, APOE 4, increases a person's risk of getting the disease. About 40 percent of all people who develop late-onset AD carry this gene. However, carrying the APOE 4 form of the gene does not necessarily mean that a person will develop AD, and people carrying no APOE 4 forms can also develop AD.

Scientists think that other risk-factor genes exist as well. A possible new one, SORL1, was discovered in 2007. Large-scale genetic research studies are looking to find other genes.

A nutritious diet, exercise, social engagement, and mentally stimulating pursuits can all help people stay healthy. New research suggests the possibility that these factors also might help to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and AD. Scientists are investigating associations between cognitive decline and heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. Understanding these relationships and testing them in clinical trials will help us understand whether reducing risk factors for these diseases may help with AD as well.

AD can be definitively diagnosed only after death by linking clinical course with an examination of brain tissue and pathology in an autopsy. However, doctors now have several methods and tools to help them determine accurately whether a person who is having memory problems has “possible AD” (the symptoms may be due to another cause) or “probable AD”.

Early diagnosis is beneficial for several reasons. Having an early diagnosis and starting treatment in the early stages of the disease can help preserve function for months to years, even though the underlying AD process cannot be changed. Having an early diagnosis also helps families plan for the future, make living arrangements, take care of financial and legal matters, and develop support networks.

In addition, an early diagnosis can provide greater opportunities for people to get involved in clinical trials. In a clinical trial, scientists test drugs or treatments to see which are most effective and for whom they work best.

At the most, there is not a cure or clinical remedy that is down with such trauma. However, there are some medicines that might alleviate the symptoms. The former US President Ronald Reagan has been diagnosed as the patient of Alzheimer. His wife was approached for conducting medical research on him. An association was set up voluntarily to ascertain stock of information and look for remedy for those who are living in a trauma like mental illness as Alzheimer’s disease.



13. Swine Influenza

Abstract: Humans have been consuming pigs from the time unknown. European and American lands are still overpopulaed with pigs farms as they need it. The

swine influenza is not a new thing. The 1918 flu pandemic in humans was associated with H1N1 and influenza appearing in pigs. The suspicion is who caught the flu first: was it from pigs to human or from humans to pigs? Swine influenza has been named as H1N1 flu, swine flue, hog flu, and pig flu. It is an infection by any one of several types of swine influenza virus. Swine influenza virus (SIV) could be any strain of viruses that is endemic in pigs. The known virus as of 2009 includes several types of influenza such as H1N1, H1N2, H3N1, H3N2 and H2N3. Latest findings, February 2014 show that viral respiratory diseases remain problematic in swine. Among viruses, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV) and swine influenza virus (SIV), alone or in combination, are the two main known contributors to lung infectious diseases. Previous studies demonstrated that experimental dual infections of pigs with PRRSV followed by SIV can cause more severe disease than the single viral infections.

Swine influenza and human influenza occurred first during 1918 flu pandemic. It occurred when pigs became sick at the same time as human. Then, it was proposed to be a disease related to human influenza. The influenza virus as a cause of disease was first identified in pigs in 1930. For the following 60 years, swine influenza strains were almost exclusively H1N1. Between 1997 and 2002, new strains of three different subtypes and five different genotypes emerged as causes of influenza among pigs in North America. The emergence of H3N2 strains during 1997-1998 was prevalent in pigs. These strains which include genes derived by reassortment from human, swine and avian viruses have become a major cause of swine influenza in North America. Reassortment between H1N1 and H3N2 produced H1N2. In 1999 in Canada, a strain of H4N6 crossed the species barrier from birds to pigs, but was contained in single farm. Currently, the outbreak of H1N1 form of swine influenza and its arrival on the Indian land is one of the descendants of the strain that caused the 1918 flu pandemic. It has also circulated in humans through the 20th century. This is the normal seasonal epidemics of influenza. The persistence of H1N1 strain reinfects when human immunity wanes. Direct transmission from pigs to human is rare but a big population of pigs surrounding humans, the transmission is faster and prone to the easy spread of swine influenza. This flu has been reported numerous times as a zoonosis in humans. It is common and causes significant economic losses in the meat industry, primarily by causing stunting and extended time to market. This disease cost the British meat industry about £65 million every year.

SIV is common throughout pig populations across the world. Transmission of the virus from the pigs to humans is not common and does not always lead to human influenza. It results in the production of antibodies in the blood only. If the transmission of the virus causes human influenza, then it is called as **zoonotic swine flu (ZSF)**. The risk of getting it is much higher in case of those people who are regularly in touch with pigs or exposed to pigs. In September 1988, a swine flu virus killed one woman and infected others. It has been reported that a woman fell sick after visiting the hog barn at a country fair and the lady died eight days later after developing pneumonia. The only pathogen identified was an H1N1 strain of swine influenza. Such illness was widespread among the pigs exhibited at the fair. Study reveals that 76% of 25 swine exhibitors aged 9 to 19 tested positive for antibody to SIV, but no serious illnesses were detected among this group. An another additional study suggested that some health care personnel who had contact with the patient developed mild influenza-like illness with antibody evidence of swine flu infection. But there was no community outbreak. Above all, human-pigs relationship is prone to invite influenza-like-illnesses. The consumption of meat on the part of an infected animal on the other hand is an another greater risk that will cause ZSF if it is not cooked properly.

1918 pandemic in humans was due to H1N1 that caused influenza appearing in pigs. It might be the reflection of zoonosis: whether swine to humans or humans to swine. Study did not show the direction of the virus. An evidence suggests that pigs caught the disease from humans. Swine influenza was prevalent only in 1918 after the first large outbreaks of influenza among people. A recent phylogenetic analysis of strains of influenza in humans, birds, and swine suggests that the 1918 outbreak in humans followed a reassortment event within a mammal. However, the exact origin of 1918 strain remains elusive. Swine or bird flu, it is remarkable that the origin of evidences has got links with either the North America or Europe, the Asian countries could not establish formal national surveillance system including the United States to determine what viruses are circulating in pigs. If there was any formal surveillance system anywhere in the world, the anxiety level or fear could not have gone to that level what people experience today worldwide. Officers in the Department of Agriculture, Philippine in August 2007 investigated the outbreak (epizootic) of swine flu. The

Philippine National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) in 2007 raised a hog cholera “red alert” warning over Metro Manila and 5 regions of Luzon after the disease spread to backyard pig farms in Bulacan and Pampanga.

The 2009 outbreak in humans occurred first in the North America. In late April, 2009, Margaret Chan, the World Health Organization’s director-general, declared a “public health emergency of international concern” under the rules of the WHO’s new International Health Regulations when the first case of the H1N1 virus was reported in the United States. The outbreak was reported in pigs in May, 2009 at a farm in Alberta, Canada, with a link to the outbreak in Mexico. The pigs were suspected to have caught this new strain of virus from a farm worker who recently returned from Mexico, then showed symptoms of an influenza-like illness. This new strain was initially described as an apparent reassortment of at least four strains of influenza A virus subtype H1N1, including one strain endemic in humans, one endemic in birds, and two endemic in swine. The swine flu has been compared to other similar types of influenza virus in terms of mortality. In the US, for every 1000 people who get infected, about 40 people need admission to hospital and about one person dies. There are fears that swine flu will become a major global pandemic in the winter months, with many countries who may be planning major vaccination campaigns.

Signs and symptoms in swine and humans are distinctively remarkable. In pigs, influenza infection produces fever, lethargy, sneezing, coughing, difficulty breathing and decreased appetite. In some cases the infection may cause abortion. The mortality rate is low (around 1-4 per cent). The virus can produce weight loss and poor growth causing economic loss to farmers. Infected pigs can lose up to 12 pounds of body weight over a 3 to 4 week period. In humans, direct transmission of a swine flu virus from pigs to human is occasionally possible. This is called ZSE. In all, 50 cases are known to have occurred since the first report in medical literature in 1958, which have resulted in a total of six deaths. Of these six people, one was pregnant, one had leukemia, one had Hodgkin disease and two were known to be previously healthy. Primarily, the influenza symptoms according to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, 2009 swine flu H1N1 virus are similar to those of influenza and influenza-like illness in general. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. This outbreak has also shown an increased percentage of patients

reporting diarrhea and vomiting. Equally remarkable is that 2009 H1N1 virus is not zoonotic swine flue, as **it is not transmitted from pigs to humans, but from person to person** through coughing or sneezing and people touching something with the virus on it and then touching their own nose or mouth. Swine flu cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food. The swine flu in humans is most contagious during the first five days. Diagnosis can be made by sending a specimen collected during the first five days for analysis. Frequent washing of hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers especially after being out in public are highly recommended to prevent spread of the virus among humans.

The treatment is not that easy as it is supposed to be. Besides antivirals, supportive care at home or in hospital, the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the use of Tamiflu (oseltamevir) or Relenza (zanamivir) for the treatment and prevention of infection of SIV. **In April 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** issued Emergency Use Authorizations to make available Relenza and Tamiflu for the treatment even to the non-licensed volunteers. These drugs are available only on prescription and used only in confirmed cases or during hospitalization. High risk categories like pregnant women, infants and children, people with cardio-vascular or pulmonary conditions, HIV-infected are the prioritized persons.

The outbreak of H1N1 virus in the Indian sub-continent is not a different story to tell. It may be the preventive measures or the treatment of the patients. High-anxiety is normal course of the day particularly in the cities. The concept of flu counture is not new. When swine flue peaked in Mexico City and New York people started wearing even whimsical masks. Indian megacities and the educational establishments have too witnessed a similar situations. Swine flu cases were confirmed from Gurgaon. National Institute of Communicable Disease (NICD), Delhi, of which two reports were positive, raising the number of positive cases in the city to 40. The disease is getting in the community is evident from the fact that only 10 per cent of H1N1 cases being reported are from airports screening and 20 per cent are through contact. A bulk of new cases—70 per cent—includes those with no history of travel or contact with infected people. Earlier, most of the swine flu cases were detected during screening at airports and contact tracing, or tracking people who had been exposed to a person carrying the virus. **In Bangalore** 26 year-old woman succumbed to the virus. All of the 10

cases had contracted the virus in the country and had no foreign travel history.

In **Chennai** 57 out of 461 suspected flu cases in Tamil Nadu were tested positive for the virus and in **Gurgaon** 34 were confirmed cases of swine .**Kolkata** the total number of people affected with the H1N1 virus went up to 21 in Bengal. **Pune** had suspected swine flu fatalities taking the toll in the city to 13. In **Raipur** an 18-year-old boy died of suspected swine flu.

A pregnant woman suffering from swine flu has been forced to deliver her baby nearly two months ahead of the due date because of medical complications. The 30-year-old woman was seven months pregnant and contracted the infection. She was screened for the virus. US Centre of Disease Control and Prevention recommend antiviral medications such as Tami flu and Relenza to be administered immediately to pregnant women suspected having swine flu, even before tests confirm the diagnosis.

On the other hand medical experts worldwide are expressing grave doubts about the unbridled use of Tami flu for treating swine flu patients-especially children.

A British study urged the government to rethink administering swine flu anti-viral to children below 12. It said the drug caused vomiting in children, and also led to dehydration and other complications. The study come a week after another research found that children given Tami flu as a preventive were reporting side-effects such as nausea and nightmares. An another weary aspect of the treatment has been reported that the people who have kidney, heart or respiratory diseases must inform their doctor before starting on Tami flu. Fearing this, the government has banned the sale of Tami flu at the chemist shops. However, the sale of drug is reportedly thriving in the black market.

The spread of virus has done a substantial loss to all. In **Pune** the administration decided to extend the week-long holiday for schools and colleges in the light of swine flu death reported in the city which has been the epicentre of the pandemic.

The financial loss on both the sides, the government and the public is considerably serious. Commercialization is quite evident. A test at a private lab would cost upto Rs 10,000 which is easily affordable for a common man. Swine flu detection kits according to experts and doctors dealing with the swine flu are stressing that such tests are unreliable.

They are rapid test kits, which are of no use in detecting H1N1. The only test kits that can be relied upon are manufactured by two pharmaceutical companies-US-based Applied Biosystems and Swiss major Roche Diagnostics-available at a cost of Rs 1.5 lakh for 100 tests. These have been approved by the Centre for Disease Control, US (CDC) for global testing and the Indian government, too, has recommended the same. Outbreak of the flue is there, at the same time the branded companies have got a better chance to enterprise their products across the world with huge benefits.



14. The Harmful Effects of Mobile Phones

Abstract: Mobile phones today have come under the category of necessary items rather than luxury. These have made life simpler with a person being in touch always. They have come to represent your personality and the younger generation's life revolves around the use of these wonder gadgets. Though technology has changed the way we view mobile phones, we cannot ignore the fact that the radiations emitted from mobile phones are a matter of deep concern. With more and more people claiming to have contracted diseases resulting from mobile phone radiations, it has become important that we take a look at the reality. This essay tries to do exactly that.

Mobile phones have come a long way from the brick sized, extremely expensive gadgets seen in some exclusive people's hands only. Today, various types of mobile phones are available that can be used to represent not only the person but also reflect the user's personality. Children, teenagers, adults or the elderly – there is hardly anybody who has not been touched by this wonder gadget. Everyone knows how to use it and a lot of people are using it to express their views. Increasingly being considered as an object of necessity, the mobile phone today has more takers than it can handle.

In 1993, when the world was just getting used to the idea of everyone having their own mobile handset, the suit filed by a man claiming that his wife had contracted brain tumor because of the use of mobile phones, shocked everyone. The case was reported in Florida and it sent all the scientists in a flurry to study and prove the authenticity of the claim. It was after these studies were undertaken that it was realized that yes, mobile phone radiations could be harmful for humans.

Mobile telephony has two main aspects – the base tower and the mobile handset itself. The working of the mobile phone depends on communication between the base tower and the handset and the means of this communication is radiation. Let us take a brief look at how a mobile phone and a base interact in order to work.

A base station has a tower mounted on a building. This tower is generally placed at heights between 15 and 30 metres. All the towers are equipped with three-directional antennae separated by 120 degrees. The instrument room, located at the base of the tower, is used as a home for low power radio transmitters and receivers. Generally, a base station has more than one transmitter, depending upon the number of mobile users in that particular geographical area. The combined output from these transmitters is fed to the antennae. This combined output can be as high as 20 to 40 watts of Radio Frequency (RF) power.

Though, the radiations from a base station are quite high, they do not effect the public in general. These radiations would effect those people, who are living directly in the path of the radiation beam.

The mobile phone also works with the help of a radio transmitter and an antenna located inside the handset. The transmitter in the mobile handset generates only one to two watts of RF frequency. This radiation is generally absorbed by the brain as the mobile phone is held close to the head.

The main concern raised by scientists all over the world was that the use of mobile phones causes an increase in the incidence of cancer. Studies were conducted all over the world to prove this and a lot of other things were also discovered. The side effects of exposure to high levels of radiation can be categorized under different heads to understand their cause and effect relationship.

The first such category is that of Thermal Effects. The International Commission for Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), an independent science organization, states that when the human body absorbs the energy from radiation, it results in a rise in tissue temperature. Generally, human tissues are capable of distributing this temperature to avoid any harm. But when this temperature increases beyond a degree or two (Celsius), then the problems start. The tissue is unable to distribute the heat resulting in tissue damage. The brain is able to scatter the additional temperature by increasing local blood flow, however the eyes are unable to do so. This has resulted in eye lens

opacity. This was proved in the case of rabbits and also human volunteers. But the same condition was not proved in the case of monkeys. Other thermal effects included penetration of the blood-brain barrier, reduced sperm production and disturbed neuromuscular functions.

Another study published in 2006 completed by 3 scientists in Sweden confirmed that long term use of mobile phones (more than ten years) increased the risk of malignant brain tumors. In the same study, the scientists also mentioned that this conclusion needed to be studied further as the research had too short a latency period.

A journal published in 2007 on Mobile phone use and risk of glioma in 5 North European countries put everyone in doubt. This particular research combined the results from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Southeast England. This study looked at reasonably large group of people of 2,530 glioma patients and 6,581 controls. The study was not very clear on its conclusion that glioma was actually caused by use of mobile phones. This was very surprising after their extremely confident claim in 2006 that this was the reason.

In 2007, REFLEX conducted a study to test for genotoxic effects in human cells that are exposed to radio frequency levels between 0.3 and 2 watt/kg. This study showed that increased exposure to these frequencies caused an increase in single and double strand DNA breaks. Even chromosomal aberrations were observed in fibroblasts. Apart from this, intracellular increase of free radicals in HL-60 cells was also observed.

In 2006, a Danish study was conducted to see if the use of mobile phones actually increased the incidence of cancer in users. The study was conducted on more than 4,00,000 Danish citizens. They were monitored for 20 years and showed no increased risk of cancer. In spite of this, some people consider this report to be inconclusive.

The largest study conducted to find a connection between cancer and use of mobile phones was called the INTERPHONE. This study was conducted across 13 nations. Even this study did not find any connection between long term use of mobile phones and an increase in the incidence of cancer.

After this study, the International Journal of Epidemiology published its data after studying a sample of population gathered from multiple nations. The study said that there is no evidence of increase in the incidence of cancer with the use of mobile phones. The study

also said that the study was distracted with bias and errors and the results needed to be investigated further for the study to be totally conclusive. Other scientists have added that since the usage pattern of mobile phones has changed with frequency and duration of calls increasing as well as number of mobiles increasing, it is important to undertake a research that would be current and would study the effects of the mobile phone usage.

Keeping in mind this uncertainty about effects of exposure of mobile radiation, a lot of countries have placed ceilings on the levels of exposures. The United States of America and Canada have set the levels at 1.6 W/kg and Europe at 2 W/kg.

To conclude, one can say that though studies conducted all around the world to prove that the incidence of cancer increases with the use of mobile phones have either been unable to provide any conclusive proof or have published their results as inconclusive, one cannot ignore the fact that exposure to radiation from mobile phones can cause problems like opacity of eye lens, sperm count reduction and changes in DNA structure to cause birth defects and mutations. Though, even the World Health Organisation (WHO) has established that the use of mobile phones does not increase the incidence of cancer in humans, countries have established laws that would limit the exposure of radiation for the benefit of its population.



15. Robots for Flawless Surgeries?

Synopsis – Surgery - certainly not a good news and those have gone through it or are about to do so now, know the feelings associated with this dreaded word. Going under the scalpel, certainly requires a great deal of mental preparation and faith in your surgeon. But what if the operating hand is not of a surgeon but of a robot? Would you be able to trust it? Well, this is the issue we are going to delve deeper into and study the implications involved in modern robotic surgery.

Robotic surgery, computer-assisted surgery and robot-assisted surgery are the terms for various technological developments that are currently in use to support a range of surgical procedures.

Robotic surgery has now become a popular alternative to traditional surgical practices. The number of prostate surgeries performed using robotic instruments has increased from 9 per cent in 2003 to 43 per

cent in 2007, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (2009).

But the question is: How is it performed? Thin tubes consist of cameras and robot-controlled surgical instruments are inserted into the body through tiny incisions and the procedure is performed internally. Promoters of the method say that this technology allows for less-invasive surgery, which leads to faster recovery.

“With this technology, we can now access the internal organs through tiny incisions”, said Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood Jr., Director of East Carolina Heart Institute and Chairman of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at East Carolina University, who is also a pioneer in this surgery.

When surgeons developed technology, they were of the view that the use of robots would help in doing away with the shakiness of hands. This was confirmed by Dr. Otis Brawley, Chief Medical Officer of the American Cancer Society.

The study found that the patients also sustained less blood loss, had fewer complications overall and were more likely to heal faster and spend less time in the hospital.

However, the study of *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that people who undergone minimally invasive robotic prostate surgery had an increased risk of incontinence, erectile dysfunction and other genitourinary complications.

Robot-assisted surgery was developed to overcome the limitations of minimally invasive surgery, in which the surgeon uses a computer console to manipulate the instruments attached to multiple robot arms. The computer translates the surgeon’s movements, which are then carried out on the patient by the robot. Remote surgery is also possible due to this. Thanks to the rapidly improving technology, robots can also perform surgery today without a human surgeon.

But how do you decide whether robotic surgery is the right option? First, research the team as successful use of the new technology, depends on whether the surgeons involved are already skilled at the procedure in question.

The entire team that will be involved in the surgery should be trained in the use of robotics. Surgeons need to know how to use the equipment. In fact, even the assistants and nurses need to know how to troubleshoot the technology.

Someone considering robotic surgery should also ask how often the surgeon in question has previously performed the surgery because repetition builds skill with the equipment. A surgeon who has performed the procedure hundreds of times has more experience than someone who's performed it a dozen times.

But all said and done, this does not suffice to ensure that robotic surgery would be the best option. A number of risk factors should be taken into account before choosing this surgery over traditional surgical methods, including the prospective patient's age and overall health.

"Arthrobot" was the world's first robot. Arthrobot was developed and used for the first time in Vancouver, Canada in 1983 by a team led by Dr. James McEwen and Geof Auchinlek, in collaboration with orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Brian Day. A national channel called "National Geographic" produced a movie on robotics which featured Arthrobot.

