

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

❖ The Lokpal Conundrum

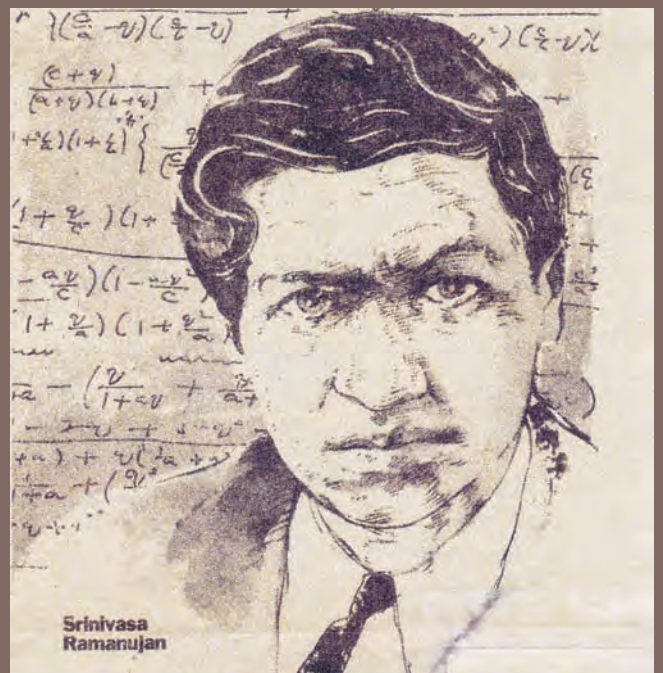
- The Lokpal Fiasco
- The Bill that Still remains a “Bill”
- Is Team Anna Losing its Lustre?
- Was All that a Storm in a Teacup?
- Some Disquieting Aspects of the Hazare Movement

❖ Pre-Budget Musings

- Recharging Growth Strategy - Fiscal Challenges
- Rural India - The Stepchild of Indian Democracy
- No Justification for Sale of Spectrum

Freedom First salutes
Srinivasa Ramanujan
on his 125th birth anniversary

“Beyond the mathematical legacy, Ramanujan left behind a cultural legacy. He appeared in the midst of the British colonial rule of India and now stands as an iconic symbol of an India that was re-discovering itself, an India that was rising to take its place in the 20th century. This meant that science and education were to be revived and energised to meet the challenges of the new, independent India.”



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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 59th Year of Publication
No.536 February 2012

Contents

<i>Between Ourselves</i>	1
<i>From Our Readers</i>	2
Pre-Budget Musings	
● Recharging Growth Strategy - Fiscal Challenges Sunil S. Bhandare	3
● <i>The Rural Perspective</i> Rural India - The Stepchild of Indian Democracy Y. Sivaji	6
● No Justification For Sale of Spectrum T. R. Chowdary	8
Cover Feature	
The Lokpal Conundrum	
● The Lokpal Fiasco Ashok Karnik	10
● The Bill that Still Remains a "Bill" D. S. Ranga Rao	12
● Is Team Anna Losing Its Lustre? Firoze Hirjikaka	14
● Was All that a Storm in a Teacup? H. R. Babu Satyanarayana	16
● Some Disquieting Aspects of the Hazare Movement R. C. Saxena	18
<i>Cornucopia</i> Firoze Hirjikaka	20
<i>Point Counter Point</i> Ashok Karnik	21
The Three Cs K. K. Pathak	23
Srinivasa Ramanujan - The Mathematical Genius B. M. N. Murthy	25
Vaclav Havel (1936-2011)	27
<i>Book Reviews</i>	29
<i>Freedom First</i> This Month in February 1955	33
<i>Educating Adults</i> An Adult Education Institute Feature	34

Between Ourselves...

What started with a bang has been reduced to a whimper. This is not to belittle the great effort of Anna Hazare. He was an innocent abroad who carelessly walked into a web and it required the Bombay fast flop to have brought this realization (hopefully) to him. He may also realize that tangling with the Indian National Congress (INC - so called - it's really the Indira Congress faction which got this respectability for technical reasons courtesy the Election Commission of India) was foolhardy. The Indira INC is rotten to the core and it is no holds barred when it comes to defending their 'first family' the head of their *parivar*. But what is important is that the issue of corruption and the need for a Lokpal is again on the top agenda of the Indian people – and parliament.

We again provide our readers with the many perspectives on the Anna Hazare-led agitation.

The quotation carrying our tribute to Srinivasa Ramanujan on the front cover is from an article "The Legacy of Srinivasa Ramanujan" by M. Ram Murty, Professor and Head of the Department of Mathematics at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada and V. Kumar Murty, Professor and Head of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Toronto, Canada. Published in *The Hindu* of December 26, 2011.

Those interested in the Union Budget to be presented in parliament in March would find the section Pre-Budget Musings which express the Liberal position, of interest.

We welcome feedback from readers on the new monthly feature 'Educating Adults'. You might consider sharing with us your thoughts on matters relating to education, citizenship, environment conservation and the like.

Editor

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Founder: Minoos Masani ● **Editor:** S. V. Raju ● **Associate Editor:** R. Srinivasan ● **Advisory Board:** Sharad Bailur, A. V. Gopalakrishnan, Firoze Hirjikaka, Ashok Karnik, Farrokh Mehta, Jehangir Patel, Nitin Raut, Brig. (Retd.) S. C. Sharma, Kunwar Sinha, Sameer Waghe
All correspondence to be addressed to the Publishers: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), 3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: +91 (22) 2284 3416 ● Mobile: 9820016392 ● E-mail: freedom@vsnl.com / freedomfirst1952@gmail.com
Published by J. R. Patel for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) and printed by him at Union Press, 13 Hornji Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 2266 0357, 2266 5526.
Typeset at **Shubham Print & Web** 59, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg, 1st Floor, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 2284 2619 ● Mobile: 9892921277
Single Copy: Rs.20 ● Annual: Rs.200 (Add Rs.50 for outstation cheques) ● Overseas (Ind Class Air Mail) Annual: \$20 or £10
Cheques to be drawn in favour of **ICCF** and mailed to the publishers at the above address.

From Our Readers

Seetha Spratt - RIP

The sad demise of Mrs. Seetha Spratt on September 20 2011 in Chennai has removed from our midst one of those whose family on both her parental and husband's sides were deeply involved in the Labour movement of India of the 1920s leading to the formation of the Communist Party of India.

