

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

The 'Lakhar' Movement in Tibet

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I am Tibetan. I eat dried cheese.
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I am Tibetan. I speak Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. My parents are Tibetan.
My leader is His Holiness
the Dalai Lama.
I am Tibetan. I am a disciple of His Holiness.
I am Tibetan. My father is a Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. Tibetan blood flows in my body.
I am Tibetan. I will continue to work for
Tibet's Struggle.
I am Tibetan. I am proud of being Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. I am Thangka painter and
an activist for Tibet's Independence.



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- ❖ *Recalling Charles Dickens*
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Between Ourselves...

The editorial note, in the last issue, ended with a reference to the tears shed by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi over the Batla encounter and wondered whether her tears would translate into votes. They didn't, not even in the Nehru fortress of Rae Bareilly.

Behenji in UP couldn't retain the additional 4% that gave her an overall majority five years earlier and that 4% this time went to the Samajwadi Party. Next time on there can be no doubt that the 4% will go back to Behenji, because by that time the Samajwadis would have ensured the breakdown of law and order and the voter will want Behenji back to restore the rule of law which she had so firmly restored during her regime. What else can one expect when rowdy Samajwadis would not let even their chosen one take his oath as chief minister in peace and when among the first appointees to the state cabinet is a person of notoriety facing criminal charges including murder and is also allotted the prisons portfolio!

And again after ranting and raving against Behenji and the Samajwadis, the losers who head the UPA2 in Delhi cock a snook at Mamata Didi who spiked the Railway Budget, and embraced Behenji and the Samajwadis for their survival in office.

And then you have the other coalition in Mumbai managing the richest and perhaps the most poorly managed Municipal Corporation, who, despite 17 years of non-performance was voted back to power because election statistics reveal that the Marathi Manos in the city rallied to the call for support from their venerable Balasaheb.

People get the government they deserve runs a popular adage. And we have been getting the government we deserve also the meaningless Budgets we were used to during the long night of the sterile Licence Permit Quota Raj. The Union Budget presented earlier this month is what could well be a return to those dark days. Political survival in 2014 is crucial and not pressing ahead with economic reforms. It is now becoming amply clear that if they were to go down 2014 they are determined to take the country down with them.

Where should we go from here? What should we be doing? Share your thoughts with us.

Editor

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Ajoy Bagchi, R.I.P.



9th March 1931- 5th March 2012

It is difficult to accept the fact that Ajoy Bagchi is no more with us. He fought a brave battle against a bone marrow illness which I thought he would overcome, and be back with us as cheerful as always. I was confident, he would. But destiny had other plans reserved for him. Ajoy Bagchi passed away in the evening

of 5th March 2012 at the St. Stephens Hospital in New Delhi.

I had the good fortune and indeed the privilege and pleasure of knowing AB as I often called him, since the 90's when he was the Director of a project called the "The People's Commission on Environment and Development (PCED)" based in New Delhi. PCED did remarkable work, often taking up contentious issues that brought local communities, environmentalists and government authorities together for development and resolution of problems at the local level.

I saw him at work preparing meticulously for these public hearings. He was so very committed to the idea of encouraging the citizen to participate in community affairs to develop a consciousness of civic responsibilities. AB had the gift of harnessing a wide spectrum of perspectives on, and insights into, environmental and development issues from a wide constituency of stakeholders and induct them into the government's decision-making process. He worked hard, travelled the length and breadth of the country undertaking these public hearings. He undoubtedly enjoyed his work, but often would express his disappointment of the 'Babus' attitude, for he did not like slack nor slow workers.

Ajoy Bagchi was a friendly human being, soft spoken, warm, humble and a thorough gentleman and honest to the bone. He always had a smile on his face,

actually I do not recall him without one. It came easily to him. He had a good sense of humour too, often joking on his "Bong clan" and our frequent lunch meetings would at times begin with one! His favourite haunt was the IIC Annex Dining Hall. As he was such a well informed person, we would talk for hours together, often losing track of time. On a few occasions the patient waiters at the Dining Hall would tell us that they were closing down and that we just had to leave the place.

AB was a Liberal. He believed in the individual, and his rights that the individual deserves to enjoy as a human being and member of the larger society. AB was a member of the Indian Liberal Group and actively participated in the activities of its Delhi Chapter for a number of years.

AB was always there for his friends. So often I would take the liberty of calling him at any time of the day to ask this, that or the other and he always had the time, more than the time, the patience to explain. There are indeed so many incidents and experiences with AB flashing through my mind as I pen my deepest respect and tributes to him.

I feel sad I cannot speak to him any longer, nor hear his voice, his soft laughter and his jokes, nor to see "AB" flashing on my mobile screen.

Rebon Banerjee Dhar
Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives
(FNVA)
www.fnvaworld.org

Mr. Ajoy Bagchi with a post graduate degree in Life Sciences from Agra University joined the Indian Postal Service in 1955 holding senior positions including that of Post Master General, Madhya Pradesh. Even after retirement he served on various Committees and Commissions of the Government of India. At the time of his demise he was Director of the PCED and a member on the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation.

The Indian Liberal Group was privileged to have had him as a member. His passing away is an irreparable loss to the Liberal movement in India. We, the Indian Liberal Group, Project for Economic Education and *Freedom First* convey our deepest condolences to the members of his family on their sad bereavement.

The ‘Lakhar’ Movement in Tibet

B. Raman

The recent hardline statements from the Han rulers of Tibet expressing concern over the situation in Tibet and their determination to crush the so-called splittist movement is a reflection of their nervousness. This nervousness is the result of their inability to understand what has been going on in the Tibetan areas of China and to crush the post-2008 Tibetan emulation of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent strategic resistance movement called the Satyagraha meaning the struggle for the truth.

The Chinese managed to crush the violent uprising of 2008, but they have not been able to crush the Tibetan yearning for freedom. They have not been able to eradicate the Tibetan love for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and their devotion to their Buddhist religion. They have not been able to destroy the Tibetan pride in their identity.

The Tibetans – particularly the GenNext – realised that a better way of asserting their pride and independence and keeping alive their hopes for the end of what they consider as the Han colonisation of Tibet would be to emulate Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle against the British colonial regime in India.

Thus was born the Lhakar movement. Lhakar means White Wednesday – a day associated, in their eyes, with the soul of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Every Wednesday, thousands of Tibetans – men, women and children – are meeting in their villages and towns to take the following pledges:

I am Tibetan. This is my national flag.
I am Tibetan. I wear Chupa (Tibetan dress).
I am Tibetan. I eat dried cheese.
I am Tibetan. I work for Tibetan Struggle.
I am Tibetan. I eat Tsampa (Tibetan staple food).
I am Tibetan. I drink Tibetan salted butter tea.
I am Tibetan. I speak Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. My parents are Tibetan. My leader is His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
I am Tibetan. I am a disciple of His Holiness.
I am Tibetan. My father is a Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. Tibetan blood flows in my body.
I am Tibetan. I will continue to work for Tibet's Struggle.
I am Tibetan. I am proud of being Tibetan.
I am Tibetan. I am Thangka painter and an activist for Tibet's Independence.

They express their determination to preserve their Tibetan identity and their refusal to be assimilated into

the Han culture and identity. Eat Tibetan, Speak Tibetan, Dress Tibetan, Think Tibetan, Live Tibetan, Die Tibetan – that is their motto.

The Tibetans themselves describe the Lhakar movement as follows: “Lhakar is a homegrown, Tibetan self-reliance movement that started in the aftermath of the 2008 uprising. In spite of China's intensified crackdown, Tibetans have embraced the power of strategic non-violent resistance. Every Wednesday, a growing number of Tibetans are making special effort to wear traditional clothes, speak Tibetan, eat in Tibetan restaurants and buy from Tibetan-owned businesses. They channel their spirit of resistance into social, cultural and economic activities that are self-constructive (promoting Tibetan language, culture and identity) and non-cooperative (refusing to support Chinese institutions and businesses).”

The Lhakar movement has unnerved the Chinese. They do not know how to stop its spread. The resistance movement has taken other forms too – self-immolation by Tibetan monks – since March last year, there have been 24 self-immolation attempts, of which 22 ended in fatalities – insistence on keeping the pictures of His Holiness in the monasteries, refusal to fly the Chinese flag and exhibit the pictures of Chinese leaders in the monasteries, refusal to observe the Chinese New Year's Day, refusal by monks to perform their religious duties in monasteries in which Chinese security forces are posted, refusal to attend the so-called re-education camps organised by the Chinese Government and party authorities.

The Chinese have sent reinforcements of their security forces to the Tibetan areas and cut off all Net connections. Despite this, the movement is showing no signs of abating. On the contrary, it is gathering strength.

The Tibetan unrest against the repressive policies of the Chinese authorities has spread from the Tibetan areas of Western Sichuan to Qinghai. According to details received late, Qinghai has been in a state of growing unrest

since the beginning of February with large numbers of Tibetan monks and students frequently protesting in the streets – separately as well as jointly. The situation in Qinghai since February last is slowly getting to resemble that in Western Sichuan since March last year.

The spreading wave of unrest started in the Nangchen county in Qinghai province's Yulshul prefecture on February 8, 2012. At a local stadium, a large number of students and other civilians gathered and shouted slogans such as "Freedom for Tibet" and "Long Live the Dalai Lama." The same day, another large group of Tibetans, including many monks, gathered in the main monastery in Nangchen town, and chanted prayers for the return of His Holiness.

The Chinese authorities did not intervene against the protesters, but allowed the demonstrations to take place, but subsequently they have been rounding up people who participated in the demonstrations. They have also circulated leaflets calling on people who joined the demonstrations to voluntarily surrender to the police.

On March 13, 2012, about 4,000 middle school students held demonstrations in Rebkong and in neighboring Tsekhog (in Chinese, Zeku) county in protest against the replacement of Tibetan by Chinese as the medium of instruction in the local schools. Similar demonstrations on the same issue had taken place in October 2010. The Chinese authorities have reportedly closed down the schools where demonstrations took place on March 13 and detained the suspected participants in the school premises pending investigation by the police.

The next day, a 30-year-old Tibetan monk tried to commit self-immolation at a monastery in Qinghai's Rebkong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in the Malho (in Chinese, Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The Chinese intervened and put out the fire. He survived with severe burns.

According to one report, when the Chinese tried

to take him to a local hospital for admission, hundreds of Tibetans rescued him from Chinese custody and took him back to his monastery. Demonstrations against the Chinese authorities were held in the town. Further details are awaited.

In the meanwhile, the Chinese have reportedly expelled about 100 out of the 200 monks in the Karma monastery in Chamdo county in the Tibet Autonomous Region on the ground that they did not have valid identification papers. They have been asked to go home and the remaining 100 monks who have been allowed to stay in the monastery have been forced to attend re-education classes to re-affirm their loyalty to the Chinese Government and Communist Party. The Chinese have stepped up surveillance of the monastery since October last when there was an explosion in a local Government building.

Gandhiji's non-violent struggle finally succeeded against the British and forced them to quit India. Will the Tibetan non-violent struggle succeed against the Han Chinese? The Han Chinese are more ruthless than the British. The Tibetans would need the moral support of the international community – particularly India – to keep their struggle alive and triumph finally. Even if considerations of RealPolitik prevent the Government of India from extending moral support to the Tibetans, Indian public opinion should not let them down. They are emulating our own freedom struggle. They are following in the footsteps of our own legendary leaders who fought against the British. The Indian public opinion has a moral obligation to empathise with the Tibetan satyagraha and support it morally.

Mr. B. Raman, is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India and currently Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai, and Associate of the Chennai Centre For China Studies. E-mail: seventyone2@gmail.com Twitter: @SORBONNE75)

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During the late 'sixties China was actively supporting insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur. With Paresh Barua, the Assamese insurgent commander, now operating from China, the latter may intensify low-intensity conflict in the Northeast. Should that happen we must not only contain it but also pay back China in its own coin. It will be disastrous for us to be pusillanimous and act like a soft state while dealing with an aggressive China. We must deal with our adversary from a position of strength, not weakness.

**Lt.Gen. S. K. Sinha (Retd.)
Excerpted from a recent article.**



External Stability for Recharging Growth*

Sunil S. Bhandare

The external sector of the Indian economy has doubtless come under considerable strain during the financial year just gone by. Exports growth slackened sharply during the latter half of the year; imports continued to forge much ahead of exports; balance of trade widened sharply; current account deficit to GDP ratio escalated further; foreign exchange reserves depleted noticeably; and the exchange rate of the rupee vis-à-vis the US dollar and some major currencies displayed disturbing volatility since August-September 2011. External stability is governed by the relative strength and stability of such crucial parameters. Surely, no economic reforms agenda for ushering growth recovery can be impervious to

considerations of external economic stability.

The purpose of this article is to briefly delineate on the key disturbing macro indicators of India's external sector and set out a policy perspective for strategising this sector towards high and sustainable growth momentum. While doing so, we now have an advantage of reflecting on what the latest Economic Survey has sought to unfold on this score as well as on the relevant strategic framework of the budget 2012-13. A quick overview of the balance of payments scenario of the last few years would offer an appropriate backdrop:

A Downward Drift in the External Balance Sheet of the Indian Economy

(US\$ Billion)	2006-07	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12**
1. Exports	128.9	182.4	250.5	297.0
2. Imports	190.7	300.6	381.1	478.0
3. Balance of Trade (1-2)	(-) 61.8	(-) 118.2	(-) 130.6	(-) 181.0
4. Current Account Balance#	(-) 9.6	(-) 38.2	(-) 45.9	(-) 69.0
5. Net Capital Account Surplus	45.2	51.6	62.0	58.0
6. Overall Balance (4+5)*	36.6	13.4	13.1	(-) 11.0

Source: *Economic Survey, 2011-12*

Taking into account "net" surplus of receipts and payments for services, incomes, etc.

* The surplus in the overall balance leads to accretion of foreign exchange reserves, while deficit causes depletion.

** Our estimates are based on the official data on foreign trade up to January 2012 and PM's Economic Advisory Council's recent document on Economic Outlook.

To begin with, **a quick definitional clarifications:** It needs to be mentioned that besides trade (exports and imports), the current account as shown above covers net incomes from export and import of services (e.g. software and business services), transfer receipts/payments (e.g. NRI remittances) and incomes (from non-resident assets/liabilities, labour and property). Capital account covers capital inflows and outflows, namely FIIs investments, FDI, NRI deposits, commercial borrowings, etc. The composite result of current and capital accounts provide

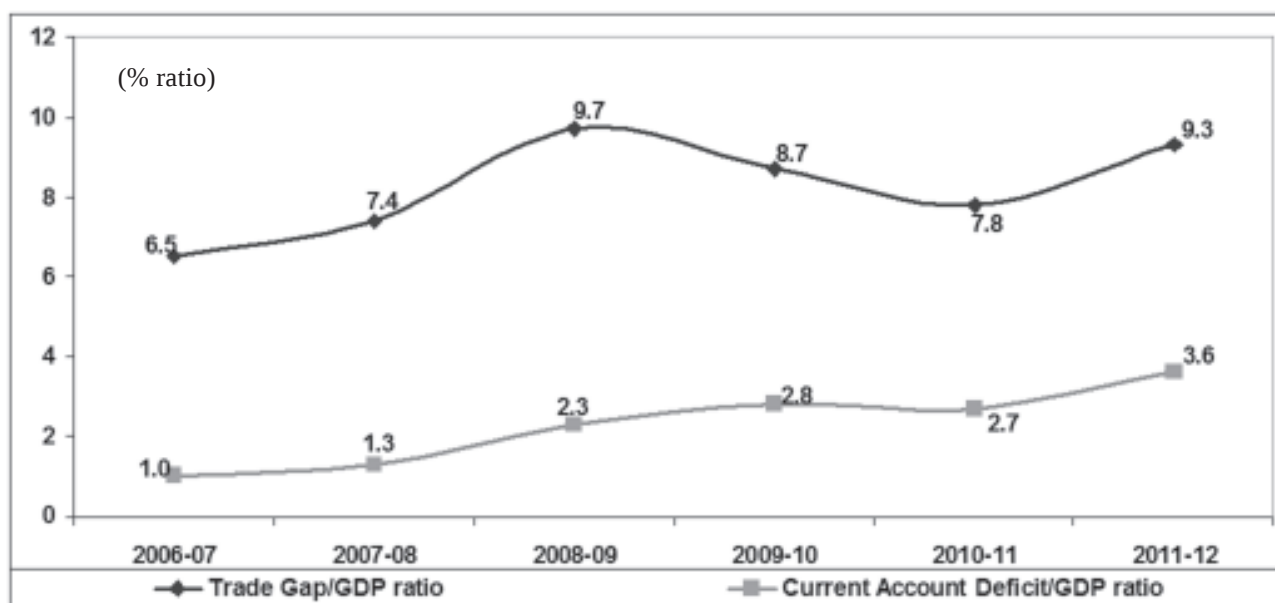
the overall external balance sheet of the economy, the viability of which is so very crucial for confidence building and steering the path of sustainable economic growth.