In 1985, a robot called, PUMA 560, was used to place a needle for a brain biopsy using CT guidance. In 1988, PROBOT, developed at Imperial College London, was used to perform prostatic surgery. ROBODOC from Integrated Surgical Systems was introduced in 1992 to mill out precise fittings in the femur for hip replacement.

The da Vinci Surgical System was developed later. This surgical system consisted of three components: a surgeon's console, a patient-side robotic cart with four arms manipulated by the surgeon and a high-definition 3D vision system. The device senses the surgeon's hand movements and translates them electronically into scaled-down micro-movements to manipulate the tiny proprietary instruments. It also detects and filters out any tremors in the surgeon's hand movements, so that they are not duplicated robotically.

The da Vinci System is FDA cleared for prostate cancer, hysterectomy and mitral valve repair. It is used in more than 800 hospitals in the US and Europe. Used in 48,000 procedures in 2006, this system sells for about \$1.2 million. The new da Vinci HD SI released in April 2009 currently sells for \$1.75 million.

In September 2010, the Eindhoven University of Technology announced the development of the Sofie surgical system, the first surgical robot to employ force feedback.

Major advances aided by surgical robots have been remote surgery, minimally invasive surgery and unmanned surgery. Some major

advantages of robotic surgery are precision, miniaturization, smaller incisions, decreased blood loss, less pain and lesser healing time. Robotic techniques are also associated with reduced duration of hospital stays, lesser blood loss, transfusions and use of pain medication. Reduced recovery times are not only better for the patient, but they also reduce the number of staff needed during surgery, nursing care required after surgery and, therefore, the overall cost of hospital stays.

One of the disadvantages is the cost factor. With the cost of the robot at \$1,200,000 dollars and disposable supply costs of \$1,500 per procedure, this is still quite high. Another disadvantage is that we are still lacking in additional surgical training to operate the system.

In 2007, a medical team, at the University of Illinois, Chicago, lead by Professor Pier Cristoforo Giulianotti, performed the world's first ever robotic pancreatectomy and also the Midwests fully robotic Whipple surgery. In April 2008, the same team of surgeons performed the world's first fully minimally invasive liver resection for living donor transplantation.

The Stereotaxis Magnetic Navigation System (MNS) has been developed to increase precision and safety in ablation procedures for arrhythmias and atrial fibrillation while reducing radiation exposure. Dr. Andrea Natale has referred to the new Stereotaxis procedures with the magnetic irrigated catheters as "revolutionary".

Multiple types of procedures have been performed with either the *Zeus* or *da Vinci Robot* systems, including bariatric surgery. MD Robotic's NeuroArm is the world's first MRI-compatible surgical robot for neurosurgery.

Gynecology is one of the fastest growing fields of robotic surgery which includes the use of the *da Vinci* surgical system in benign gynecology and gynecologic oncology. Robotic surgery can be used to treat fibroids, abnormal periods, endometriosis, ovarian tumors, pelvic prolapse and female cancers. For hysterectomies, myomectomies and lymph node biopsies, the need for large abdominal incisions has been virtually eliminated.

The Center for Robotic Surgery at Children's Hospital Boston provides a high level of expertise in pediatric robotic surgery. Specially-trained surgeons use a high-tech robot to perform complex and delicate operations through very small surgical openings. The results are less pain, faster recoveries, shorter hospital stays, smaller scars and above all happier patients.

Some scientists are also attempting to miniaturize the robots. The University of Nebraska Medical Center has led a multi-campus effort for a collaborative research on mini-robotics. There may also be a day when nanorobots may be inserted into people's bloodstreams to replace the general practitioners.

While robotic surgery systems are still relatively uncommon, several hospitals around the world have moved on to the same. These systems, with the potential to improve the safety and effectiveness of surgeries, also have some drawbacks. It is still a relatively young branch of science and is very expensive. Some hospitals are still not sure of the success of such a technology.

While the use of robotic surgery has become an item in the advertisement of medical services, critics point out studies that indicate that long-term results are superior to those after laparoscopic surgery are lacking. The robotic system does not come cheap and has a learning curve. Data are absent to show that the increased costs can be justified.

The question still remains that how many of us would volunteer to be the guinea pig for the world's first unassisted heart surgery? There were about a million doctors on hand to monitor Dr. Carlo Pappone's robosurgeon working on a 34-year-old Italian patient suffering from atrial fibrillation (heart flutters). Luckily for the pioneering patient, the 50-minute surgery was smooth. One can conclude from the above discussion is that the future belongs to robotic surgeries. While it may take time to build the trust of mankind in the latest advancement, what we cannot deny is the fact that surgical robotics is already a reality.



Biographical

1. People's President: Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam (1931-2015)

Abstract: The US-National Flag was flying half mast, Gov of India declared seven days mourning, people across the country flooded to take the last darshan at the official residence 10 Raja Ji Marg, New Delhi and finally the mortal remains of the Mahatma Scientist of India was taken to his birth land, a small coastal village Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu state of India. At the time of a convocation ceremony at IIT Varanasi, it was Dr Kalam who refused to sit on a chair because it was bigger than the other chairs. Treating everybody equal is a virtue not even the greatest of minds manage to conquer. This poet scientist, a great nationalist and a humanitarian breathed his last on 27th. of July, 2015 in the North-East Shilong, of India. And his will that he be remembered as a teacher

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam was the 11th elected President of India from 2002 to 2007 with the support of both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition Indian National Congress. A career scientist turned reluctant politician, Kalam was born and raised in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Kalam was born in a Tamil Muslim family in Rameswaram in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. His father Jainulabudeen was a boat owner, and his mother Ashiamma, a housewife. He came from a poor background and started working at an early age to supplement his family's income. After completing school, Kalam distributed newspapers to contribute to his father's income.

In his school years he had average grades but was described as a bright and hard working student who had a strong desire to learn and spend hours on his studies, especially mathematics.

After completing his education at the Ramanathapuram Schwartz Matriculation School, Kalam went on to attend Saint Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, then affiliated with the University of Madras, from where he graduated in physics in 1954. Towards the end of the course, he was not enthusiastic about the subject and would later regret the four years he studied it. He moved to Madras in 1955 to study aerospace engineering. At the early stage of his life, he was very keen to become

air fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force, but couldn't make it. He decided to study physics and aerospace engineering. While Kalam was working on a senior class project, the Dean was dissatisfied with his lack of progress and threatened to revoke his scholarship unless the project was finished within the next three days. Kalam met the deadline, impressing the Dean, who later said to him, "I was putting you under stress and asking you to meet a difficult deadline".

After graduating from the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1960, Kalam joined the Aeronautical Development Establishment of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as a scientist. He started his career by designing a small helicopter for the Indian Army, but remained unconvinced by his choice of a job at DRDO.

To his first stage of career making, he worked as a scientist and a science administrator mainly at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Kalam was also part of the INCOSPAR committee working under Vikram Sarabhai, the renowned space scientist. In 1969, Kalam was transferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) where he was the project director of India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which successfully deployed the *Rohini* satellite in near-earth orbit in July 1980. He had first started work on an expandable rocket project independently at DRDO in 1965. In 1969, Kalam received the government's approval and expanded the programme to include more engineers.

In 1963 - 64, he visited NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland and Wallops Flight Facility. Between the 1970s and 1990s, Kalam made an effort to develop the Polar Satellite Launching Vehicle (PSLV) and SLV-III projects, both of which proved to be successful.

He was intimately involved in India's civilian space program and military missile development efforts. He thus came to be known as the *Missile Man of India* for his work on the development of ballistic missile and launch vehicle technology. He also played a pivotal organizational, technical and political role in India's *Pokhran-II* nuclear tests in 1998, the first since the original nuclear test by India in 1974.

Kalam was invited by Raja Ramanna to witness the country's first nuclear test Smiling Buddha as the representative of TBRL, even though he had not participated in its development. In the 1970s, Kalam also directed two projects, *Project Devil* and *Project Valiant*, which sought to develop ballistic missiles from the technology of the successful SLV programme. Despite the disapproval of the Union Cabinet, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi allotted secret funds for these aerospace projects through her discretionary powers under Kalam's directorship. Kalam played an integral role convincing the Union Cabinet to conceal the true nature of these classified aerospace projects. His research and educational leadership brought him great laurels and prestige in the 1980s, which prompted the government to initiate an advanced missile programme under his directorship. Dr. Kalam and Dr V S Arunachalam, metallurgist and scientific adviser to the Defence Minister, worked on the suggestion by the then Defense Minister, R. Venkataraman on a proposal for simultaneous development of a quiver of missiles instead of taking planned missiles one after another. R Venkataraman was instrumental in getting the cabinet approval for allocating 388 crores for the mission, named Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) and appointed Kalam as the chief executive. Kalam played a major part in developing many missiles under the mission including Agni, an intermediate range ballistic missile and Prithvi, the tactical surface-to-surface missile, although the projects have been criticised for mismanagement and cost and time overruns.

Kalam served as the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of the Defence Research and Development Organisation from July 1992 to December 1999. The *Pokhran-II* nuclear tests were conducted during this period in which he played an intensive political and technological role. Kalam served as the Chief Project Coordinator, along with Rajagopala Chidambaram, during the testing phase. Media coverage of Kalam during this period made him the country's best known nuclear scientist. However, the director of the site test, K Santhanam, said that the thermonuclear bomb had been a "fizzle" and criticised Kalam for issuing an incorrect report. Both Kalam and Chidambaram dismissed the claims.

In 1998, along with cardiologist Soma Raju, Kalam developed a low cost coronary stent, named the "Kalam-Raju Stent". In 2012, the

duo designed a rugged tablet computer for health care in rural areas, which was named the “Kalam-Raju Tablet”.

Kalam served as the 11th President of India, succeeding K. R. Narayanan. He won the 2002 presidential election with an electoral vote of 922,884, surpassing the 107,366 votes won by Lakshmi Sahgal. He served from 25 July 2002 to 25 July 2007.

On 10 June 2002, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which was in power at the time, expressed that they would nominate Kalam for the post of President, and both the Samajwadi Party and the Nationalist Congress Party backed his candidacy. After the Samajwadi Party announced its support for Kalam, Narayanan chose not to seek a second term in office, leaving the field clear. Kalam said of the announcement of his candidature:

I am really overwhelmed. Everywhere both in Internet and in other media, I have been asked for a message. I was thinking what message I can give to the people of the country at this juncture.

On 18 June, Kalam filed his nomination papers in the Indian Parliament, accompanied by then the prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his senior Cabinet colleagues.

The polling for the presidential election began on 15 July 2002 in Parliament and the state assemblies, with the media claiming that the election was a one-sided affair and Kalam’s victory was a foregone conclusion . The count was held on 18 July. Kalam became the 11th president of the Republic of India in an easy victory, and moved into the Rashtrapati Bhavan after he was sworn in on 25 July. Kalam was the third President of India to have been honoured with a Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honour, before becoming the President. Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1954) and Dr Zakir Hussain (1963) were the earlier recipients of Bharat Ratna who later became the President of India. He was also the first scientist and the first bachelor to occupy Rashtrapati Bhawan.

During his term as president, he was affectionately known as the *People’s President*.

Signing the Office of Profit Bill as said was the toughest decision he had taken during his tenure. Kalam was criticised for his inaction in deciding the fate of 20 out of the 21 mercy petitions submitted to him during his tenure. Article 72 of the Constitution of India empowers the President of India to grant pardons, and suspend or commute the

death sentence of convicts on death row. Kalam acted on only one mercy plea in his five-year tenure as president, rejecting the plea of rapist Dhananjay Chatterjee, who was later hanged. Perhaps the most notable plea was from Afzal Guru, who was convicted of conspiracy in the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and was sentenced to death by the Supreme Court of India in 2004. While the sentence was scheduled to be carried out on 20 October 2006, the pending action on his mercy plea resulted in him remaining on death row. He also took the controversial decision to impose President's Rule in Bihar in 2005.

In September 2003, in an interactive session in PGI Chandigarh, Kalam supported the need of Uniform Civil Code in India, keeping in view the population of the country.

At the end of his term, on 20 June 2007, Kalam expressed his willingness to consider a second term in office provided there was certainty about his victory in the 2007 presidential election. However, two days later, he decided not to contest the Presidential election again stating that he wanted to avoid involving Rashtrapati Bhavan from any political processes. He did not have the support of the left parties, Shiv Sena and UPA constituents, to receive a renewed mandate.

Nearing the expiry of the term of the 12th President Pratibha Patil on 24 July 2012, media reports in April claimed that Kalam was likely to be nominated for his second term. After the reports, social networking sites were notable for people supporting his candidature. The BJP potentially backed his nomination, saying that the party would lend their support if the Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party and Indian National Congress proposed him for the 2012 presidential election A month ahead of the election,

Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mamata Banerjee also expressed their support for Kalam. Days afterwards, Mulayam Singh Yadav backed out, leaving Mamata Banerjee as the solitary supporter. On 18 June 2012, Kalam declined to contest the 2012 presidential poll. He said of his decision not to do so:

Many, many citizens have also expressed the same wish. It only reflects their love and affection for me and the aspiration of the people. I am really overwhelmed by this support. This being their wish, I respect it. I want to thank them for the trust they have in me

After leaving office, Kalam became a visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Management Shillong, the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad and the Indian Institute of Management Indore, an honorary fellow of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Chancellor of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology Thiruvananthapuram, professor of Aerospace Engineering at Anna University and an adjunct at many other academic and research institutions across India. He taught information technology at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad and technology at Banaras Hindu University and Anna University.

In May 2012, Kalam launched a programme for the youth of India called the *What Can I Give Movement*, with a central theme of defeating corruption. He also enjoyed writing Tamil poetry and playing the veenai, a South Indian string instrument. Kalam listened to Carnatic devotional music every day and believed in the Hindu culture. Kalam used to read Bhagavad Gita and was a vegetarian. He was nominated for the MTV Youth Icon of the Year award in 2003 and 2006. In the 2011 Hindi film *I Am Kalam*, Kalam is portrayed as a positive influence on a poor but bright Rajasthani boy named Chhotu, who renames himself Kalam in honour of his idol.

In 2011, Kalam was criticised by civil groups over his stand on the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant. He supported the establishment of the nuclear power plant and was accused of not speaking with the local people. The protesters were hostile to his visit as they perceived to him to be a pro-nuclear scientist and were unimpressed by the assurances provided by him regarding the safety features of the plant.

Kalam died of a massive cardiac arrest on the evening of 27 July 2015 after he collapsed while delivering a lecture on 'Liveable Planet' at Indian Institute of Management Shillong. Following the collapse on around 6.30 pm, Kalam, was wheeled into Bethany hospitals' ICU in a critical condition but he was confirmed dead after more than two hours he was taken to the hospital. Kalam would have turned 84 in October 2015. Governor of Meghalaya, V. Shanmuganathan rushed to the hospital on hearing the news of Kalam's admission. Later Shanmughanathan said Kalam died at 7.45 pm even after medical team's best efforts to revive Kalam. On 28 July, morning Chief Secretary PBO Warjri told reporters that he had spoken to Union Home Secretary, L.C. Goyal asking for arrangements to be made for carrying Kalam's body to Delhi from Guwahati.

Dr. Kalam was a dynamic person. He lived his full life distinctively for a cause. There are some very popular books widely read to his credit. In his book *India 2020*, Kalam strongly advocated an action plan to develop India into a “knowledge superpower” and a developed nation by the year 2020. He regarded his work on India’s nuclear weapons programme as a way to assert India’s place as a future superpower. He says:

I have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) agriculture and food processing; (2) education and healthcare; (3) information and communication technology; (4) infrastructure, reliable and quality electric power, surface transport and infrastructure for all parts of the country; and (5) self-reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and if advanced in a coordinated way, will lead to food, economic and national security.

Very remarkable to note that there was considerable demand in South Korea for translated versions of books authored by him.

Kalam took an active interest in other developments in the field of science and technology, including a research programme for developing bio-implants. He also supported Open Source technology over proprietary solutions, predicting that the use of free software on a large scale would bring the benefits of information technology to more people.

Kalam set a target of interacting with 100,000 students during the two years after his resignation from the post of scientific adviser in 1999. He explained, “I feel comfortable in the company of young people, particularly high school students. Henceforth, I intend to share with them experiences, helping them to ignite their imagination and preparing them to work for a developed India for which the road map is already available.”

Kalam’s 79th birthday was recognised as *World Student Day* by the United Nations. He has also received honorary doctorates from 40 universities. The Government of India has honoured him with the Padma Bhushan in 1981 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1990 for his work with ISRO and DRDO and his role as a scientific advisor to the Government. In 1997, Kalam received India’s highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, for his contribution to the scientific research and modernisation of defence technology in India. In 2005, Switzerland declared 26 May as “Science Day” to commemorate Kalam’s visit to the country. In 2013, he was the recipient of the Von Braun Award

from the National Space Society “to recognize excellence in the management and leadership of a space-related project.”

After serving a term of five years, he returned to his civilian life of education, writing and public service. He received several prestigious awards, including the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honour. His national and international credentials are outstanding.

Year of Award or Honour	Name of Award or Honour	Awarding Organisation
2014	Doctor of Science	Edinburgh University, UK
2012	Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa)	Simon Fraser University
2011	IEEE Honorary Membership	IEEE
2010	Doctor of Engineering	University of Waterloo
2009	Honorary Doctorate	Oakland University
2009	Hoover Medal	ASME Foundation, USA
2009	International von Kármán Wings Award	California Institute of Technology, USA
2008	Doctor of Engineering (Honoris Causa)	Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
2007	Honorary Doctorate of Science and Technology	Carnegie Mellon University
2007	King Charles II Medal	Royal Society, UK
2007	Honorary Doctorate of Science	University of Wolverhampton, UK
2000	Ramanujan Award	Alvars Research Centre, Chennai
1998	Veer Savarkar Award	Government of India
1997	Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration	Indian National Congress
1997	Bharat Ratna	Government of India
1994	Distinguished Fellow	Institute of Directors (India)
1990	Padma Vibhushan	Government of India
1981	Padma Bhushan	Government of India

A legend has passed away. The brightest star in India just left to take his place in the galaxy above. President APJ Abdul Kalam was the most inspirational figure we have seen in this century and the past. Exceptionally talented and unbelievably humble, this man was the most

ideal human being there could ever be. Our chest swells with pride at the fact that he was our country's president once upon a time. From doing ground breaking work in missile and space programmes to encouraging budding talent, this man has inspired a whole generation towards excellence.

No words can express the loss the nation has suffered. There has been no other figure as inspiring as he, and we hope his life and lessons will give birth to many other kalams who will grace our motherland in the years to come.

This great man was blessed with outstanding feats he achieved that nobody ever could, and raised the benchmark of excellence to great heights:

The former president and one of the most talented rocket scientists in the country was a fisherman's son born in a poor family. At one point of time, he distributed newspapers to support his family. But he went on to study aerospace engineering from Madras Institute of Technology, and soon joined DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation). From selling newspapers to designing helicopters - he proved nothing was impossible;

The breakthrough in his illustrious career came when he was welcomed at ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) and appointed the project director of the SLV-III mission - India's first satellite launch programme! And thus, he became the Missile Man of the country; Dr Kalam not only successfully launched the satellite Rohini in 1980, but also expanded India's space programme to bring it at par with the powers that be of the world. This man was responsible for empowering India on the basis of its military strength after he took the reins of the country's missile programme in his hands; brilliance never goes unnoticed, and in 1992, Dr Kalam was appointed chief scientific advisor to the prime minister. He was spearheading India's missile strategy and power at a time when the country was struggling with maintaining friendly ties with its neighbour Pakistan as well as establishing a stronghold in international corridors; Kalam managed it perfectly well by successfully conducting the Pokhran-II nuclear tests that sent out a clear signal that India could defend itself well.

An iron hand and a clear conscience is what it takes to lead a nation, and Kalam proved it bang on; the simplicity of his demeanour and the brilliance of his wisdom was evident in his simple lifestyle. Even after

becoming president of the country, his needs were few. His books and veena (Yes, not many know he could play the veena really well) were pretty much the things he needed to be happy. A mark of a truly great person indeed; he gave away all his wealth and savings to a trust called PURA (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas) that he founded. A rocket scientist and president of a nation with no bank balance - could there be a better example of a greater man?

The mark of greatness lies in humility. At a convocation ceremony at IIT Varanasi, Dr Kalam refused to sit on a chair because it was bigger than the other chairs. Treating everybody equal is a virtue not even the greatest of minds manage to conquer. When he became president, his “presidential guests” at the Kerala Raj Bhavan were - a cobbler and the owner of a small eating joint. His vision of the country was a progressive one, and no other politician has encouraged young talent like he has. Even while president, he continued to visit schools and shared his knowledge with young minds. He was known to adore children and never refused a child. In the last days of his life, he dedicated himself to sharing his wisdom with the young generation. It is poetic justice that he went away delivering a lecture at a university. As they say, died with his boots on.