On her paternal side she was closely related to Singaravelu Chetty whose memory is to be honoured by the Jayalalitha government shortly by erecting a statue. He was one of the founding members of the first ever trade union in British India. Her husband the late Philip Spratt was a member of the British Communist Party which sent him to India in 1926 to deliver Lenin's personal message to the veteran Bengali trade union leader M. N. Roy who was also a member of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to start the Communist Party of India. Philip Spratt thus came to be closely associated with Singaravelu and his family in South India. This also led to his marriage with Seetha which was in itself something of a revolution in those days. The British colonial administration had him arrested in the Meerut

Conspiracy case in 1929. He was sentenced to a period of solitary confinement which, according to Mrs. Seetha Spratt was responsible for his losing some of his natural gregarious instincts.

Stalin's infamous Moscow Purges converted Philip Spratt to the view that Gandhian ideals were better suited for achieving India's freedom and for her economic progress thereafter. It was a mark of his intellectual integrity that even in the midst of those trying circumstances he waited for his normal release from prison to announce his rejection communism and embracing the Gandhian path.

Seetha Spratt bore the brunt of looking after the family, which left Spratt free to concentrate on his editorial duties. Like Singaravelu, Spratt also deserves to be honoured for his glorious service to his adopted motherland not only by the Tamil Nadu government but by the Government of India as well.

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Nepotism: India's Third Demon

In the olden days, it was common for the eldest son of a king to succeed the father (dynasty). For that matter, it prevails in the United Kingdom even today, of course, with a modification (instead of the eldest son, it is the eldest offspring). But, to follow the same system, directly or otherwise, in our country is nepotism. In fact, it is the land's third demon.

The demon came out to the public, in a very significant way, some fifty years back, We must hold the Congress mainly responsible for that culture. Very many know why the late Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri was made the Prime minister overlooking very many efficient seniors in the party. It is unfortunate that the system is continuing.

This evil practice is being perpetuated from generation to generation. Many other politicians are also equally guilty of nepotism. A few months back, two young Indians were added to a famous magazine's list of "notable heiresses". It is just an indication of the extent to which nepotism is openly indulged in the Corporate sector of our country. Such companies behave as though they are the exclusive properties of the promoter families and are not depending on any one else for their finance.

Just because some person is from Kellogg or Harvard, it does not mean that he/ she is fit for the top post of a big corporate, overnight. In fact, it takes many years, in

the normal course. In the very same companies, persons of superior qualifications and richer experience will be working even at the middle management level. It will be demeaning not only to such individuals but also to the very company, itself.

It is high time that Corporate India sets relevant Standards for top management posts also. If it fails, the Centre should step in and mandate the Standards. It is nothing new. The Standard for employing Company Secretaries is a relevant example. At any rate, Corporate India is hands-in-gloves with the unscrupulous politicians.

Very many educated people want to believe that every thing is alright in the U.S.A. regarding recognition of an individual's attainments for going up the ladder. Unfortunately, it is not so. To quote Noble Laureate, Dr. Paul Krugman: "....And in America, more than in most of the wealthy nations, the size of your pay cheque is strongly correlated with the size of your father's pay cheque". (*The Hindu*, January 17, 2012)

Unless and until all the three demons, Casteism, Corruption and Nepotism, are finished off, our country has no bright future.

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Recharging Growth Strategy – Fiscal Challenges

Sunil S. Bhandare

Recharging growth momentum through fiscal strategy in such an environment, not only requires fiscal acumen, but political courage and sagacity to take the reforms agenda forward irrespective of coalition compulsions and fractured polity. The question is whether the veteran FM will do it?

What needs to be the key components of growth strategy for 2012-13? Obviously for an economy as large, diverse and complex as ours, devising the Central Budget is the most unenviable task. The Finance Minister (FM) is invariably looked upon as a ubiquitous saviour, who through his budgetary strategy every year can deliver not only the inspirational sectoral growth pattern, but also social welfare, infrastructure development, science and technology for modernising the economy, and a host of social services from education to health. At the same time, he is supposed not to overlook the compulsions of public spending on external security (defence) and internal security (law and order). For the past many years, various FMs have found themselves in a multifarious bind, and we should not expect any distinctive change in this format even during 2012-13.

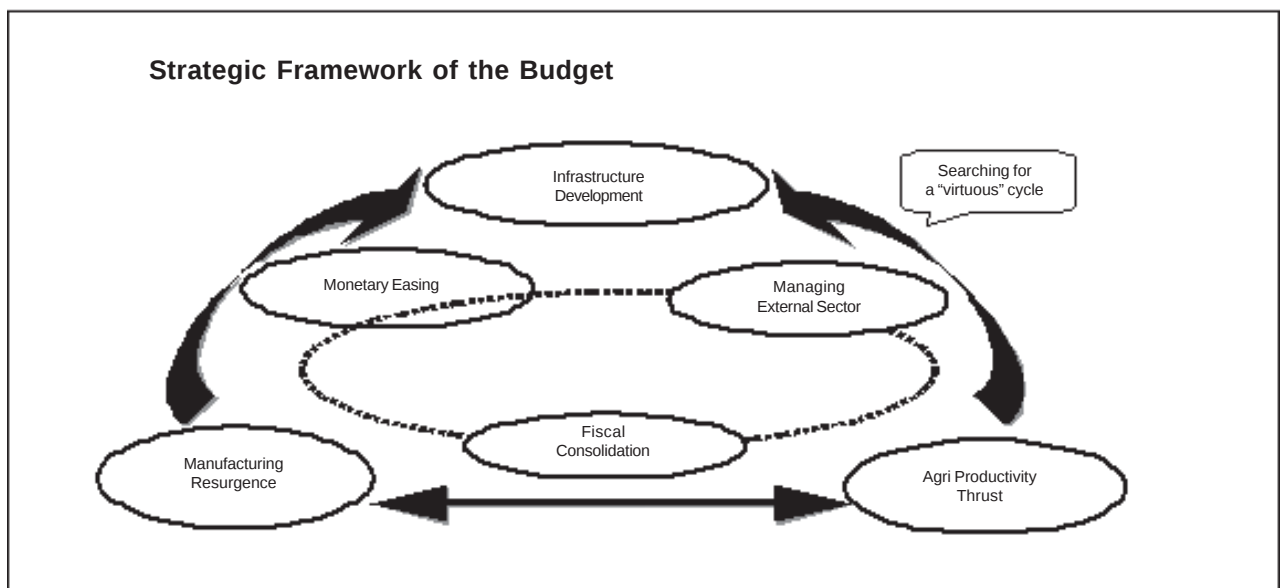
Having said this, the most dominant challenge for the FM is how to create enough fiscal space and provide a directional thrust in the forthcoming budget.

To begin with, the FM must acknowledge the

imperatives of recharging India's flagging economic growth. We certainly can neither afford another year of lost growth opportunity nor yet another year of policy paralysis and fiscal drift. High growth (at least 8.5 to 9%) is a must

- to be able to deal with issues of poverty and unemployment on a sustainable basis;
- to reap the true benefits of demographic dividend and prevent frustration amongst the youth;
- to achieve greater regional economic balance;
- to restore confidence in the future of the Indian economy of both domestic as well as global investors; and above all
- acknowledge the fact that high growth can revive revenue buoyancy that is so crucial for fiscal consolidation.