Evidently, **2006-07 was one of the best recent years of external sector performance** of the economy. Not only trade and current account deficit gaps were within reasonable limits, but it helped in substantial accretion to the foreign exchange reserves. In contrast, there is a progressive building up of pressures on the external sector

* *This is a follow-up of two earlier articles published in the January & February 2012 issues of Freedom First. The first dealt with key fiscal policy issues & the second covered the urgency of monetary easing. We now reflect on managing the external stability of the economy for recharging growth, and with that we have broadly covered the macro policy framework.*

in the last three years, and more acutely in 2011-12. The following chart also brings this out vividly in terms of a rising balance of trade gap to GDP ratio and current account to GDP ratio. Our foreign exchange reserves have

after a comprehensive review of the balance of payments: “A trade deficit of more than 8 percent of GDP and CAD of more than 3 percent is a sign of growing imbalance There is scope therefore to discourage unproductive



already dropped from the peak level of US\$322 bn as of August 2011 to about US\$294 bn at present; and these reserves now provide cover for just seven-months import bill as compared to as much as twice that level in 2007-08.

Against this backdrop, we believe that **the key objectives of external sector policy agenda need to be:** (a) recharging exports growth in US\$ terms to at least 20% per annum and share of our global exports from its current less than 2% to at least 3% over the next three or four years; (b) promoting imports through tariff cuts and trade facilitation measures – essentially of capital goods, raw materials and intermediates, project imports, whereby the country can build up its fuller potential of manufacturing, as envisaged in the National Manufacturing Policy; (c) reversing the balance of trade gap at least to the level that prevailed in 2006-07 and keeping the target of current account deficit/GDP ratio to not more than 2%; (d) encouraging capital inflows largely through FDI, NRI investments, and medium to long-term commercial borrowings; and (e) calibrating the rupee exchange rate only through minimal, but effective strategic intervention in the market. Needless to stress, the globalising Indian economy must continuously monitor and respond to the dynamics of global economic uncertainties.

Witness what the Economic Survey has to suggest

imports like gold and consumer goods to restore balance ... Greater attention therefore has to be given to improving composition of capital flows towards FDI”. It also cautions that “the size of foreign exchange reserves could be a constraining factor for checking depreciation of currency in the event of external shock and reversal of capital. It is therefore imperative that during times of surge in capital flows, when currency is under pressure to appreciate, measures are taken to build up reserve levels”.

What does the latest budget offer to the external sector in its strategic framework? Evidently, in the positioning of its five specific objectives, **there is no mention whatsoever about strengthening the external sector, even while the Finance Minister has recognised upfront in his speech the adverse impact of global economic crisis on the Indian economy.** Neither has there been any distinctive foreign trade specific policy initiative. It is quite likely that the FM would expect the Commerce Minister to formulate the strategy in his new Foreign Trade Policy, which may be announced after a couple of months.

However, **several measures interspersed in the budget do make some feeble efforts** to boost capital inflows on the one hand, and promote infrastructure and manufacturing production on the other. Illustratively, the FM has promised (i) to pursue the proposal held in

abeyance for allowing FDI in multi-brand retail trade up to 51 per cent; (ii) to allow Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) to access the Indian Corporate Bond market; (iii) to strengthen Infrastructure Debt Funds to tap overseas markets from long tenor pension and insurance funds; and (iv) to allow external commercial borrowings (ECB) for (a) capital expenditure on maintenance and operations of toll systems for roads and highways, (b) for working capital requirements of the airline industry for a period of one year and subject to a total ceiling of US\$ 1 billion, (c) for financing low cost affordable housing projects; among others.

The budget has also proposed substantial reduction in the withholding tax on interest payments on ECB from 20% to 5% for three years for selected infrastructure sector/industries like power, airlines, roads and bridges, ports and shipyards, affordable housing, fertilizer, and dams. Likewise, there are some proposals for reducing basic customs duty to promote investment in certain infrastructure areas and industries, which would indirectly help in building capacities for exports of manufactured and agricultural goods; for example, in power, coal and railways, specified coffee plantations and processing machinery. And as was to be expected, he has faithfully carried the suggestion from the Survey to increase basic customs duty on standard and non-standard gold bars, gold coins and platinum. But to expect

that such measures would *per se* mitigate the pressures of large balance of trade and current account deficit would be foolhardy.

What is missing in the FM's proposed strategic framework is a holistic policy response to the key objectives of external sector stability outlined by us earlier. From the liberal perspective we feel the urgency of increased coordination and consultation among the policy making troika – the Finance Ministry, the Commerce Ministry and the RBI. Surely, the Commerce Ministry can not work in isolation while envisaging export and balance of trade targets for the economy. Its performance would be crucially dependent not only on the support of relevant economic ministries, but more importantly on fiscal and tax policy support of the Finance Ministry. Likewise, the RBI's role becomes crucial in determining the appropriate exchange rate through strategic market intervention, keeping in view the norms of safety and stability of foreign exchange reserves, inflation levels and interest rates structure, as well as its overall assessment of domestic fiscal imbalances and global economic scenario. In that sense, we believe that the budget is incomplete in dealing with challenges of restoring and strengthening external stability. **Hopefully, the policy-making troika would address the tough tasks going forward!**

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The Genesis of Corruption : An Historical Perspective

K. K. Pathak

Creation, the two components, which make for all creation, are Sat and Asat (Good and Evil). Quite naturally, Nature is a carnival of opposites. As a matter of fact, Sat is Energy and Asat is Matter. Man has been able to convert Matter into Energy. Conversion of Energy into Matter needs spiritual elevation. No scientific instruments can convert Energy into Matter. Human nature has fourteen basic instincts. Love and Hatred are basic instincts. So is Selfishness. The instrument of survival is the outcome of Selfishness. We tend towards evil because of sheer selfishness. Corruption is an illegitimate child of selfishness. This brief explanation will go a long way in understanding the genesis of corruption in an historical perspective.

After our Independence, Nehru, a great chatterbox of socialism, talked of equality and equal opportunities as a step towards a welfare state. Honestly speaking, Equality is a dogma, unattainable by any amount of human endeavour, because Nature is a beautiful spectrum of Inequality. To work against the eternal laws of Nature and make an attempt to alter them is more than a quixotic exercise, culminating in total failure. Any talk of equality gives rise to material bonds, making us more selfish than it is desirable, leaving no scope for such noble instincts as compassion and compunction, which make for nobility in human nature.

Nehru ignored the Gandhian way and resorted to usher in his brand of socialism through laws and amendments to our Constitution. Gandhiji laid much emphasis on fellow-feeling and compassion. He wanted the people to imbibe the very spirit of socialism by fostering and inculcating civic virtues. Nehru's path led to arbitrary powers to the Executive for implementation of his socialist programme through his "scientific" planning. His Five Year Plans were based on Soviet Union lines. He was over-enthusiastic to abolish disparity from man to man through laws contrary to the eternal laws of Nature. All schemes for the benefit of the common man hardly reached the desired destination because of enormous discretionary powers he gave to the Executive. Gross misuse of these powers became a green breeding ground of corruption in the country. His "grow more" schemes became instrumental in grow more rich by the Executive, administrative as well as technical wings. Instead of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, his planning made "the rich richer and the poor poorer" but fortunately free from the virus of corruption. But it did not last long. Within five years of our Independence, the Legislature also caught the infection and a nexus between the Legislature and the Executive became a firm ground for breeding more corruption than our nascent democracy could cope with.

By the middle of the 1950s, things got from bad to worse. During the second half of the fifties of the previous century, the Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers of some States and legislators became notoriously known for corruption. K. D. Malviya, Pratap Singh Kairon, Sanjeeva Reddy, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, V. K. Krishna Menon and many more names came to light for corruption and misuse of power, for benefits not for the public good but for personal gains. Public life was no longer for selfless service with dedication and missionary zeal for promoting the common good. It became a sort of lucrative profession alluring people to grow rich by taking to public life as a whole-time profession. In 1962, the Kalinga affair took place in which Biju Patnaik, the then Chief Minister, was involved. The foodstuff and the blankets for soldiers in NEFA were deprived of the stuff sent to them. Nothing could be more anti-national than their blatant corruption in 1962. Nehru himself was an honest man. He was shocked to see so many Chief Ministers indulging in corruption, including his closest associates in the Cabinet. He simply asked them to step down, without taking any preventive measures to stop the growing corruption becoming a gigantic monster, devouring anything good in the country. He was shocked and amazed but did very little to prevent corruption becoming a prevailing mode in every walk of life in the country. He died a sad man who never anticipated such a degeneration of our society as had already taken firm roots in his lifetime.

Lal Bahadur's tenure was so short that he could hardly do anything to check the rising ride of corruption in the country. When Indira Gandhi took over as PM, she was herself struggling to get rid of the Old Guards in the Congress. After the split in 1969, she paid no attention to the fast growing corruption in the country. She wasn't as clean as her illustrious father. Quite naturally, corrupt people gathered around her, making corruption as "a fact of life", as she herself said. She hardly knew the

implications of the policies she pursued. Corruption grew in leaps and bounds. The expenditure incurred by the AICC office grew many times and the Chief Ministers were asked to contribute. This made matters worse. The Chief Ministers asked their colleagues to raise funds to meet the expenses of the AICC office and as a result of that, the ministers indulged in wanton corruption. The legislators became more corrupt than ever before. Elections became a costly affair. Quite naturally, the legislators started making money and corruption became “a fact of life”, as Indira herself put it before the nation. She herself wasn’t as clean as her illustrious father. When the top gets rotten, the bottom couldn’t be healthy enough to resist the temptations of going the wrong way round by hook or by crook. The malady spread from the top and penetrated down to the bottom in a big way. Nothing could break the vicious circle.

Panchayati Raj and Panchayat Finance Bill Rajiv got passed made the villages a hot spot of growing corruption. Gandhiji visualised Panchayati Raj as a means to regulate local life by local people. But the entire institution became a great source of corruption in villages, making things worse than ever before.

Nehru made the State the biggest employer to solve the problem of unemployment. A great financial burden on the State without producing wealth was the net result of the swelling number of government employees. Apart from this, nationalisation in some sectors like mining resulted in corruption with a sequel, lowering the quantum of production qualitatively and quantitatively.

Indira Gandhi took certain decisions which became a breeding ground of more corruption, leading to scams and scandals which were quite rare during Nehru’s tenure. After the split, Bank Nationalisation was one of those unfortunate decisions, resulting in the loss of credibility of our banking system and giving rise to scams which came to light much later, holding the Rajiv government and the Rao governments responsible. Without a sound backbone of national character, nationalisation becomes the greatest source of corruption and the lowering of productivity, efficiency and profitability of ventures nationalised. Instead of producing and increasing national wealth, public institutions became an intolerable burden without fulfilling the purpose for which they were raised. Quite naturally, poverty, not affluence, was distributed. State controls became another source of breeding corruption in the country as they were linked with discretionary powers vested in the Executive. Nehru and Indira Gandhi were more identified with the Permit-Licence-Quota Raj than any free market economy based on the laws of Nature. When the State is not a producer, it cannot be an efficient distributor of the things it does not produce.

The quality of citizenry went down to the extent that no public work could be done according to the standards and norms set for them. Since elections became costlier, day in and day out, our legislators indulged in wanton corruption, amassing wealth to meet the expenses of contesting elections.

We have now people who want to wipe out corruption by appointing Lokpal and Lokayuktas. It is next to impossible for such bodies to cleanse the Augean stable the entire country has come to be. Coalition governments are far greater breeding grounds for corruption than a majority government of a political party. Coalitions at the Centre as well as in the States have proved to be a potent source of corruption. Honestly speaking, corruption has become our national outlook, making it a “a fact of life”, as Indira Gandhi put it long ago. Anna Hazare is incapable of wiping out corruption through fasts unto death and Advani through his *Rathayatra*s. Corruption has become a matter of demand and supply. So long as there are givers of bribes, you cannot do away with takers of bribes. Neither Advani nor Anna can wish away these stark realities. They will remain in a world of utter confusion, beguiling and befooling people in the name of rooting out corruption, raising trust for their meaningless efforts and activities. Such social and political contractors should be shown the door out by thinking people coming forward to bring about a moral revolution, revitalising the ethical and moral fibres of our society for any abiding change which has a chance to last for some time.

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Ending Political Interfering in Education

The Trinamool Congress government of West Bengal took the first step towards ending political interference in academic appointments by piloting the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2011, in the state legislative assembly on December 23. Introducing the Bill, state higher education minister Bratya Basu said the objective of the Bill was to ensure transparency in the appointment of vice chancellors, and free universities from political interference in the cause of academic excellence.

Vice chancellors will henceforth be selected by a search committee comprising the chancellor, chairman of the UGC, and a retired high court judge. “We have intentionally not included any government nominee,” Basu told the assembly. The previous Left Front government was often accused of nominating vice chancellors and faculty in educational institutions by opposition parties and academics alike.

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Visit: www.educationworldonline.net

Death of Democracy

Firoze Hirjikaka

If democracy is defined by Abraham Lincoln's dictum of by the people, of the people, for the people, this country does not qualify.

No, this article is not about Syria, or Iran, or any other dictatorship. It is about our very own *Bharat mahan*; the same shining India that is routinely touted as the world's largest democracy. Well, if democracy is defined by Abraham Lincoln's dictum of by the people, of the people, for the people, this country does not qualify.

In fact, India's system of governance defies conventional classification. It is not a dictatorship, but on the other hand, the will of the people – if it prevails at all – does so in a very arbitrary and unsatisfactory manner. Yes, there is an election every five years; a brief period when politicians, money grabbers and criminals prostrate themselves before the electorate, promising the moon but delivering peanuts. Once elected, however, the charlatans bask in the comfort of virtual immunity for their misdeeds and near-zero accountability.

It is an accepted truism in our country that the majority of those who govern us have crooked intentions – only the degree varies. And yet, while we the people routinely moan and complain about the pathetic state of governance we are tormented with, we rarely acknowledge that it is the same people who elected the crooks in the first place. Not us, the so-called elite would remonstrate; we don't vote for these thugs. True, they don't vote for thugs; they don't vote and all – and the thugs are elected by default.

It is a continuing mystery why, even after 60 plus years of Independence, educated and privileged individuals who are capable of making an informed choice do not do so during elections. They don't necessarily make bad choices; they don't bother to vote at all. Don't they want good governance? Don't they want our politicians to behave ethically and be accountable? Don't they want the police to be to be impartial and respond to the needs of common citizens, instead of being coerced or bought by politicians and others with deep pockets? Don't they get furious at the fact that their tax rupees are squandered recklessly on overpriced and overdue projects with very little to show for the gigantic expenditure? Of course they do; and yet they make no effort to vote good people into office. Why is this so? Perhaps they have given up on good governance as a lost cause; a battle they cannot

win. Since they cannot fight the system, they have made it redundant. They don't need the government to "get their work done". They have their own network – greased by large quantities of cash, no doubt, but at least it works.

What they don't seem to realize is that their apathy towards the voting process only increases the sense of entitlement and unaccountability in those who get elected by default. The recent Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections provide prime proof of this. The Shiv Sena has retained control of the city municipal corporation for the next 5 years. A pity. I am not saying that the Congress-NCP combine would have been any less indifferent to Mumbai's problems or any less corrupt. All political parties are birds of the same feather. However, by re-electing the Shiv Sena-BJP, the people (or those who bothered to vote) have sent out a wrong message. They have, in effect, rewarded the BMC rulers for 12 years of massive corruption, inordinate project delays and escalations; and awarding important city contracts to the least qualified agencies, purely on the basis of the kickback received. This undeserved victory will only encourage BMC corporators to be even more brazen while carrying out their nefarious activities. They will come to the conclusion that they need make any effort to mend their ways or be more accountable to Mumbai's citizens. The only stick available to the common man to extract some improvement and accountability from their corporators was the threat of removing them from the power they crave. That threat has now been removed. If you thought the past 12 years were bad for the city, wait for the next 5. The Shiv Sena has given the lie to Abraham Lincoln's famous adage. They can indeed fool all of the people all of the time.