We salute the great man who led by example. His was a life well lived, and dedicated to the service of the nation.

2. Narendra Modi: The Prime Minister of India

Abstract: Born in 1950, Narendra Damodardas Modi is the current and 15th prime minister of India. He is the first incumbent of its kind after India's independence. Power obsession is an obvious phenomenon in politics. Does it apply in case of Modi? Well, it's a matter of future tense. Nevertheless, critics opined that Narendra Modi was obsessed with power he got to enjoy as the Gujarat CM. He would never ever want to let go of his position for a lesser cause. But going by 'Sadbhavna' fast in Ahmedabad, he had silently put forth his desire. The report by the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) has acted as an icing on the cake. But the report has acted as a double-edged sword. According to the report, Gujarat under Modi had the most effective governance amongst all the states in India followed by Bihar when Nitish Kumar was the chief minister. People of India have chosen Modi as the prime minister of India the largest democracy of the world where the healthiest thing is that the axe of political criticism has spared no one. In line with a tradition like this

Modi's assumption that in prehistoric mythological times, India had mastered genetic science and plastic surgery, sounds pompous but irrational as observed by a TV journalist. But the truth being the truth, he certainly enjoys a clear lack of competition inside his own bloc. The acronym Namo' has now become a standard yardstick of Indian politics getting its root deeper into the psyche of common Hindu dominated population of the country.

Narendra Modi, without taking into consideration the comments and appraisals of his political rivals and critics, is a political idol without a shadow of doubt. The nature of respect he commands throughout Gujarat is awe-inspiring. And after the end of Vajpayee era, he is the lone warrior standing tall in the NDA camp, often giving sleepless nights to political parties particularly the Congress and the Samajwadi Party. He could retain the chair of CM of Gujarat as long as he wished and presumably there was no one in the state who could give him even a close fight. But that's not the point. The point is that he as a potential PM retains his stature in times to come and stands firm to the expectations of the people he promised during storming election campaign of 2014. And even if he fights against all the odds and gets there, would he be able to do justice to the position which millions can only dream of?

One needs to weigh all the pros and cons of this possible situation. There is no denying the fact that Narendra Modi is obsessed with the power he gets to enjoy as he did in Gujarat as CM. He was taken as a total control freak who wanted even the movement of a shade of grass in his state to be under his authority. He would never ever want to let go of his position for a lesser cause. But going by the recently concluded 'Sadbhavna' fast in Ahmedabad, he had silently put forth his desire. And the report by the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) has acted as an icing on the cake. But the report has acted as a double-edged sword. According to the report, Gujarat under Modi was the most effective governance amongst all the states in India followed by Bihar under Nitish Kumar. Political weightage of Nitish Kumar as of now on the current political circuit is marginalized who can't command even his own party against Modi if he ever wishes so. We understand that no political stalwart of any party including a century old party like Congress and others can come between him and his dream.

Now there arises the sense of insecurity on Modi's part. Another not-so-encouraging feature of Modi's political personality is his ways

of handling religious issues. Even when most of the Muslims and other Minority groups are claiming to be satisfied under Modi, there is still much left to be done in this area. Secularism is one of the fields where the Bihar CM can score some brownie points over Modi. Though he claims that he has risen above religions and castes, he is still very much the poster boy of 'Hindutva' and RSS. Even though Modi seems to be doing nothing wrong these days. Godhra as of now is forgotten but it is said truly 'corpses are not buried in politics. They are kept alive so that they can speak when the time comes.' Therefore no prizes for guessing that Modi will have a very tough time ahead maintaining a balance between his images of a staunch enthusiast of Hinduism and keeping Muslims content.

But no matter how much we try to bring out the negativities in him, we cannot miss the charisma he radiates. He is the finest manager of Indian media amongst all leaders. He has excellent organizational capabilities, dynamic personality and can motivate even a corpse to move with his powerful words, to name a few of his qualities. The business stalwarts of the country (read Ratan Tata, Mukesh Ambani etc.) seem to be in awe of him. The fact that GDP growth rate in Gujarat has been 11.05% over the past few years (a number that has been well publicized by the Gujarat government) as against the national value of 9% is something one cannot overlook. The looks of the power hubs of the state, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and Surat have been turned upside down, leaving the other cities of the country gasping for breath. Gujarat is quickly turning into an economically and industrially ideal state, something which other states will look up to as an example. If we consider the aspect of a leader's willpower to bring positive changes in his/her constituency skipping the other attributes, then Narendra Modi undeniably stands out amongst his counterparts in other states, may be even leaving behind his arch-rival, Nitish Kumar. But then again, there are a whole lot of other facets which need to be taken into consideration when we are talking about the most powerful face of the world's largest democracy.

Lok Sabha elections 2014 has seen a shift of power from the reigning UPA coalition to the NDA, then this debate will turn into an unavoidable situation. But then instead of writing columns and airing programs on televisions pondering over that Modi is the right choice, we should better let the country and its people decide. But the truth

being the truth, Narendra Modi certainly enjoys a clear lack of competition inside his own bloc.

The bottom line is, like most of the realistic political situations, it is extremely tough to take a side (only when someone is not paid to do the same). The sine qua non for having a luxury to choose amongst suitable candidates is their availability and the truth is that we don't have too many viable options in this regard and perhaps we don't have.

Modi in his ablest work style has established himself as the leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the index of his performance as the Chief Minister of Gujarat state from 2001 to 2014 has surfaced in the Indian politics as a remarked administrator and development sloganized. He is the Member of Parliament (MP) from Varanasi is again his strategic and political farfetched vision of Indian culture and civilization. Modi has set an example for the first time after Independence that he finds himself to be a Hindu Nationalist and a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and can become the prime minister. Controversial though, but he has succeeded in his venture to spread the message both within India as well as internationally. His administration has been criticized for failing to act to prevent the 2002 Gujarat riots, at the same time he has been praised for his economic policies, which are credited with creating an environment for a high rate of economic growth in Gujarat. However, his administration has also been criticized for failing to make a significant positive impact upon the human development of the state.

Modi as an Indian prime minister is different. Unlike his predecessors, his political philosophy and thoughts take a different side in terms of his duty and responsibility. He is quite comfortable working as a Hindu prime minister of India. The impact of his learning Hindu religion and practicing Hinduism is exceptionally his identity of which he is proud of. In interviews Modi has spoken of visiting various Hindu *ashrams*, or places of Hindu religious learning, founded by Swami Vivekananda. The first of these was the Belur Math near Kolkata. His declaration and acceptance that he has worked with his uncle in Vadnagar at a canteen at the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation strengthens the strings of karma and motivates the millions people of poor section of the country. His acquaintance with Inamdar, at Hedge war Bhavan, the RSS headquarters in the city paved a wider way to the understanding of *rashtra sewa and Hinduism*. *It was* the impact of Indo-

Pakistan War of 1971, he stopped working for his uncle and became a full-time *pracharak*/ campaigner of the RSS. Thereafter, he never looked back. Modi became a *sambhaag pracharak* (regional organizer) for the RSS and also earned an extramural degree in political science from Gujarat University. He received some RSS training in Nagpur, which was a prerequisite for taking up an official position in the Sangh Parivar on the basis of which he was given charge of Sangh's student wing, *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad*, in Gujarat. During 1975-77, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of the emergency, political opponents were jailed and political organizations including RSS were banned. Modi went underground in Gujarat and to evade arrest was occasionally disguised as a Sikh, saint, elderly man etc. and printed and sent booklets against the central government to Delhi. He also organized agitations and covert distribution of the Sangh's pamphlets. He also participated in the movement against the Emergency under Jayaprakash Narayan. He was made the general secretary of the Gujarat Lok Sangharsh Samiti and his primary role was to co-ordinate between activists in the state. During this period he wrote a book titled *Sangharsh ma Gujarat* (Gujarat's struggle) in Gujarati which chronicles events, anecdotes as well as his personal experiences.

In November 1995, Modi was elected National Secretary of BJP and was transferred to New Delhi where he was assigned responsibility for the party's activities in North India in states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Vaghela parted away from the BJP after he lost the 1996 Lok Sabha elections having previously threatened to do so in 1995. Modi was promoted to the post of general secretary (Organization) of the BJP in May 1998. While on the selection committee for the 1998 Assembly elections in Gujarat, Modi favoured supporters of Patel over those loyal to Vaghela, in an attempt to put an end to the factional divisions within the party. He was seen as a master strategist who knew the way out of every crisis. His strategies were credited as being a key to winning the 1998 elections. So were the May 2014 Lok Sabha elections which have created a history in the Indian polity.

Criticism apart whether bitter or soft, a new window has been opened where through people of the country can see a dozen upcoming national programs. Micro level welfare national scheme like Swachh-Bharat-Abhiyan started by Modi is to wake up and galvanize the thought

and perception of the people towards citizens' fundamental duty. Governance-government relationship appears to be a powerful and well-conceived device for the Prime Minister Modi and his government at the Centre.



3. The Greek Masters

Abstract : In Europe — the ancient Greece is responsible for many things. All the events and their ups and downs are remarkable in the history of Europe, where Greece alone played instrumental role in making a history. Athens is known for its intellectual awakening. Now, as never before, scholars and learned men discussed freely of what concerned them most — religion, philosophy, morality, politics, art and literature. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Socrates, Plato Aristotle and, of course, The Great Alexander—were all Greeks.

SOCRATES

“I am taking this cup of poison to drink for the sake of truth...” and Socrates took the poison. If there is anything absolute, it is truth. Everything is temporary. Socrates method of teaching is one of the best suited methods of teaching for growing minds. It proceeds by means of questions and answers. He did everything orally. He did not regard written work to be of much value. “Have you got a bad memory”, was Socrate’s comment when he observed a student making notes of his discourse. Socrates wanted that everything should be done orally while teaching. No writing, no reading of books, no examinations—what a wonderful way of teaching! When the students get the grip of the subject, they start putting questions and the teacher answers them. In this way everything is finished sweetly, silently and sanely.

Socrates was the best of the Greek philosophers. His pupils were the greatest men of knowledge without college. Plato was Socrate’s most obedient pupil. And so was Plato’s Aristotle. Alexander The Great, who desired to win the world was Aristotle pupil. When Socrates was about to leave this material world, he made a request to his friend to pay the cost of the hen which he had borrowed. Good husbands have bad wives. That seems to be a law of nature. And perhaps too much of good husbandry spoils wives. Xanthippes, the wife of Socrates was a very quarrelsome woman. He lived around 5th century B.C. He was among

the first philosophers who never thought to be a 'Sophist', means he never felt that he was wise for he was always in the pursuit of knowledge. As a philosophy, he claimed that philosophy was merely practice for getting used to death and dying. What philosophy has to do with death? What is the connection between philosophy and death? Socrates' argument makes a lot of sense to answer these questions. The flame of a candle is upward. It produces light and kills darkness. In case the flame shakes or disturbed by the wind, the objects cannot be seen clearly. So is the concentration. Removal of distractions is must to learn the truth. These distractions are not situational and circumstantial only, but mental and bodily distractions as well. Prejudiced, predefined and sensorial perceptions cannot view and examine the world accurately. Socrates argues that senses merely hinder and obscure the truth. The sense of sight can easily lead one astray when confronted with naturally occurring optical illusions. Similarly, sound does not when one is trying to concentrate. They cloud judgement, therefore, be detached from the mind. Socrates argues that philosophers must view the world around them with their souls in order to accurately learn about it.

Socrates looked upon death with cheer and hope. Jainism says that death should be celebrated, a similar thought is being reflected in Socrates' school of thought also. Socrates believed that after death the soul is free to seek truth without any hindrances. That is why he saw his death as a liberation from the shackles of life.

PLATO

Plato's date of birth is generally put down at 427 B.C. but he certainly died in 348 B.C. He was the most celebrated disciple of Socrates. By his time, the glory of Athenian art and literature, illustrated in the works of artists like Phidias and Ploygnotus and writers like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, was on the wane, and their place was taken by philosophy and oratory. Confronted with the declined in national character and the standards of social and public life. The philosopher in particular discussed a great variety of matters, of concern to the citizen and the state, applying the test of reason to each. Socrates head them all by his dispassionate quest of truth. It has challenged many in terms of belief and convention. Besides all these—value of literature to society and it's nature and functions come in for it's due share of consideration during Plato's Greece, as the 4th century B.C. was an age of critical enquiry and analysis.

Plato was not a professed critic of literature and his critical observations are not embodied in any single work. His chief interest was philosophical investigation, which forms the subject of his great work, *The Dialogues*. Every discussion is in the form of questions and answer by a number of interlocutors, the chief of whom is Socrates. It is Socrates who utters these profound truths that form the philosophical system of Plato.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle lived from 384 B.C. to 322 B.C. He was the most distinguished disciple of Plato. To Indians he is also known as the tutor of Alexander the Great, who overran north western India in 326 B.C. He is believed to have written nearly half a dozen critical treatise, of which only two are extant *Poetics* and *Rhetorics*. *Poetics* dealing with the art of poetry and the *Rhetorics* with the art of speaking. Poetic however, deals with many more problems of literature than Rhetoric.

Greece during Aristotle's period was a hub of scholarly activities. The city **Macedonia** was Europe's famous ancient city and more so because it was Aristotle's scholarly place of Greece. His father was a royal physician. At the age of 17, he proceeded to Athens to study at Plato's Academy. He remained there nearly 20 years. He was there as a student first later as a teacher also. After Plato's death in 347 B.C. Aristotle went to ASSOS. Here his friend Hermias was the ruler. He taught Hermias. In due course of time, he married his niece and adopted Pythias as his daughter. Then Persia (Faras) was in war with Greece. Consequently, Hermias was captured and executed by the Persians. Certainly it was not a comfortable situation for Aristotle. He couldn't bear with his friend's tragedy and finally he went to Pella that was Macedonia's capital then, and get the opportunity to teach the young son of the king. That young son was nobody else but the Alexander the Great.

335 B.C. was a turning point in Aristotle's life. Alexander became the King and after a short stay Aristotle went back to Athens. Later on, he established his own Academy there called Lyceum. The style of teaching was unique. Most of the lessons were taught while waling. Both students and teachers used to walk and teaching-learning activities were performed. Due to this unique feature of the School, it got another name also called 'The Peripatetic School'. Peripatetic is a Greek word which means walking. After Alexander's death in 323 B.C. There was anti-Macedonian feelings in Athens. This rebellious movement

compelled Aristotle to move to a family estate in Euboea, and died there.

'Aristotle' literary and most rhetorical works leaves the reader in no doubt as to the nature and purpose of poetics. It is not a mere emancipation of the principles of the poetic art. Its conclusions are firmly rooted in the Greek literature. Aristotle followed his teacher's shown-path. Art of discourse was the main intellectual activity. He used his dialogue in his beginning years most emphatically at the Academy. He did some very technical writings such as a dictionary of philosophical terms and a summary of the Doctrines of Phythagoras. Of these, very few writings have survived. Nevertheless, Aristotle's work on various subjects are as true as today as they were in his own day.

Aristotle's writings cover a wide range of various disciplines : physics, astronomy, meteorology, biology and medicines. Most remarkable is his observation on poetry. He considers the nature of Poetic art. Following Plato, he calls the poet an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, who imitates one of three objects—'things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be' : in other words, what is past or present, what is commonly believed, and what is ideal. The function of poetry according to Aristotle is to please. The very two instincts of imitation and of harmony and rhythm, from which it springs, are indulged in for the pleasure they give. Thus, from the Aristotelian and Greek point of art is an element in the higher life of the community; The pleasure it affords is an enduring pleasure, an aesthetic enjoyment which is not divorced from civic ends.

Aristotle's remark on the study of biology is equally important to note. He regarded the world as made up of individuals (substances) occurring in fixed natural kinds. He as an astronomer, proposed a finite spherical universe and the earth as it's centre. This centre is made of four elements : earth, air, fire, and water. Aristotalian physics in terms of these four elements has a right place, determined by it's relative heaviness, i.e., specific gravity. Each moves naturally in a straight line.

Plato's approach to literature was that of a social reformer, as truth is the ultimate goal; Aristotle's is that of a scientist. Plato wanted literature to do the work of morality, as it is the sole purpose of humanity; Aristotle expects it to be no more than what it is — art. It means that Aristotle clearly sees the distinction between the two which Plato had failed to see.

ALEXANDER

Alexander was Aristotle's most-loved disciple. He was the only Greek ruler who established himself as the leader of the world in his time. He was king of the kings and got the unique title 'Great'. Even today, Alexander is addressed as Alexander "The Great". Aristotle taught him literature, science, medicine, philosophy and the art of discourse. His father was Philip, the ruler of Macedonia in 359 B.C. Alexander was crowned after his father's death in 336 B.C. In his thirteen years reign, Alexander achieved mountain high success and became the world's most important personality. Philip couldn't do much that he had planned. Alexander expanded his might in a very short period of time and made his empire stronger and stronger. He crushed all types of revolts in Athens. He punished the rebels who were trying to break away from Macedonia. He destroyed the city of Thebes and gave stunning defeat to his neighbouring rulers. He made Greece powerful and united.

Macedonia, Athens and part of Greece were in confrontation with Persia. Then Persia was very powerful and the ruler was a great politician of his time. In 332 B.C. Alexander led his army and entered into Persia. In due course of time, the great war with Persia was won. He defeated the Persian army, and captured territories of Asia Minor. Consequently, he fought a number of wars in 332 B.C. and conquered Tyre, Gaza and in 327, he won Egypt. 331 B.C. is a remarkable date in the history of Persia. Alexander defeated the main Persian army in Mesopotamia. The Persian King 'Darius' was killed by his own soldier as a result, Alexander declared himself the king of Persia. The Persian territories became a viable route to enter Asia for Alexander. It was thus, the Persian land where Alexander decided to conquer the whole world.

In 327 B.C. Alexander led his army towards India. It was then that the Alexander's army decided to return to Macedonia. They refused to move further. They were nostalgic to see their homes and families. Alexander did not protest and agreed to turn back. He went back to Babylon in 323 B.C. There he fell sick. His body ran high with fever and he died. He was just 33 years old.

Alexander was a great admirer of Greek culture, art and aesthetic values. Wherever he went out his country, he carried with him such impressions and introduced them to non-Greek people. He was responsible for spreading Greek culture throughout western Asia. He opened up a passage from East to Greece establishing social, cultural,

political and economical relations. He was not an orthodox ruler. He kept his mind open. He adopted ideas and customs from the non-Greek. He married a Persian woman, and a number of Persians were part of his powerful army. Wherever he caught and captured territories, he got them transformed into new beautiful cities. One of them is today's Alexander of Egypt which was conquered in 327 B.C.

Greek civilization is also called 'Hellenistic Age'. It happened so after Alexander death in 323 B.C. Hellenistic means 'Greek Speaking' or 'behaving like a Greek.' It spread beyond Greece. This newly born civilization shifted from Greece to Alexander of Egypt. But it didn't prove to be a wise step for the rulers of Greece. This polarisation of power weakened Greece. Cities and states were not as strong as they were during the Alexander rule. They couldn't defend themselves from foreign power and the downfall of the Empire began.

However, Alexander of Egypt, Greek civilization got stronger. Many scientific developments including mathematics, medical science and other discoveries which were popular during Hellenistic Age, came to Alexander, Egypt.



4. John Milton (1608–1674)

Abstract : John Milton was born in London and was educated at St. Pauls and at Cambridge. Comus and Lycidas are his famous literary works. He visited Italy and Grotius and Galileo. He raised the banner against Charles I, and sided with the Parliament. He was made Secretary of the Latin Tongue to the Parliament and Cromwell. During this period of active politics he got his landmark literary works Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained published. He died in London and was buried at St. Giles.

The Life of Milton has already been written in many forms. He was by birth a gentleman. His grandfather, John Richard, was the keeper of the forest of Shotover, a zealous papist, who disinherited his son because he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors. His father, John, who was the son disinherited, had recourse for his support to the profession of a scrivener. He was a man eminent for his skill in music, and his reputation in his profession was such that he grew rich and retired to an estate.

John Milton, the poet, was born in his father's house, at the Spread Eagle in Bread-Street, on December 9, 1608. His father John, was very keen to educate Milton. He received early education by a private tuition under the care of Thomas Young. Then, he was sent to St. Paul's School under the care of Mr. Gill. At the age of sixteen, he joined Christ's college in Cambridge.

By this time Milton was eminently skilled in the Latin tongue. He translated or versified two Psalms 114 and 136, which he thought worthy of the public eye, but they raised no great expectations. Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his 18th year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice discernment. Milton was the first Englishman who wrote Latin verses with classic elegance. Milton took both the usual degrees : Bachelor in 1628, and Master in 1632' but he left the university with no kindness for its institutions. He was alienated by injudicious severity of his governors. The effects of this nature of incident appears in his writings.

Milton went to the university with a design of entering into the church, later he declined and altered his mind. His reaction on becoming a clergyman is remarkable in terms of his resentment against the church : "Subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless, he took with a conscience that could retch, he must straight perjure himself. He thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the office of speaking, bought and began with servitude and forswearing."