Recently, the Prime Minister, while conceding that India would have a lower economic growth rate of 7% in the current year, assured the nation “to bring back the rhythm of our growth processes to sustain an annual growth rate of 9-10% in the medium-term”.



This is undoubtedly a welcome positive stance, but to regain such growth momentum, it is very imperative to have a strong political will to consistently implement a growth-promoting policy agenda over the next two or three years. Statements of good intentions have been a plenty during the UPA II government's regime so far, but stakeholders are rapidly losing faith in its various commitments.

Searching for a Virtuous Circle

Against this backdrop, from our perspective, what is important is to chart a holistic approach to reach out to the promised growth path (as illustrated below). There will inevitably be multiple facets, but the effectiveness of any good strategy will be determined by a sharp focus on certain key areas and its concerted implementation.

Evidently, any strategic policy framework must have its inner core comprising some key components for their immediate implementation. We believe that, in the current milieu, these ought to be:

- (i) fiscal consolidation;
- (ii) monetary easing;
- (iii) external sector management.

The other three elements forming the outer core must essentially deal with issues of

- (iv) infrastructure development;
- (v) manufacturing resurgence; and
- (vi) thrust on agricultural productivity.

Needless to stress the fact that there is vital inter-dependence of all these six facets.

Thus, no one can envisage the prospects of the Reserve Bank of India initiating monetary easing – a substantive and sustainable reduction in the current high interest rates regime – as well embarking on financial sector reforms without fiscal consolidation. The effective management of the external sector (trade, investment flows, etc), and keeping the rupee exchange rate on an even keel is also inextricably linked with fiscal consolidation.

Likewise, there cannot be substantive resource allocations for infrastructure development, manufacturing resurgence and productivity driven agricultural growth without creating fiscal space through consolidation. In all these sector-specific growth areas, capital formation and capacity building have already suffered a severe set-back. Hence, to

regain the private sector's investment momentum, a propeller for public investment is needed at least for the next couple of years. Such strategic state intervention is surely in consonance with our liberal position. We propose to reflect on each one of these facets in separate of articles in the forthcoming issues of this journal.

We shall, in this edition of *Freedom First* begin with the challenges of fiscal consolidation, keeping in view the forthcoming central budget to be unveiled in early March 2012.

Fiscal Consolidation

By all accounts, fiscal consolidation is the mother of all economic policy reforms. Our policy-makers did recognise its importance during the economic crisis in 1991. But after remarkable success in correcting acute fiscal imbalances till 2007-08, thanks to the implementation of the Fiscal Responsibility Budget Management Act, we are now again, back to the same square. Fortunately, the PM in his very inspiring new year message has not only assured that he will personally work to “*provide an honest and more efficient government, more productive, competitive and robust economy and more equitable and just social and political order*”, but also eloquently articulated the urgency of “*restoring fiscal stability*”.

From a longer-term perspective, we believe that fiscal consolidation must go much beyond mere pursuit of reduction in revenue and fiscal deficit to GDP ratios. It may not be very difficult to phase out completely revenue deficit and bring down fiscal deficit to GDP ratio to, say, about 3 to 3.5% over the next three years or so. Indeed, achieving such a fiscally prudent bottom line of budgetary arithmetic can be “well-managed” through fiscal engineering.

However such an approach often obscures several weaknesses of real fiscal health. Therefore, the challenge before the FM is to initiate a process of restructuring budget-making so that it reveals everything and conceals nothing (e.g.off-budget transactions having fiscal impact). Further, having created a framework of outlay-outcome budgets since 2005-06, the FM must now revisit this fiscal policy tool. The objective should be to make it a powerful annual audit and assessment exercise – not just in financial terms, but essentially in building healthy benchmarks for actual physical achievements. Such an exercise must invite intense parliamentary attention

and debate, including in the relevant parliamentary committee.

Three Key Drivers for Fiscal Turnaround!

The forthcoming budget must also stress on three key drivers of sustainable improvement in the fiscal balances, namely,

- (a) expenditure management;
- (b) tax reforms for renewed tax buoyancy; and
- (c) an enabling environment for accelerated private sector investment.

The PM's message referred to earlier, outlines some of these key elements: *"the most important step for restoring fiscal stability is the Goods and Services Tax. This would modernise our indirect tax system, increase economic efficiency and also increase total revenues. Another important step is the phased reduction in subsidies. Some subsidies, such as food subsidies are justifiable on social grounds and are expected to expand once the Food Security Bill becomes operational. But there are subsidies that do not and these must be contained"*. In essence, this also reflects the Liberal position stated many times over these past many years.

In the domain of public expenditure, apart from focusing on rationalisation of subsidies, there is need for an urgent and comprehensive evaluation of a whole gamut of non-plan expenditure, which currently account for almost two-thirds of total expenditure. To create adequate fiscal space, efforts must be made to bring down its share to at least 60% in a phased manner over the next three years. Thus, a two percentage point net reduction in the share of non-plan expenditure in the 2012-13 budget could release about Rs.280 bn. from a likely budget estimate of a total expenditure of over Rs.13,850 bn. This is, by no means, a small amount. For instance it can fund power generation capacity of about 5500 mw. But even more importantly, it would send positive signals about the qualitative change in fiscal management and governance.

Incidentally, just as there is a case for containing subsidies, so also we believe is the need for urgent and complete overhaul of tax incentives. In the current debate, a lot of heat has been generated that while the corporate sector continues to lobby for various tax incentives, exemptions and concessions – and thereby causing the government to forego tax revenues – when it comes to subsidies for the poor like the

newly proposed national food security, there is strong opposition on grounds of their fiscal burden.

This proposition is only partially true. In the matter of tax incentives, it is surely possible to establish their positive correlation to specified objectives such as capital formation, growth promoting investment, backward areas development, export performance, research and development, to mention a few – even acknowledging the fact that there could be some areas of their misuse. But in the case of most subsidies, what percolate to the beneficiaries is less than one fifth of funds allocated and disbursed. For the past several decades, we have been desperately struggling with devising efficient administrative systems to ensure maximum delivery of benefits and have failed. Despite this the government has continued superimposing one flagship programme over another.

Even so, let us recognise that the total revenues foregone due to tax incentives are placed at about Rs.5116 bn. As against the total cost of all explicit subsidies in the central budget of over Rs.2500 bn. There are also implicit subsidies, the current fiscal burden of which is not known. Again, it may not be difficult to generate at least 10% savings in such tax revenue by forgoing expenditure on subsidies; and this would generate over Rs.760 bn additional fiscal resource for various developmental programs.