India is a country where the haves have always displayed supreme indifference to the needs and aspirations of the have-nots. Centuries of caste discrimination and feudal traditions have ingrained a sense of fatalism in the less fortunate. They do not expect any understanding, compassion or even acknowledgement from the entitled. They do expect it, however, from the government. The British quickly realized the inbuilt dependence of the Indian masses on their rulers, whoever they be. They cleverly exploited the natives' need for a *mai-baap* government to keep them in check. After Independence, the Indian

overlords simply continued where the British left off. No matter how much India advanced economically, they made sure that three-quarters of the population remained poor, so that they would be grateful for the sops the “benevolent” government doled out to them – no matter that 85% of the funds dispersed were gobbled up by the ‘dolars’. Come election time, the desperately poor could be bought off with paltry freebies – and that suited the rulers just fine.

And it’s not just the government. In a telling comment on Indian society, it was recently revealed that the Maharashtra Human Rights Commission had ceased to function with the resignation of its last remaining member, which was no great loss really since during its totally farcical tenure, it had examined almost 600 abuses without arriving at a single conviction. Moreover, this is a country where the well heeled have no compunction in inducing

desperately poor couples to sell them their newborn infants for a pittance and where Indian diplomats abroad import their less privileged countrymen as servants and treat them as bonded labour.

So you see, the world’s largest democracy is a bit of a sham. It is a thin veneer pasted over India’s caste and feudal system: a veneer that reflects a deceptive sheen to the outside world, but is quite flawed behind the curtain. And so it will remain until the self labelled intelligentsia and cognoscenti get off their soap box and panel discussions and get their hands dirty trying to bring some measure of equality and fundamental dignity to a majority of India’s teeming masses.

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What it Costs to be, or try to be, the President of the United States of America And what it cost in terms of policies

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Sir Winston Churchill

Washington Monthly is a liberal bimonthly which can be described as being ‘pro’ Democratic Party. In their January-February 2012 issue they carry what we would describe as a review article. The book “*Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress – and a Plan to Stop it*” by Lawrence Lessig - According to the reviewer Walter Shapiro a “passionate Obama partisan since their days together on the faculty of the University of Chicago Law School.” Perhaps we could secure a copy and get it reviewed by our very own Firoze Hirjikaka. Meanwhile we share with our readers some excerpts, particularly what it costs to be or attempt to be the President of the United States of America. These excerpts selected at random in the context of Firoze’s article “*Death of Democracy*” is to reassure him that Democracy in India is not dead. How can it be when it is yet to be born! August 15 and Republic Day notwithstanding! It is alive and kicking inside the womb of mother India. Read on. – Ed

“Campaign costs are increasing faster than almost anything else in this moribund economy, including law school tuition. As recently as 2004 George W. Bush and John Kerry spent about \$700 million combined on every aspect of their presidential campaign...Projecting from current political fund-raising trends, and using the rule of thumb that 70% of all money in politics gets allocated for the media buy, a leading Republican operative and I estimate that Barack Obama and his GOP opponent will end up spending between \$1.2 and \$1.5 billion on television ads.

“Almost all this advertising onslaught will be unleashed during the run-up to the November election. In that final 100-day frenzy, the presidential candidates will become the largest TV advertisers in America, eclipsing General Motors and Procter and Gamble... Since a regional projection suggests that another \$2 billion in TV ads will accompany the presidential race, it is easy to imagine that campaign and independent groups will end up lavishing more than \$5 billion on the TV component of Campaign 2012. Throw in another \$2 billion or so for the essential aspects of modern campaigning ..The result: Politics Incorporated may well raise and spend over \$7 billion this year, which would put the industry roughly on par with Visa... In a nation that lavishes \$20 billion on pet food annually, moralistic shock about how much money is squandered on campaign advertising can be overwrought...the real crisis facing American politics is what elected officials have to do to raise the money to pay for those ads.

“Lessig is suffering the agony of the true believer confronted with a godlike figure who failed. As Lessig puts it, the idealist in me certainly could not believe that Obama would run a campaign grounded in ‘change’ yet execute an administration that changed nothing in the way of the way Washington works. ...Nothing close to the reform that Obama promised is possible under the current system...”

Women Chief Ministers Are No Better

N. S. Venkataraman

India has seen many women chief ministers during the last few decades and it is now the right time to assess as to whether the women chief ministers have performed better than their men counterparts.

This study is particularly required in the present juncture, since the three women chief ministers namely Jayalalitha, Mamata Banerjee and Mayawati have caught national attention by their aggressive and confrontationist approach to the central government as well as to the opposition parties in their own states.

Women have been held in high esteem traditionally in India and our countrymen have always been reposing greater faith in the wisdom of women and their sense of fairness. Even when mistakes are made, women are generally given greater consideration in India, even by the judiciary. Recently, when the case involving Ms. Kanimozhi MP was heard in the Delhi Court, it was argued by her counsel that her case must be viewed by the judiciary with sympathy, since she happens to be a woman and mother.

However, a careful analysis of the performance of the women chief ministers in India, both present and past, indicate that they have not lived up to the expectations of the average Indian. Women chief ministers like Jayalalitha and Mayawati and Sheila Dixit are facing serious corruption charges. Jayalalitha, Mayawati and Mamata Banerjee are known to be very hard and abrasive in dealing with their political opponents and are seen as no less political schemers than men chief ministers. There is nothing unique about these women chief ministers.

One significant observation about the style of functioning of the women chief ministers is that they have ensured that they would be the sole leader in their political party in their states, as is evident from the fact that Jayalalitha, Mayawati and Mamata would not hesitate to put down mercilessly anyone in their party who would tend to argue with them, leave alone questioning their authority. To this extent, these women chief ministers have developed an image of themselves as “dictatorial leaders” in their political parties. Their own partymen have to be necessarily “sort of slaves” to their political leader and none of them are even tolerated if they would address the chief minister concerned by her name. For example, in Tamil Nadu, none of her partymen would dare enough to address Jayalalitha by her name but have to use some “title” like “amma”. “Didiji” is Mamata Banerjee and

“Behenji” is Mayawati. God save the partyman who dares to disagree with the views or decisions of these headstrong women chief ministers or address them by name!

One distinct aspect about them is their extraordinary level of self confidence and courage of conviction and compelling many to comment that the “only man” in their party concerned is the woman chief minister.

Apart from their own partymen, even leaders of the other parties have found it extremely difficult to get on with them. They seem to think that women chief ministers are not only undependable but also unpredictable, without any firm commitment to a principled approach and they would not hesitate to play to the gallery, for their survival when required.

All said and done, the unfortunate fact is that the women chief ministers have not been able to show any extraordinary capability for administration and for initiating and implementing far reaching economic and industrial development programmes, commensurate with the comfortable majorities that they enjoy in the state assemblies.

The country would have felt proud of the women chief ministers if atleast they would have put down corruption and nepotism in their states, given their bold approach to every one of the issues confronting them. On the other hand, two of the three are facing serious charges. This is the most disappointing aspect about India’s women chief ministers.

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On Nepotism

Nepotism arises from Uncle-Nephew Softheartedness
A wag quips that with *Chacha* Nehru
At the helm at Independence and
A dynastic democracy continuing by His family,
no wonder Nepotism is having
A firm grip!

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man examines all sides before coming to a conclusion. This is an attempt to present various sides of an issue so that a considered opinion can be formed.

Security Agencies – A Maze?

1. After the ignominy of the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai and the replacement of Shivraj Patil as Home Minister, the new incumbent, P. Chidambaram, has stirred the pot enthusiastically creating a plethora of agencies to improve our intelligence gathering and coordination. New acronyms are decorating our security lexicon now. MAC (Multi Agency Center), NATGRID (National Grid), NIA (National Investigating Agency), NTRO (National Technology Research Organisation), NCTC (National Counter Terrorism Centre) have all sprung up. These are in addition to the earlier avatars like CIC (Committee for Intelligence Coordination) and the mother of them all, the National Security Council and its various Sub-committees. The thing to admire is that PC believes in action and spares no effort to put across his ideas. He cannot be faulted as he picks the best out of what other countries have tried out. The furore over the NCTC infringing on the federal structure is a blip on the horizon because the Centre took the states for granted. An intelligence agency (NCTC) getting powers of search, seizure and arrest is not the same as an investigating agency getting these powers as the scope of intelligence gathering is undefined and infinite.

1. The real worry is whether the multiplicity of agencies would deliver results. PC's success should be measured through this single parameter. His ideas are sound. It is our bureaucracy's expertise in ruining the best laid plans that is the point of worry. Each new agency vies with others to be as big and their chiefs are more worried about their pecking order; we generally end up with more agencies, duplication of work, ever increasing demand for manpower and budgetary sanctions. Their main role of providing better intelligence is soon forgotten and each vies with the other to show how it is indispensable. There is no system of review after a year or so whether the desired results have been obtained or it has been a waste of money and manpower. The other point to ponder over is whether the countries which have tried out these new systems have enhanced their intelligence capacity through these initiatives or are they floundering too? International cooperation on terrorism has indeed improved but has ground level intelligence output risen?

Warning Signals

2. The five State Assembly elections threw up some surprises and definite warnings at least for the national parties. The Congress did badly everywhere except Manipur; the BJP had mixed results but could congratulate itself at its own peril. Mayawati's caste manipulations have hopefully ended socially divisive politics which once threatened to become a force major in Indian politics. The rise of Mulayam Singh is not a happy tiding given his record of goonda raj but his son, Akhilesh Yadav promises a lot. Is it the end of caste and communal polarisation? Theses may be written over the next year to explain what happened without making us any the wiser. We can only hope that these are signs for the better. Or is it the signal that regional parties will control states and we will be back to the regrettable United Front days of Deve Gowda.

2. What is disturbing is that the major national parties (Congress and BJP) could not find place in the voters' mind when they were determined to reject the larger than life Mayawati as Chief Minister. Mayawati in her imperious ways had not done badly since UP's GDP had gone up and law and order, which was a major casualty during the earlier incarnation of Mulayam Singh, had been controlled; what had irked people was her vainglorious habit of throwing people's money on building edifices of herself for posterity to remember. Even then the people did not opt for a national party to replace her. The Congress and the BJP have to redesign themselves as parties with a positive agenda and not mere critics of Mayawati. A singular blow to the Congress was the demolition of Rahul Gandhi's halo as the saviour of the party. He worked hard but mere haloes do not seem to work any longer. Let Rahul Gandhi stand up for something rather than avoiding controversial subjects.

To hope that a fresh face like Akhilesh will be able to bring about radical changes using the same old rotten party machinery is futile. It is not a problem only with the Samajwadi Party. When dirty money finances the politics of all mainstream parties, how can we hope they will tackle corruption? Since criminals can help generate big money easily they have become an asset in today's politics.

Sandeep Pandey, *Sunday Times of India*, March 18

Mumbai Elections

3. Even earlier the ten Municipal Corporation elections in Maharashtra, had shown that all was not well with the Congress. The Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation election has unusual importance as it is the barometer of how urban India thinks. The February 2012 election was even more important because the 17 year old dominance of the Shiv Sena over Mumbai was expected to be put to extreme test. The Chief Minister even predicted that after the election results, the Shiv Sena would disintegrate. The Sena faced a huge anti-incumbency resentment; it had done little to assuage the grievances of the people in 17 years. It had split and the rebel MNS was acting as a spoiler; the Congress and the NCP had formed an alliance to avoid splitting their vote bank; the Sena-BJP combine was riven with discord. The recipe for disaster was ready. Surprisingly that did not happen and the Sena-BJP combine got a near majority (107/227) – although a little less than on the last occasion. The MNS also improved its tally but did not damage the Sena.

3. Political analysts have drawn confusing conclusions from the result that the SP, BJP and MNS had gained but others lost; one thing is clear that the Congress lost out badly; its share dropped from 71 to 50 when it was expected to triumph. The message ought to be clear to the ruling party at the Centre: its credibility is badly affected. The opposition may not be strong enough to challenge it directly but the people want to reject the Congress and opt for anybody standing opposite, be it the Shiv Sena, BJP or MNS. The position is the same in other Municipal Corporations too; the Congress share dropped from 473 in ten Corporations earlier to 263 in 2012. Anna Hazare's agitation may appear to be faltering but the message it has sent is clear: the corrupt need to be taught a lesson. *L'affair* Kripa Shankar Singh, Mumbai Congress President, who had to be charged with corruption because of the intervention of the High Court (not other way) is a case in point. The Congress is unwilling to tackle corruption; it needs to be goaded into action. If this be the lesson, the Congress has to do a lot before the 2014 General Election.

Questions for the National Parties

- Will the Congress give up cheap gimmicks like doles (reservations, free food, caste and communal divides) and concentrate on increasing national wealth? Gimmicks are not useful any longer.
- Will the BJP stop looking back at past glory and adopt a modern, forward looking economic policy? The need to work together on nation building programmes has to be accepted by both the ruling and opposition parties as the two may interchange their positions periodically.

Since the answer to both questions is likely to be a resounding "NO", the future is worrisome.

Readers are invited to send their points of view on serious issues of the day to ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in

The Age Row

The deliberate foul play regarding the date of birth [DOB] of General V. K. Singh has not been exposed. Instead there is unwarranted criticism of this action as not befitting the high office occupied by him. The entry in the application to the UPSC is not taken as proof. He had to submit the original copy of the matriculation certificate as proof of age. The matriculation certificate and birth certificate from Military Hospital, Pune show his DOB to be 10 May 1951.

The correct DOB was recorded by the Adjutant General's Branch who is the official keeper of personal records. In the records of the Military Secretary's Branch too his DOB was accepted as 10 May 1951. It was shown as such in the Selection Board proceedings held from September 1996 to September 2005 for promotions upto the rank of Acting Lt General. There should have been no doubt about it. In 2006,

a conspiracy was contrived at to cut short the tenure of General V K Singh by one year. The application form of UPSC was dug up to manage the line of succession. Two former Army Chiefs threw all the rules overboard and pressurized General V K Singh to accept 10 May 1950 as his DOB. The Ministry of Defence is ever ready to inflict a dent into the integrity of the Armed Forces. They could act easily in this case as the Prime Minister and Defence Minister remain unconcerned. Much has been made out of the illegal method of forcing General V K Singh to accept the wrong DOB prior to his promotion. It is like a robber removing the purse from a traveler and also taking a letter from the victim that he was handing it over voluntarily.

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Three Different Situations But the Same Old Story

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

Recently the UPA2 government was involved in a three act play that had all the ingredients of high drama - intrigue, suspense and skullduggery. It had its lighter moments too with court jesters to relieve the monotony with their outrageous comments. By the way, Owls are considered as being wise and presumably that is why the collective noun is Parliament of Owls. Now consider a gathering of Baboons. They are the loudest, most dangerous, most obnoxious, most vicious and least intelligent of all primates. And what is the proper collective noun for Baboons? Believe it or not it is Congress of Baboons.

Situation One: 2G Spectrum Scam

The 2G mega scam reached a climax on 2nd February 2012 when the apex court delivered its verdict, which in effect cancelled 122 2G spectrum licences granted to 11 companies in 2008 by the then Telecom Minister A.Raja noting a flaw in the government's first come first served policy for use of natural resources. In their judgment the bench noted how despite Subramanian Swamy's letter to the Prime Minister of November 29, 2008 alleging huge corruption and criminal conspiracy in the grant of 2G spectrum, the matter 'remained dormant' and the Central Bureau of Investigation took steps only after the court's intervention. Two observations of the SC are noteworthy: "There is no provision either in the 1988 Act or the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 which bars a citizen from filing a complaint for prosecution of a public servant who is alleged to have committed an offence" and "It cannot be disputed that where corruption begins all rights end. Corruption devalues human rights, chokes development, liberty, equality, fraternity which are the core values in our preambular vision. Therefore, the duty of the Court is that any anti-corruption law has to be interpreted and worked out in such a fashion as to strengthen the fight against corruption." The verdict validates a huge loss to the exchequer to the tune of Rs.1.76 lakh crores in the 2G spectrum allocation as assessed by the CAG. To that extent H.R.D Minister Kapil Sibal's repeated assertion that there was no loss stands deflated. Since the spectrum has been cancelled from the business point of view there will be some set back and this must be a lesson to the corporate entities that tried to influence and maneuvered the spectrum allocation.

During a TV discussion there was a point of view put forth that in future big business houses may shy away from doing business in India the implication being that they are being made the target for internal political problems. It is felt this is a specious argument for India

has a huge market and it is doubtful whether these big business houses will allow themselves to be swayed by such considerations to overtake their profit motives which decide all their priorities. Special Judge Saini has an awesome reputation and it is the same judge who remained unmoved when he refused to grant bail to Kanimozhi. Therefore, his observation (letting off Chidambaram) that a decision taken by a public servant does not become criminal for the simple reason that it has caused loss to the public exchequer or resulted in pecuniary advantage to others is extremely puzzling and debatable. The loss was not ordinary but mind boggling. No doubt Swamy must feel happy that he has won the first round against formidable odds in the SC and the whole nation is grateful for he has empowered any citizen to approach the government for permission to prosecute and this can be considered as another powerful instrument to supplement RTI.