When Milton left the university, he returned to his father, at Horton. He resided there for five years. During his stay here, he is said to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. His next production was *Lycidas*, an elegy, written in 1637 on the death of Mr. King, the son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland in the time of Queen Elizabeth, James, and Charles. Mr. King was Milton's finest friend at Cambridge. He was full of wits and Milton shared a lot with him, that was an honour to Milton's memory.

In 1638, Milton left England, and went first to Paris. From Paris he hastened into Italy. There he studied the language and literature. At Florence in two months duration, he found his way into the academies, and produced his compositions of repute. He found his merit with distinction, for which he didn't claim. From Florence, he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome where he got a warm welcome from the learned and great. He remained there for two months and thereafter proceeded to Naples. There he earned a high opinion of English elegance

and literature. He, then, decided to visit Sicily and Greece, but couldn't. He heard of the differences between the King and the parliament. As a result he returned home. His meeting with Galileo, who was, then a prisoner in the Inquisition for philosophical heresy at Naples was not liked by religious school/clergyman. The Restoration Movement was at it's peak. He felt strongly about his followers and friends in England.

When he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died, by a quiet and silent expiration, about 10th of November, 1664 at his house in Bunhillfields, and was buried next to his father in the Chancel of St. Giles, at Gripplegate. His funeral was very splendidly and numerously attended. A monument has been erected in Westminster Abbey "To the Author of "Paradise Lost."



5. Iqbal: A Legend and Master of the East

Abstract: Iqbal was a brilliant student since his school education. He got a number of medals and scholarships for his academic excellence. His higher education was with distinction. He earned popularity and reached close to the heart of the people of his time when he was resident student at Lahore. Later he became the shining star in the world of poetry. He was a poet philosopher of the East; fragrance of patriotism of 1904 poetry still fills every Indian-hearts with Indian spiritual food.

Let any of the two national festival come, All India Radio or Doordarshan echoes the air patriotism with: Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara...; an evergreen symphony of Indian Army, Navy and Air Force orchestras—the unforgettable tune reaches the heart of every Indian. Such is the immortal literary contribution of Mohammed Iqbal. He was born in Sialkot (now in Pakistan) on November 9, 1877. His father Sheikh Noor Mohammed was a tailor by profession and belonged to a family of immigrant Kashmiris. Though Seikh Noor Mohammed was not educated, but he was fond of education and strove to give his son the best education he could afford.

Iqbal's family belonged to a small village near Srinagar in Kashmir, remains of which are still found. His ancestor's were Brahmin family of Sapru 'gotra', later embraced Islam and the head of the family was rechristened Baba Saleh. After 1857 War of Independence, Iqbal's

ancestors migrated to Sialkot. Sheikh Noor Mohammed was a handsome youngman with fair complexion and keenly interested in problems of religions, ethics and mysticism.

Iqbal got his early education in the private madarsa. Soon, he was admitted to Scotch Mission High School. He passed Entrance Examination in 1893 with distinction and was awarded scholarship with medal. Also, he won scholarships in Primary and Middle examinations. During his school education, he got married. While studying in Intermediate classes in the upgraded Scotch Mission College, Iqbal started writing poetry and sought advice on his poetic compositions from the celebrated poet, Dagh Delhavi, through correspondence, which continued for a short while. After passing Intermediate examination, Iqbal was sent to Lahore in 1885 where he was admitted to B.A. in Government College with English, Philosophy and Arabic as his subjects. He passed B.A. with distinction, got scholarship and gold medals for obtaining highest marks in English and Arabic. It was Lahore he came in contact with Sir Thomas Arnold who had joined Government College here as a teacher after relinquishing his job in the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College (M.A.O.C), Aligarh, U.P. Lahore Government College Alumni are Lal Krishan Advani, Dev Anand and many more who are stalwarts in their respective fields. Iqbal passed his M.A. in Philosophy in 1899 and was awarded a gold medal for standing first in the Punjab University. During his stay in Lahore in student days, he was mainly a resident student putting up in Room No.1 of the Quadrangle. At this place, he started reciting poems in Mushairas.

In 1901 Iqbal got his poems published in a popular monthly journal "**Makhzan**". Those are Iqbal's celebrated poem on the Himalayas. Here he worked as Assistant professor, and later on published his first book on economics entitled **Ilmul-Iqtesad** (knowledge of Economics). In 1904, he wrote his famous poem : Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara, one of the most popular patriotic song which provides the signature tune to the AIR and Indian TV network. During pre 1905 and post 1905 poetic work, there was a turning point in Iqbal's art and thoughts. In September 1905, he sailed from Bombay to Europe and was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge as a student of Philosophy. Iqbal took his degree at Cambridge, obtained a doctorate at Munich, where he submitted his research thesis on the Metaphysics

of Persia and qualified as a barrister. He delivered a series of lectures in London, the first of which was held at Caxton Hall and was reported at length in all the leading papers.

Iqbal returned to Lahore in August 1908. He joined Government College, Lahore as a part-time Professor of Philosophy and English Literature. He was allowed to practise in Lahore Chief Court as a lawyer simultaneously. Later he left teaching and concentrated on law.

Next 10 years or so is said to be the golden period of Iqbal's poetry. He wrote incessantly against ruthless imperialist exploitation of African and Asian countries. In 1904, he wrote a heart-rending elegy of his mother. He experienced the organisation of thoughts on the subject of Death. Man's role in the Universe was theme that accelerated his mental faculty. For the first time, he made effort to evolve a Philosophy of his own and gave it poetic expression par excellence.

The poet Iqbal had now found his style. Since, he was not very successful at the Bar, he was concentrating on poetry. Consequently, in 1923, *Pyam-e-Mashrig* a collection of Persian verses appeared in print, as a rejoinder to Goethe's *Westosthicher Divan*. In 1927, another collection of Persian poems, *Zabur-e-Ajam* were published continuing the same theme. The same year, he delivered six lectures on "**The Reconstruction of Islamic Thoughts**" in Madras (Chennai), Hyderabad and Aligarh. In March 1924, The first collection of Urdu poem was published under the title, *Bag-e-Dra* with an introduction by Sir Abdul Qadir. He writes :

"Who ever know that after late Ghalib, there will ever be born someone in India who could give new life to Urdu poetry and revive the Peerless imagination and unique expression of Ghalib once again to cause new freshness in Urdu literature."

The only other kind of activity, besides poetry and law that attracted his attention was politics. Though not much by choice, but due to compulsion of the circumstances, his bosom friends Joginder Singh, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, and Khwaja Shababuddin encouraged Iqbal to contest election for the Legislative Council, and got elected in 1931. Later, he was nominated a member of the Second Round Table Conference, and during his trip to London, he visited Paris and met a famous French philosopher, Henri Bergson and the eminent Orientalist, M.Marsignon.

Speaking on one occasion in 1930, in his presidential address he elaborated his scheme for the solution of the political deadlock in India. He writes :

“Man is enslaved neither by his race, nor by his religion, nor by the course of rivers, nor by the direction of mountain ranges. A great aggregation of men, sense of mind and warm of heart, creates a moral consciousness which is called a nation...”

Thus, Iqbal’s ideology speaks of manythings. India is Asia in miniature. Part of her people have cultural affinities with nations in the East and West with nations in the middle west of Asia. If an effective principle of co-operation is discovered in India, it will bring peace and mutual goodwill to this ancient land which has suffered so long, more because of her situation in historic space than because of any inherent incapacity of her people.

In 1932, Iqbal attended the Third Round Table Conference in London. Then, propounding the idea of Pakistan was on : a country carved out of Muslim majority states of the India subcontinent. Iqbal, categorically disassociated himself from the idea. In 1934, he was awarded D.Litt. (Honourous Causa) by the Punjab University. From 1935 to 1938 he came to Bhopal several times at the invitation of his friends. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru writes about his meeting :

“During his last years, Iqbal turned more and more towards socialism... As I talked to him about many things, I felt how much we have common in spite of differences, and how easy it would be to get on with him... I admired him and his poetry. A little before I left him he said to me, “What is there in common between Jinnah and you? He is a politician, you are patriot.”

In 1935, he was invited to Oxford for Rhodes lecture but ill health did not allow him to go. In 1937, a cataract developed in his eyes and while he was still planning to write a treatise on the Reconstruction of Muslim Jurisprudence and the book : *A Forgotten Prophet*, in English, death was fast approaching him. He, however, continued composing poems. He dictated a ‘Rubai’ (a poem of four lines) which uttered on his lips when he breathed his last on 21 April, 1938 :

“The departed melody may recur or not, The Zepher may blow from Hejaz or not, The days of This Faqir have come to an end, Another seer may come or not,”

(Translation : A.Vahid) from Persian.



6. Witty Songs in King Lear

Abstract: An Elizabethan genius, William Shakespeare (23 April 1564–23 April 1616) was a poet and playwright. History reveals that Shakespeare was in a literary rivalry with his counterpart Christopher Marlow, a political young man of his time. He reached the height of popularity through his marvellous literary works. He invented a literary style known as free-verse for writing plays in the Elizabethan English literature. Nevertheless, a kind of political and literary confrontation between the two giants, (Shakespeare and Marlow) is still a subject matter of mystery. A conspiracy was hatched to kill Marlow. He was stabbed to death. Who is that character, ‘the Fool’ in Shakespeare’s King Lear?

The play King Lear is one of the most painful family tragedies ever written by Shakespeare, according to a critic. It is a moving image of life concerned with men in action. The playwright has shown his marvellous craftsmanship of words to the exploration and understanding of an octogenarian: an everyinch King Lear. He enjoys power but in a nonsensical paradigm and virtually becomes a prey in the hands of his own close family members. Human follies and passion drag him into physical and emotional sufferings. He sows the seeds of disaster himself and his own people mock at him rather than winning any sympathy or respect for the elderly Lear.

The plot of the play contains the moral discovery that lies at the heart of every tale. The play is a beautiful work of art but with tells a lot about morality very significantly, D.H Lawrence too is of the opinion that the essential function of art is moral not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime, and recreation, but moral. The complex magical web of meanings having to do with seeing and blindness, madness and reason and the ambiguities of Nature are the typical Shakespearean way of exploring the sufferings of humanism during the Elizabethan period where evils rule the evils mind that too equally as modern as today. It is at this naive and indispensable level of response that our moral judgement is first engaged..

From the beginning, Lear is the embodiment of perverse self-will. His ego brings the seeds of disaster and the plant of Lear’s misfortune grows and grows. He puts question,

“who is it that can tell me who I am?”

We realize that this is a question, the play brings before our imagination in social dimension is the problem of human identity. The

moss haunted character in the play Shakespeare has created in King Lear is the ironical fool. Audience in the theatre might realize that Fool is the most intelligent and perhaps the only well-wisher of master Lear. His songs contain 'Human Genus', vicissitudes, jealousy, love and hatred, lecheries, shrewdness, philosophy and a lot of conceits to describe a man in action and unfolding the hidden personality. The echo of such skeletonic nature and observation on human mind prevail throughout in the lay.

Lear is not clever enough to understand that he is surrounded by obsequious flattery, ("The told me I was everything"), and Lear's most intimate people in their different ways like Kent, appear as his liege man, Cordelia as his daughter and third the Fool. Fool is truthful to his work, his speech is his utter loyalty though which he wants to warn his master from the resultant misfortune.

Fool as it has been endeavoured to prove is both: as a commentator whose words furnish important clues to the interpretation of the play and as a prominent figure caught up into the drama whose role and nature form a vital part of the central tragic theme. Lear's Fool, sings nearly eight songs in the Play in which two songs are pure songs that occurs in Act One Scene Four. He, like Touchstone and Feste, an all licensed critic who sees and speak the real truth about the people around him. His business, however, is not to deal out satirical, but to emphasize one particular dreadful instance of the reversal of position between the wise man and the fool, indeed he labours this point as the maddening reiteration which is excusable because his tactless jokes and snatches of song spring so evidently from genuine grief. Here, Fool sings a song, drawing Lear's inclination:

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year ;
 For wise men are grown foffish ;
 And know not how their wits to wear
 Their manners are so apish. (A-1 , S-4)

He is warning Lear to be careful about his behaviour. The most remarkable point, we notice in Fool's behaviour is that the Fool's love for Lear does not appear in words, and we might note that he is under a compulsion to tell the truth, so that what he says has professional reliability. He loves Lear through his love for Cordelia. But the Lear's love for the Fool is suffering, Lear turns in the storm to feel with his Fool. He seems more of a spirit than a man; elusive and evasive; the

outlines of his thought of his personality , continually changing like the images in a revealing kaleidoscope. Only one thought constants the folly of Lear who banished Cordelia and gave all to those who hated him and her. Then, he is half-witted , and the half which is no wit sings snatches of old song , and his mind whirls like a dancing marsh-fire, among shreds of thoughts and images. Ad there is a stored-up , half-cynical wisdom in the song he sings;

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than owest,
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,
 Set less than thou throwest
 Leave thy drink and thou whore
 And keep in a door
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

We notice in fool, the rest of wild talk in this scene is so sharp to the matter. We realize that Lear's first action is incredibly stupid, as the Fool keeps on telling him. It appears that Fool's songs are very poetic speeches, which comes through Shakespeare's intuitive understanding of life wherein the use of imaginary-nature, of sex, of astronomy of order in the paradoxical counter pointing of symbols of light and dark, of sight and blindness, of knowledge and ignorance, of good and evil. It all brings his highest poetic and dramatic power, particularly in the Third Act. Fool sees everything as see-saw whichever end of the see-saw anyone chooses, the Fool's job is to be counter weight. Because, the King himself is an instance of universal handy-dandy. He had made his daughters his mothers. Instead of wielding the rod, he receives correction himself. Instead of remaining a ruler on the throne, he has become an irresponsible child playing bopeep. Handy-dandy is a psychological law , too (as we see in the following song):

Then thy for sudden joy did weep
 And I for sorrow sung,
 That such a king should play bo-peep,
 And go the go fools among.

Act III, Se-II, when Lears' suffering is at its peak and Lear's change occurs in the madness which form the Central features of the middle of the play. Lear, appears differently Gloucester on the other hand searches his climatic thirst when he decides to kill himself, Fool's song reveals this:

He that has little wit-
With a heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with fortunes fit;
For the rain it rainet every day.

The genius of Fool, with the association of Nature, Lears' responses and reaction are being prudently revealed. It can be said that songs in this most painful tragedy are not simply giving comic-relief, but reveal the facts hidden in a dark shell of misery. He presents universal conscious.

Audience is filled with catharsis and might come up with substantial amount of observation that too with certain degree of criticism ; a finding that it is not an any means to the whole spirit of the tragedy which represents the world as a place where heavenly good grows side by side with evil, where extreme evil cannot endure; these continue almost to the end.

Critics on Shakespeare are of the opinion that Shakespeare wrote a series of connected plays. He exhibited that he was aware of the complete tragic pattern, even though he didn't then, came to complete it.

A critic points out that tragedy is man's answer to the universe which crushes him so pitilessly. Destiny scowls upon him; his answer is to sit down and point here where she stands. It means, tragedy is concerned with resistance to circumstances. Through the nature of things, man at his highest can only resist the fear of the universe; he cannot cooperate with them. In tragedy loss and suffering result, the hero or the tragic figure, is ultimately reconciled. Dover Wilson feels about Shakespearean way of creating a character:

'The Lear that dies is not a Lear defiant, but a Lear redeemed; his education is complete, his regeneration accomplished'. Meaning: true learning is through sufferings.

It is an approach to unfold the sufferings of a man like Lear who learns humanism through sufferings only. He is enlightened now what he was not before when enjoying the pleasure of life. Destiny-time relationship on the otherhand is equally instrumental in moulding a man in action. Lear is rewarded but through a natural phenomenon of

acute sufferings and not the whims and fancy of life and romanticism. Truth prevails, it comes to the mind of Lear after he lost his most loved daughter Cordelia that dies due to asphyxiation. Conspiracy successfully worked against Lear and his well wishers. The climax reaches its peak only when Lear's sensibility is flashed and exposed before the audience which appears to him though as a sudden realization of truth which has been wittingly echoed in the songs of the most experienced character of Shakespeare, The Fool, in the play **King Lear**.



7. Prof. Obaid Siddiqi (Father of Modern Biology)

Abstract: Professor Obaid Siddiqi is certainly in the same league of Indian scientists such as Meghnad Saha, Homi Bhabha, and C.V.Raman. This great man worked solely for the 'love of science', and for him, lab was a lifetime of commitment and dedication. The first ever mapping of a gene, a work that eventually earned Pentecorvo, the Nobel Prize in Physiology, had some important contributions by this Indian scientist. He also presided over the Indian Academy of Sciences and has played an important role in the 'Third World Academy of Sciences to get the developing world on a global scientific map. Prof Obaid Siddiqi never gave up his humble fight for progressive and enlightened values to transform the whole of the Indian subcontinent united by common cultural threads. After dedicating his whole life, working with stalwarts from different walks of Science, for creating awareness about scientific values, he never really expected anything in return. Prof Obaid Siddiqi was too humble, to acknowledge his contributions at times, and would let others take the credit. It was unfortunate moment for the world of Science and in the Indian context particularly that the last of the giants of the South Asian scientist met with a freaky road accident.

Science, these days has become a collective organized activity and its tremendous growth and the possible implications, have direct relationship on the advancement of the society. In this context, it is exceptionally rare to find someone who has become an institution in itself during his life time. One such person that has reached that stature was Prof. Obaid Siddiqi, "the Father of Modern Biology" in India. He is certainly in the same league of Indian scientists such as Meghnad Saha, Homi Bhabha, and C.V.Raman.

This great man worked solely for the 'love of science', and for him, lab was a lifetime of commitment and dedication. The first ever mapping of a gene, a work that eventually earned Pentecorvo, the Nobel Prize in Physiology, had some important contributions by this Indian scientist.

Prof Obaid Siddiqi further went on to contribute a lot more to projects spanning from protein synthesis, bacterial gene exchange, to synaptic vesicle recycling, to the first exploration of the genetic basis of taste and smell.

Tata Institute of Fundamental research (TIFR), Mumbai, the premier research institute in the country, owes much to him for the setting-up of National Centre for Biological Sciences. He also presided over the Indian Academy of Sciences and has played an important role in the 'Third World Academy of Sciences' to get the developing world on a global scientific map.

Prof Obaid Siddiqi never gave up his humble fight for progressive and enlightened values, to transform the whole of the Indian subcontinent united by common cultural threads. Being a creative and objective person, he never bothered about individual scientific success but as a responsible scientist showed a lot of concern for the society as a whole. Science as a tool for social change was what he firmly believed in.

The sudden expansion of research institutions, compromising their quality and standards really made him worry. In this mad race for publications, he indeed had something inspirational in him that not many scientists of our times have.

He advocated against the succumbing of educational institutions under the pressure of religious forces to incorporate astronomy in the official course work. He did not support the various political interventions in deciding the fate of the central universities.

Despite his ideological differences with successive Indian governments, he still had his say in matters that really mattered to the welfare of the Indian science. Setting up a Science policy, guided by rational and positive approach was definitely his top priority aimed at betterment of the society through the medium of Science.

Apart from, running the most prestigious lab in South Asia, he was highly involved in social activities and even contributed many of his

personal resources for the right causes, giving away books to students who couldn't afford them.

After dedicating his whole life, working with stalwarts from different walks of Science, for creating awareness about scientific values, he never really expected anything in return. Prof Obaid Siddiqi was too humble, to acknowledge his contributions at times, and would let others take the credit.

It was unfortunate moment for the world of Science and in the Indian context particularly that the last of the giants of the South Asian scientist, met with a freaky road accident. His tireless efforts for building a democratically accountable structure of Science and Technology never ceased all through his life and will continue in future through the efforts of his trained students. Several generations of scientists equipped with rational thought have passed out of his lab. It's hoped his trained young scientists would surely strive hard to carry on his vision of a modern South Asia.



8. Sachin Tendulkar: A True Trailblazer

*Abstract: The recipient of the India's highest civilian award **The Bharat Rattan**, the name that has echoed in our ears for nearly over two decades and has become the only synonym for Cricket in India, it is none other than our little Master- Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar. "LITTLE MASTER", "MASTER BLASTER", there is an endless list of adjectives to describe him. He has always stayed in our minds and will continue to do so. For those passionate about Cricket, he is the Lord of Cricket, while for those outside its ambit; he is who ultimately defined the game of Cricket. Sachin is a real gentleman to aptly define the gentleman's game. He is exactly what we have seen him as over the years. His character has not undergone the slightest of changes even after being accredited with innumerable titles and records. It is true beyond doubt that Sachin has made a huge impact both within and outside the sphere of Cricket. His entry to Indian Cricket team has undoubtedly increased its popularity amongst the masses. More and more people started watching cricket matches just to see how a little boy was working wonders in the crease.*

The cricket fans world over is witnessing the farewell test of India's little master Sachin Tendulkar. Those who have watched him playing are very lucky. They would relish this memory that they have seen Sachin

Tendulkar play. This memory is something which is unforgettable. Probably we can divide the era of cricket into two parts before Sachin and after Sachin. It may be a modest way of saying Sachin Tendulkar's contribution to cricket.