Therefore, the next round of tax reform initiatives must not only progress with time-bound implementation of the Direct Tax Code and GST – and evidently, some positive developments are happening in this area – but also progress with simplification and rationalisation of the tax structure and laws (both direct and indirect) that are currently ridden with some of the most obsolete/unjustifiable incentives, concessions and exemptions. India now needs to have a progressively simple, modern and computerised tax system that will help in checking tax evasion, reducing corruption and ensuring minimum human interface.

Conclusion

To sum up, these are tough times for the FM. Every single thing that can go wrong has gone wrong in 2011-12. Tax revenues have lost their buoyancy; expenditure, especially of the non-plan variety, has risen beyond budget estimates; several new fiscal burdens are impending through ambitious flagship programmes;

(Cont'd. on page 30)

Rural India – The Stepchild of Indian Democracy

Y. Sivaji

India continues to live in the villages and India cannot prosper as long as villages and farmers continue to languish. It is an irony of fate that every village is turning to be an old age home and suicides among farmers are continuing despite bumper harvests.

Never in the history of India have we produced so much of foodgrains as now, if we consider one aspect related to the sector. We are expected to record 240 million tons of food grains this crop year even as our warehouses are overflowing with previous years' stocks. We have a visionary and dynamic Prime Minister reputed for ushering in liberalization and unshackling the industry from the license-permit raj, and a Finance Minister who has demonstrated his ability to steer the nation through turbulent times.

Yet, farmers continue to end' their lives in hordes year after year and choose to declare a crop holiday in some areas. The winds of liberalization have not touched them. The tragedy is that the farming sector is booming even as farmers are sinking.

The root problem lies in farmers not getting remunerative prices for their produce. The costs of production have been spiraling year after year because of the steep increase in prices of inputs like fertilizer and pesticide and wages in the wake of the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA).

The minimum support prices fall far short of the costs of production. On several occasions we have neither the resources nor institutional mechanisms to ensure that farmers get even the un-remunerative Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Six decades after Independence, Indian agriculture continues to be a gamble with the monsoon. Farmers go through the vicissitudes of droughts and floods and pestilence year after year. When yields go down for reasons beyond their control, the farmer does not recoup his costs of production. When he reaps a bumper harvest, cruel market forces depress the market price and ensure that the farmer does not gain.

With globalisation, Indian farmers

are exposed both to the volatility in the world market and the cyclical macro economic changes. Often the burden of falling international prices falls immediately on the farmers and the gains of increasing international prices are cornered by the middlemen. Instruments available in this regard are blunt due to the complex market structure. On the other hand reliable information and data base required for policy intervention is dated and grossly inadequate. There is a growing disconnect between the growth in agriculture and that of farmers incomes. The gap between the prices at farm gate and the consumer is widening.

With all these inherent drawbacks the gaps in incomes in agriculture and the non-agriculture sector is steeply widening as shown in the Chart on the next page

India continues to live in the villages and India cannot prosper as long as villages and farmers continue to languish. It is an irony of fate that every village is turning to be an old age home and suicides among farmers are continuing. Last year alone there were 15,900 suicides, demonstrating the deepening crises in agriculture. With the widening gaps in incomes, living conditions, opportunities and leaving more than 60% of the population with a dismal share of 8%, the rhetoric of inclusive growths is a cruel joke and we are sitting on a social volcano that may explode at any point of time.



Projected Structural Shift in India's Relative Sectoral GDP share by 2022

Sectors	Current Contribution to GDP (or Weights) 2011-12	Projected or (assumed annual % growth rate) 2012-2022	Projected contribution to GDP (or weights) in 2022
Agriculture	15.0	4.0	8.9 *
Manufacturing	15.0	15.0	24.4
Non-agri/ non-Manufacturing	70.0	9.0	66.7
Real GDP	100.0	9.2	100.0

*includes allied sector also

(Table courtesy Sunil S. Bhandare from his paper "Reflections on National Manufacturing Policy", published by the Forum of Free Enterprise)

I submit that the Government should not neglect agriculture since it provides livelihood to 63% of our population. Besides providing food for the entire nation, it supplies raw materials to industry and provides a market for the industry and service sectors. It enriches a host of people ranging from input suppliers and processors to service providers and governments. It helps to redress regional imbalances and eradication of poverty. The incremental capital output ratio is advantageous in agriculture.

To address these issues, some policy initiatives are immediately warranted. The Government should

- Facilitate constitution of Commissions on Agricultural Costs and Prices at the State level.
- The MSP should be flexible and be linked to spiraling input costs as is done in O.A calculations.
- The difference between the MSP and recommended cost of the state agencies should be treated as bonus by regional governments.
- Abolish all restrictions on the marketing of agriculture produce. The farmer should have the freedom to sell his produce within or outside the country.
- Conversion of crop loans into key loans soon after harvesting.
- Decentralise the procurement system. All statutory taxes and cesses on FCI purchases should be waived.
- Seed village concept with proper protection of farmers rights on seed
- Strengthen Agriculture Insurance Corporation .
- Reserve seats for candidates from rural areas in professional colleges.

- Utilize the market cess for improving marketing infrastructure including establishment of market intelligence centers.
- Restrict NREGA implementation to the non-agricultural season.
- Encourage mechanization of agriculture to overcome labour shortage and improve productivity.
- Allow FDI in agricultural processing industries, more so in tobacco.
- Promote establishment of cold storage chains and modern post-harvest technologies.
- Publicize demand and supply projections well in advance of the sowing season.
- Develop physical and social infrastructure in rural areas on par with urban areas.
- Industrialize rural areas, with special emphasis on micro and small enterprises
- Develop a farmer's welfare index on the lines of the UNDP Human Development Index.

Already extremism is prevalent from Nepal to Andhra Pradesh via Bihar, Jharkhand , Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Chattisgarh. Before these desperate suicides turn to homicides it is the responsibility of the rulers, administrators, planners, economists, social scientists, intellectuals, political parties and civic society to put their heads together to avert such situation .

This is a synopsis of the presentation by Dr. Y. Sivaji to Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee at his pre-Budget meeting with the Agriculture Interest Group in New Delhi on 11 January 2012.

DR. Y. SIVAJI is an agriculturist and a former member of parliament. He is based in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

No Justification For Sale of Spectrum

T. H. Chowdary

The sale of the radio spectrum is unjustified. It should not be separated from the telecom licence. The revenue share and licence fee etc., that is imposed on the telcos must take care of the spectrum charge also. Issuing licences at one time and selling spectrum another time provides for the political ministers making money a la the permit-licence-quota raj.