Situation Two: General V. K. Singh's DoB Fiasco.

This has been a vexed issue concerning the controversy on the date of birth determining the age of General V. K. Singh simmering for the past one year or more. The Adjutant General's branch which deals with manpower issues recorded General Singh's date of birth as May 10 1951 while in the records of the Military Secretary's branch it is 10 May 1951. There has been a lot of exchange of communications between the Ministry of Defence and General V. K. Singh. Minister A. K. Anthony heads the Ministry of Defence. Like our PM Manmohan Singh the defence minister is also known for his impeccable integrity. According to media reports the PMO is also kept in the loop. Since both sides appear to stick to their positions finally the General decided to approach the court. General Singh heads a 1.1 million-strong army, among the world's largest. The country has not seen such an unseemly tug-of-war between the civilian administration and the Army General. It is a pity that in these times when

India's security concerns must be the primary consideration, the civilian administration appear to be on a collision course bent on demanding its pound of flesh. General Singh has an enviable record of distinguished military service as an upright and strict officer. Probably MoD underestimated the General's resolve and never thought that the General would approach the court. But for the General it was a question of defending his honour. It is difficult to say what factors made the minister adopt such a tough stand. There is a general perception that it is the bureaucracy that runs the show in this country. It is not unlikely that the bureaucratic advice which in many cases tries to assert its superiority over not only the military but also other services may have persuaded the minister to take a tough stand. When the matter was listed for hearing in the Supreme Court, the MoD got a little panicky and sent a missive to the AG's Branch to change the date to May 10 1950 and report compliance. In fact, this gave the game away and the Supreme Court has not viewed it favourably and gave three options. A bench of Justice R. M. Lodha and H. L. Gokhale asked the government to clarify if it wanted to withdraw the December 30 order that had rejected Singh's statutory complaint saying that the decision was against principles of natural justice. It further adds; "We are not concerned as much with the decision but we are concerned with the decision making process which is vitiated...". These are strong observations and clearly puts the MoD in an untenable position.

Situation Three: Debarring Four Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists

The Prime Minister's Office in its order of January 13, 2011 debarred the former ISRO Chief G.Madhavan Nair and three other senior scientists from holding any post-retirement jobs for their alleged involvement in the controversial Antrix-Devas S-band spectrum deal. The four scientists have been 'divested of any current assignment or consultancy with government with immediate effect. Nair says the PMO order is the 'personal agenda' of the current ISRO chairman K.Radhakrishnan. The crass comments by the minister of state in the PMO saying he would teach a lesson to scientists has understandably incensed the scientific community. The head of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister Prof C. N. R. Rao described the punitive action as saying that these scientists have been 'thrown out like garbage.' This has also upset and shocked missile man Dr. Kalam. It must be remembered that these scientists represented the cream of our society and brought name and fame by their space exploits. These are the scientists and technocrats who ushered a golden period by successfully launching 25 space missions including the planting of the Indian tricolour on the moon (via Chandrayan) and discovering water on the

moon. These are monumental achievements that any country can feel proud of. This has generated widespread reaction of dismay and revulsion among the scientific community against the government

As regards the minister of state Narayanaswamy's utterances are concerned, this is not the first time that he has indulged in such inflammatory and intemperate language. Whatever may be the provocation it shows lack of grace to treat our scientists in such a disgraceful manner. As per latest development there are signs of government toughening its stand. It is reported that while prosecution based on the findings of the committee's findings was not ruled out, the prosecution must be based on the possibility of illegitimate financial gain. These are in the realm of speculation at this time and even so it leaves a bitter trail of disappointment with the scientific community and has the effect of demoralizing them.

What is significant is the sad fact that the same standard of accountability is not applied to politicians judging by the way A. Raja and Kalmadi and others were being shielded until the media and the judiciary came on the scene.

Postscript

Whatever may be the final outcome the government cannot escape the charge that, as demonstrated, it is suffering from paralysis of action to take decisions and this has adversely reflected on governance. The Supreme Court said as much when it remarked in the DoB controversy that it is concerned not so much about the decision but the decision-making process.

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The IPKF Misadventure

Brig. Sharma's article on the IPKF misadventure was excellent (*Freedom First*, No.537, March 2012). India was moved by two considerations while intervening in Sri Lanka. The first was that India did not want Pakistan to step in to help Sri Lanka and have an enemy on the southern doorstep. Secondly, it wanted to be a wall between the Tamilians and the Sri Lankan army. It did not take into account the fact that the LTTE was drunk with power and did not need a wall to protect the Tamilian population. What India tried to avert in 1987 happened 23 years later and the LTTE was annihilated; good intentions do not always lead to desirable results!

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Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjickaka

Arup Patnaik A Quiet Revolutionary

The overriding focus while floating tenders and awarding contracts has been on which party can offer the biggest kickbacks.

A rather insignificant news item tucked in the inside pages of a newspaper caught my attention. The media may have dismissed it as being of no particular interest, but I found it hugely significant; one that signals a return to common sense and accountability so sorely lacking in our public life. The news item concerned the Mumbai Police Commissioner, Arup Patnaik, who had shot down an expensive proposal to acquire 24 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for the police force. He rightly reasoned that the expensive toys would be barely utilized since the Mumbai Police had no expertise in operating them. (What he left unsaid was that there would be no interest either, since you cannot collect *hafta* from a drone.) A few weeks ago, the same gentleman had disallowed the construction of a blast-proof wall in front of Mantralaya, arguing that the notoriously inefficient Public Works Department would probably make a mess of it.

You may think that the above hardly qualifies as an earth-shattering development; but you would be wrong. The state government and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) have hitherto been scandalously deviant on the issue of acquiring overpriced equipment without any foresight or due diligence. The overriding focus while floating tenders and awarding contracts has been on which party can offer the biggest kickbacks. The result is that many of these exorbitant purchases remain underutilized or neglected. For example, there was a recent news item about a 6 crore rupee piece of medical diagnostic

equipment purchased by a government (BMC) hospital months ago, which is lying unutilized because the civil works are not ready. As a civil engineer, I can assure you that the “civil works” for mounting this equipment should take 14 days at most. As for the equipment itself, it has been rendered unfit for use, since rats have eaten away critical wiring. Meanwhile, patients and BMC employees are being sent for diagnosis to private hospitals at government expense. The money does not come from their pockets after all. I am sure there must be scores, if not hundreds, of such white elephants lying around in government institutions.

That is why Patnaik’s action is so significant. It is one of the very few occasions where a public servant has actually given importance to the interests of the public he is meant to serve. In the process, he has probably acquired the ire of disgruntled subordinates and virtually ensured that he will not get an extension after retirement. He is the genuine martyr. For six decades, the charlatans who govern us have drummed into both their employees and the general public that they cannot hope to fight the system and survive. Patnaik has fired the first salvo. As a quiet revolutionary, he has done more to instill a sense of accountability in our profligate governance than Anna Hazare and his sloganeering hordes. If many more of his ilk take up cudgels in defence of the long-suffering public, there may yet be hope for this misruled nation of ours.

The Undue Importance of Rituals in Zoroastrianism

In my opinion, the underlying reason our priests and traditionalists are so vehemently opposed to admitting “outsiders” into the religion has very little to do with diluting ethnic purity.

In a recent letter to the community magazine, Kersee Kabraji, a prominent Parsi reformist, laments the fact that Parsi priests are so focused on ceremonies and rituals that they virtually turn a blind eye to the *Gathas* and the true teachings of Zarathustra. It profits our priests to keep the lay flock in happy ignorance by not preaching the religion of Zarathustra - and by religion I mean Zarathustra’s true message; not the unintelligible prayers that are understood by a microscopic percentage of the Parsi population and have been so adapted over the centuries that they probably

bear little relation to Zarathustra’s intentions.

After all, the priests have cleverly positioned themselves as the sole intermediaries between the average Parsi and his Prophet. According to them, the long winded rituals they readily perform – for suitable remuneration, of course – are not just the preferred, but the only means available to lay Parsis to convey their hopes and desires to Zarathustra. And it suits ordinary Parsis as well. They can salve their conscience and feel good about fulfilling

their religious obligation through the simple expedient of shelling out a few hundred rupees and a few dozen sticks of sandalwood. Why waste time and effort in trying to locate and understand even the gist of Zarathustra's message? As long as they are fed feel good fables about our ancestors' heroic flight from Islamic persecution and the sugar-in-milk fairy tale, they imagine themselves as a master race and are content.

In my opinion, the underlying reason our priests and traditionalists are so vehemently opposed to admitting "outsiders" into the religion has very little to do with diluting ethnic purity. The reality is that those who express a desire to be converted into the Zoroastrian faith have generally made an effort to study the religion and could pose a real threat to the "religious" monopoly of the priests. As Kabraji rightly points out, Zarathustra and the other great Prophets took birth on this planet with the

express purpose of spreading the message of the one God to as wide an audience as possible. And the word of God is universal. Only the interpretation differs. The belief that one's own religion is somehow exclusive and superior to others inevitably gives rise to fundamentalism. Therefore, to exclude others from Zarathustra's faith - and to bar those born in it because they married "outside" , is counter productive and contradicts the fundamental tenets of Zoroastrianism.

The greatest gift God has given to humans is free will. It is a shame that so many Parsis choose not to exercise it in the matter of their religion, preferring instead to be led like docile sheep.

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Why do we delude ourselves?

Whenever there is a change there is always elation for some time. We all need to find hope, so we say Akhilesh is young, uses iPad , is tech savy, modern. We assume all this would lead to good governance. I also get caught in this positive spin. But seriously can the current set of leaders really change India, without doing systemic reforms. Why do we delude ourselves?

Vishal Kumar Singh posted on Facebook, March 11

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Saving a Floundering India

– Before it is Too Late

Nagesh Kini

Today's India is floundering in a vicious circle of dysfunctional governance paralysis. The Opposition is, as much as the ruling party, not ready for a regime change.

Addressing the Hindu College Alumnus at Delhi on January 13, 2011, the constitutionally appointed watchdog, the Comptroller & Auditor General, Vinod Rai, who had courted many foes for the number of scams unearthed by his dedicated team, rightly pointed out - "Democracy is at crossroads today and each of us needs to contribute to debunk the myth of the silent majority.. The time has come for the majority not to be silent because it is a minority which speaks on behalf of the majority... The media is bringing out all confidential documents in the open."

Earlier on October 11, 2011 delivering the 28th Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Lecture at the National Police Academy at Hyderabad Mr. Rai made a stronger statement when he said that the credibility of the government is at its "lowest ebb". Its quality of governance "below par" and that decision making has become a "casualty".

At New Delhi also speaking at another Sardar Patel lecture, Jairam Ramesh, the Union Rural Development Minister held successive governments both at the Centre and in the states responsible for the spread of Naxalism by their failure to protect the dignity and constitutional rights of the poor and disadvantaged and there was an urgent need to restore people's faith in the administration by doing away with distrust, alienation and deprivation.. It has to do with restoration of lands. Both the realistic statements one from a seasoned bureaucrat-turned-watchdog and another from a technocrat Union Cabinet Minister are most apt and need to be taken seriously to initiate steps

When a strictly apolitical personality like Azim Premji has to express his anguish that the absence of decision-making is a cause for concern coupled with corruption is the biggest challenge facing the country, it is time for those in governance and the governed citizenry to wake up and take steps to stem the rot. The Union Agricultural Minister does not go along with the Food

Security Bill though it is vigorously pushed by the Congress President headed National Advisory Council. The Planning Commission, a Soviet era creation, is not sure of its numbers with its flip-flop of Rs.26-32 for BPL cut off.

Trade and Industry are in the doldrums with frequent hikes in interest rates, thirteen in as many months, and fuel prices. With all the information from the Swiss and other tax havens of black money stashed there as well as pre-election affidavits declaring crores in assets filed by all candidates, the Income Tax authorities need to *suo moto* ascertain how much income tax is and is not paid by each candidate and initiate immediate prosecution and put the names in the public domain. Opposition MP Varun Gandhi has filed an RTI application seeking the names of individuals with foreign bank accounts.

Today's India is floundering in a vicious circle of dysfunctional governance paralysis. The Opposition is, as much as the ruling party, not ready for a regime change. The common people looted left, right and centre have come to a point to say *enough is enough*, okay *thus far and no further*, had chosen to follow Anna Hazare, to take on the demon of corruption and also his call for electoral reforms. Lately his IAC Movement moving out of the corruption focus is found to be floundering.

The Prime Minister has refrained from his favourite *cliché* of 'not having a magic wand' to deal with corruption, neither has the Finance Minister repeated his favourite *no quick-fix* solutions to stop price rise. The Home Minister confined to his home for sometime (!), cancelling out of town trips, tells us that there is *no way to prevent terror attacks completely*. The Congress Party Maharashtra Chief Minister says that he is *not sure of how to avert future terrorists' strikes*. Their Party President, unseen in public, on medical advice (?) mercifully, is on the silent mode. The HRD-cum-IT Minister shoots his mouth off by questioning the

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

Long before we won our freedom, self-reliance was the goal of those of our people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence: men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru who practised self-reliance.

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Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



constitutional authority of the CAG audited figures by stating that he thinks it ought to be a *zero-loss*. Thank God he didn't specify the number of zeroes! Every known so-called important *person*, be it an MP, whistle blower or company honcho, even remotely connected to any scam or *sub-judice* matter is in Tihar Jail that will soon need to increase its capacity many fold. Tihar Jail has even taken in Anna Hazare but he was not in any hurry to come out!

All this, at a time the country is plagued domestically in political uproar, economic imbalance, social disorder, media misinformation accentuated by surging food prices, out of hand unbridled double digit inflation, sharp fall in GDP growth coupled with decline in industrial production and weakening farm output despite good monsoon, fiscal profligacy compounded by the cascading effects of the global instability.

The Union Rural Development Minister, Jairam Ramesh frankly goes on record – “There are serious, shortcomings in the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. While the wage earner has to get his wages within 15 days, it takes as long as 9 months. A Chief Minister of a North Indian state told me that the NREGA has been responsible for the proliferation of Boleros and Pajeros in his state.” At a function organised by Hunger Project on Gandhi Jayanti, Jairam said - “Open defecation is a blot on India's image. There is no other country in the world where 60% of the women population has to go to the open field. We prefer to remain clean and dump filth outside. Rivers are not rivers in India, they have become sewers. The 500 km. stretch of the Ganga between Kannauj and Varanasi is just sewer.” Three Members of the Ganga Action Plan of which the PM is the Chairman have put in their papers as they found him wanting in dealing with it.

Our archaic tax, corporate and labour laws call for an immediate revisit. Our opaque laws as well as regulatory norms need radical and bold systemic changes to deal with the menace of bludgeoning corruption. The Regulators all come out as toothless tigers. Big ticket reforms can only be brought about by stronger initiatives.

Columnist Swaminathan S. Anklesaria in his column in the *Sunday Times*, entitled *Middle class hypocrisy on poverty line* points out that Rs.32 per person to a family of five translates to Rs.6,000 per month that a typical middle class family refuses to pay a household help that they can't do without. He also points out how these very 'civilized urban' folks do not hesitate in bargaining for a village handicraft created by an artisan or weaver eking a living at less than Rs.4,000 pm. So harebrained are our

babus, is evident from this filing by the Planning Commission with the Supreme Court that anyone who spends more than Rs.32 in urban areas and Rs.26 in rural India will be deemed below the official poverty line making them ineligible for any benefits that the BPL individuals are entitled to. Given the ground realities these amounts are not enough to feed even an am admi's family of three with a single minimal dal-roti, leave alone a subji or aloo-pyaaz or to commute to distant work places or meet medical bills.

The youth and the Indian middle class, those darlings of India Inc. who power the robust domestic demand that lends colour and flavour to India's growth story entrapped in the surging price rises at home, Euro storm and US recession, is the single largest group that anchors the growth boat. Their hard earned disposable surpluses are constantly eroded by increasing food, fuel, medicines, rentals, EMIs, insurance, transportation and education costs. This class of citizens is badly sandwiched between the BPL have-nots and the stinkingly wealthy rich going by the new terminologies – HNIs - High Net worth Individuals to UHNIs – Ultra rich HNIs whose unearned incomes from corporate and mutual fund dividends and capital gains do not suffer any taxes and consequentially pay far lower taxes on their incomes, hardly any on their vast wealth and none on their estates that go to their heirs free of cost. Mr. Chidambaram, in his demand for taxing the rich more by suggesting raising the rates to raise the non-debt revenue, is only reminding rich Indians what Mr. Warren Buffet said in the USA and is adopted by President Obama and in Europe by the French President following suit. The European Commission has laid out plans to raise E57b a year by taxing Financial Transactions to refill help depleted public coffers.