As an Indian we should be proud of having such a legend amongst us. He has played five editions of world cup and fulfilled his dreams to be in the winning side in the last edition. Playing continuously for so long without losing form is not an ordinary thing. He saw many cricketing stars that started their career after him and retiring before him. The teammates with whom Sachin played have not crossed an average age of 3 years. It would be difficult to think of Indian cricket without Sachin Tendulkar. He is admired by fans at home and abroad. Many of the cricket legends in the world are amongst his admirer. It's no fault to call Sachin Tendulkar as god of cricket. He is cool and calm in the ground. He does his job in the field with perfection and walks away with grace and confidence.

Sachin is from a middleclass family who could not complete his matriculation. He travelled long distance from home to the ground to play cricket. He worked hard to perfect the cricketing skills. There is no short cut to hard work is the lesson that he gave to every youth in the country. He made his debut in the mid-teens and since then there is no stopping for him. He has made fans world over and everywhere he draws large crowds who come to watch him in action. This is not an easy task to accomplish. The contribution of Sachin Tendulkar to cricket is numerous. He is the first in the world to hit a double ton in a one day international match. He has been bestowed with numerous awards including Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honor. He has been awarded the highest civilian award of the country **Bharat Rattan in 2014.**

Sachin's retirement will definitely cause a great impact on Indian cricket. He is a path finder for not only Indian youngsters but all over the world. He has inspired a whole generation who admire him of his achievements.

Sachin Tendulkar is definitely a trailblazer to many of the youngsters in the world like to ape him. Even though there will be many players after Sachin Tendulkar who are going to prove their skill in the cricketing field but there will be no one who can match him. Sachin is

one and the only in the world. In the words of Andy Flower, “There are two kinds of batsmen in the world. One, Sachin Tendulkar, two all the others”.

Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar, popularly called as ‘Little Master’ is arguably one of the greatest cricket icons of all time. He is a symbol of excellence and an epitome of personal humility. Sachin took up cricket at the age of eleven, at the age of sixteen made his Test debut against Pakistan in 1988. His professional career spanning over twenty four years was unblemished and noncontroversial. He inspired a whole generation by his perseverance, discipline and humility.

Sachin Tendulkar is the most accomplished batsman of his time. His batting is a combination of some fine principles –balance perfection, movement economy, stroke-making precision, and anticipation. He is proficient equally at a range of orthodox shots that he is not a legend of signature stroke but a master blaster of every shot (straight drive, paddle sweep, uppercut, pull shot etc).

The greatness of his batting lies in the fact that he can score all around the world and all around the wicket in all conditions. It was not an inborn skill; rather one which was crafted by his passion, intelligence, dedication and hard work.

Sachin has a huge list of records tagged to him. A glimpse of it are; leading run-scorer and century maker in Test and one-day international cricket, first player to score one hundred international centuries, the first player to score a double century in a ODI, and so far the only to complete 34,000 runs in international cricket. He became the first sportsman to be awarded the honorary rank of Group Captain by the Indian Air Force even without aviation background.

In 2012, Tendulkar was named as an Honorary Member of the Order of Australia. He contributed his part to the 2011 Cricket World Cup winning Indian team. He was the only player of the current generation to be included in Bradman’s Eleven.

For a country known for unity in diversity but also for communal riots, Sachin inspired the Billions. He is an icon of every Indian and a joy for the nation. His name unites every Indian. That is why one could see his fans holding posters during matches stating; ‘Cricket is my religion and Sachin is my god’. He has won the hearts and minds of the Billion cricket fans in India and the rest of the world. Australian

cricketer Mathew Hayden reported to have commented about Sachin Tendulkar; “I have seen God. He bats at number 4 for India.”

The motherland in return lauded him with many honors prominent being; Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian award, and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India’s highest sporting honor.

Despite stardom, Sachin remained a humble, self-composed man. He is regarded as a perfect man on and off the field. He brought elegance to the game of cricket and lived to the reputation that cricket is a gentleman’s game. Sachin started as a batsman as a 16-year-old, elevated to be a hero and finally retired as a god. He is unarguably the biggest crowd puller and an entertainer in the game of cricket.

He continues to be the most admired cricketer in the world. Billions of his fans adore him as a finest cricketer. This was evident at his emotional farewell in Mumbai. No other sports person has such a sendoff in India. Indeed, Sachin is a trailblazer. No retirement in cricketing or sporting history has been quite like that of Sachin Tendulkar. There were tears in the millions of eyes when the little master announced his quits. The stadium was filled with people and all were with moist eyes.

Much of Tendulkar greatness comes from the fact that he consistently fulfilled the expectations of the people. He played with ease in all conditions against all types of bowling with a wonderful temperament. Sachin is a real master blaster of cricket history. He has made many unbreakable records. He started his career in very young age of 16 and today he is called as god of cricket. Sachin comes from a middle class family, where the people find it difficult to dream big. He not only saw big dreams but went on to fulfill them. This he did through his hard work and determination. That’s why people see him as the role model and a source of inspiration. The question was asked in the historic selection meeting for the 1989 Pakistan tour: “What if he fails?” It was reported, “Tendulkar never fails”. The name of Sachin Tendulkar unites people of the country. As an Indian we proudly say that Sachin plays for India and we are Indians. Despite of all the stardom, Sachin has always remained calm, humble and down to earth person.

Tendulkar’s dominance of his sport continued, even he moved well into his thirties. He was awarded with many honors; Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India’s highest sporting honor, Bharat Ratna, India’s highest

civilian award. The impact of Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar would be long lasting, as every cricketer wants to be like him.

Sachin Tendulkar is rightly acknowledged as the greatest batsman of the modern generation and by many as the greatest cricketer of all time. He is truly a trailblazer.



Topics of Common Interest

1. Bachchans— a Legacy or a Brand Name?

Abstract: Bachchans—Family name or a brand name? With loads of recognitions and honours to their credit and valuable contributions, this legacy of record setters and mind-bogglers continues. This essay uncovers the finer details as to how this legendary name was created and its journey towards the position of leaving behind an eternal legacy.

The Bachchan legend took its birth in 1907, when in a small village of Raniganj in the district of Pratapgarh, U.P. near Allahabad in the United Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh), was born a distinguished Hindi poet of Chhayavaad literary movement (romantic upsurge) of early 20th century Hindi literature. Hailing from a Kayastha family, the eldest son of Shrivastavas was nick-named Bachchan (meaning child-like).

After completing his studies at the Allahabad University and Banaras Hindu University, he joined the independence movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. During his tenure with Mahatma Gandhi, this poet started earning a name for himself in the literary circles of poetry. This famous poet of the Hindi Kavi Sammelan, best known for his early work 'Madhushala', was called Harivansh Rai Bachchan Shrivastava. In later years, he also gained popularity in account of his son, the Bollywood megastar, Amitabh Bachchan.

Harivansh Rai Bachchan managed to carve a niche for himself in the poeting commuting. He became a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1966 and was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1969. In 1976, he received the "Padma Bhushan" and the "Saraswati" Samman for his contribution to Hindi literature. In 1994, he was awarded the "Yash Bharati" Samman by Uttar Pradesh Government. He was also conferred with the Soviet Land Nehru Award and the Lotus Award of the Afro-Asian writers conference.

Bachchan will be most remembered for Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, and his Hindi translations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello* and *Bhagvad Gita*. His last poem was 'Ek November 1984' on Indira Gandhi's assassination. In 2003, an Indian postage stamp was released in his memory.

In spite of his achievements, his usual introduction of himself was *Mitti Ka Tan* (A body of clay), *Masti Ka Man* (A Mind Full of Play) and *Kshan-Bhar Jivan — Mera Parichay* (A Moment's Life - That Is Me).

Bachchan had tied the knot with Teji Suri, a Sikh, in 1941. They had two sons, Amitabh and Ajitabh.

The Big B, Amitabh Bachchan, the demi God for millions, does not need any introduction. The great actor, entrepreneur and politician, game show host has been gifted with a charismatic persona. The very aptly named 'angry young man' of Bollywood was born on October 11, 1942. This Bachelor of Science worked as a freight broker for a shipping firm in Kolkata, prior to embarking on a remarkable career in acting.

Numerous awards, Big B has won during his span of career includes four National Film Awards and thirteen Filmfare Awards. He has set a record for bagging the most number of Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor nominations at the Filmfare Awards. In addition to acting, he has also been a playback singer, television presenter and film producer. Another feather to his cap included his tenure as a member of the Indian Parliament from 1984 to 1987.

Debuted in *Saat Hindustani* in 1969, he rose to stardom with his major hits in films as *Zanjeer*, *Abhimaan*, *Namak Haraam*, *Deewar*, *Sholay* (the highest Indian grossing film, earning INR 2,36,45,00,000 equivalent to US\$ 60 million), *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Don*, *Mukaddar Ka Sikandar*, *Lawaaris* and many more. He was given the title of "one-man industry" by the French director François Truffaut.

The year 1982 saw an overwhelming public response when during the shooting of *Coolie*, Big B suffered a near fatal intestinal injury. Public offered prayers in temples and there was a near frenzy to save the Bollywood God. People even offered to sacrifice their own limbs to save. After recovering, he was inundated with long queues of well-wishing fans.

In 1991, he became the first artist to receive the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award. Bachchan was awarded with the title of Superstar of the Millennium in 2000 at the Filmfare Awards. He also received the "Padmashree" in 1984 and the "Padma Bhushan" in 2001. In 2007, France's highest civilian honour, the Knight of the Legion of Honour, was bestowed upon him for his "exceptional career in the world of cinema and beyond".

In 1999, BBC online poll voted Bachchan as the Greatest Star of stage or screen of the Millennium where he defeated many Hollywood legends. He was honoured with the 'Actor of the Century' award at the Alexandria International Film Festival in Egypt in 2001. Other honours that he won included the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 Asian Film Awards.

In June 2000, he became the first living Asian to have been immortalised in wax at London's prestigious Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. Another statue was installed at New York and Hong Kong in 2009.

He was also conferred with several honorary doctorates all around the world as an attempt to recognize his phenomenal work in the Indian film industry. In 2003, he received the Honorary Citizenship of the French town of Deauville. An Honorary Doctorate was conferred on him by the Jhansi University in 2004, the Delhi University in 2006 and by the De Montfort University in Leicester, UK in 2006. He was also awarded the University Brandan Foster by the Leeds Metropolitan University in Yorkshire in 2007. The Honorary Doctorate conferred by the Queensland University of Technology in Australia in 2009 was turned down by him as a mark of protest against racial attacks on Indian students.

A number of books have been written on him. Some of these include *Amitabh Bachchan: The Legend* (1999), *To Be or Not To Be: Amitabh Bachchan* (2004), *AB: The Legend: (A Photographer's Tribute)* (2006), *Amitabh Bachchan: Ek Jeevit Kimvadanti* (2006), *Amitabh: The Making of a Superstar* (2006), *Looking for the Big B: Bollywood, Bachchan and Me* (2007) and *Bachchanalia* (2009). Bachchan himself also wrote a book in 2002 entitled *Soul Curry for you and Me - An Empowering Philosophy That Can Enrich Your Life*.

Known for his deep, baritone voice, he has been a playback singer, a narrator and a presenter for numerous programmes. Bachchan was the host of the third season of the reality show Bigg Boss. Another smashing game show that he hosted was the adaptation of the British television game show, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* entitled, *Kaun Banega Crorepati*.

Bachchan married Jaya Bhaduri, a Bengali by birth in 1973. A IWalkinggend in her own wake, she is also a well known personality. She has been honoured with the "Padmashree" and the "Yash Bharati"

Samman, apart from many awards for her achievements as an actress in cinema, including the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award.

She works as a Rajya Sabha Member and is a part of the Samajwadi Party.

She gave birth to the heir of this Bachchan legacy Abhishek Bachchan, who proved himself as yet another legendary actor and went on to marry Aishwarya Rai. Aishwarya Rai, better known as Ash, also has a number of awards and honours to her credit. Born in a traditional South Indian family, this architect by profession rose to be crowned Miss World making India extremely proud. She has, with her smashing hits and acting talent, already given tough competition to her contemporaries.

Ash became the first Indian actor to be a member of the jury at the Cannes Film Festival in 2003. This latest member of the elite L'Oréal Dream Team, has been their international ambassador. She appeared on the covers of India Today and the prestigious TIME Magazine, which listed her on their list of the “100 Most Influential People in the World Today”. She was also the first Indian female to be immortalized in wax at the world famous Madame Tussaud’s wax museum in London and also the youngest actress to receive the “Padmashree” award, the fourth highest civilian honor, from the Government of India.

She is the first goodwill ambassador for Smile Train, a charity that works worldwide for children with cleft lip. She has also won the esteemed V. Shantaram award twice.

That’s not all. The story continues. Only time can tell the future, but present definitely has set before us the example of heightened achievements and larger than life personalities. These personifications of success would no doubt continue to be an aspiration for the generations to come. Just keep track.



2. Censor Board and Teleserials

Abstract: In the past few years, the reality shows being aired have produced a whole new debate on whether we need a censorship for television content or not. As the number of television channels are growing rapidly, the number of shows are also going up. Do we really think the contents of these shows needs censoring? Some people view censorship as an important instrument for guiding the viewer whereas, some

feel that censorship amounts to restrictions in their freedom. Does this mean that we are over-reacting and actually there is no need for any censor board for television content? Since, in India there is a significant number of young viewers, this definitely is an important question to think over.

Television is an inseparable part of our daily lives; a means of entertainment that is right there amidst us in our drawing room. Those days have long gone when we used to wait for the weekly entertainment programs like Rangoli or Chitrahaar. Nowadays, we are bombarded with a variety of entertainment programs, on the innumerable channels, some of which, need viewers discretion for sure.

This surge in the choices has also brought over its pros and cons. The lack of entertaining programs has given way to unlimited hours of full entertainment. On the other hand, it has also emerged with content quality that has been compromised in terms of modesty and basic standards of decency.

One such example which stands out is the mushrooming of reality shows that are at their best in attracting audience. At times the vulgarity and the obscenity, these programs features leaves the viewer extremely embarrassed, especially when watching in the company of their family.

Take the example of a particular show where youngsters are invited to bite back and take revenge from their former “special” friends. What are we teaching? Are we not encouraging the new generation to think on these terms?

Numerous episodes of reality shows (where the participants are supposed to stay in a given accommodation) show them using abusive language and exhibiting unacceptable behavior. What these shows comprise of is constant backbiting and altercations, just another gimmick to increase their television rating points (TRP). Some shows even go as far as showing violence between the contestants or the participants of the show. Is this what we are teaching our new generation, rather than exposing them to higher virtues?

Indecent attire and dance movements have become part and parcel of the dance and entertainment shows. This is not to deny the talent, but the point is that showcasing talent in a package of exposure is something which is not essential, if we really intend to judge an art form.

Leaving aside the shows, even the advertisements are based on detrimental belief systems. Some advertisements have been banned for

their style of presentation and also because of the parallels drawn with them. Showing advertisements of toothpastes and deodorants based on appeal of physical intimacy and not hygiene or cleanliness, again raise a question mark on our changing values and perceptions.

Talking about the news channels, it would be apt to call some of these a real mess. Instead of covering news which is meaningful and of significance to the masses, what is telecast is either the worthless trifle happenings with a non-stop repetition or news revolving around the personal life of celebrities. Or else, you will see the catfights that took place in the different tele-serials aired. Had we wanted to see those meaningless episodes as news, wouldn't we have watched the serial or its repeat telecast directly? Most of the times, the episodes telecasted leaves a negative and complaining impact.

Is there any solution? According to Virendra Singla, regional officer, Censor Board Film Certification (CBFC) Mumbai all programmes need to go through the Cable Act.

The Cable Act was amended in the year 2000 to meet this need. However, unfortunately the implementation has not yet materialised. But now, considering the growing vulgarity on the small screen, this issue is to be taken up with the highest authorities in the government – that is X-raying every programme under the Cable Act also becomes their priority.

Successive Censor Board chairpersons have vowed initially, to purge Indian television of its ills and bring order to the chaos. While hardly any steps have been taken so far, any incumbent wishing to take on the responsibility would also have to walk on the fine line. If the board manages to do that, it will be a major milestone for the industry.

At the end of the day though, what is required is a set of standards that governs broadcasting. The ITC in UK is an excellent model that is worth following. Till the time, a framework of rules is not built or established broadcasting will be governed by the perceptions and personal prejudices of whoever is at the helm of the Censor Board to set forth his or her agenda. Even the newly appointed chairman of the Central Board of Film Certification, Mr. Kher has made clear his intentions about not letting sleaze go unchecked on television.

While most broadcasters do adhere to indigenously developed codes of programming conduct, there is a singular lack of a governing body that could monitor programming, check lapses and report erring broadcasters. In the absence of such filters, programming is mostly at

the will of broadcasters and viewers are at the mercy of the broadcaster. While the national channel maintains decorum with sanitised shows and social messaging, the private ones are not bound by such moral considerations. Often, extreme violence, exposure and licentious conduct aired blithely on television go unreported. Unlike in the UK, where there is a watershed mark of 9 pm, beyond which adult content can be aired, Indian broadcasters are not bound by any such regulations.

Incidences of channels apologising to the Independent Television Commission (ITC) for mistakenly airing gory scenes from uncut versions of certain movies or shows has been seen. In India this is not the case, thanks to the lack of a definite governing body.

Even in western countries there are restrictions on shows. The rating system is designed to protect children from viewing violence, nudity and vulgarity. Those who are against censorship should realize that children also watch TV. It is not always possible for parents to check what their kids are watching.

Therefore, this gives rise to the need for a creative license in the business of television software. While some of the industry insiders insist the extramarital relationships are detrimental to viewers, others are of the opinion that the veto finally rests with the viewer who wields the remote. TV tracker and columnist Shailaja Bajpai has a point when she says that censorship guidelines of the country the channels are uploaded from, apply; which leaves most channels out of the Indian censorship bracket.

There is another side of the coin, though. There is a viewpoint which says that the viewers are capable to choose what is good for them and discard the rest. Shows are not imposed and viewers have the choice to turn elsewhere, abandoning the program that offends them. It is not for the authorities to decide what we should see or not. A true democracy brings absolute freedom.

People are of the opinion that it is sad because if there is a need of the censor board today it is only because some others are needed to tell what their limits are. Not that left to themselves they would take unnecessary liberties in the name of creative freedom. They're much too sensible for that.

In this modern day and age, censorship has become antiquated and totally redundant. It should be left to the industry to evolve basic guidelines for censorship depending on the sensibilities and the aesthetic perceptions of the producers.

We talk of meaningful programs, but if we have censorship which is so restrictive and conservative, no meaningful television can flourish. The kind of independence of expression that any serious work of art, including television requires is curbed by such an organization.

While the debate as to censor television or not to can go endlessly. One thing is obvious, wise intervention of a governing body is welcomed. We need to have people with greater intellectual and moral sensitivity to update the censorship guidelines. Or else show-makers must unite to evolve a universal code for themselves.



3. Commonwealth Games 2010 A Success or What?

Abstract: India bagged the opportunity to host the commonwealth games 2010, in 2003 after submitting a bid of Rs. 1899 crores to host the games. But as the day for the sporting event drew close, the Delhi government got embroiled in a controversy. They were accused of mismanagement of funds, missed deadlines and escalated costs among others. In spite of all this, the commonwealth games were held with great style and won the hearts of people all over the world. India finished second in the medal tally with 101 medals and is now recognised as a country, whose players can play sports other than cricket also.

When the Commonwealth Games Federation (CWGF) chose India as the host for the XIX Commonwealth Games to be held in 2010, it must have been with a lot of apprehensions. These apprehensions were rooted with the fact that India had won the candidature to host an international gaming event after twenty eight years. Before this, India had hosted the IX Asian Games in 1982. In fact, the CWGF's decision to allow an Asian country to host the games was taken for the second time, the first being in 1998 when Malaysia had won the candidature to host the games.

Any international sporting event translates into a lot of development for the city hosting the event. This is because, any sporting event needs a well placed infrastructure including state of the art stadiums, modern sporting equipment, top-class medical facilities and clean and smooth transportation, among others. In addition to this hardware, even software in the form of management skills, organizational skills and

operating expertise is needed. Though crucial and most important thing of all for the success of an event, the cost of all these things is not low.

Self-dependent as far as software is concerned and knowing that the hardware could be managed, Delhi had also applied for the bid to host the Commonwealth Games 2010. Delhi placed a bid of Rs.1,899 crores to host the games in 2003. After winning the bid, Delhi realised that the bid placed was just an estimation and the actual cost would be much higher than that projected. In subsequently revised budget sheets, the cost kept increasing and an official figure of Rs.10,000 crore to conduct the games came to the fore.