The sale of spectrum to cellular mobile telephone companies (Telcos) has become very controversial since the sale was begun more than 10 years ago. Ministers and secretaries concerned with the sale and allocation are accused of wrong doing. Some have gone to jail. Some are awaiting investigation and trial. A few other actions of the government have become as scandalous as the sale of the spectrum by the Department of Telecom (DoT) and its Ministers from time to time. Actually, there is no justification for pricing spectrum separately from whatever financial conditions are applied for issuance of licences for provision of services.

Sunlight is Not produced by India

Sunlight is a natural resource. It cannot be owned by individuals or by governments. There is no justification for licencing its utilization. The products of utilising sunlight may be taxed or excise duties imposed upon them. There should be no licence required to utilise the sunlight. So many international passenger aircraft are flying in the skies over national territories like those of India. They don't require any licence to fly nor can the fact of flying be taxed by the government or the country over which there is the sky in which the aircrafts are flying. If the aircraft wants to land in the country, it does require permission and if it utilises the airport facilities, it will have to pay the prescribed charges. So many satellites are crossing the sky over national territories in low earth orbits. They don't require any permission for doing so nor can they be taxed. Why then should the radio frequency spectrum be charged? It is not produced by the country.

Radio Spectrum is a Natural Resource

It is as natural a resource as the sun. The sunlight is energy over a frequency spectrum, the visible spectrum from Violet to Red (VIBGYOR). Below this spectrum is heat and above the spectrum is another form of energy. They come forth from the sun. The radio transmitters whether of broadcasting stations or the antennas mounted on towers by the mobile telephone service providers, radiate energy in certain frequency bands, which are different from those of sunlight. Just as the propagation of light and

its reception do not need licence, much less merit taxation or sale price, so should not the wireless transmission of the cellular telephone companies. When these are used to provide services like voice, text, data and video, the providers may be licenced as well as taxed. If somebody is producing photo voltaic cells to convert solar energy, that is, light into electricity, those products are excise - dutied and sales are taxed. The products that the cell telephone companies are giving are telephony, data, SMSs, even radio and pictures and so on. These services are licenced. A condition of the licence is that a certain percent of the revenues coming to the Telcos shall be given to the government. That is revenue-sharing. When the Telcos are giving a share of the service revenues, why should spectrum be charged. It is not produced by government, it is universally available just like air and sunlight. It requires to be regulated so that the same frequency band is not utilised by everybody so as to be totally useless for all. The same frequency band can be utilized to carry information by different techniques of modulation and encryption. In the Code Division Multiplexing (CDM) the entire bandwidth given to the company is utilised for spreading the signal according to a code. Different information (e.g. different people voices) are differently coded. In TDMA systems some other technique is used. We have wisely left the choice of using whatever technology to the service provider who adopts it for rendering the service.

Licencing a Telco is Meaningless

Giving a licence to a telephone company without the spectrum has absolutely no meaning. They cannot lay cables – twelve companies digging roads, laying separate cables is unthinkable if not foolish when there is the alternative of wirelessly connecting any user, stationary or mobile to the network. All information services (voice, text, data and video) can be delivered wirelessly. The wireless propagation is in free space which is not produced by any country but is a part of the universe. Either the companies themselves bring in regulation or an institution like the TRAI can be in place to regulate interference in space during propagation. It will coordinate

to prevent the mutual interference and destruction of information while in transportation by different companies. Space is not only national but international. There is no non-transmitting curtain or boundary wall between two different countries. There is space above. Wireless is used by all countries. Its propagation does not respect national boundaries. So there needs to be regulation to ensure that the transmission of different nations do not destructively interfere with one another. This is done by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) through its Consultative Committees for International Radio (CCIR). The ITU in consultation and agreement with national governments has allotted different frequency bands, that is spectrum, for different uses like broadcasting, satellite communications, terrestrial communications, civil aviation, maritime navigation and so on. The national authorities take those allocations and assign slices of them to different providers of different services.

It is misappropriation of a natural resource which belongs to every citizen, in fact to every living being if governments think it is their property and so start selling it. It is as bad as selling sunlight to every householder. There could be some redeeming feature if the sale proceeds of the spectrum are utilized for promotion of the services delivered by wireless. The spectrum charges levied by the government are a cost to the companies and they are built into the price for services to citizens. In other words the citizens are indirectly taxed for communicating with one another. This is an infringement of the natural right to communicate.

The Indian government is squandering the monies collected from telephone companies. As it is 6% to 8 % of the revenues of the telephone companies are taken by the government. In addition there is 10% service tax. Besides, there is the Universal Service Fund (USF) contribution at 5% of the companies' revenues. In addition to all these are the spectrum charges. Overall, about 30% of the telephone company revenues or collections from users are appropriated by the government and these are used not for the promotion of communication technologies nor for reducing price for the user but simply for populist programs in the name of welfare and social justice. As 'great' a person as Rajiv Gandhi himself pointed out in 1985 at the centenary celebration of the Indian National Congress (INC) that 85% of the expenditure that government is spending on welfare is not reaching the

intended persons. That is, it is turning into black money shared by government officials, politicians and the agencies delivering the welfare. Therefore the money that the government is realizing by the sale of spectrum is to the extent of 85% misappropriated and transformed into black money. The sooner it is done away with, the cleaner will be public life in India.

There is a strange and deleterious obsession in the DoT. It is always seeking to burden the service providers and to make the service costly. The DOE pleads with the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance and other organs of government to reduce the burden on producers of electronic equipment. That is, it is promoting the industry and thereby benefits, to the community. But the DoT has been consistently wanting to impose financial burdens on telephone companies. The reason could only be that all the senior ranks in the DoT are held by engineers who had been used to monopoly and have the most obnoxious record of thwarting every move to liberalise, to de-monopolise and to privatise the telecom services. In the process, they are hurting even their own children – the BSNL and the MTNL. In order to have a level playing field, very wisely, these two PSUs are required to pay the licence fee as well as spectrum charge and contributions to the Universal Service Fund (USF) just like the private companies. Also, the various subsidies they were getting from levies on the Private Telephone Companies (P-Telcos) have been done away with. What is not done away with is the over staffing and the inefficiency and non-commitment of the engineering officers who are on deputation to these companies for more than 10 years. It is inexplicable as to how thoughtlessly the engineers in the DoT are inflicting wounds upon themselves that is, their companies the BSNL and the MTNL. The payments received by sale of the spectrum to these companies are the nails that are being struck into their coffins.

It is necessary that the moral and legal justification for the sale of spectrum is deliberated upon by economists and statesman politicians apart from the managements of the private & public telephone companies.

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Doomed Society

When you know that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing, When you see that money is flowing to those who deal not in goods, but in favours, When you see that men get rich more easily by graft, rather than by work, and your laws no longer protect you against them, but protect them against you...You know that your society is doomed!

Ayn Rand in "Atlas Shrugged" (1957). Contributed by reader M. B. Damania

The Lokpal Conundrum

Is the Fight Against Corruption a Lost Cause?