So far not a single rich Indian has come forward to offer his income for higher tax like Warren Buffet. The infection of taxing the rich more that is fast catching up in the West will soon visit here too. The unearned Income of the rich Indians from dividends, capital gains, fees for board of directors meetings and commissions to directors ought to be taxed at the highest marginal rates. Thereby ensuring that they pay taxes at least the same rate as the aam tax payer and not any less.

The only way to repatriate the billions stashed by Indians abroad is to develop the political will to invoke a Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty and more particularly the Tax Information Exchange Agreements with tax havens to first ferret out information and thereafter seek their repatriation. The only problem will be that the big names involved would have moved their funds elsewhere.

It is sad to hear the economist in the PM interestingly attribute the inflation to the higher spend arising out of larger incomes generated by GDP rises. But he has no explanation for the harsh food price rise that is primarily a result of the Government's utterly skewed policies of a multitude of middle men and APMCs, exports of sugar, onions and cotton by vested interests, bad agricultural production practices all by greedy corrupt vested interests. Successive governments are shying from taxing agriculture for fear of losing rural votes. A whole lot of important Bills like the Companies and Direct Taxes Code and myriad others are hanging fire in Parliamentary Committees' procedures.

There is an urgent need to induct more professionals, in stead of uneducated moneyed politicians in our Union and State Cabinets. John Mathai, C.H. Bhabha

in the first post-Independence Nehru cabinet were no politicians nor was possibly Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. We ought to adopt the US Constitution that specifically bar members of the Federal Cabinet from being members of either the Senate or House of Representatives but at the same times subjects them to a stringent Confirmation process in the Houses before taking office. We need to modulate the Parliamentary system in adopting this practice to get over the *Coalition Dharma* menace when the Chemicals Minister doesn't answer questions because he knows no English, the Minister for Agriculture is seen more on the cricket fields abroad as if food inflation is not his concern! Even in cricket his team is getting a drubbing all over!

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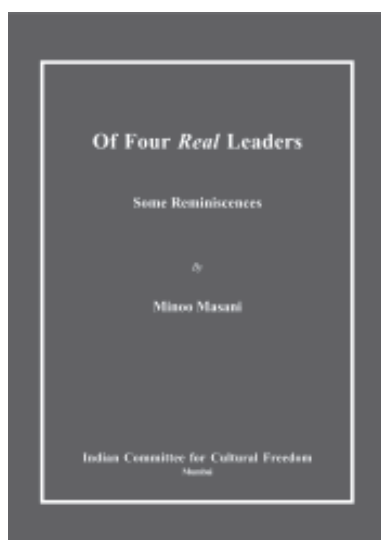
Why We Break Rules

Understanding behavior patterns means changing our current attitude from haranguing enforcement agencies to take ownership of the problem. "We are suckers for conformation. This is essentially what drives most of us to break rules and conform to norms. A simple message like 'Don't litter the national park' sends out a subconscious emotional message to the brain that says, 'others are doing it too and hence it's okay.' Instead, positive communication such as, 'The national park is well preserved, help us to maintain it,' tells us that the norm is to preserve it and hence we shouldn't go against it"

Behavioural scientist Ram Prasad on how poor civic sense has more to do with perception than enforcement." *Mumbai Mirror* March 11.

Of Four Real Leaders

By Minoo Masani



Minoo Masani died on May 27, 1998. Four years earlier in December 1994 he wrote what was to be his last booklet "Reminiscences of Four Great Figures." For reasons explained in the booklet, it was printed last November and released at a seminar on Leadership marking his 106th birth anniversary.

The reminiscences are frank, even irreverent, first person accounts of his encounters with the "Four Great Figures: Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and Jayaprakash Narayan. The booklet also carries his article entitled "Two Styles of Leadership" published in a *Freedom First* special issue on Leadership in January 1980. Though written 21 years ago, it almost seems like he wrote it as a foreword for his "Reminiscences.

In today's world there is an almost universal, almost fatalistic acceptance of the poor quality of 'leaders' not only in public life and politics but in almost every field of human endeavour with no discernible evidence of the likely emergence of the kind of leadership thrown up by the freedom movement or even in the early years after independence.

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The Armed Forces and Disaster Management

Suresh C. Sharma

The Armed Forces have a proud record of valour and grit in battle. In the last sixty years after Independence, they have added one more dimension to their success – relief in disasters.

Be it war or riots or disaster due to floods and earthquake, the armed forces can be counted upon to respond quickly to provide relief. Acts in war are accompanied by cheering crowds and flowers while the hard work and risks undertaken during disaster management are appreciated only by the affected people. They are often too devastated by loss of family members and damage to property to express their gratitude. The defence services personnel are not looking for any thanks. They are content with the pride that comes from doing a job well and bringing sunshine into the lives of people who have lost all. Disasters often strike at places and time without any warning signs. Local resources are inadequate to deal with the large scale damage to life and property. Destruction of roads and telecommunication links makes even assessment of help required difficult. The Armed Forces are capable of quick reaction and have the resources to patch up communications and build up own telecommunication links. Helicopters may be the only viable means for transport in some cases. The need for instant communications to decide on relief and rescue operations is often not realized.

On 26 December 2004, tsunami wrecked havoc in the major inhabited island of Car Nicobar spread over about 150 kms in the southern group of islands in the Andamans. No one had ever heard of a tsunami and every one felt relieved when the tremors at 6.30 am did not cause any damage. Some people had gone towards the sea out of curiosity. About 30 minutes later, eight 20 meter high waves traveling at great speed hit the coast. The Air Force accommodation was in ruins and 128 personnel and families lost their lives. Damage to property was about Rs.150 crores. Thick slush covered the runway which was rendered unusable. The Air Force personnel rose to the occasion. Ignoring their own loss, they cleared the runway and made it operational the same day. Two MI-8 helicopters were pressed into service, carrying out search and rescue operations over land and sea. The relief flights continued for a month. The Navy and Coast Guard ferried 2800 tons of essential supplies and 5700 personnel to the island. More than 8500 people were given medical aid in centres established on board the ships. More than 11000 persons were evacuated. All this was done in spite of major damage

to the jetties. A Tsunami Memorial has been erected and the names of 128 men and families who lost their lives have been inscribed on it. The memorial rises from the middle of a series of gradually rising wide steps that convey the impression of sea waves from a distance.

A major earthquake caused widespread destruction in Kashmir on 8 October 2005. Twenty six security people and 755 civilians were killed. The Army lost no time in establishing a Disaster Management Centre at Uri and commenced relief work in remote villages where no civilian teams had yet gone. Dhulanic village which was the last hamlet on the LOC could be reached only by a manual rope bridge. Army teams spread out all over the damaged area. The villagers always approached the Army teams for help and not the civilian officials – a clear indication of where their confidence lay.

The Army does not wait for a disaster to come out for help and relief. In the remote areas of J&K and the North East, Army extends medical help and educational facilities. Operation *Sadbhavna* has been launched for this task. In Kupwara which was one of the main sectors affected by terrorism, the Army has established a school for special children. Lt.General Sinha, as Governor of J&K had promoted mini-hydel generators. At his initiative, the project was executed by the Army who had a better reach in the remote areas and could do the work much faster. It ensured that the funds would not be siphoned off and there would be no political considerations for selection of sites. When he drove from Baramula to the site of the one thousandth mini-hydel project 20 kms away, he was delighted to see the national flag fluttering in every village enroute – an appreciation of the work done by the Army.

In 2004, a landslide disrupted the road between Badrinath and Joshimath. A large number of pilgrims was stranded in Badrinath. After two days the Government opened the 4-kilometre-long tunnel built to carry water to the hydel project. The walls were wet and there was the danger of electrocution as live electric wires were strung all along. The pilgrims were advised not to take the support of the wall while walking along. They were escorted by soldiers who literally led the senior citizens by hand. The

pilgrims recall the care taken by the soldiers who would not let them carry any package. Their enthusiasm and cheerful spirit took away the monotony of a 4-km walk.

No text book solutions are possible. Every situation is unique. In 1971, floods in River Gomti threatened Lucknow when the protection embankment in the upper reaches started giving way. The sand bags thrown to strengthen it were being washed away by the raging current. The Army Engineers drove a few trucks loaded with sand bags into the river which gave them a short respite. A large number of sand bags were dumped in. The embankment and Lucknow were saved.

In the earthquake in Sikkim on 18 September 2011, the roads were blocked and ten thousand food packets were air dropped. In a daring operation, a helicopter pilot kept it suspended about one foot from the ground to rescue an engineer of the Border Roads Organization.

Colonel Cresto saved the lives of thirteen tourists who were stranded in a cable car strung between two hills in Timber Trail in Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh. The helicopter pilot kept the plane steady as Colonel Cresto held on to the cable car with his hands. He swung like a pendulum in the strong breeze. He suffered a mild electric shock due to static electricity. He chatted with the passengers to keep them cheerful. He was awarded the Kirti Chakra and honoured by three States - Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Goa.

The Armed Forces have a proud record of valour and grit in battle. In the last sixty years after Independence, they have added one more dimension to their success – relief in disasters. The Military is the ultimate guarantor against external aggression, internal security and are called upon to render relief in any disaster. Specialized equipment like foldable saws to cut through concrete or foldable thermal imagers for search and rescue are not available

to the Indian Army. In USA, Japan and Indonesia specific organizational capability has been built into the structure of their armed forces. The Indian Army relies on its well trusted resource – the Indian soldier as witnessed in the recent earthquake in Sikkim. Due to unavailability of bridging material, a human bridge was formed.

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The human bridge in Sikkim

Photo Courtesy: Lt.Gen.(Emeritus) Raj Kadyan, PVSM AVSM VSM, Chairman IESM.

Question (Outlook): Has the issue (DoB of Gen. V. K. Singh) created a trust deficit between army and government. And will it impact civil-military relations?

Answer (Gen. V. K. Singh): .. In India, civil-military relations have evolved along certain unique lines since Independence. The Indian armed forces have always remained an apolitical institution; one of the pillars of our democracy... we have a standing army that operates under some of the most difficult conditions in the world... The system has to be far more responsive for us to perform effectively. Unfortunately we are bogged down with unnecessary hurdles. Timely replacement of weapons systems, ammunition, logistical requirements, an acute shortage of officers are the more obvious areas that are affected.

COURTESY: Outlook, March 12

Vladimir Putin Makes A Comeback

As President of Russia

Raghavendra Gidadhubli

The Russian mindset developed over a few centuries among some sections in Russia that they need a strong leader like Peter the Great, Pytor Stolypin, and Stalin have helped Putin, who is well acknowledged as a strong leader.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin succeeded in his highly publicized poll winning the presidency for a third term in the election held on 4th of March 2012, thus demonstrating in the process that he is a strong leader. He managed to secure 63.75% votes in a four-cornered contest defeating Communist party leader Gennady Zyuganov (17.19%), Mikhail Prokhorov independent (7.82%) Liberal Democratic Party chief Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (6.23%) and 'A Just Russia' party leader Sergei Mironov (3.85%). Putin's incredible victory in the face of a formidable campaign by opposition candidates and protest marches against him a few weeks before polling, by lakhs of young and old Russians in the streets of Moscow and other cities despite severe winter is unprecedented in the contemporary history of Russia. There was much speculation that Putin might not get the required 50% of the votes required to win in the first round. How was Putin able to transform an adverse situation to his advantage and win?

Putin led his team personally inducting even outgoing President Dmitri Medvedev in his campaign to win back the presidency. He adopted a policy of mass mobilization comprising activists from trade unions, state employees, teachers and workers to join demonstrations organized under the banner of his United Russia Party. To counter the role of younger generation in anti-Putin demonstrations and neutralize their impact Putin's team inducted activists of 'Nashi' an organization known for its nationalist and radical views, 'Young Guard', and Stal (Steel) among others. to rally round his banners like 'Great Russia Needs a Strong Leader', 'No Chaos', 'We are against Orange Revolution'. He also carried on an 'Information War' on the internet to counter opponents and aimed at the net-savvy younger and educated class. He also wooed the educated middle class in Moscow and other cities and regions, which accounts for about one-third of the electorate with sops such as increases in pensions and salaries of teachers in school, university lecturers and doctors by 2018 even while critical of the increasing role of the bureaucracy, corruption and the

pathetic infrastructure. On issues such as the poor investment climate, 'managed democracy' and lack of political reforms for which Putin was being blamed, instead of ignoring such criticism he took them head on and promised to bring about major changes in the society and economic prosperity.

Putin and his managers comprising aggressive political activist Vlachslav Volodin and film maker Stanislav Govorukhin emphasised the crucial importance of the stability factor in their campaign. They accused political rivals of the threat of 'Color Revolutions' that have occurred in Georgia, Ukraine and the Kyrgyz Republic of the CIS which have led to instability. On the other hand, his campaigners claimed that Putin symbolized stability to the nation after the "Turbulent Nineties," and guarantees peace since the alternative would be chaos. Thus by highlighting this potential threat and promising stability for Russia, Putin seems to have won over the older section of society as also the urban and rural voter.

Rumours abounded of money being promised for participating in pro-Putin demonstrations and at times not being paid. Moreover, (as also accused by the opposition party Yabloko) Putin's team did not hesitate in resort to force, in one of which the director of a Moscow training center was reported to have been fined in the first week of February for not providing school teachers for a pro-Putin rally. Intimidatory tactics were reportedly resorted to by the authorities on media reporters for exposing vote rigging during the Duma election last year. It was evident that the State administrative apparatus was being utilized liberally for Putin's benefit. Similarly, the management of private channels Ekho-Moskvy and Dozd which gave wide coverage to anti-Putin campaigns demanding 'Fair Elections', were severely criticized by members of the Putin team and chief editor Andrei Venediktov was sacked accusing him of serving the interests of the West and not of Russia. By not preventing anti-Putin demonstrations, and by not resorting to arrests of agitators on any large scale, Putin showed his openness to criticism and claim

his credentials as an upholder of democratic values. In reality Putin's team did not hesitate resorting to force, misuse of the State administrative apparatus when required.

Aware of the Russian's pride in a strong army Putin promised to revive Russia's traditional military might by rebooting the sluggish military to the tune of \$ 770 billion in about 8-10 years. The proposal to bring about military reform and modernize the equipments and technology of the defense sector assumes significance as it has lagged behind in many ways. At any rate these statements emphasizing that Russia will not lag behind the West got Putin the support of the Russian army for his candidature. The Russian mindset developed over a few centuries among some sections in Russia that they need a strong leader like Peter the Great, Pytor Stolypin, and Stalin have helped Putin, who is well acknowledged as a strong leader. This is amply evident from the statement of the president of Russia's southern republic of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov, who praised Putin, stating that Russia needed a "Tsar" rather than a manager, as head of state. Similarly, army commander Vladimir Shamanov thanked Putin for bringing stability in Chechnya which assumes importance since Putin has received several threats of assassination including the one in February 2012. Moreover, Putin has the strong support of his conservative political group as also the Siloviki clan, which comprises security services veterans.

It is a fact that for over a decade Putin has managed to control conflicting groups among policy making circles in the Kremlin and hence play the game of balance of power. In view of this a strong view that prevails and admitted by a section of the educated class is that there was no 'alternative strong' candidate to Putin.

Finally Putin was supported by several lakhs of Central Asians particularly from Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic who are working and legally registered in Russia and hence eligible to vote. Knowing that job opportunities in Russia help them to earn and send remittances to their families living in Central Asia, they consider that Putin is a better choice for their security and survival and realize they cannot afford to rock their boat. This is evident from the fact that the newly elected Kyrgyz president Almbek Atmbaev on his official visit to Moscow in the third week of February 2012 openly supported Putin's presidential candidature. Other candidates Zyuganov and Zhirinovsky have done little to earn their support and

Prokhorov wants a visa regime for migrant workers.

As expected there were allegations and counter charges which are evident from the fact that some election observers including Russian media organization Golos head claimed fraud and intimidation in voting, ballot box stuffing and carousel voting in different parts of Russia. Possibly under pressure from Putin, the CEC chief Vladimir Churov denied such allegations said that the election was the "cleanest in the history of the Russian Federation". Political analysts and some Russian experts including Fyodorov and Dmitry Orlov have opined that Putin's victory was extremely convincing, which is not shared by foreign analysts. Strong differences exist between Zyuganov, who contended that he could not recognize these elections as fair, honest and worthy; whereas Putin who initially claimed that the election was fair and an open fight, later admitted that some violations might have occurred thus indirectly conceding to the international monitors who have opined that the election was unfair. At any rate Putin wanted victory at any cost and hence did not care for criticism of fairness in his campaign strongly believing that all is fair in love and war. Putin has won the battle, but he may face even more formidable challenges and the problem of fulfilling the many promises that he has made during the campaign.