This money was to be spent on different spheres of the games including the construction of a brand new terminal at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, a new runway, finishing off crucial metro lines, new expressway from Delhi to the airport, upgradation of stadiums, construction of new outdoor and indoor stadiums at Yamuna Sports Complex, purchasing the latest sports equipment and constructing the Games Village in East Delhi. Apart from this, the estimated budget also included the cost of conducting the Queen's Baton Relay, opening and closing ceremony and security arrangements and other operational costs for the duration of twelve days during which the games were to be held. Adding to this, the cost of making the international athletes stay, catering, ferrying them to and fro to the events, medical attention and the organisation of volunteers to help them and all the other people who would be there to actually see the games in action adds frills to the CWG 2010 budget.

As the date for the commencement of the games drew close, the Delhi government got embroiled in a scandal that accused the government officials of corruption and escalating the cost of conducting the games just to fill their pockets. The government was also accused of mispending funds, missing deadlines and allowing different agents to get away with the construction of inferior quality infrastructure. The medical condition of the city was also not under control and a few athletes, who arrived early in the city for to practice as a result flew back.

Some countries like England and Scotland threatened to pull out from the games owing to all the negative publicity about the unhygienic conditions of the games village. Commonwealth Games England chairman Sir Andrew Foster expressed his concern for the athletes when he said, "I think the next 24 to 48 hours is the critical time which will

tell us whether the Village — which is where the main problem is now ... Our staff have been round all 17 sports venues and they are in good order, so the key remaining feature which there's a problem with is the village. The other problems have been resolved. It's a situation that hangs on a knife-edge. It is not certain and we will not be sending our team unless we are confident." At the end of the day English athlete, Phillips Idowu, Australian world discus champion, Dani Samuels, did pull out of the games citing security concerns.

Some African nations also complained that they were not taken for field visits, as a result of which, they were not in a position to take a decision regarding sending full strength teams to participate in the games. Had the African nations decided not to send their full strength, Delhi would have been hard hit. This is because out of the 53 nations that were participating in the games, 19 were from the African continent. Though, all the African nations did send their full strength teams, the concerns they raised did raise the hair at the back of all the Indians involved in the commonwealth games 2010.

In spite of all the hiccups that the commonwealth games faced, teams did arrive at the games in time to get adjusted to the environment and give their best performance. Problems pointed out by officials from different nations were dealt with promptly assuring them that the participating athletes are quite safe.

Even from the Indian perspective, it can be said that games did more good for the country than bad. The games were conducted successfully and with full panache. The long term effects of the games cannot be denied. The first and foremost long term effect of the games was that India emerged as a major sporting nation by finishing second in the medal tally. Major improvements in the infrastructure that were carried out keeping the games in mind, are actually here to stay. A new terminal, runway, metro lines, rails, buses and rickshaws have all vastly improved the image of Delhi.

The Delhi government employed an estimate of 4,25,000 people for the smooth and successful conduction of the games. Just imagine, the amount of people getting gainful employment during the games, who otherwise would have been on the streets.

The opening and the closing ceremony of the games was enjoyed by one and all. Both these depicted the flavours of India and won international acclaim. Even Mr. Mike Fennell, the CWGF Chief, could not stop himself from appreciating the ceremony and lauding Delhi.

He was quoted as saying that the opening ceremony surpassed all expectations, though he did warn that he wanted the good work to be sustained throughout the duration of the 11 days of the games.

7,000 artists including men, women and children participated in the opening ceremony, organised at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The theme of the ceremony was 5000 years of Indian culture and diversity of Indian religions. The ceremony was watched by 65,000 people and was very well received. Even countries like Australia, who were not sure of participating in the games, were awestruck and claimed that the ceremony was nothing like what they have seen before. Another first for the opening ceremony was the audience of the teams. All the teams marched into the stadium before the ceremony began so that even they could enjoy the fantabulous show.

India won a total of 101 medals against the total of 177 medals won by Australia and 142 won by England. In spite of the lower medal count, India finished second as she had 38 old medals against the 37 won by England. The events where India showed tremendous potential were archery and wrestling.

Another major advantage of the games was the recognition that other sports, apart from cricket received. India, for the first time, acknowledged that cricket is not the only game that Indians can play well. There are other games and athletes that they are good at.

From the athletes' point of view, the commonwealth games have given them modern sporting equipment and state-of-the-art stadiums to practice in. They are no loner dependent on international stadiums. Also the craving of athletes and sportsperson belonging to non-cricket areas for recognition and acknowledgment has been satisfied. They feel more satisfied and are willing to put in more effort in their chosen sport.

To conclude, one can say that developing a truly sporting nation requires a lot, including taking risks. The commonwealth games 2010, a successful effort of the Indian government, is just a point in case.



4. Is Today's Justice as an Avatar of Gandhaari?

Abstract: Justice delayed is justice denied. This is the general perception for everybody, but do we question ourselves as to what is our own contribution in getting justice? Do we actually come up and report criminal activities? Some people are of the

opinion that justice is not for the poor, it is only for the rich, so why even bother? But are we not becoming victims ourselves by turning a blind eye. Who is at fault over here? Justice or the people who have been appointed to give justice. Every coin has two sides. Similarly, we also cannot ignore the cases where justice has been given, though late. This essay will explore the different ways in which justice is viewed to present a balanced view of the same.

Have you ever seen a crime being committed? What is your initial reaction? Do you actually call the police or try to alert the authorities? Or do you suddenly behave as if you have lost your abilities to hear or see?

Studies show that 90% people's first reaction is to turn blind eye or try to slink away from the scene of crime. Have you ever wondered why do we react in such a way? Why don't we take a stand as responsible citizens and raise our voice against the injustice? Why do we behave like spineless individuals and are afraid of taking on the pain of interrogation by legal authorities?

If I say that we react in this manner because of our judicial system, because the victim will not get justice, especially if the victim is poor, then how would you react? Would you say that I am right or would you say that I need to reanalyse the whole system?

Justice today is described as a tool for the rich. The rich and the powerful have the clout to call the shots. They can either get a word from the authority or pay hefty amounts to lawyers to find loopholes in the judicial system. However, one cannot generalize the impression for there are instances where verdicts are delivered in favor of the 'not so rich and powerful'.

The Indian constitution separated the judiciary from the executive and legislature in order to ensure its freedom is functioning. The constitution wanted the judicial system to be free from any kind of pressure from any quarter. But, seeing today's scenario, the constitution seems to have failed miserably.

Today, just like any person who turns to the jungles of coins, even the judiciary seems to have ears for only that kind of sound. Gone are the plights of the sufferers or the moans of the one left behind by the victims. As far as the judiciary is concerned, these have ceased to exist and have no effect on the merciless ears of the judiciary.

Do all these points refer to the fact that the current system of delivering justice is a mere charade? Are the judgments up for sale for

whoever can buy them? Or can the average man still hope to find some solace in the judicial system? Is justice available only for those who are dear to it or can the mere plebian still be sure about the foundation of his/her education? Of truth always triumphing?

Different people have different viewpoints on the judicial system. According to a very influential businessman, Mr. X, the term justice itself has changed its meaning greatly. What was once the right of one and all, irrespective of social or financial standing, has now come to be doled out in measures equal to the *moolah* laid down in the other scale.

He continues to say that justice today is fashioned on the terms dictated by the rich and powerful. It is no more in favor of the truth. Evidences can be easily doctored to suit the needs of the rich and the powerful. The dictum, survival of the fittest, has now come to mean "survival of the richest". Riches command power and power commands riches. The richer you are, the righter you can be.

Countering the viewpoint of Mr. X are some college students. They say that it is not as if the rot has overtaken the system. It is actually the case of just a few bad eggs. They feel that today, in order to perform an honest job, a man needs to be corrupt. If he is not corrupt, then his daily life will become a struggle. They feel that there are still some people in positions of power who refuse to buckle under pressure and do their job to the best of their ability. A case in point can be laid down by citing the example of Mrs. Kiran Bedi.

On the third side, we have a woman from the judicial system. Miss Z accepts the flaws of the judicial system and offers her views fearlessly. She says that it would be wrong to say that justice is for only the rich and the powerful. You cannot question justice. What you can question is the person giving justice. Take the case of the judges that were caught cheating in their examinations. Will people, who cheat for themselves, shy away from cheating on other people? Let us not forget that even those sitting to deliver justice are humans and very much susceptible to falling under the spell of the Mammon.

On the fourth side, we have a group of social activists presenting their viewpoint. They do not agree with either Mr. X or the college students. They say that had the judicial system has been only for the rich and the powerful.-Would the tea stall owner had received justice against the Haldiram bhujia baron, Prabhu Shankar Agarwal? Prabhu Shankar Agarwal has been sentenced to rigorous life imprisonment for plotting the murder of tea stall owner, Pramod.

They also feel that had the judicial system failed, the world would have been pushed into anarchy. Why are the courts still functioning? Why do people still have faith in the judicial system? Why does the judicial system still have cases upon cases bequeathing justice?

The social activists further clarify their stance saying that this is not the case. In some cases, the rich and the powerful might have been able to get justice in their favor. But how do you explain what happened to public names like Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt? Did they have any less clout than any other rich and the powerful?

They go on to say that had the judicial system been sold out, it would not have appealed to the public any more. What needs to be re-examined are the ways in which evidences are treated. The judicial system functions on evidences. We need to think of ways in which tampering with evidences can be stopped. We need more advanced ways of dealing with evidences. These evidences are going to help the courts in delivering justice.

Mr. X has another viewpoint to present. He says that “justice delayed is justice denied”. There are countless instances of decades going by with people waiting for succor in form of a correct judgment. Cases are left hanging fire for one reason or the other. Even the dates for hearing are allocated after months, making the exercise futile and frustrating.

Look at the Sanjeev Nanda case or the Uphaar tragedy. In both the cases, the guilty led a full and complete life, while the victims kept suffering during the decades it took the court to reach a decision. How does the court compensate for the decades of suffering of the victims? Any punishment for the perpetrator cannot remove the decades of torture and frustration that the victims’ families felt.

Whatever the rich and the powerful, the college students, the people from the law and the social activists have to say, we cannot deny the fact that the judicial system does need an overhaul. We need to have fairer people and better evidence dealing techniques and teams. We need the police to be vigilant and not to fall prey to the hoodlums. But most of all, we need the judicial system to remove the sash from its eyes and see what needs to be seen. The judicial system needs to stop behaving like Gandhaari, who wrongly strengthened her son beyond damage, and start behaving like Mother India, who did not falter in shooting her own son for justice.



5. Dresses to Define Attitude

Abstract: Dressing up for an occasion or in a mischievous mood today? Giving an important business presentation and need to look your best. Well, whatever may be the event, dressing up certainly has to do with displaying your attitude and confidence. Not only this, it also exhibits the way you feel. This essay explores the different approaches to dressing depending on your personal style and, obviously, the occasion.

Dressing with confidence is not only about wearing the latest fashion trend, but it is also about feeling good and comfortable in what you are wearing. Only if you are comfortable with what you are wearing, you look self-assured in all situations.

Is it believable that something as simple as how you dress could affect your attitude and self-confidence. The truth is how people dresses are related in some way or the other to how they feel. They feel first and dress later. Changing the way we dress, would change the way we feel. Dressing well makes us look good and we automatically feel better. When we look good we are more likely to feel good inside, have more energy and treat others better.

Dressing well is not rocket science. There are only a few ingredients that can teach you how to dress well. One is knowing the occasion and your audience. You need to understand colours and how to use them. You must choose your dresses in accordance with your body type. The correct cut and fit can make you look taller, shorter, fuller, or slimmer. You would also look better when you learn to add that personal style to your dresses.

While standing in front of the wardrobe give some consideration to the occasion. Choose your attire according to the event. Whether you are going to a professional meeting, shopping, to a religious place or to a gala event, what you wear needs to be tailored for the occasion. A well tailored dress would define the right attitude.

Let us take the example of a business meeting. The dress code for first time business meetings is structured, tailored clothes with straight lines and firm fabrics (suits). On the other hand, for business meetings where a personal rapport has already been established; softer lines, structured blazers and jackets, matched or unmatched tailored pants can be used.

Social occasions can include anything from a dinner with an acquaintance to a formal event. To feel comfortable at an informal social event opt for unmatched suits, denim skirts, khaki pants and turtlenecks. Black tie means formal and white tie means ultra formal. At a black tie event men wear tuxedos and women wear cocktail or long dresses.

Audience refers to the people whom you are meeting. These can be your friends, clients, colleagues, family or your peers. Dress thinking what you would expect the other person to wear at such a meeting. Also do not forget that you have a certain role in the meeting. For example, a banker would be expected to be dressed in a suit, a farmer in work clothes and a teacher in smart casuals.

The key to feel confident is to dress to suit your role. For instance, if you work in an environment where you create artistic products you will be expected to dress a little artistically. A conservative dressing will not only make you feel uncomfortable, your audience would also feel that something is astray.

People want to interact with people who can get into their comfort zone or with whom they can relate. This qualifies the need and importance of knowing what is expected in particular roles and dressing to fit that role.

Colours create magic. A dash of bright colour can make any usual garment look appealing and exciting. We are instinctively drawn to certain colours and respond to them with feeling; when used in garments and laid against our skin they produce either positive or negative results. The right colours make our eyes sparkle and skin glow; while the wrong colours make us look tired and our skin pale. This is why it is important to know the colours that look best on us.

You can choose the colours that suit you very easily. The best way to do this is to sit in front of a mirror, place different colours next to your face and notice which colours make your skin come alive and which ones wash it out. Once you know which colours flatter you, use them consistently in your wardrobe. You will feel that you look better and feel more wonderful more often always. This will also help you in projecting the right attitude needed for the occasion.

Another thing that you need to understand about colours is their emotional effect. Soothing colours give your personality a soothing attitude and loud and brash colours will make you look loud. In an interview, where you need to give the correct first impression, it is always advisable to wear neutral colours that complement you.

Dressing smartly also requires you to understand the effect of certain prints and styles on your body. You need to choose your dresses in accordance with your body type. Once you have selected the colors that suits you, choosing the right outfit becomes important. No style should be beyond you, no matter if you are fat or thin.

Fat people generally avoid horizontal lines, but strategically placed lines can enhance your look and make them look more chic and contemporary. Similarly, short people are known to wear vertical stripes and single block colors. Wherein, shorter people should wear lighter colored lowers teamed with darker tops. Or they should go for short dresses that show their legs. Legs make a person look taller.

A heavier individual should lean towards fitted clothes but in flowing fabrics. As, flowing garment does not allow the eyes to rest on a particular body part and the fitting makes sure that there is no extra fabric. On the other hand, a gaunt person should wear slightly stiff fabrics that are fitted loosely. The stiffness of the fabric and the loose fitting, both present the illusion of body mass making the person look fuller than what he /she is.

Last but not the least, add that personal touch. The personal touch will not only make you feel comfortable but, will also reflect in your attitude.

Personal touch can be seen in the fabrics and the colours that you choose. It is also evident in the jewellery, handbags, shoes, shades and other accessories that you use to enhance the attire. All these make you feel confident and thus, help in spreading a positive vibe.

All personal styles can be broadly categorised into four style preferences. These are classic, romantic, sporty or dramatic. The classic style has an elegant traditional look and comprises timeless garments. The romantic style has a soft feminine look and comprises dresses and skirts rather than pants. The sporty style includes casual comfortable clothes and prefers natural fabrics. The dramatic style is sophisticated, turns heads and which includes the latest trends.

That brings us to situations, in which we may not relate to the occasion as the personal style may be different. Likewise, if a person's style is sporty and they are attending a gala event or their personal style is dramatic and they need to attend a ball game? How to feel confident at such times, express your own style and still fit the occasion. All occasions will not fit our personal style but if we know our style well enough we can make accommodations.

For example, in the situations mentioned above, the sporty style can also make you look gala and can also express your own style; by wearing long, flowing top, pants and sports (but elegant) shoes. On the other hand, the dramatic style opter will feel comfortable in a leather jacket, a bold print top and angular jewellery for a ball game.

When you dress with confidence you know you have made the best choice for you and you feel comfortable in any situation. It means feeling attractive and completely you. Dressing appropriately for the situation enhances confidence and the right colours brighten you making you feel complete and positive.

So, depending on the attitude that you want to portray, you have to be independent, creative, friendly, organized or the affluent. Dress up for the occasion. It does define your attitude.



6. Corporate Social Responsibility and Multinationals

Abstract: The concept of CSR was introduced by the UN with the theory of responsible investing in their minds. Introduced in the early 1970's it has started showing results only now. With multinationals being dependent on developing countries for profits and developing countries being dependent on multinationals for development, CSR has evolved to gain an important position in the business model being followed. Though, there were a lot of takers for this concept, it also faced many criticisms. In this essay, we will explore the meaning of CSR, CSR methodology, advantages and criticisms of the much debated CSR.

The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was coined in the early 1970's when multinational corporations started emerging. The idea behind the introduction of CSR was the concept of responsible investing. CSR is a kind of corporate self-disciplined assimilated into a business model. Under this business model, the business regulates and guarantees its active conformity with the spirit of law, ethical standards and international rules and regulations. The goal of CSR is understood; as the acceptance of responsibility for the company's actions and encouragement of a positive impact through the company's activities on the environment, employees, consumers, and communities and all other members of the public sphere.

When the concept of CSR was introduced, it was also assumed that multinationals following this approach would actively promote public interest. They could do so by encouraging community growth and development and willingly discarding practices that harm the public sphere. CSR represents the formal and intentional inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making, and of binding the multinationals to the maxim of 3Ps, that is, People, Planet and Profit.

The decision for including CSR in the corporate business model was done keeping in mind not only the stakeholders but, also the employees of the companies. Companies following the CSR based model have certain moral and ethical responsibilities which they need to take into account and adhere to.

CSR can be implemented in various ways. Initially, CSR was more of philanthropy. Philanthropy translated into monetary donations given to the development sectors of the country in which the company is operating or giving it directly to any controlling organization that the beneficiary had. The aim for this philanthropy was the development of impoverished communities, especially in the developing countries. However, this approach is being rapidly discarded as companies are realizing that this kind of development is neither properly implemented nor sustained.

For a more sustained development, some big and powerful multinationals have taken to doing development work in communities in conjunction with local authorities and organizations. Examples of this kind of development can be cited by the Shell Foundation. Shell Foundation has set up an Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Flower Valley in South Africa. This ELC follows a two-pronged approach where it helps educate the community's children and also helps in developing new skills for the adults. Another example, is that of Marks and Spencer. Marks and Spencer is actively building a trade network with the community. They are guaranteeing regular fair trade purchases from the community of the products made by the community. In fact, one of the largest service providing firms, KPMG has gone a step further and included the CSR strategy directly into its business model. KPMG procures tea and coffee from the communities that it has adopted through the Fair Trade method. They insist that this is the least that they can do for the community. Other avenues that companies work for include community health, a greener and thus cleaner community and plantation.

Another approach that is now being followed internationally is that of increasing interest in corporate responsibility. This model is called Creating Shared Value (CSV). CSV believes that corporate success and social welfare are mutually dependent. A business, to thrive, needs a vigorous, skilled workforce, an expert government and sustainable resources. Similarly, a society, for surviving, needs profitable and competitive businesses so that wealth for the development of the society is created.

Some companies also use the strategy of benchmarking. In this strategy, companies evaluate their competitors' CSR policy. They study the implementation and effectiveness of their CSR policy. After a comprehensive study of competitor strategy and an internal policy review performed, a comparison can be drawn and a strategy developed for competition with CSR initiatives.

The extent and description of the benefits of CSR for a company may differ depending on the nature of the enterprise. The benefits as such are difficult to quantify. However, it is to be noted that when companies develop their CSR strategy, they do not look at short term financial gains. In spite of this, let us try to see the extent of benefits under the following heads:

Companies can use CSR policies to convince the governments and the wider public that they take their responsibility seriously. They can take up issues like health and safety, diversity, or environment and display their sincerity with respect to labor standards and impacts on the environment. A good CSR policy would also enable them to avoid government interference through taxes and other regulations.

A good and well formed CSR policy can help a company in attracting as well as retaining new recruits. Today, young graduates want to join companies that have a good CSR policy. A CSR policy can also help improve the sensitivity of a company among its staff. It also gives the staff a chance to get involved through fundraising activities, payroll giving or community volunteering.

A major challenge that companies face today is that of branding. A good CSR policy complemented by a company based on ethical values has a huge potential of building a very loyal customer base. Brands like The Body Shop, The Co-operative Group and American Apparel are built on these very ethical values.

Apart from the advantages, the concept of CSR has also faced its criticism. Some scholars feel that CSR distracts the companies' attention

from the economic role of business. Other critics say that CSR is just an eye-wash and the corporate companies neither have the will nor the time to take CSR seriously. Another point, which they put forward, is that CSR is just an attempt of corporate companies to somehow avoid the eyes of the government acting as a watch dog over these companies. Let us take a quick look at these criticisms.