The Lokpal Fiasco

Ashok Karnik

In a perfect world, perfect men operating a perfect system, can deliver perfect results; but in an imperfect world things can wrong for many reasons. The fact is that no law is ever adequate; it is only an instrument. Its usefulness depends on the user.

The Government at long last came out with its version of the Lokpal Bill (December 22, 2011) as if to meet the deadline prescribed by Team Anna. It got the bill passed in the Lok Sabha and that was the end of its success. It did everything wrong thereafter. To be honest, the entire Lokpal conundrum was difficult to grasp. The Government's Lokpal idea satisfied no one. Even UPA II partners like the Trinamul Congress were unhappy. For starters, many supporters walked out of the Lok Sabha and allowed the opposition parties to defeat the Bill to give it constitutional status. It was to get uglier in the Rajya Sabha where UPA II did not have a majority in any case. The brave effort of the Congress to extend the Parliament session by three days to pass the bill ended in bitter humiliation due to poor floor management and arrogance of power. The Bill could not even be put to vote in the Rajya Sabha and the Government had to face the indignity of the charge that it had scuttled the Rajya Sabha session because it was afraid of losing the battle of votes. The treasury benches, including the PM, sat watching when a single unruly MP (RJD) threw down papers in the well of the House. The spectacle of the Rajya Sabha being reduced to helplessness was humiliating even to those who were watching it on TV. The fact that this disturbance was predicted an hour before on a TV channel made the charge of 'match fixing' very credible. The Parliamentarians who accused Team Anna of denigrating the institution of Parliament were themselves guilty or worse. What began as a brave effort to present a *fait accompli* to Team Anna ended in disgrace.

Government's Belligerence

The Government seemed to bend to Team Anna's time-table but did not accept their demands. The Government finally decided not to give too much importance to Anna but failed to secure the support of its own allies and a chance to get the BJP on board by

offering to accommodate one or two of its suggestions. A hint of the Government's obduracy was available earlier when Dileep Padgaonkar, a respected journalist, wrote that it was time to put an end to Anna's vaudeville act. Padgaonkar, being the Government's favourite intellectual these days, could not have written such a scathing piece without some foreknowledge. Sonia Gandhi put the seal of approval on Government's new found belligerence and declared that the Congress was ready to fight for the Government's version of the Lokpal Bill. It was good to see such determination from somebody in power but the sagacity required to carry the battle forward was missing. The stage was set for confrontation rather than X'mas bonhomie. With allies like the Trinamul Congress, the Congress does not need enemies! Even otherwise, a ruling party must learn to take the main opposition with it on national issues, which the Congress failed to do and paid the price.

Reactions to the Bill

Opposition parties of different hues attacked the Bill for various reasons. SP & RJD predictably wanted reservations in the Lokpal panel; it was a red herring as reservation or lack of it had nothing to do with the efficacy of the bill. A lot of time was wasted criticising 'outsiders' (read Anna) trying to influence the Parliament and urging the Government not to rush into passing the Bill. The Parliament had already taken cognizance of Team Anna's demands and passed a 'sense of the House' resolution; there was no longer a question of 'civil society vs Parliament'. Besides, after 42 years of waiting, where was the propriety in waiting some more?

Predictably, Team Anna rejected the Government's version and started an agitation against a 'thoroughly useless legislation'. Another bone of contention was provision of Lok Ayukta for the States in the Lokpal Bill.

It was construed as an attack on the federal structure. Thus, after a lot of sparring, battle lines were drawn again. Back to square one! It is true that the Lokpal Bill would not have seen the light of day unless the Government was pushed to the wall. For 42 years, there was no action. It might have taken another decade or so if there was no push. The paradox is that the agitation which started it all rolling seemed to be weakening when the Government's abysmal arithmetic gave it new life. Where did the Government go wrong? Could it have taken the opposition into confidence to explain its compulsions instead of treating all opposition parties as enemies? Have we failed to evolve a system where dialogue is preferred to confrontation? If an issue like removal of corruption is on everybody's agenda, why is there so much bitterness in evolving a solution?

Merits and Demerits of the Lokpal Bill

The Government's Lokpal Bill is not as bad as it is made to look. There are some good points and some not so good:

- 1) The Lokpal was to be made a Constitutional entity rather than a statutory one, which was indeed welcome. The Government did not have 2/3 rd majority to make a constitutional amendment and the opposition seized the opportunity to defeat the provision. If only the Government had shown respect for the opposition's views on certain matters the constitutional amendment would have been a cake walk.
- 2) Selection of the Lokpal panel was transparent enough although sceptics pointed to possible bias. BJP's demand that the appointment and removal of the Lokpal should be out of Government's control was reasonable enough but not accepted by the Government.
- 3) A major concern was that the PM would be kept out of its purview. Since no other act like the IPC or Anti Corruption Act exempts the PM from its jurisdiction, there was no logic in exempting the PM from the Lokpal. Better sense prevailed and the PM was included, albeit with some reasonable conditions.
- 4) Another gain was that senior bureaucrats (Joint Secretaries and above) who could not be subjected to even preliminary enquiries without Government sanction were no longer to be protected.
- 5) The Bill provided that Lok Ayuktas would be appointed in States to take care of corruption at the

State level. Since the Bill brought formation of Lok Ayuktas under the Central law, there was a cry of breach of federalism and infringement of States' autonomy. Even the redoubtable Mamata Bannerji rose in revolt. The Government clarified that the Lok Ayukta provision would not be applied without the consent of each State but the damage was done. This could have been averted if the matter was left entirely to the discretion of the States.

- 6) Group C & D employees were not brought under the Lokpal as suggested by Team Anna. They would be covered by the CVC. How effective the CVC is anybody's guess. So far, the CVC has performed to nobody's satisfaction. Without covering Group C&D employees, the corruption faced by the common man on day to day basis cannot be eradicated and the entire Lokpal exercise would be an eye wash. Even then this did not become the breaking point.
- 7) The main bone of contention was the status of the CBI. It is known that the CBI has been used as an instrument by the Government on several occasions and its independence is in serious doubt. All stake holders except the Government wanted it to be independent of Government control. The Lokpal Bill failed to provide for such a body; the CBI would have remained under the administrative control of the Government; an effort was made to make its Director's selection a little more apolitical but that did not rule out Government's ability to interfere with its working. The CBI itself was not happy as it had hoped that it would be made autonomous; instead it was burdened with one more boss to report to in the form of Lokpal. Why is the Government unwilling to free the CBI?
- 8) The Judiciary was left out of the purview of the Lokpal which is right as judiciary should not be brought under an arm of the executive like the Lokpal. It is to be hoped that the separate legislation to govern the judiciary would be effective enough to control corruption in the judicial system.
- 9) Similarly, the Citizens' Charter was left out and a separate law would govern this aspect. Again it is to be hoped that the Citizens' Charter, in whatever form, gives relief to the common man. If not, it would be another black mark against UPA II for not doing enough.
- 10) The Lokpal did not have powers to look in to corruption cases suo moto. In complicated cases like

the 2-G and CWG scams, private citizens cannot have documentary proof of malfeasance; one may only have suspicion which is not enough to register a complaint with the Lokpal. Proof can be obtained only through a preliminary enquiry and, therefore, the Lokpal needs the powers to initiate enquiries.