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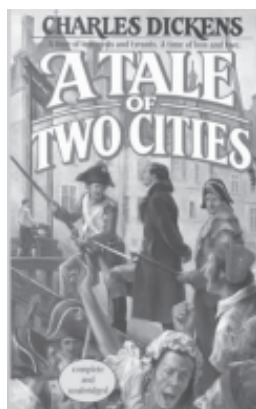
Recalling Charles Dickens in his Bi-centenary Year

R. Srinivasan

It has been affirmed that many of his novels are also tracts as well analyzing and laying bare the problems of modern civilization.

One of the surprising things has been the rather muted bicentenary celebrations of Charles Dickens, save for a brief mention in national newspapers. This is particularly so for a whole generation in the country were introduced to the delights of English literature by reading his unforgettable books. One has to be in his late seventies to recall and savour the pleasures of reading his novels. "Here is God's plenty". Once introduced to his novels, as many of us were, in our higher classes, they remained permanently imprinted in our consciousness. In school and college, these were prescribed as non-detailed texts and after class hours we would exchange our understanding of them, the brighter students explaining some aspects of the novels, *Oliver Twist*, *Bumble the Beadle*, *Mr. Gradgrind*, above all *Mr. Micawber* and the "Willin" *Barkis* were not easily forgotten. Some phrases like something will turn up, no room to swing a cat, King Charles's head, have become part of our daily vocabulary. The circumlocution office introduced by him has been our every day experience. Very often, we have had our frustrations and echoed the sentiments of the beadle "If the law supposes that the law is a ass or a idiot". Conventional wisdom has repeated in our country that "it is always best on these occasions to do what the mob do".

Outside Shakespeare, we have had no variety of characters in creative literature as in his novels. Fagin, the Artful Dodger, Scrooge, Dick Turpin and above all the saintly Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations*. Can we forget them or their individualities both unique and typical? Equally fascinating are some women like Peggotty, Miss Havisham, the haughty Estella, Mrs. Joe; the demented and eccentric Miss Havisham is in a class by herself. Sarah Gamp with her invoking her friend Mrs. Harris is again familiar and disreputable with her lingering smell of gin about her. The



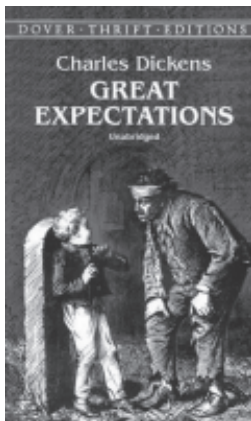
individuals who constitute the *Pickwick Club* with Mr. Winkle, Snodgrass, Tupman and the Chairman himself has been one of the evergreen clubs of literature. Of course Sam Weller and his father add relish to it. Fat Joe, the ever sleepy dormouse opening his eyes to surprise and shock caught Mr. Snodgrass in the act of kissing the maid in one of the unforgettable pages of the novel.



Dickens also wrote on the social traumatic events as in *Barnaby Rudge* and *A Tale of Two Cities* vividly describing total civil unsettlement resulting in the Gordon Riots of 1870 and the terrible fallout of the French Revolution, the latter has remained popular, made into a movie and contains some vivid scenes and has captured the imagination of innumerable readers.

The gradual penetration of industrialization and urbanization into what was once pristine rural areas and the strain of coming to terms with the inevitable realities are vividly presented in his novels. In all these, the underdog of course gets a raw deal and gradually sinks into genteel poverty. Some of the older gentry adjust themselves to the new forces and become spokesmen of the new dispensation as Mr. Gradgrind. But the empathy of the author is for the victims and it infects us as well. It becomes difficult to appreciate those who have successfully climbed the greasy pole of success.

It has been affirmed that many of his novels are also tracts as well analyzing and laying bare the problems of modern civilization. But to many among us, uninitiated readers what is of eternal appeal are straight, simple narratives that many of them are and which lay bare the rather unwelcome realities of an unfeeling social order. This is how the earlier generations read them and they perhaps still do for many readers of the present generation as well. However, it must be accepted that his writings can be



savoured only by readers that have some nodding acquaintance with British life and British social structure that was continually changing. They would offer little to those who have no acquaintance or empathy with these. It is quite likely that the coming generations of readers would find it difficult to experience the resonance that these novels have had on an earlier

generation.

In spite of passages of dark contours Dickens's world is suffused by a sense of optimism and a sentiment that the world is not after all a bad place. This is typically British and later generations of novelists as J. B. Priestley in the *Good Compassions* (not very much read these days) and some of the novels of H. G. Wells such as *Kipps* and *History of Mr. Polly* continue the picaresque tradition of Dickens.

Dr. R. Srinivasan is retired professor of Political Science, Mumbai University and Associate Editor of *Freedom First*.

Much Ado About Dickens

"...it's hard to imagine an author better able to stand up to this kind of excessive popular celebration (than Charles Dickens). Though time and inclusion on high school curricula has lent him a highbrow gloss, Dickens has been a writer of mass popularity since the serialization of his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*. Even when he was alive, his work inspired theatrical productions and caricatures and bootleg editions and enormous parties: on his first visit to America in 1842, the thirty-year-old Dickens was already so famous that thousands of New Yorkers turned out to fete him at a lavish "Boz Ball" at the Park Theatre. (Dickens apparently enjoyed the dancing, then got sick, as authors on busy book tours still do, and was laid up for three days.)

Upon his death in 1870, crowds mourned this literary icon as if they'd known him; as Longfellow wrote, "It is no exaggeration to say that this whole country is stricken with grief."

Amanda Katz. For more visit www.dickens2012.org/about-dickens-2012



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Rukmini Devi and Her Immortal Creation “Kalakshetra”

B. M. N. Murthy

On the occasion of the 108th Birth Anniversary of Rukmini Devi (29February 2012) we pay our tribute to this great Artiste and founder of the immortal institution she founded and named it “Kalakshetra.” At the age of 24, Rukmini Devi who knew no dancing and who was fascinated by the dance of the 20th century’s greatest Ballerina Anna Pavlova, once expressed a desire to the ballerina: “I wish I could dance like you but I know I never can”. Pat came the reply from Pavlova “No, No. Never say that. You don’t have to dance, for if you just walk across the stage, it will be enough. People will come to watch you do just that much!” That was Rukmini Devi, a born Dancer, or as they say in Sanskrit: Aagarbha Nritya Kalavida.



1904 - 1986

The first half of the twentieth century can well be described as the era of Renaissance in India which saw the establishments of two powerful institutions in the country which are popular today and recognized all over the world: one is Shantiniketan founded by Ravindranath Tagore in 1918 in Calcutta (now Kolkata) which brought

back to glory the system of education in the Gurukula system and the second one is Kalakshetra in Madras (now Chennai) founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936 which revived the greatness of Indian Performing Arts, again in the Gurukala tradition. Kalakshetra, the inimitable creation of Rukmini Devi, is today one of the most popular centers for dance and allied performing arts and stands as the most tangible testimony to Rukmini Devi’s vision and clear perception about Indian culture.

Rukmini Devi was born to a traditional family in Madurai on 29th February 1904. Her father Neelakantha Shastry was a Sanskrit scholar and a theosophist and her mother Seshammal was a great lover of music. It is therefore no wonder that even at a young age Rukmini came under the influence of the Theosophical Society and its vision

of global humanity and universal brotherhood. After the demise of her father, Rukmini met Dr. George Arundale who was a Britisher by birth and an eminent educationist and theosophist. Incidentally he was a protégé of Dr. Annie Besant. Arundale who was already 40 years by then fell in love with the young and beautiful Rukmini who was about 16 years. They got married in Bombay since marriage in the tradition-bound conservative Madras of the twenties was unthinkable – a marriage between a Brahmin girl of 16 years hailing from a traditional South Indian family and a foreigner and that too with an age difference of 24 years.

After her marriage Rukmini came into very close contact with Dr. Annie Besant and traveled extensively all over the world with her husband in connection with the activities of the Theosophical Society, and working in the multiple fields of culture, education, animal welfare, performing arts etc. It was during these travels between 1920- 1933 that she got an urge to bring out the glory and tradition of Indian culture and performing arts on the global scene. It was during one of those trips to Australia she became quite close to Anna Pavlova [of the ‘Dying Swan’ fame], the Russian Ballerina, who has been considered the world’s best ballet dancer of the 20th century. It was she who inspired Rukmini to learn Indian dance and propagate it.

After the demise of Dr. Annie Besant in 1933, Rukmini Devi returned to India and joined the Indian National Movement for the revival of Indian culture and the arts. She began her revival work by learning ‘Sadir’, a form of dance performed by hereditary practitioners known as ‘Devadasis’ who danced in the 18th and 19th century temples and some royal courts of South India. However, she revived the ‘Sadir’ by refining it and giving it an

aesthetic taste. With the refinement of 'Sadir' it was thought by dance experts like Sri E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi that it would be better to give a new name to the revised form of dance. A conference was held in the Music Academy at Madras attended by experts. Sri E. Krishna Iyer, in consultation with Rukmini Devi, suggested the name 'Bharathanatyam' and his proposal was seconded by the eminent Sanskrit scholar Dr. V. Raghavan. Accordingly a resolution was unanimously adopted, "Hereafter 'Sadir' will be replaced by the name 'Bharathanatyam'. Rukmini Devi gave her maiden performance of Bharatanatyam in 1935 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the International Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras. Even at the age of 31, she danced for two hours without a pause and the audience was spellbound, absorbed by the beauty of the dancer and her graceful movements. This maiden performance of Rukmini brought worldwide recognition to her talent as a dancer.

One year after her debut, Rukmini founded the International Academy of Arts [which was later renamed as Kalakshetra] in the premises of the Theosophical Society on the banks of the Adyar river in Madras, to facilitate the revival of the whole complex of South Indian arts including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and other dance forms, folk arts, music, painting, crafts, textiles etc. The several classes of the Academy were conducted in open air in the midst of sylvan surroundings. This went on till 1950 when, due to a policy change in the rules of the Theosophical Society, Rukmini was asked to move out of the premises bag and baggage. By this time her husband Arundale had passed away in 1945. Undaunted by the crisis, Rukmini purchased a hundred acre plot in the adjoining Tiruvannamalai and re-housed the Kalakshetra in all its entirety. This was the most challenging part of her life, which she faced boldly, almost single handed, and came out with tremendous success.

With the soaring popularity of Kalakshetra in the subsequent years, the Government of India had an eye on it and wanted to take it over. In fact, the University Grants Commission sent a committee to Kalakshetra and it offered the status of 'Deemed University' and with an offer of tempting grants, modernization etc. But Rukmini politely turned down the offer with the words "I appreciate your concern to make this center toe the line of the UGC. But unfortunately your rules and guidelines are diametrically opposed to the ideals of Kalakshetra". Rukmini thus demonstrated that she was not a person who could be lured by money, power, status or fame.

When the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai offered her the post of the President of India, she declined the

offer as she wanted to devote her entire time to the revival of the arts of the country which alone would give her inward happiness and satisfaction. She believed and lived in the Upanishadic truth:

*"Na Karmana, Na Prajaya, Dhanena
Tyagena Ekena Amrutatvam Anashuh"*

which means "One attains immortality, not by activity, not by progeny, not by material wealth but by supreme sacrifice and renunciation". It may be remembered that this is one of the most popular prayers of the Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai recited every morning.

Rukmini also took keen interest in the revival of Indian textiles. She was sensitive to harmonious colors, having an instinctive aversion to anything gaudy, sparkling and glamorous. She created what is called 'Kalakshetra Sarees' that attracted women of cultured and cultivated taste. She believed in the adage 'Apparel maketh a man' and always used to emphasize that the dress and demeanor of a person even in day-to-day life should reflect his or her sense of aesthetics and beauty. She was particular about how people dressed, particularly in the campus. In the Kalakshetra campus she insisted that all women wear only Saree or *Pavadai* (petticoat) and *dhavani* (dupatta) and the men dhoti/kurta or pyjama/kurta, which is the uniform for students even today.

When the dance form 'Sadir' was revived as Bharatanatyam, Rukmini introduced several changes. Till about 1930 the dance teacher and the musician used to walk behind the Devadasi dancers as they danced and the audience used to be positioned on all sides of the performer. Rukmini changed this by first separating the teacher and his ensemble from the dancer and seating them on a beautifully laid carpet. The audience was kept seated facing the dancer. She recreated traditional jewellery after making a deep study of the temple ornaments and several sculptures. It is learnt that she never used nose ornaments as she felt that it would conceal the expressions on the face.

By showing that art cannot be separated from life and that good art can come only out of pure thoughts and a truthful life, Rukmini Devi demonstrated the integration of the noble concepts of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.

B. M. N. Murthy retired as the Chief Engineer of the Life Insurance Corporation of India. Over the last many years, he has been writing weekly articles recalling India's great heritage. Email: bnmurthy@gmail.com

BOOK REVIEWS



NON STOP INDIA by Mark Tully • Published by Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books • 2011 • Pages 258 • Rs.499

Reviewed by Meera Godbole-Krishnamurthy, an architect and author of 'Balancing Act', a novel about architecture and motherhood. She has studied art and architecture at Oberlin College, Columbia University and the University of Virginia.

India is a complex place. There's some of everything here and it defies a simple definition. You can't truly know it till you've lived here. Some have called it a "muddle," some have called it

"incredible," others have called it "shining." Mark Tully calls it "non-stop." Where others have used adjectives or nouns, Tully seems to use a verb, and this gives it a dynamic, vibrant quality, much like the cover of this book. They say don't judge a book by its cover, but in this case, I have to say, I did. And I was both, pleased and disappointed by it.

Mark Tully's reputation precedes him. He's a veteran newsman of the old-fashioned kind. He believes in reporting news, not creating it. He is understated and gentle, preferring to let the people speak for themselves – a far cry from the often shrill pontificating that masquerades as news these days. And this comes through in this quiet and understated book.

Tully writes in the introduction, "...All the institutions essential for a democracy to function are in place. There are legislatures right down to the village level, elections, as I have said, are regularly held, there is a civil service, there are courts, the press is free. Furthermore there are politicians, bureaucrats, lawyers and journalists who know exactly what their responsibilities should be, and how their institutions should function...Having lived in India for more than forty years I have become affected by the widespread cynicism about governments and governance in this country." But he remains optimistic about India's future because he believes that India will find a way to make existing institutions work the way they were meant to.

The book is written in ten chapters that span the whole spectrum of what you read in the papers these days, from Dalits, to Naxals to the debate on English vs. regional

languages, community building initiatives to tigers. Depending on the reader's interests, some chapters may be of more interest than others. The subjects are presented with the old-fashioned reporter's motto of letting the people be heard. They are interviews of people Tully and Gillian meet on their travels. He doesn't insert himself into the narrative wherever possible, and other than framing questions, quotes the voices directly. They speak, he listens, and he moves on to his next destination. This makes for interesting and engaging reading because it isn't often these days that you get to know about original data that is gathered. We are so bombarded with the rush to analyze and speculate and judge and offer solutions.

As you read through the chapters, you move from one village to another, with Tully telling you where you are to go next. He's certainly not a bad guide to have. Tully, after all is better informed about India than most of us, he has had a ring-side seat to almost all major historical events in the country, by virtue of his being a "foreigner," and I have been given to understand that he is a self-effacing, good man. Readers will have no problem letting themselves be taken through this book on a non-stop tour of India with Tully as their capable guide. One may suggest that he should have expanded the itinerary a bit. Too much - more than half - of the book is based in North India and this reflects the general tendency of the media to focus on "north-of-the- Vindhyas" stories. Like any journey, once in a way, the telling can get tedious, the writing is a bit uneven, but it is engaging enough to keep going.

There's the slight problem of classifying this book – is it a travel book, is it literature, is it academic, political, current events? Is it analysis, reportage, storytelling? Is it meant for students or those unfamiliar with India? It is some of these, none of others, but finally, the answer came to me once again, as I stared at the cover. It is, essentially, a book of folk tales: stories of the land, real stories about real people told in the oral tradition. And at this level it works wonderfully. Chapters such as *Caste Overturned* and *Building Communities* for this reason work especially well.

Having said this, it is difficult to criticize the book. Let me explain why I say that. It's certainly not because I loved everything about it.