Opponents of CSR, such as Milton Friedman and others have claimed that a corporation's purpose is to maximize its returns for its shareholders. They further add that since only people can have social responsibilities, multinationals are only responsible to their shareholders and not to the society as a whole. They also say that corporations should obey the laws set by the countries where they work, but at the same time, they do not have any moral obligation towards the society. Some scholars also see CSR as incompatible with the very nature and purpose of business. They also say that CSR is indeed a hindrance to free trade.

This view of Friedman and others has been countered by supporters of CSR. They say that in the long term, CSR can improve corporate profitability as it reduces risks and incompetence while offering a gamut of possible advantages such as enhanced brand status and employee engagement.

Critics are concerned with corporate hypocrisy and insincerity. They say that companies generally use the CSR policies to distract attention from ethical questions raised as a result of their basic operation. Examples of these include that of the Royal Dutch Shell Company. This company, in spite of its much-publicised CSR policy was not able to prevent the 2004 scandal concerning its misreporting of oil reserves. This seriously injured its reputation and led to charges of hypocrisy. Since then, the Shell Foundation has changed its policies and has become involved in many projects across the world, including three flower and fruit growing communities across Africa.

Supporters again counter this claim by saying that strict government regulation and enforcement should be used to monitor and regulate the CSR policies of various companies.

In spite of all the criticisms that CSR is subjected to, one cannot ignore the fact that yes CSR has a very vital role to play in the development of communities. CSR can help communities by implementing sustained development. Though there are players in the market, who appear to be insincere in their efforts, we cannot ignore

others that are sincere and have succeeded in establishing themselves through their CSR policies.



7. Understanding Landfills

***Abstract:** Landfills are the oldest solution for waste management. Initially these were not well managed, but with the advancement in science and technology, better ways have come forward to manage landfills. Better technology calls for classification of landfills into various categories. Different countries categorise landfills differently. There are two main ways of classifying landfills. One is based on the type of wastes accepted and the other on the technique used for handling the landfill. In spite of the better technology, impact of landfills cannot be ignored and they need to be monitored for a long period even after their closure.*

Urban countries have given rise to urban waste. This has made waste management techniques practiced till now not only ineffective but also insufficient. It is because of this, that landfill sites have gained popularity and much usability.

Landfill refers to a particular site where rubbish is dumped and managed systematically and scientifically so that no or little harm is caused to the environment around it. Rubbish that can neither be recycled nor reused is generally dumped in landfills. This is done with the purpose of composting the rubbish and thus accelerating the rate at which it biodegrades itself. In fact, this composting has given the world renewable and environmentally friendly fuel in the form of renewable gases and solid manure.

In spite of this, one must remember that trash can not be dumped anywhere and everywhere. Or that any place where trash is dumped cannot be called a landfill. This is because a landfill, if not managed properly, can have adverse affects on the environment rather than benefiting it. There are certain rules that govern the use and management of landfills and it is precisely for this reason that a lot of consideration goes into choosing a landfill site.

Landfill sites are the oldest way of managing rubbish. These have been used since long but the technique to manage them to yield fruitful results has been developed recently. Better and more sophisticated methods call for waste separation and planning landfill sites accordingly.

All landfill sites cannot accept all types of wastes. But, differentiation between landfill sites is important as the location of landfill sites depends on the waste material that it accepts. Globally, there is no set parameter for a landfill site. Some countries classify these on the basis of waste material that it collects and some classify these on the basis of the techniques used for managing the same.

On the basis of the waste material accepted, landfills can be separated into general waste landfills and hazardous or toxic material landfills. General landfill sites are those sites that can accept only general waste material. These materials are those that do not pose any threat to the environment or the residential complexes around it. Examples of this type of waste include domestic and commercial waste and builder's rubble, among others.

On the other hand, hazardous waste landfill sites are those that accept hazardous material that pose a threat to the environment. These wastes can also threaten the environment and public health. Examples of hazardous materials include items like oil, paint, acids, industrial waste, and the likes.

Further classification of a general landfill can be done in the form of organic or biodegradable waste and inorganic or non-biodegradable waste. Examples of organic waste includes food, paper, cardboard, wood, and the likes. Inorganic or non-biodegradable waste includes wastes such as plastic, glass and the likes.

Another way to segregate general landfill sites is domestic landfill and commercial landfill. Domestic landfill accepts waste that comes from domestic users and households. This includes waste like food, tin, aluminium, plastic, wood and the likes. Commercial waste, the other category, accepts waste like concrete, building rubble, lead and the likes.

One more classification that is much contested internationally is mono-disposal and joint-disposal. Mono-disposal landfills are those landfills that have only one types of waste being deposited there. On the other hand, joint-disposal landfills are those that accept different types of waste in the landfill. The bone of contention in this case is the co-habitation of both safe and hazardous materials. Some scientists hold that the decomposing process of safe ad domestic waste can take care of the decomposing of hazardous material. But, this has not yet been established for all types of waste material. Some materials take longer to decompose and some take less time. When such materials are thrown together, they create problem for the atmosphere rather than helping

it. Careful analysis of wastes is required before dumping waste material in joint-disposal landfills. Another major problem that has come forward in this type of landfill is the problem of space. If mono-disposal landfills are planned for all types of waste materials, there would be a major space crunch.

Another broad classification of waste material depends on how the landfills are managed. On the basis of these, the four kinds of broad classifications are:

- (i) Total containment
- (ii) Containment and Collection of Leachate
- (iii) Controlled Contaminant Release and
- (iv) Unrestricted Contaminant Release

The total containment strategy is used for hazardous and polluting wastes such as nuclear waste, acids, paints, and the likes. In this type of management, no water movement in or out of the landfill site is allowed. This means that the process of decomposition is slow and the responsibility of containing the landfill site will remain largely with the managing authority and that to for a very long period.

The containment and collection of leachate strategy of managing waste is used for municipal solid wastes. In this type of management, water movement is controlled but not prevented entirely. Along with controlling the water movement, it also requires active leachate removal and management. When building this type of a landfill, a permeable base is used to line the landfill site. Even in this case, it takes centuries for the waste material to decompose and form compost. The time taken for decomposition would depend on water movement allowed through the landfill site. Scientists are now trying to find a way to accelerate leaching so that the process of decomposition is reduced from centuries to decade.

The third categorisation, controlled contaminant release, is used for certain types of waste material. The waste materials dumped in this landfill include those whose leachate is relatively safe. While constructing these types of landfill, the top cover and base liner are designed of such a material that would allow controlled leachate leakage. But before such landfills are planned, a clearance certificate is mandatory from the environmentalists. The environmentalists would study the leachate and its affects on the environment before providing such a

certificate. Apart from controlling the leachate leakage, no other active leachate management is practiced. A typical example of such a site would be one near the coastal region and accepting only inorganic waste.

The last classification, unrestricted contaminant release, is used for inert wastes as well as municipal wastes. In this type of management, there is free movement of water inside as well as outside the landfill.

It is not necessary that all countries have these kinds of landfills. Different types of landfills are found in different countries. For example, the unrestricted contaminant release landfills are generally found in rural areas in the less developed countries. On the other hand, European countries would not accept this type of landfill. In fact, they do not even allow controlled contaminant release landfills. Only the total containment and collection of leachate types of landfills are allowed.

Choosing a landfill site requires close attention to some vital points. These points include the proximity of the site to water resources such as rivers, ponds, lakes, and the likes, purpose of the landfill, the trash to be dumped in the landfill and number of users, among others. But in spite of careful selection of landfill sites, their impact on the environment and the neighbouring areas cannot be ignored.

Landfill sites are a threat to not only ground water but also to surface water. The most major concern for a landfill operator or manager is the leachate. The leachate or the “garbage soup” is the watery solution that is obtained when water is passed through a landfill site. This leachate may or may not contain toxic substances. Any unchecked leakage of leachate in the soil or groundwater table can intoxicate the supply of drinking water.

Leachate, if managed properly, can be quite safe and non-hazardous. But if leachate is not managed properly, it may cause major health problems. Once the leachate leaves the landfill site it comes in contact with other substances also. These substances can either pollute the leachate further or clean it further. This can be determined by monitoring water obtained from deep wells placed strategically around the landfill sites. In either case, leachate needs to be monitored carefully and for longer periods.

Once the landfill site is closed, it can be used for landscaping or for making recreational spots such as parks, golf courses, and others. This is generally decided at the time of planning a landfill site. Although, a landfill site may be managed properly, it is important to monitor the quality of groundwater near a landfill site for at least 3

decades. If there is any change in water during this period, it can be looked into and steps to minimize the affects can be taken.



8. Prisons—Do We Really Need Them?

Abstract: Prison—the name itself creates jitters in the mind of many people. Millions of people in the world are rotting in jails/prisons. Some think of jails and prisons as an essential part of society, but do we really need them? Do prisons really protect people from violence and victimization, or do prisons just make matters worse? This essay takes a look into the real needs of the inmates and the efficacy of our prisons with a remarkable example of Tihar Jail of Delhi in making a difference in that direction.

The purpose of prisons can be generally categorized as deterrence, isolation, punishment, reformation and reintegration. While society has been evolving and is apprehensive about this kind of confinement as the remedy from crime, prisons still exist as chastising agents on behalf of the general public. The mere presence of prisons deters general public from engaging in unlawful activities. This is because a good number of people are scared of being incarcerated, which is known to be a public disgrace. Moreover, a prisoner is kept from involving in crime after the completion of his sentence.

The idea behind seclusion of the criminal through imprisonment is to prevent corruption in the society and to protect law bidding citizens from the probable danger to their lives or property from the criminals and their act of criminalities. Another purpose of this seclusion is to make the prisoners realize their mistakes and giving them time to realize the futility of their wrongful acts and to come to terms with reality.

Indian prisons are generally no better than dungeons. Thousands of under-trial men and women have spent years for the courts to decide their fate. The suffering of these prisoners can be seen in the stubbornness of the judiciary. As a result, hundreds are spending their years in cells exposed to hardened criminals. The pile-up of pending cases in courts is matched only by the pile-up of prisoners in jails. The pitiful condition of the prisoners is such that they spend unjustified time waiting for the trial process to begin which is supposed to decide further term of imprisonment depending upon the case. By the time they are released

they have spent a major chunk of their lives in the company of hard core criminals and under such drastic conditions, that even the innocents are moved towards crimes. Such as the arrears in the courts that even petty crimes need a lot of time to be decided upon and a decision reached.

This is not only derogatory to the individual, but to the nation as well. The huge financial resources spent on the maintenance of jails and confinement of prisoners turns out to be a burden on the state. Adding fuel to the fire is the overcrowding which has been seen in the last few decades. A pathetic life, unavailability of education and reformation facilities and further criminalization adds to the woes of the inmates.

However, there have been some examples from amongst these prisons where the reformation process has reached decent levels and paved a path for others to follow. One such example is that of Tihar jail in Delhi. Initiated by IPS officer, Dr. Kiran Bedi, some of the corrective measures implemented here have been able to serve the true purpose of reforming the criminals. Let us take a look at some of the reformative steps taken.

Inter-ward and inter-jail sports competitions have been organized twice a year over more than the last five years. This has observed a sharp increase in the participative spirit among the prisoners. Sports like volleyball, cricket, basketball, kho-kho, kabbaddi, chess, carom and the likes are organized during the winter sports festivals. These sports festivals are popularly called "Tihar Olympics". Apart from these sporting competitions, inter jail cultural meets called "Ethnic Tihar" are organized during the spring season every year. During this meet, the inmates compete in music, dance, poetry, painting and quiz competitions among others. To encourage the prisoners to take part in the sports and cultural events, to foster their cultural, physical and mental development and develop discipline, eminent personalities from the field of sports and culture are invited at these occasions.

A flag hoisting ceremony is organized on national festivals like Republic Day and Independence Day. Religious festivals like Holi, Id, X-mas, Guru Parv, Diwali are celebrated by one and all. Rakshbandhan is celebrated by sisters and brothers who are allowed to meet the inmates and tie Rakhies. Sweets are prepared inside the prisons and sold to the visitors. This occasion is a gesture of care by the jail administration towards prisoners that makes a difference. These efforts have proved to

be effective in channelizing the energy of the prisoners in a positive direction.

Government as well as Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have joined hands to impart education, both adult and formal, to the prisoners. More than 2000 inmates are enrolled at the Study Centres of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) at Tihar. Even computer training centres for computer education are functional at the prison. Relevant books and study material is available in the library created with the help of NGOs. All expenditure on fees and study aids is borne by the government.

Not only this, the educated prisoners voluntarily teach less educated prisoners. Courses like Bachelor of Art or Commerce, Diploma in Creative Writing in Hindi or English, Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education, Masters in Tourism or Management or Computers, Certificate in Human Rights are some of the courses that are conducted at the jail. Even the Directorate of Training and Technical Education organizes vocational classes for typing and commercial arts.

In addition, efforts for teaching various trades are also put in both for convicts as well as under-trials. These trades include book binding, pen manufacturing, screen printing, manure making, envelope making, shoe-making, tailoring and cutting and the likes. This has resulted in not only learning a trade and developing skills, but also in providing monetary gains for the prisoners. The post-release rehabilitation of the prisoners is also taken care of by the Social Welfare Department of the Delhi Government. Under this scheme, loans are provided by the Delhi government for setting up self-employed units.

The welfare activities of prisoners are carried on by the prisoner bodies called 'Panchayats' which help prison administration in the field of education, legal counseling, vocational education, kitchen and public works among others. Open meetings called "The Mahapanchayats" are held in the presence of the Director General (Prisons) and media to address the grievances of prisoners. The prisoners are even responsible for managing the prisoner welfare canteens.

Yoga and meditation classes for cleansing and disciplining the mind are also conducted in a routine manner at Tihar jail. These classes are conducted with the help of various voluntary organisations. Vipassana meditation camps for large number of inmates are organized and vipassana centres too operate in the premises. Meditation groups like

Brahma Kumari, Ishwariya Vishvavidyalaya, Sahaj Yoga Kendra and Divya Jyoti Jagriti Sansthan have also opened their branches in jails for imparting moral education, improving the quality of life and providing counseling to the prisoners. This has helped many prisoners to change the way they approach life.

As understood, reintegration eventually works to bring the offender close to the society by giving him the exposure of the positive elements of a free environment. All these happenings for the betterment of the life of prisoners and to bring them back in touch with the life they are meant to live, forces one to rethink about the existence and worth of the prisons. This also points out the fact that the presence of prisons in the conventional manner where the so called culprits are forced to live a life of humility and disgrace is an outdated concept. This, if replaced by innovative reformation houses like the one mentioned above, is sure to build a new society. The basis of such society would be the real restructuring of the value systems and lifestyles of millions of people who either due to misdirection or due to the inbuilt flaws in our administrative system move to adopt the unacceptable ways of life.

The purpose of prisons, hence, can be modified from deterrence, isolation, punishment, to reformation and reintegration. The building of a new culture would then be inevitable and would truly serve the purpose of transformation from the evil to the good.



9. Scientific Reason behind “Sagotra” Marriages?

Abstract: With the recent killings of young couples done in the name of honour, an important and relevant question – Does the opposition of same gotra marriages have a scientific base – was raised. Though legally, sagotra marriages cannot be contested, socially, our elders are dead against it. They have been opposing these marriages since long. We would love to challenge our ancestors, but how many of us know that even science suggests that sagotra marriages are not good for our future generations? In this essay, we are trying to explore all three aspects, that is, legal, social and scientific, of sagotra marriages.

Can we recall the sudden flurry of honour killings in the state of Haryana? Same gotra or “sagotra” marriage was stated as the reason.

When asked, our elders say that people belonging to the same gotra have emanated from the same forefather and our hence our brothers and sisters. And the Hindu religion does not allow brothers and sisters to get married. It might sound ridiculous to some, but is it possible that there is a scientific reason behind our ancestors insisting on marriages in different gotras? Let us try to explore this question further.

Legally, “sagotra” marriages are absolutely valid and are not considered to be an act of incest under any law. This issue was settled long back in 1945, when the two-judge bench, of the Bombay High Court, ruled that “sagotra” marriages are authorized and nobody can contest them from the legal point of view.

This ruling was passed in the case, ‘Madhavrao vs Raghavendrarao’. The case involved “sagotra” marriage of a Deshashta Brahmin couple. The two- judge bench, who presided over the case, comprised of the first Chief Justice of India, Justice Harilal Kania and Justice P B Gajengragadkar, who became the Chief Justice of India in 1964. They studied the Hindu religious materials in depth and conferred on the same with recognized and established commentators of Hindu religious texts. They also looked into various previous rulings, and reached the conclusion that marriages between the same gotra are absolutely valid, as there is no proof in the Hindu scriptures that states otherwise.

The two-judge bench had also quoted P V Kane, an eminent scholar on Hindu religious rites and the author of “History of Dharmashastras”, when they said that the mass of material on gotras and parivasas, as available in the sutras, puranas and other digests is so vast and so full of contradictions that it is almost next to impossible to reduce it to order and coherence.

As an attempt to further explain this ruling, they said that gotras represent an unbroken line of descent from the initial eight ancestors as laid down by the Hindu scriptures. But, considering the varied range of gotras and sub gotras prevalent today, it is impossible to prove that any lineage is actually a true unbroken line of descent from any one of the eight ancestors. Further, they also said that the texts of Manu and Yajnavalkya suggest that the gotra requirements as stated by the various Hindu scriptures are recommendatory in nature and not mandatory.

They also that with the change in time, it was necessary to change the laws and customs as through the years many different interpretations of the Hindu law have been put forward. Taking all this into

consideration, they ruled that “sagotra” marriages are legal and therefore cannot be contested legally.

Socially, “sagotra” marriages are considered to be an act of incest. Our ancestors believe that as a race, all Brahmins spring from any of one of the eight maharishis namely Gautama, Bhardwaja, Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Vasistha, Kashyapa, Atri and Agastya.

All these eight rishis were the mind-sons of the creator of our world—Lord Brahma. Over the years, these rishis started new lineages and slowly the number of gotras started increasing. Other reasons for the increase in gotras were inter caste marriages, inclusion of other castes in the gotra system and adoption of names of gurus which were believed to have blessed a particular family. As of today, there are a total of 49 recognized gotras.

As, we are descendents from any one of 49 ancestors, people belonging to the same ancestors belong to the same gotra and when the forefather is the same, all people belonging to the same gotra are considered to be brothers and sisters. It is because of this reason that couples belonging to the same gotra should not get married.

In spite of this belief, there are examples all over the world of people who marry within their gotra in order to maintain the “purity” of their blood or bloodlines. This was seen especially in the royal families and nobilities the world over. This concept of marrying first cousins or even closer relatives is referred to as inbreeding.

A very famous example of inbreeding was the marriage between Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIII. Cleopatra VII was the sister of Ptolemy XIII. But, they married in order to follow the rules to kingship. In ancient Egypt, the eldest son and daughter became the successive king and queen respectively. This necessitated both to get married and rule Egypt.

Even the Incas practiced inbreeding. As per the rules, the heir to the throne had to be the son of the present king and his queen or the king and his sister. If the heir was the son of the King and the sister, then the king had to marry his sister.

Other examples of inbred marriages include Charles Darwin and his first cousin Emma Wedgwood and Albert Einstein and his first cousin (through his mother) and second cousin (through his father), Elsa Löwenthal née Einstein.

Scientifically, various researches all over the world have proved that “sagotra” marriages can lead to major genetic diseases being introduced

in the gene pool. Though selective breeding is practiced the world over, the first generation of inbred children generally suffer from physical deformities and other sexual, emotional and psychological defects.

Inbred children are known to suffer from health defects such as reduced immunity, reduced infertility, reduced sperm producing ability, reduced birth rate, increased genetic disorders, increased infant mortality, slower growth rate, increased morbidity rate, smaller adult size and increased facial and physical deformities. This general decreased fitness is called inbreeding depression.

Another problem with “sagotra” marriages is the limitation of gene pools. This means that when people marry in the same gotra, they marry a genetically same person. When two similar gene pools interact, the resulting gene pool is also the same. Though this method may be used for weeding out a particular genetic trait through generations, it also limits the gene pool.

An additional factor that needs to be taken into consideration is that of defective or undesirable genes. In the process of getting star products, many undesirable genes are also passed from the parents to the children. When the gene pool is limited, the immunity of the entire gene pool reduces, making them more susceptible to diseases of a particular kind. This can lead to the extinction of a particular gene pool. Let us understand this with the help of an example.

Cheetas all over the world have the same gene pool. It is believed that some time in the ancient world, the cheetas must have been forced to come together and mate there. Therefore, all the resulting cheetas have the same gene pool. If a virus develops that the cheetas are not able to fight off, the entire species of this big cat will get extinct and that too, in no time.

Another example that can be studied here is that of the British house of Habsburgs. The Habsburgs had a lot of inbreeding between aunts and nephews and uncles and nieces. One genetic disorder that the generations of Habsburgs developed was the Habsburgs Lip or Habsburgs Jaw. In fact, through the generations, the problem of the deformity of the jaw increased so much that the last of the Habsburg King, Charles II, could not even chew his food properly.