What Next - Accept the law and amend it later if required

In a perfect world, perfect men operating a perfect system, can deliver perfect results; but in an imperfect world things can go wrong for many reasons! The fact is that no law is ever adequate; it is only an instrument. Its usefulness depends on the user. As Abhishek Manu Singhvi, the chief architect of the Bill very aptly put it, let us not destroy the good while searching for the perfect. Let us be prepared to accept a not so perfect Lokpal and improve it as we go along. The Lokpal suffers from a lot of infirmities. It is feared that the Lokpal Bill would go the way of the Women's Reservation Bill, in the limbo. However, there is hope that the Government would bring the Lokpal Bill before Parliament in the budget session; it might do well to smoothen out some of its rougher aspects before doing so. Mere passing of the Act is not enough. Ultimately, it depends on how we use this

instrument. Do we condemn it as useless or do we start using it, detect its flaws and take remedial action as we go along? Will the Government keep an open mind and rectify mistakes or would it pat itself on the back for producing a masterpiece? Team Anna planned to make the weak Lokpal an election issue to teach the ruling party a lesson. UPA II's failure to get even an imperfect legislation through would hurt it if this becomes an election issue. The mere passage of even an imperfect bill would have certainly helped the Congress. Team Anna was faced with a dilemma though; it could boycott the Congress but the beneficiaries like Mulayan Singh and Mayawati were worse in the corruption stakes; the BJP is also no better. The benefits of the anti-corruption campaign should not go to such elements. Team Anna has to draw a fine line to ensure that its campaign does not get derailed in this confusion of goals. It decided not to make any party its target but then its election campaign would lose its sting.

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The Bill that Still Remains a "Bill"

D. S. Ranga Rao

At last, the cat is out of the bag! But which cat is it? Black or white? Neither, but a cat which catches no mouse! That's what happened to the Lokpal Bill – a Bill that was tabled in the Lok Sabha on 22 December 2011 by the ruling coalition. This coalition went through the motions of keeping its commitment to Anna Hazare in pursuance of the 'Sense of the House (Parliament)' Resolution of 27 August 2011 that an effective Lokpal Bill would be introduced and passed in the Winter Session of the Parliament.

Howsoever contorted, the government managed to get a Bill far removed from its original conception, through the Lok Sabha because it had the numbers, something it could not manage in the Rajya Sabha where it met its Waterloo! The passage of the Bill by the Rajya Sabha was put off to the next Session with the government and the Opposition blaming each other for the debacle.

Even within the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA), there was no unanimity on the structure and shape of the Bill with its partners like the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and some others pulling in different directions. It was due to a lack of floor coordination, and above all, to

an obvious lack of will on the part of the government which led to chaos and pandemonium and not to the enactment of the Bill with the Speaker adjourning the session *sine die*. This was in utter disregard of the people's long and patient wait for corruption-free governance and will now have to wait for the Budget session of Parliament for the Government to fulfil its promise to muster the votes necessary in the Rajya Sabha; a promise based on the ruling party's hope to improve its tally in the Rajya Sabha following the Assembly polls in five States due later this month.

The Lokpal Bill that was introduced in the Winter Session of Parliament was called The Lokpal and Lok

Ayuktas Bill, 2011. It was a transformed version of the Lokpal Bill, 2011 proposed by the government and presented to the Joint Drafting Committee on the Lokpal Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 4, 2011 and later referred to the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice.

The Bill that was passed by the Lok Sabha on 27 December 2011 amidst a lot of din and noise by the Opposition carried a plethora of landmines like

- the 50% Reservation quota in the composition of the Lokpal Selection Committee (clearly with an eye on vote banks);
- the Constitutional status sought to be given to Lokpal and Lok Ayuktas through the introduction of the Constitution (116th Amendment Bill, which was defeated);
- the inclusion of the Prime Minister while in office with certain safeguards;
- the inclusion of religious institutions;
- the vesting of the Lokpal with powers to supervise the CBI and CVC in respect of corruption cases against Group A, B, C & D grade employees but without administrative powers to control the agencies.

The modified Bill rendered the Lokpal unworkable with the selection and removal procedure of the Lokpal Institution and its members and also with the CBI still remaining under the control of the government, contrary to the assurances given by the government. That apart, the government rejected all the amendments moved by the Opposition except the one that allows state governments to decide when the Bill would be applied to them. The Bill turned out to be a total negation of the basic principles of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which requires all countries to put in place anti-corruption investigative agencies that would be independent of the executive control of the government of the day and would have jurisdiction to investigate all public servants for corruption.

A confused Congress Party, due to public pressure mounted by Anna Hazare's India Against Corruption (IAC), Aruna Roy's National Campaign For People's Right To Information (NCPRI), Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan's Lok Satta Party (LSP) and other likeminded civil society organizations, reluctantly brought forth a diluted Bill. The bizarre proceedings in the Rajya Sabha exposed the lack

of willingness on the part of the UPA and its allies and the entire parliamentarians as a class to put in place a strong Lokpal. Even the so called proponents of a strong Lokpal such as the BJP and their allies unwarrantedly introduced 187 amendments which helped the ruling clique, already short of majority in the Rajya Sabha, to wriggle out of the chaotic situation by not putting the Bill to vote and abruptly getting the House adjourned leaving the Bill hanging in limbo.

That neither group was interested in the smooth passage of the Bill was evident in the hollowness of the BJP's and Trinamool Congress's objections that the provisions relating to Lokayuktas were beyond Parliament's legislative competence. Parliament's legislative competence to enact legislation giving effect to international agreements (e.g. the provisions of the UNCAC or Article 253 of the Indian Constitution) is obvious. Entries 1 and 2 of the Concurrent List in the Indian Constitution relate to criminal law and criminal procedure, and the Bill is fully covered by these entries. Thus, despite these settled principles of law, the Government and the Opposition indulged in grandstanding and wasted the precious time of Parliament merely to obstruct the Bill.

Probably, history will never condone the Parliamentarians of the day for their blatant betrayal of the people. What an irony that while violent movements of the people in the Arab states of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) succeeded about the same time in overthrowing their well-entrenched despotic regimes, we, in India, said to be the cradle of Democracy and the land of the apostles of peace and non-violence like the Buddha Mahatma Gandhi, a democratic and peaceful people's movement failed to get a strong law against corruption passed by a democratically elected government!