There's an old trick that anyone who's in management – or married – knows. It's called taking the zing out of the argument. It goes something like this: "I know you think I was insensitive yesterday but that was not my intention." Well then, nobody can respond to that by telling you that you were insensitive yesterday. They would be stating the obvious, something you already told them you knew.

Similarly, in his introduction, Tully says, "*The chapters in this book are all stories of my travels...they are not analyses.*" He says it's always difficult to write for two audiences. And he says that there are difficulties writing prose when you've been a radio journalist your whole life. There goes the zing from any criticism I may have of this book.

These, indeed, are the three main problems with the book. But the way I see it, naming the beast does not make it disappear. Tully is clearly self-aware – a good quality in anyone, especially a reporter. But this does not let Tully off the hook. It may have been perfectly acceptable for many journalists, some even well known ones. But one holds somebody like Mark Tully to a higher standard. From a veteran like him, at the age of 76, with his range of experience, one has higher expectations.

First, he says these are stories, not analyses. But even read as stories, the story-teller must offer something of himself. If my grandmother tells me a story, I expect something more of her in the telling, in the message, indeed in the analysis from her experiences, than if a younger sibling were to tell the same tale. Does India need a "sympathizer" who tells a bland tale? Being sympathetic does not mean being soft. Tully is called an honorary Indian and yet retains that he is a foreigner. With the best of both worlds, he should be brave enough to speak his mind and offer his insights into the stories he hears.

As readers, we expect something of his wisdom, some analysis other than the refrain that becomes redundant by the end of the book: "If governance issues are resolved, India would be non-stop."

Second, it is difficult to write for dual audiences. One wants broad strokes, the other wants more detail. The *Preface to the Indian Edition* suggests that the main text is the same for both audiences. Like Aesop's fable, when you try to please everyone, you end up pleasing no one. At many points, Indian readers will find that the book sinks

into what I call the daal-soup, naan-bread category of narrative. It is tedious to read through superfluous explanations of known items time and again and this does not ease up as the chapters progress. So perhaps the chapters were meant to stand alone and be read in any order. It is a little baffling why Tully would not have insisted that the publishers have the text modified for separate audiences. This could easily have been fixed with a few smart copy-editors on the job.

"Caste Overturned"

"She's trying for IIT," he said. IITs are the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology that export so many of their graduates to Silicon Valley and other destinations in America, Europe and Australia. Devi Saran Singh went on to boast, "Because I am in the BSF I can afford to give her tutors and coaches. She got 93 per cent in her tenth standard exams. If I'd had the same facilities I would have got a much better job. When I was doing my MSc I spent most of my time travelling from town to village and in the village there was no electricity."

A girl called Jyoti, sitting among the villagers was already at university studying zoology. She wanted to be a doctor. Devi Saran Singh told her she was wasting her time doing this degree, she should have gone straight to medical college. Jyoti, surprisingly defiant for a woman and one so much his junior, looked Devi Saran Singh in the eye said, "You have got this all wrong. I didn't join medicine because I got into a private college but we didn't have the fees. I hope by getting this degree to qualify for a government medical college which we can afford."

Another girl, Kumari Brijesh Gautam, was less fortunate. She said, "My family's condition is down so my education is of a simple type. I have studied but can't speak English. There isn't the atmosphere in the village for it. We don't have money for me to study further and get a professional qualification so that I can get a good job. I really feel hatred for the force but I have no choice but to apply to the police. I hate them, but what can I do?"

The villagers protested because her father, who was a non-commissioned officer in the railway police, was sitting opposite. But the young girl continued in a barely audible voice, "The police are the most good-for-nothing people. Whoever commits a crime gets away with it and someone else gets punished."

Rajesh Paswan, who had brought us to the village, said, "Whatever your career, it is particularly good that Dalit girls are now educated and getting proper jobs."

(Excerpted from Mark Tully's *Non-Stop India*, page 49)

And third, the difficulty of writing prose. While nobody is expecting literature from Tully, we certainly expect more meat in his content. There is a difference between the spoken and the written narrative and he must control, if not master, the media he presents in. This would mean that he put more of himself and his thoughts onto the written page. Other than in the introduction, there's not much of Tully in this book. The same aloofness that makes him an excellent radio reporter lets him down in print.

So in the end, when you're done reading the book, there is a sense that something is missing. Reading the

chapters was like browsing through a solo exhibition in an art gallery. Each painting is interesting on its own; some are more detailed, more appealing than others. But at the end of your walk-through, you are left wondering what the theme was. What was the artist trying to say? Did he, in fact, want to say anything?

The key element that's missing in this narrative is the author's passion. There's a reluctance to immerse into the landscape fully, and ultimately, this lack of critical engagement with the subject is what was truly disappointing about the book.



AND ALL IS SAID - Memoir of a Home Divided by Zareer Masani • Penguin Books
• pages 236 • 2012 • Rs.299

Reviewed by S. V. Raju. jurasv@gmail.com

Shakuntala Masani passed away in a London hospital in 1999, and cremated there. She was 79. Zareer Masani took the ashes to Delhi, where, after the prescribed pujas for the Hindu dead were performed, her ashes were immersed in the Ganga.

Minoo Masani died a year earlier in Mumbai in 1998. He was 93. His body was taken by his friends in a Municipal hearse to the Chandanwadi electric crematorium and cremated to the sound of *bhajans* by M.S. Subbalakshmi particularly Gandhiji's *Vaishnava Janato* according to his wish. He also instructed that there be no religious ceremonies of any kind including Zoroastrian rituals. Zareer Masani could not come down from London for this cremation.

The media in India took little notice of Shakuntala's death. Minoo Masani's received passing mention. Zareer's book about his parents, published 14/15 years after they had passed on, has attracted the attention of the mainstream press. The book has been well received and the juicy bits devoured hungrily in page 3 style. There is also a bit of grudging recognition of sorts of his mother's accomplishments and that of his father's as well. Clearly the book has attracted attention because of its subtitle "Memoir of a Home Divided" backed, no doubt, by Khushwant Singh praising it as a "beautifully written memoir that reads like a novel" and Mark Tully's description that it is "A fascinating and almost painfully honest autobiographical account of the lives of a prominent Indian political family". Frankly, it is my view

that the book interested the press because it involved Minoo Masani a principled politician who in just about 8 years led a party that denounced socialism and emerged as the largest single opposition party in parliament. He lost the elections of 1971, the party collapsed in 1974 and after a brief appearance in the public eye as Chairman of the Minorities Commission he retired from politics and the public scene in 1977. His two volume "Political Memoirs" went largely unnoticed. Zareer's book revived memories of Minoo Masani. I have been wondering ever since whether Minoo Masani would have appreciated the context in which he was being remembered!

Be that as it may, the book richly deserves the praise it has been getting, its underlying sincerity, for its narrative style and sparkling prose (typical of the Masanis) and, true to its title 'a tell it all'.

Zareer has dedicated his book to his parents and grandparents. But the book is essentially about his mother who shared the name immortalised by Kalidasa's Shakuntala who suffered the pangs of separation from her husband. So did Shakuntala Masani but, sadly, without a happy ending. The title of the book "And All is Said" is a phrase borrowed from Goethe's German adaptation of this immortal Sanskrit play. Her son etches his mother's personality and her travails, warts and all, her prevarications, doubts, hesitations and second thoughts about a divorce battle which engaged her for a large part of her married life. Any mother would have been proud to have had a son like Zareer who looked after her devotedly till she was no more. Not only does he bring out the fact that much of it was of her own making but also confesses his responsibility in increasing the rift between his parents. This is the reason why he decided to write this book "to offer her in death

some of the dignity that adverse circumstances denied her in later life” whereas “the collapse of socialism both globally and in India” was a vindication of his father’s beliefs. I consider this juxtaposition a *non-sequitur*.

The author who is also a historian hopes that “this family memoir might also have some value as a record of three generations who bridged and contributed to India’s evolution from nineteenth-century British colonial rule to the status of an emerging twenty-first-century superpower.” Though this assumption is echoed by Mark Tully, I really wonder. Have we really? Isn’t there some truth in another belief held by many Indians, in increasing numbers, that in terms of ‘divides’ the country has taken one step forward and three steps back; let alone being a ‘super-power it is going back to the condition it was in before the battle of Plassey!

“And All is Said” is the story of a family that broke up and the circumstances in which it happened. The story would make for a good a novel. It reads like one says Khushwant Singh. Perhaps like so many eminent novelists Zareer could have written this memoir as a novel. But then would such an expedient have caught the attention that it did?

This has also little to do with the social history of India and more with the two opposing lifestyles he was exposed to in his growing up years – on the one hand the rich and pleasure loving Srivastavas and on the other the not-so-uppity middle class spartan and almost puritanical Masanis. His mother though brought up on the lap of luxury made good use of her situation to develop her love for the fine arts be it classical dancing, painting or writing. Unlike the other members of the Srivastava family she was more in tune with the Gandhian struggle for freedom than loyalty to the Union Jack even as her father was a member of the Viceroy’s Council. On the other side Minoo true to his DNA was a disciplinarian, writer of books and a talent for organisation and leadership, simple living and an iconoclast. Minoo had ideological differences with his father who was a liberal conservative and had to leave home and fend for himself as his father would not tolerate ‘class warfare’ in his home! What brought Shakuntala and Minoo together was not only her beauty but their non-conformity, a reluctance to accept the *status quo*, and a sort of bohemian life style. Both were strong-personalities with minds of their own. This last is what lay at the root of their later estrangement.

On a personal note soon after Minoo Masani died, after the condolence gathering and when Zareer Masani and I were coming out of the meeting, Zareer asked me: ‘How did you manage to be with my father so long’. I

remember replying ‘I survived in spite of him’. I thought that that was a ‘clever’ answer which however invited a wry smile. What I meant was that his father was not the easiest person to get along with.

If he had not been so perhaps he would not have had four marriages. In public life I know of instances where the organisations he led collapsed or weakened considerably because he either lost interest or not quite comfortable with those with similar organisational capabilities which posed a threat to his leadership in that organisation. His basic instinct was authoritarian and impatient with others not as good as he was. Here was a contradiction. It was for the other person to trim his sails. Often he wanted the cake and eat it too.

Coming back to my personal experience, the ‘so long’ spanned almost four decades between 1959 and 1998. In the first three or four years I found him very strict, very ‘bossy’. He was often unreasonable and I am not ashamed to admit he even made me cry! But as I had taken a liking for the kind of work I was doing. I shrugged these off biding my time as it were. I realised where to draw the line – never to challenge his authority. Also to be a little ahead of him in whatever work was entrusted to me. Over a period of time this led to a healthy relationship based on mutual trust that lasted till he died. In this book under review Zareer quotes his father’s relationship with Yusuf Meherally in school and college: “Father wrote (in his autobiography): ‘The friendship that developed during our last year or two of school, had become somewhat intense about the time we were in College. While I was very fond of Yusuf I found it difficult to reciprocate with the same intensity that he displayed, and he often called me a cold person. It was a matter of different temperaments.’” Zareer speculates “Could it also have been that Yusuf was consciously or otherwise in love with him, at a time when homosexuality was strictly taboo, especially in the nationalist circles in which they moved?” (page 48).

After reading this comment I wonder whether Zareer’s ‘wry smile’ was due to a feeling that there may have been more to my relationship with his father perhaps of the “intense” Meherally kind? There was no such feeling. I was not in “love” with Minoo Masani! I looked upon him as a good teacher. More importantly I admired and tried to emulate his probity in public life, intellectual integrity and preparedness to be in a minority of one and of course his organisational competence. Nevertheless I would have agreed with Yusuf Meherally. Minoo was a cold person.

He was unbending, stubborn and as many of his peers who admired him observed, often in exasperation,

that he was a 'purist.' Why does he have to make every little thing a matter of principle is a complaint I heard quite a few times. He saw everything in black or white. There was no gray. He would tell me that as a Hindu I always looked for the gray. And Shakuntala too was a Hindu. Zareer was part Parsi part Hindu. He had his problems readymade! He developed the strong wills of his father and mother, and as he kept referring many times his book (quite needlessly, I thought, and almost defiantly) that he was a homosexual.

There are a few factual errors in the book concerning Minoo's political career. The 'beef' incident which necessitated Shakuntala coming on stage at a public meeting in Rajkot and swear she never cooked beef in the house, was not a plot of the "Hindu Nationalists" (the reference is to the RSS and the Jan Sangh). In fact in all three elections he contested from Rajkot the "Hindu Nationalists" did not put up a candidate against him as his constituency was Swatantra's in an electoral adjustment with the Jan Sangh and in 1971 as part of the "grand alliance" so called. They had therefore nothing to do with it. It was sourced from a booklet published by Minoo during his socialist days after a visit to a Soviet collective farm. It was picked up by a pro-Congress newspaper in Rajkot and widely publicised. There are a few others but these do not impact on the story told by Zareer.

In a preface to the first volume of his memoir written in 1977, Minoo writes: "Whether mine is a life of wasted opportunities I do not know, but it is a life I would live again, if I had the option. Though against the tide, I have lived well, and fully. I have been many times around the globe; I have enjoyed the love of beautiful women. I have friends and comrades in all continents."

In a very telling manner Zareer quotes from his mother's diary. She was already in a critical condition:

"When I left Minoo, I gave up a husband who was more precious than a thousand sons..."

"Now when it is too late, this has become so clear. If only I had had someone whom I trusted to guide me at the time I made this decision. But I always did what I wanted. Mummy sad I was headstrong –that was putting it gently.

"Minoo always paid me such compliments! There was no one like me in the family I was the best of the 'Silly Sisters..."

"Absurd words! They destroyed my life and warped my values. When I think of all those compliments men paid me, I wish there had been someone to give me a tight smack and say: 'come to your senses.'

The final straw that destroyed any chance of a reconciliation happened in 1971 when mother and son joined the Indira Congress. The news broke out in the Rajkot press causing irreparable damage to Minoo's candidature. I happened to be there in Minoo's election office. This was during the General Elections of 1971. The phone rang and I picked it up. 'Hello' said a lady's voice from the other end. 'Can I speak to Mr. Masani'? I replied he was not in office as he was out campaigning. 'Who am I speaking to?' I gave my name. 'Oh Raju I am Mrs. Masani. I am so glad you are there. How is he doing', she asked 'Thanks to you Minoo is going to lose'. I replied. 'Why do you say that? I hope he wins. Please tell him I had called' and put the phone down.

"With Compliments"

For the Chindwin crossing in 1944, bridging equipment had to be transported from Dimapur Road through Imphal to Tamu (200 miles), and then on to Indangya (90 miles) with further 21 miles to the crossing site at Kalewa.

While negotiating a narrow road cut into the cliffs of the Myittha Gorge, a 3-tonner vehicle in which I was travelling, broke down, bringing a convoy of 100 bridging lorries to a standstill. I immediately got down and started repairing the vehicle with the help of my driver. Ten minutes had passed, but the vehicle was still stuck. There was complete chaos on this road, with people shouting and swearing to move on, I was getting panicky, specially so, as I was then the only Indian officer on the road at that time, and that meant disaster for me.

Suddenly out of the blue, a jeep came along belting at full speed, and stopped near my vehicle. A British officer, wearing an overcoat so his rank was not visible, got out and asked me what was the trouble. While I was narrating to him my woes, he called for one of his officers, and ordered him to throw my vehicle into the Khud below. I violently objected and told him that this was not on, as I alone was responsible for the safety of my vehicle. Nevertheless the vehicle was thrown down the khud.

I was on the brink of tears, and asked the officer as to how I was going to explain this loss to my British CO. Seeing my plight, he took out a paper from his notebook, wrote something on it, and told me to give it to my CO. He then left. The note had just two words written on it. "With Compliments" and was signed, 'General Slim' XIV Army.

Courtesy: Brigadier (Retd.) Furdoon S.B.Mehta from the Military Papers left behind by the late Brigadier Noshir Grant, an eminent Military Engineer.

The Dangers Of Physical Planning

by Prof. Hannan Ezekiel

Democracy in India is threatened by a new danger. Economic planning, which the Planning Commission had visualised as a great experiment in democracy and which had been hailed as such in many parts of the world, may now take a new direction which must necessarily mean the ultimate destruction of democratic ways of living in this country. While the communist defeat in the Andhra elections has ruled out a rejection of the democratic postulates of economic planning through a change in the Government at least in the immediate future, it appears that this may take place through the acceptance of "physical planning" by ruling circles in the country and particularly by Pandit Nehru.