Apart from this, King Charles II also had many genetic physical, intellectual, sexual and emotional inconveniences. As a consequence of subsequent inbreeding, the King was impotent. This made him the last of the Kings, after whom the Habsburg dynasty finished.

All these medical reasons make versatility in the gene pool a necessity. Only when diverse gene pools interact, would healthy generations take birth and will humanity continue. Without the diversity in gene pool, the extinction of a particular type of gene pool is definite. Though our elders do oppose “Sagotra” marriages on the pretext of them being our brothers and sisters, the reality needs to be taken into account. “Sagotra” marriages, though legal, should be avoided so that the future generations are healthy.



10. Supermarkets of Our Days

Abstract: Someone had said, “Every diversity brings with it an equal scope of opportunity”. It is up to us to figure out if we are looking at a problem or an opportunity. Hence, it is a view that the popularity of supermarkets has threatened the livelihood of small time traders and shop owners but in no way can we say that the battle has been won by the super markets. In case of traditional retailers, they can match up the might of the modern retail shops by working on their strength. The traditional shops have certain aspects which endear them to the consumers such as the close proximity of the shops to the consumer’s home is convenient to the end consumers. Also, the small shops give additional facilities such as home delivery and monthly credit facilities so as to ensure they retain the loyalty of their customers. These shops retain a high trust and strong personal relationship with the consumer.

Today India is shining on the world map. It enjoys the privilege of being one of the fastest growing economies. This robust and sound economic growth which has made India a cynosure among developing countries is sustained by retail sector to a large extent. Retail sector is a market for people of all classes whether rich or poor. Retail sector to a large extent comprises of small time traders, pavement vendors, small store owners and the like. They cater to the demands of both the affluent as well as low income groups by providing a variety of goods and services at affordable prices. Retail sector is also a major source of income and livelihood to a large section of population. It is a broad economic forum that provides new avenues of employment opportunities and entrepreneurship to the youth as well as to the vast uneducated and unskilled workforce of our country. Thus retail sector is indispensable in our economy. Till now small time traders operating in open markets had enjoyed monopoly in this sector. But today their unrivalled and

undisputed position is being challenged by the emergence of a new business enterprise: the supermarkets.

Supermarkets are newly established market phenomenon in our country which came into existence after liberalization. These provide a variety of goods and services under one roof. These have received immense customer response in a very short span of time. After liberalization, the markets of our country were opened to global competitiveness. Our economy was exposed to an unprecedented level of opportunities. Tremendous FDI inflow and outsourcing to multinational companies have generated a lot of capital in the economy. At the same time to compete and assert ourselves in the global market our economy adapted to new methods of working which aim at maximizing efficiency of production processes through technological and with minimum investment. So the goods and services sector such as manufacturing and IT which could cater to these new demands received a major thrust in our economic planning.

The new found capital was utilized in creation of IT parks, SEZ, infrastructure development and for industrial expansion. All this helped in generation of massive employment opportunities among the skilled youth and educated middle class. Now the capital has passed on into the hands of the middle class. As a result their purchasing power also increased. With this new buying power there has been a drastic change in the tastes and preferences of consumers from price-linked to quality and value linked product and services. At the same time there has been a dramatic shift in the cultural trend among people especially among new generation and middle aged groups who have been exposed to western ideology in the wake of globalization. Today, joint family has been replaced by nuclear family as a result of industrialization, globalization and liberalization (IGL). People aspire to lead a life of comfort and luxury. Both husband and wife work for higher earnings. This has increased the pace of life and essence of value of time. This lifestyle demands services that keep up with the pace and offer convenience and value. This is where the supermarkets come in. Their concept of providing all quality goods and services at the same place fits proudly into this newly formed culture. So, supermarkets cater to the needs of the newly rising urban middle class. The success of supermarkets threatens to shatter the age-old foundation of our retail sector governed mostly by small time traders and shop owners.

Supermarkets tend to exploit the principle of comparative cost advantage. They enhance the sale of their products by offering quality and branded commodities at discount rates and also by the introduction of several new incentive schemes to attract the customers. Any small retailer in the vicinity of supermarket offering inferior products with higher prices will face immense competition from it and find it exceedingly difficult to survive his business in the market.

Availability, access to credit and capital help the supermarkets to implement and exploit technological benefits which remain far from the reach of small store owners mostly on the account of lack of sufficient credit. This helps supermarkets to gain an upper hand over the small retailers. Availability of huge financial resources also helps supermarkets to offset any initial operating costs and losses. As compared to supermarkets the capital required to set up a small retail shop is very small as well as its operating costs are also low. But a small store owner lacks the requisite capital necessary to survive in the market in the event of heavy losses.

Small store owners obtain their commodities for sale mostly from distributors of wholesale markets at a bargained price. The small retailers then sell these products and services to customers and earn a marginal profit. However the process of retail consolidation which supermarkets are increasingly undertaking is likely to hurt small retailers. This is because supermarkets demand massive sales volume of manufacturers and distributors. So the distributors would be more willing to cater to the demands of supermarkets rather than small retailers.

Supermarkets have better storage facilities and an efficient transport system that enables them to ensure speedy and effective distribution of goods and services in a cost-effective and economical manner. Small retailers especially in wetmarkets that comprise of subji mandis are at a greater disadvantage in this context as they have to supply perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables with no storage system available at their disposal. The emergence of supermarkets or organized retail has definitely increased the level of competition. It has also challenged the livelihood of small retailers to certain extent. But the organized retail as identified by malls, multiplexes, supermarkets and hypermarkets is still at nascent stage in India.

Unlike the developed economies where organized retail has replaced small traders and shop owners, the retail sector in our country is still dominated by small retailers. So it is imprudent to conclude that our

retail sector in coming years would eventually succumb to the dominance of organized retail. There are several aspects of the unorganized retail comprising of small retailers and customer psyche that need to be considered before we make any conclusion.

In order to compete effectively with the modern shops, the traditional shops can tap their strengths to meet head-on the strengths of the big super markets. The retailers can provide customized solutions to the consumers, in terms of home delivery which the big supermarkets can never provide their customers. Also, the traditional shops can focus on providing niche products to its consumers. Even though the supermarkets provide the entire set of products under one roof, the small traders can provide quality services and advices to the customers by focusing on niche products. There are also few examples to quote such as Mom and me shops which provide products related to baby care. Hence, by exploiting the weakness of the big supermarkets the small shop owners can compete effectively and continue with their existence in the days to come.

The small retailers have begun to adapt to the changing market scenario and in tune with customer tastes and preferences. To attract the customers, they have introduced several innovative services such as telephone order for various commodities, home delivery and even procurement of branded items on demand for customers. Long-term association with customers due to provision of such facilities helps to develop a bond of loyalty with them. Such customers are not easily drawn towards supermarkets.

The small retailers have also learnt to focus on customer/product niches where they can add value where large retail chains cannot. These include sale of goods and services such as medicines, gifts and greeting cards that customers require unexpectedly and immediately. So, they prefer to buy from their nearest retailer rather than from a distant supermarket.

Customer's psyche also plays a pivotal role towards their orientation towards a particular type of market. Most of the middle income groups which are the potential targets of supermarkets believe that such big retail chains are expensive. So, they usually stick to their small retailers. In regard to food items, most Indians have a habit of procuring fresh food products rather than processed and packaged items. So, here the small grocery vendors who replenish their stock on a daily basis have an upper edge over supermarkets.

Supermarkets usually flout that their major customers are the affluent. But the reality is that a majority of rich people have a tendency to send their servants to markets to fetch for their day-to-day necessities. The servants usually feel intimidated by supermarkets. So, they turn to their friendly neighbourhood Kirana store. Rural India turns to small retailers for its necessities. Rural areas have yet remained untouched from supermarkets. So, what is seen is that our unorganized retail consisting of small retailers is evolving to meet the new challenges of present scenario. This sector is here to stay. Supermarkets have been able to strengthen their roots in our country because these are the need of the hour. These are essential to meet the challenges of changing lifestyle of people in modern time. In India supermarkets are still in a blossoming stage. However, in future there are ample opportunities for its expansion. But at the same time we must also understand that supermarkets present a significant challenge to the livelihood of small time traders and shop owners that form a major part of our unorganized retail sector. These are mostly low and middle income groups. Their expulsion from the market by the dominance of supermarkets can have serious social ramifications in the form of increased unemployment and perpetuation of poverty. In the light of this, we must strengthen our unorganized retail by ensuring better access to credit from banks and microfinance institutions, modernization of wetmarkets such as mandis through public private partnership, providing better infrastructure facilities and promoting new innovative market strategies to small retailers to enable them to compete effectively. At the same time we must also regulate the expansion of supermarkets.

Supermarkets and small retailers can co-exist in harmony if we generate a friendly environment for their growth. Its benefit would eventually fall upon the customers who would be able to enjoy the fruits of both the market systems. Shopping has always been a celebrated occasion in India. People wait the time when they go to shop with the families and make their purchases. Shopping has undergone lots of changes over the years but the intensity with which the people shop remains the same. Retailing in India has been unorganized until a few years ago. The retailing industry is getting organized over a period of time. Organized Retail Sector is currently at an inflexion point, and is ready to take the next leap of growth at a steady and stable pace. The factors responsible for rapid growth of organized retail in many countries

are urbanization, rising income levels, increase in spending power due to working women and the increased FDI.

The different formats of food retailing in India have been traditional shops, departmental stores, supermarkets, hypermarts, and super centres. Super-centers are large shopping area selling an assortment of food and non-food items. Hypermarkets- shops are having wide range and depth of products. Large supermarkets carry a complete line of food products and convenience items. Traditional shops or departmental stores are small family run business usually selling few assorted products such as vegetables and basic household amenities.

The shopping habits of people have evolved from fragmented local markets to larger centralized wholesale markets. In the case of big food retail chains, the most important aspect which attracted consumers is in terms of the 'variety of assorted products given under a single roof'. The modern retail stores have been positioning themselves as a one stop shopping center. Consumers could come to a super market and make the entire family shopping in a single place. Secondly, these retail chains also promise better quality and substantial cost savings compared to the traditional shops. Hence with the evolution of the modern retail shops, the traditional retailers located in their vicinity experienced reduced business during the initial stages. This in turn has affected the livelihood of small time traders and shop owners who had to compete with the big super markets for the share of the consumer purse.

The super markets have access to lots of resources such as professional people to manage the business, standard processes and adequate amount of capital which makes them give a heated competition to the small shop owners. Anyway, trends of consumerism have their own ways to attract consumers. No matter what supersedes the other. It is a matter of the mood of the people and the changing life style.



11. Reality Shows

Abstract: Reality shows influence youngsters. They affect the moral fabric of the society. They have become the greatest find in Television Industry in the present century. A jackpot to make viewers glued to their sets unaware of time or the sensibility of what they are viewing .Kaun Banega Crpati might have been a start for this ingenious drama involving household characters. It could be the girl next door or

anyone to whom one can relate the common audience. But a lot was in the pipeline. The success of these shows lie in the simple ingenious formula of creating real life situations. For once Indian audience was relieved to get out of the Saas Bahu traumas and the larger-than-life characters of daily soaps. They were happy to get a view into other peoples' lives and into their household, their privacy. And when celebrities volunteered to open up the masks, stand raw in front of the camera depicting their natural colors, what more can the audience ask for? When these shows succeeded in getting TRPs their concepts became weirder and wilder! Use of abusive language and vulgarity dominated these shows.

Are reality shows like Rakhi ka Insaaf, Big Boss, Splitsvilla, Emotional Atyachaar, Roadies etc having a positive effect on youngsters? Does it mean they disturb the moral fabric of the nation? Over the last few months the issues of morals and morality have re-entered the Indian mind-space consequent upon the sudden decision on the part of the government to relegate reality television shows or at least some of them from prime timeslots to late night viewing. The stated reasons for such a move are related to the issues of obscenity and inappropriateness for family viewing. Having an implication like this of such shows, moral codes are being in some way, breached.

The issue of moral values and globalization of the reality shows from western culture into our social fabric is corrupting our 5000 year old culture. Highly sensitized and overtly manipulated in the scripted reality shows are responsible for spoiling the smooth fabric of our society by encouraging money mindedness, voyeurism and sadistic pleasure. Shows like Emotional Atyachar, Roadies, Raaki ka Insaaf, Khatron ki Khiladi are very much responsible for some kind of mishappenings.

Dr. P. D. Kaushik, associate director of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, said, "such shows only promote a disregard for values and result in the collapse of the moral fabric of the society, channels do not mind exploiting the youth in order to gain T.R.P's". Last year one of the justice seekers is dead, a resident of Prem Nagar, Jhansi Madhya Pradesh. He participated in a show. He was stopped from eating and drinking and finally died. So far, no case has been filed against the show 'Raahi ka Insaaf' the most disgusting show on Indian TV.

Similarly the Splitsvilla, a show conducted by MTV spoils the nature of the Indian girls whom they fighting for the attraction of guys. Also on watching the reality shows like Roadies attract the youths by conducting the races among themselves in cities which also results in

some horrible accidents. Emotional Atyachar is a reality show which is playing game of life of many people in conducting the loyalty tests which helps in eroding the relationships that are built on trust. Moreover, some popular types of reality shows are game shows, talent hunts, dating shows, supernatural and paranormal shows etc. These shows, despite all criticism have become an essential part of people's daily lives. But what we fail to realize is that we are harming our naïve ones big time. Children with their impressionable minds and over sensitive nature susceptible to the slightest of forces become hopeless victims of these shows. In 2008, a 16 year old girl Shinjony sunk into depression and eventually was paralysed after being severely rebuked by the judges in a Bengali dance reality show.

All is said by making hay while the sun shines though with precaution and responsibilities are the need of the tough hour. Television production houses need to realize that they being the biggest form of media have huge social responsibilities to fulfill towards children, households and society for they can't escape scot free from the sharp glare of the society and law.

Reality shows influence youngsters. They affect the moral fabric of the society. They have become the greatest find in television industry in the present century. This is a jackpot to make viewers glued to their sets unaware of time or the sensibility of what they are viewing .Kaun Banega Crpati might have been a start for this ingenious drama involving household characters. A girl next door or anyone to whom one can relate the common audience. But a lot was in the pipeline. The success of these shows lie in the simple ingenious formula of creating real life situations .For once Indian audience was relieved to get out of the Saas Bahu traumas and the larger than life characters of daily soaps. They were happy to get a view into other people's lives of their household and their privacy. When celebrities volunteered to open up the masks, stand raw in front of the camera depicting their natural colors, what more can the audience ask for. If these shows succeeded in getting TRPs their concepts became weirder and wilder. Use of abusive language and vulgarity dominated these shows. The impact of such scenes on the younger generation is a social concern. Shows like Emotional Athyachar, Sach Ka Samna and the like have caused relations to split, family ties to wither.

Indian cultures are eroding. We hear this day in and day out. And what is happening in the society is only being depicted in the visuals.

Jobs in MNCs, easy access to money, night clubs, and discos and so on. Westernization is welcomed with open arms. Teenage affairs, live-in relationships, break-ups, extensive use of drugs and alcohol consumption all are pointing to the low morale of the younger generation. When the Supreme Court legalized live-in relationships, westernization has almost got a legal sanction. We may feel these privileges are available only to the upper class societies who are more exposed to the changing trends. But media only worsens the harm by providing a tainted image of the new generation to the general public. As it has always been debated media has its good and evil. Visual media has a very strong impact on the viewers. And hence they have a moral obligation to the society while screening such programs. Privatisation of National media may have allowed a wide variety of programs for the viewer but it has also increased publicizing immoral and irrelevant content without censoring. And such contents are offered to a wide range of audience ranging from children to teenagers to adults.

How do they affect the moral fabric of the society? Children and youngsters are influenced the most with these shows. As their counterparts are shown in national television due to their break-up with their partner, or when someone does a loyalty test on his/her partner publicly, the conclusion we can draw is 'In today's era publicity has greater value over personal relations and commitments. The deterioration of morality among youngsters is clearly depicted in these shows and even if a part of them will be scripted and hoaxed, it will only generate a negative influence on the viewer who is obviously attracted by the concept of easy publicity.

When the reality show 'Big Boss' had a high dose of abusive language and visuals which were marked as adult content the court ordered its time slot to be made after 11p.m. This is clearly pointing at the bad impact of such shows on the younger generation. But the order was soon revoked and the show continued to be telecast during its normal hours.

Information and Broadcast Ministry has a huge role to play in curbing the telecast of such socially irrelevant and abusive shows. The entertainment media as a whole has a moral obligation to the society. Their role in imbibing cultural values among youth is inevitable. And when such a responsibility is not taken up the entire moral fabric of the country is disturbed. Breaking the usual norms, youngsters should

come forward and protest their telecast. As it is they who are mocked and used in these shows to gain TRPs. Our private life being a reason of mirth and entertainment for millions is not something to be proud of. As youngsters we have a responsibility to the country. Being part of a multi-lingual, multi-faceted culture and history is our greatest blessing. We need to preserve these values and imbibe only the virtues of other cultures. Hope the media realize their role in this mission and telecast only shows that upheld the dignity and integrity of our culture.



12. Upholding Good Journalistic Standards

Abstract: Many times certain scams were uncovered by media through sting channel operations. Although the legality of these operations might be altogether a different debate but still they did some socially good by it. But only of these facts, we can't conclude that the media of our nation has touched the height of high journalism. Media of nation can only be said to be of high standard when it is aware of its societal responsibilities and it is actively involved in it. But in this regard I would rather say with great sorrow that media of our nation has failed in its duty towards the country. It is correct that the media has been successful in giving itself a professional touch according to the changing conditions of globalization, but on the other hands it could not maintain a fair functioning of its duties towards the nation at large. Although in today's time media needs to be professional, because fund raising is very necessary for it to function properly but with the professional touch it has to focus on social issues even if they are not so profitable.

It is said that media is the fourth pillar of the democracy. It keeps the people aware about the political turmoil on one hand, and it pressurize the political leaders to show accountability to the people on the other. Today, in India the face of media has changed a lot and in fact many times it has proved its efficiency. The media is actively involved in the national level affairs relating to the social justice, law and order, constitution and many other things.

Many times the media has played an extremely positive role by creating a public opinion towards a thing. Recently in the campaign of social activist Anna Hazaray, media played a big part in making the campaign a success. There are many other examples when the media played a great role in providing justice to the people as like in the case of Jessica Lal murder, if the media had not given the case so much of

hype there were hardly any chances that the culprits would have got the sentence of life. Moreover many times certain scams were uncovered by medic through sting channel operations, although the legality of these operations might be altogether different debate but still they did some social good by it.

But only on these facts we can't conclude that the media of our nation has touched the height of high journalism. Media of nation can only be said to be of high standard when it is aware of its societal responsibilities and it is actively involved in it. But media of our nation has failed in its duty towards the country. It is correct that the media has been successful in giving itself a professional touch according to the changing conditions of globalization. But on the other hands it could not maintain a fair functioning of its duties towards nation at large.

The truth is that even when the hype of media results in positive yields, those incidents are not a product of the consciousness of media for the society at large but instead a part of their strategy to create reputation and money. As like the case of the death of Jessica Lal was given so much hype by the government, but in rural areas everyday thousands of people are killed, many other types of families are killed but our media hardly take those incidents with that seriousness, with which it took the case of Jessica and alike. In several states many people are dying because of hunger and malnutrition, but such things never get enough attention from the fourth pillar of our democracy. On the one hand at regional level many agitations are taking place which are even continued from years; they never got justice from the side of media, Sharmila is agitating for years to improve the plight of the people of North-East, but the media never give it enough attention.

Although in today's time media needs to be professional, as fund raising is very necessary for it to function properly; the professional touch it has to focus on social issues even they are not so profitable. In rural India many NGOs are working for the welfare of people poor, removal of literacy and many other social causes, if they help through media in their campaign it can bring drastic change in the plight of the people. When the big projects are created and people are replaced without adequate compensation, media should be actively involved in showing the plight of those people to the public, but it hardly happens. Ultimately the true goal of the journalism is to make good to people. Media should always keep this point in mind.

There is also a responsibility on the government that it should not unnecessarily interfere in the working of the media. The independence of media is a very necessary aspect of its fair functioning. Moreover it is guaranteed under article 19 of the Constitution of India, which ensures freedom to speech and expression. In the past many time the political leader had pressurized the media to achieve their own political ends and hindered the emergence of high level journalism. Political leader are required to understand the importance of reporting by media. They must give the journalists and editors sufficient safeguards against the criminal and unsocial elements.

To achieve the high level of journalism the media is required to be oriented towards the problems of the people. It is required to impartial and independent in the reporting of political incidents. It is required to be more concentrated on social issues as like suicide by farmers, rural development, social movement, displacement, land acquisition etc. After shameful incidents of bribing in Parliament people are losing faith in the democratic structure of nation. Media can play a great role in bringing back this trust.