The high-priest of "physical planning," which thus threatens to enter through the back-door, is Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, Director of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, who is also Statistical Adviser to the Cabinet and wields great personal influence with Pandit Nehru. In recent years, this statistician has built up a large staff, including some foreign experts, at his institute in Calcutta, mainly through funds made available by the Government of India. The list of the foreign experts at the Institute is revealing. It includes two leading Soviet economists with the Gosplan and Prof. Oscar Lange of the Polish Planning Organisation. From countries outside the Iron Curtain, there are Prof. Charles Bettelheim of France, Prof. Rangar Frisch and Dr. R. M. Goodwin. All these are suspected of fellow-travelling tendencies. The latter two are econometricians and, by virtue of their subject itself, they tend to think of human beings in terms of tidy little patterns of behaviour that can be fitted into equations and graphs.

(This is an excerpt. - Ed.)

N O T E S

'The Truth Shall Make Ye Free'

If freedom of culture is based on the unfettered flow of information and a faith in the capacity of people to face and absorb the truth, friends of cultural freedom in all lands will have reason to welcome the belated publication of the records of the Conference of the Big Three (behind the back of the Big Fourth) that took place at Yalta in 1945 and to look forward to the release of the other secret records of World War II.

Increasingly in recent years, those in the know have

arrived at an understanding of the real nature of the Yalta Agreements as the most infamous of the deals by means of which the fruits of victory were lost to the peace-loving peoples of democratic countries.

"The manner in which territories, railroads, ports and islands were cold-bloodedly parcelled out as though these were the perquisites of successful gamblers is something for which the Powers concerned should be eternally ashamed," writes the *Times of India*, while deploring with peculiar lack of logic the bad taste shown in exposing these deals to the eyes of the vulgar multitude. Believing, with the apostle, St. John that "the truth shall make ye free," *Freedom First* on the other hand holds the action of the United States in taking this step to be all the more praiseworthy.

The searchlight was thus bound to be thrown on the pitiful naivete of its own former head, President Roosevelt, who in his supremely egotistic "hunch that Uncle Joe is all right," double-crossed his own ally Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek and bartered away the freedom of the Chinese, the Poles and other peoples in vain attempt at buying "peace" with the Soviet monolith.

One does not have to be blind to President Roosevelt's other estimable qualities and achievements to appreciate the justice of the wag who remarked that he was one of those on whose graves should be inscribed the epitaph: "I knew how to handle the Soviets." Since, unfortunately that tribe of incurable optimists is by no means extinct, it is good that the undertakers of pilgrimages to Peking and Moscow today should be able to see the pathetic figures they are likely to cut in the mirror of history and that the peoples of the world are given an opportunity to assess the consequences of Yalta type conferences with the communist dictators.

Many Voices

The Constitution was a wonderful temple we built for the gods but before they could be installed the devils have taken possession. The only thing we can do, therefore, is to destroy the temple by burning it down.

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, *Times of India*, March 20, 1955.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave today declined a request to sign an appeal for banning atomic weapons to be placed before the forthcoming World Peace Conference at Helsinki and told a communist delegation that met him that they should not worry about the hydrogen and atom bombs.

- A report in the *Times of India*, March 14, 1955.

Educating Adults

Youth in Governance

Dr. Jyoti Marwah leads a discussion on engaging youth in governance

It is unfortunate that year after year, India, squanders its young resource in umpteen ways. The brightest minds leave this country for an intellectual haven outside while those overwhelmed by national idealism later repent, only to reconcile with mediocre options which fail to get the best out of them.

Empowering and engaging the 1.2 billion youth worldwide is like harnessing a mighty river for a sea change. Empowering young people leads to developing within them the power to make informed decisions about issues that affect their daily life and giving them an opportunity to influence policy making. This requires capacity building by providing access to education, health, employment, and resources. Thus given the tools to participate in society they remain the biggest strength for any country. As citizens have come centre-stage and become discerning, 'governance' and 'good governance' is not just about lofty talk and good intentions but governments must evolve a methodology to achieve the eight major characteristics of being participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive with regard for the rule of law. 'Activism' and 'participation' are a positive mode of action to enhance better governance so as to overcome alienation, social exclusion and democratic deficit. This proposes a meaningful engagement with long-term effectiveness of inclusive empowerment and commitment of this 1.2 billion of which 60 percent are Asians and 570 million are Indians. Ironically, good governance is intertwined with a demand for less governance.

'Engagement' has been rightly defined as participation and sustained involvement of young persons in an activity with a focus outside of himself or herself. Full engagement has three components, a behavioural component (time to do an activity) with an effective component (deriving pleasure from participating in it) and a cognitive component (gaining knowledge from and about the activity). There are apprehensions about long term

sustainability and effectiveness of the quality of this engagement as research indicates a number of inconsistencies in the everyday life of young people, due to a number of factors such as their social class, geographical allocation, ethnicity, confidence, involvement in social networks and their accessibility to adult decision-makers. Yet the need to harness their ideas and energy cannot be denied for it can lead to three consequences — if ignored a negative consequence amounting to anti-social activities or belligerence, confrontational and combative action on the streets, in the pursuit of their ideals and if participative they collectively become the strongest voice for positive change.

In India they donned 'me Anna Ahe' (I am Anna) and Akhilesh Yadav exhibited the changing face of the electorate in India which meant understanding the new upsurge of aspirations among the masses and their quest for respect rather than 'hubris' (Shekhar Gupta in *The Indian Express* March 2012). The Occupy Movement of 2011 displayed this youth power all over America, London and across Europe against the capitalist class, corporate greed and wealth disparities. There were no Tahrir Square or Arab Spring repeats of bloodbath but riding the social media circus, OWS (Occupy Wall Street) became an all encompassing 99% movement, highlighting issues of economic injustice ever since the Lehmann Brothers collapse and absence of legal action against the banking mavens who were to blame for the global financial crisis.

It is unfortunate that year after year, India, squanders its young resource in umpteen ways. The brightest minds leave this country for an intellectual haven outside while those overwhelmed by national idealism later repent, only



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to reconcile with mediocre options which fail to get the best from their optimum levels of performance, at the right time.

The only place where we can find wavered youth participation is in politics as in a feudal mindset. The young in the family are groomed for the takeover. Why can't these leaders think of such grooming of the young, irrespective of their family names to become inheritors in all sectors of the system. Year after year, the UPSC does a fine job in assessing lakhs of students for civil services, filtering a few thousands for the written exams and then fewer for the interview. Fifty percent of this choicest resource from the open category are purely on merit which is built up over years of hard work, by intellectual assimilation. My question is, why should this qualifying group of five thousand odd be allowed to fritter its strength at the prime of it's accomplishment? Should capacity building for them not result in their absorption within the system, at the centre or the state? After all were not the IIM's initiated for feeding the public sector rather than the MNC's? It is for the government to turn the thought process in such a way that this group becomes participatory and engaged in governance. Joining politics is not governance alone. Governance needs greater decentralization.

Public Concern For Governance Trust (PCGT)

The Trust in association with 20 NGO's organized a convention in January 2012 on the theme 'Youth for Governance' at Shanmukhananda Hall, Mumbai. It was heartening to see nearly one thousand NSS students of the University of Mumbai at the convention being addressed by ex-chief of Infosys Narayana Murthy, Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik, Ajit Ranade, Kumar Ketkar, Joint Commissioner of Police Vivek Phansalkar and actor Rahul Bose. PCGT Chairman Julia Riberio and Joint Mangement Trustee and Chartered Accountant Narayan Varma stressed the need for youth participation in identifying cases of corruption, injustice, bad governance and to press for compliance by authorities like the Police, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and NGO's. They promised that cases brought to the notice of the PCGT will be assisted in all possible ways. The speakers urged the youth to lead by example and become exemplary leaders through education, participation in voting and debates based on data and facts. They categorically stressed the need to avoid conflicts and discourteous behavior in discussions and debates. Narayana Murthy in a despondent tone urged the youth to take the burden of this failing system and apologized in all humility that his

generation had failed them.

Lessons from the Convention

In a panel discussion on Youth for Governance, the students of SYBA ICLES' MJ College who attended the Convention - Priya Joshi, Manisha Jha and Preeti Agarwal formed a panel to put forward their views on three important aspects of youth-affirmative action for governance: Vote You Must, RTI and Urban Concerns for Civic Amenities including Police and Traffic Management. Their views were centered on the understanding that when young people work in equal partnership with adults on boards, committees, coalitions, commissions or other governing structures it is called youth in governance. The youth become equal stakeholders in all decisions made by such a group and thereby responsible citizens of the country. Priya Joshi was of the opinion that the RTI has been the greatest gift in terms of ushering transparency in governance and needs to be well understood by the youth. Manisha opined that if one fails to vote he or she loses the right to criticize the politicians/government, for after all, having ended British rule in India, we have together ushered in democracy to be run by our representatives on our behalf. Preeti was concerned over the growing urban stress on all amenities in cities. A city like Mumbai is unable to cope with the exploding population and to provide adequate safety from crime and adequate infrastructure, shelter, roads, water sanitation and public health amenities. The young panelists felt the growing and urgent need to find workable solutions to these crucial issues.

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Towards a Corruption-free India

Rita P. Bhambi

Martin Luther said, "I have a Dream". If he had not thought of that dream he would have accomplished nothing in his life. Youth is the spring of life. It is the age of discovery and dreams. Their dreams extend beyond themselves as it encompasses the nation and entire humanity.

I aim to stimulate a dialogue on governance issues among the youth by emphasizing the role that they can play in demanding accountability of those who govern. They have the idealism, resourcefulness, responsiveness and resilience to help charge these issues.

Corruption in India is rampant. It is a vicious circle. No section of the society is spared from it. Recent examples like CWG, 2G and Adarsh Society scams are glaring examples of expanded corruption at all levels of Indian society. It hinders the dream of India to become a developed Nation.

To deal with this problem youth power can play an important role. India is having the largest youth population in the world today. Indian history is full of such names whose mere mention fills our heart with pride. Shivaji, Swami Vivekananda, Saheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev were men with dedication and vision who paved the way for this nation's progress. Today, we cannot but be proud of Sachin Tendulkar, Vishwanathan, Vijendera Singh, Saniya Nehwal, Rahul Gandhi and many more for their inputs in various sectors.

In a Convention held recently in Mumbai, Retired DGP Julio Reberio said, 'Anna Hazare movement has led people to talk about corruption'. The movement asked the youth to identify cases of corruption, injustice, bad governance by enforcement authorities like Police, BMC etc. In India, everyone emphasized on anti corruption laws and policies but its actual implementation is possible, if youth became an active and aware member of social movement for "Corruption Free India".

My appeal to the youth is to educate themselves to become productive and honest citizens and to do good by fighting corruption, participate in the voting process, beingf secular, using data and facts in arguments and debates to bring out the best decisions and remove people biases against you.

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Youth in the Corporate Sector

Anita Passbola

Governance has emerged as a new paradigm and denotes something more than just drawing up policies. It denotes a system of values and a commitment by which a society or a corporate body manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction within and without. Governance in the corporate world means participation, fairness, transparency, decency, accountability and efficiency in business. Youth can be effective agents of change and therefore it becomes pre-dominantly important for them to practice and spread

awareness about basic assets of good governance. They must be organized and free from the evil of unhealthy and wrong practices in the organization that they serve. They should make their employer accountable and transparent for all the practices they follow in the organization. If they can achieve this, there will be job satisfaction among employees leading to reduction of absenteeism and higher efficiency with profits.

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Making India Corruption free

Manisha Tusshar Saindane

Anna Hazare and youth became the symbol of anti-corruption as this movement swarmed every street and corner of the country. Corruption has been one evil that has dominated popular discourse in 2011. Corruption is defined by the World Bank as "the misuse of public office for private gain. As such, it involves the improper and unlawful behaviour of public-service officials, both politicians and civil servants. Ultimately, all parts of society must share the responsibility for containing corruption because all are willing or unwilling participants. Each corrupt transaction requires a "buyer" and a "seller."

Youth is the greatest asset that a nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. They are the right measure for judging the extent to which a country can produce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles are directly correlated with the development of their country.

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Needed Young People With Ethics

Khushi Ghosh

India wants young people with ethics who will bring beauty in character and harmony in homes. We must be a corruption-free nation, but corruption begins at home. We should use the bond of love that we share with our father to make our home corruption-free and take an oath that today onwards I will work as corruption-free brigade at my home.

We all need to fight a hard battle to improve things and to make our country corruption free. Our politics needs to undergo chemotherapy. The ignited mind of the youth is the most powerful resource on earth, under the earth and above the earth. Knowledge will empower us to undertake great missions. If everyone contributes to the best of his or her capacity and ability we can make India a Corruption Free Nation. Youth is wholly experimental and with the full utilization of their talents, India can become an developed Nation.

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Real Nation Builders

Shivani Vooredi

The role of youth in governance was first initiated by former Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. People could vote when they are 18, earlier it was 21. The youth can play a very vital role in framing policies. They should be encouraged to be responsible and accountable for economic and social development. Exclusion of youth from developmental activities will have a serious impact on the economy. They are the real builders of the nation, so their force and creativity cannot be undermined. The need of the day is the transformation of society. Corruption is rampant. Nothing is more important to the health of our democracy than the active involvement of youth in representative governance. The state of India needs youth with ethics. If youth decide that their family & society

will be free from corruption, the state can be rid of corruption. The youth is the most powerful resource on the earth to undertake great missions.

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Combating Corruption

Dilveen Kaur Bhasin

Today, corruption is the biggest problem faced by India. It is rampant in our social and political life. It has come to be regarded as the hallmark of Indian politics. No section of the society has been spared from it. It is like a cancer eating into the vitals of our society. 'Money makes the mare go' is the mantra of our administrative and political set up. The Commonwealth Games, 2G Scam and the Adarsh Scam are glaring examples of rampant corruption at all levels. It is for the youth to stand up against corruption and act as essential agents of change. They are a storehouse of infinite power and energy. They are like sparks which can either burn or spread light in the country. The enthusiasm of the youth is infectious and if used in the right way can bring about the desired changes in the society. They need to take up cudgels against corrupt officials, administrators and politicians of our country to root out corruption.

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Given the socio-economic condition our children come from (and the limiting backgrounds of their parents), teachers at Parikrma are more than just that. They are friends and even parents to our children. We are looking for teachers who can fit into the many roles and who are extraordinarily patient and caring as they journey along with the child.

We are looking for teachers from K-12, principals and quality heads. All positions require you to be proficient in English, have wide interests, understand multiple intelligences and have the ability to adapt to technology.

If you are interested, mail your resume to teacher@parikrmafoundation.org along with a covering note explaining why you think you would fit in Parikrma and be most suited for the role. For more details, log onto www.parikrmafoundation.org.

Parikrma Humanity Foundation is a non-profit that manages 4 Centres for Learning and Junior College for 1300 children from 53 slums and 5 orphanages in Bangalore.





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Freedom First

Digitisation Project

Freedom First, which began publication 59 years ago, was founded by the late Minoo Masani, author and MP, at a time when free India was just five years old, World War II had ended and the Cold War had begun. As a participant in India's freedom struggle he shared the vision of the leaders who had led us to freedom that, with independence, our country would launch towards the winning of a new world - the creation of a new society, secular in its foundation, ensuring liberty of thought, belief and action and the realization of economic and social justice for all the citizens of the free republic.

This vision ***Freedom First***, has steadfastly adhered to, even when it was politically incorrect or 'unpopular' to speak up for liberal values not to mention liberal economics. Our primary aim has been and continues to be to inform, analyse and educate our readers whether in the context of the not so recent past be it on the real nature of Soviet Communism, its inhuman treatment of dissent; of the fifth column that it created in the form of communist parties organised internationally including India; issues of governance; the onset of corruption as the licence-permit-quota-raj tightened its stranglehold on the economy; the Planning Commission which was patterned on the Soviet Gosplan and which inevitably led to wrong priorities e.g. the emphasis on heavy industry to the neglect of rural India in general and agriculture in particular; a lopsided foreign policy in the guise of non-alignment; and the growing trend towards too much government and too little citizenship. The list can go on.

We propose to digitise the entire set of 530-plus copies of ***Freedom First*** (1952 -2011) reflecting the times they were written by men known for their integrity and competence. We are also digitising ***Quest***, a bi-monthly journal of enquiry, criticism and ideas, which was also published by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) between the years 1956 and 1976. Outstanding litterateurs, poets, writers and academics were its editors and contributors. ***Quest*** had to shut down in 1976 during the 'Emergency' due to difficulties with the Censors. Between the two, digitising involves over 19,000 printed pages of ***Freedom First*** and 2000 pages of ***Quest***.

We look forward to your support in the funding of this project. Cheques made out in favour of "ICCF" will be gratefully accepted. Our address: The Hon. Secretary, Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. Phone: 022 22843416, 022 66396366. Cell: Hon. Secretary- 9820016392; email: freedom@vsnl.com / freedomfirst1952@gmail.com.

Editor