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"Egyptian women are lucky in one way. They have witnessed the predicament of Iranian women and seen how the Islamic state has hijacked the Iranian revolution, changed the laws and reversed women's gains. My advice to Egyptian women is "do not give way to a government that would force you to choose between your rights and Islam". I believe that Iran was a lesson for the women in the entire region". Nobel Laureate and Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi.

Open Democracy, www.opendemocracy.net

Is Team Anna Losing Its Lustre?

Firoze Hirjikaka

The folk heroes of Team Anna were revealed to have feet of clay or, at least, turned out to be not quite the pillars of rectitude expected from leading anti-corruption crusaders.

This article was received from Firoze Hirjikaka on 6th November 2011 for publication in the December 2011 number. Since we, like so many others, had been on an overdrive on the Anna Hazare movement, and as the entire issue had been referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament, Firoze kindly agreed to our suggestion that we hold it over for publication after the Standing Committee made its report to parliament. Now that not only has the Standing Committee made its report but thousands of us have witnessed the 'debate' in parliament as also the Hazare movement's fiasco in Mumbai, we are publishing Firoze's answer to the question he put to himself along with side with his postscript about a movement, and the issue it championed, that began with a bang and is perilously close to dying without even a whimper. - Ed

Is Team Anna losing its sheen? Is their burnished halo being progressively tarnished? Is Anna himself steadily slipping in the saintliness index? Of late, more and more people have begun to ask such questions. And they are getting very few answers. So what accounts for this sudden fall from grace? It started with Prashant Bhushan voicing an opinion on Kashmir that was deemed to be unpatriotic. Personally, I believe Bhushan is entitled to his views - so long as he does not impose them on others.

Next, Kiran Bedi was revealed to have done some creative accounting with respect to her travel vouchers. Apparently she frequently claimed full and even business class airfare even while availing of the 75% discount she was entitled to. Her justification that the surplus cash was used to fund her charities seemed contrived and failed to convince many. To my mind, Team Anna's most serious blunder was muddying their feet in the murky business of politics. For reasons that remained unconvincing and disillusioned many of their supporters, they decided to actively oppose the Congress in the Hissar by-election. Their portraying this *volte-face* as retribution seemed puerile - especially as the Congress had given a commitment to seriously take up the Jan Lokpal bill during

the winter session of parliament. The subsequent revelation that Arvind Kejriwal was himself from Hissar and perhaps had a vested interest in defeating the Congress candidate, further damaged Team Anna's reputation. In short, the folk heroes of Team Anna were revealed to have feet of clay or, at least, turned out to be not quite the pillars of rectitude expected from leading anti-corruption crusaders.

Most of us, including the media, have an unfortunate tendency to view people and issues in terms of black and white. Shades of grey are not entertained. We don't seem to realize that an individual like Mahatma Gandhi comes along once in a century. The rest of us are flawed; indeed, it is what makes us human. So what if Bhushan, Bedi and Kejriwal are, in reality, less than sainted, it should not shift the focus away from the principal issue; which is the rampant corruption indulged in by our politicians and public officials. The media is not doing a public service by harping on these misdemeanors *ad infinitum*. On the contrary, it is playing into the hands of the very people who have a vested interest in making Anna Hazare's crusade go away. They may already be succeeding. Observe how Anna's *maun vrath* (vow of silence) was treated with total indifference by the very hordes who were so vociferous during his fast. And further debate on the Lokpal Bill is conspicuous by its absence. For me, the biggest disappointment has been Anna himself. Anna may profess to be a Gandhian, but he is no Gandhi. The great man would never have allowed himself to be distracted by petty squabbles, nor be influenced by his "team". The distressing reality is that Anna is a simple rustic - a small man who has allowed the excessive public and media adulation to go to his head. He is no giant leader, but a follower who is easily manipulated by his team. Team Anna has been blatantly trading on the groundswell of public admiration for their "leader", but Anna doesn't see it. He is so convinced of his own invincibility that he believes that all it takes are threats to bend the Congress to his will. He seems oblivious of the BJP and RSS exploiting his popularity by jumping on his bandwagon and using his shoulder

to fire their cannon at the Congress. He does not realize that should the Opposition come to power, with his help, they will prove to be every bit as opportunistic and corrupt as the party it replaces. The only thing that distinguishes one Indian political party from another is the title. They are all birds of the same feather. *Postscript:* So where do we go from here? Nowhere, I'm afraid. If the Congress currently seems to be making all the right noises about tackling corruption, they are merely playing up to the public mood. The Congress is well aware that the BJP is as reluctant, in reality, to pass an effective anti-corruption legislation as it is. After all, should the BJP come to power in the next election, as seems likely, it certainly does not want to be saddled with a regulation that would seriously impede the ambitions and aspirations of its stalwarts. As the Bard aptly phrased it, it is but a tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing. And the real losers will, as usual, be the general public.

This begs the question: Do Indians secretly believe that the fight against corruption a lost cause? Do they believe that the more things appear to change, the more they will remain the same? The Lokpal stir seems to be petering out. It may be partly because Anna Hazare's team is tarnishing his halo by giving indications of having vested interests. It may also be that Anna's repetitive message, earnest and sincere though it is, is beginning to cause ennui. However, I believe there is a more fundamental reason. Given the skillful and hypocritical manner in which all political parties scuttled the Lokpal bill in Parliament, even as they ostensibly gave the illusion of supporting it, the general public is reaching the fatalistic conclusion that the fight against corruption is a battle they cannot win. The odds are stacked too heavily against them. It is perhaps utopian to expect corrupt law makers to pass any laws which will condemn them.

So is there nothing we, the people, can do? Are we totally bereft of weapons that could, if not vanquish, at least bring a scalpel to the cancer of corruption? Let us first analyze the root cause of corruption. Corruption occurs and thrives when people with power, however petty, have the ability to deny common services of permissions they require. Politicians, bureaucrats and government officials capitalize on this power to demand and happily accept bribes as long as we, the people, are prepared to pay them. The only effective way to put a dent in corruption is for the ordinary citizen to refuse to pay a bribe, even at the cost of the inconvenience and frustration that will inevitably result. On the face of it, this will not happen. It is not in the Indian character.

The ordinary citizen pays a bribe because it has been inculcated in him that there is **no** other way to "get his work done". The threat is often implied, but very effective. However, there **is** another way, although it would involve considerable inconvenience and frustration – not to mention a good deal of patience. Think about it. One of the most common ways of ensuring compliance is the implication, often explicit, that the file granting permission will go to the bottom of the pile unless an appropriate remuneration is forthcoming. But what if we called their bluff? What if all of us, or least a majority, declare that we are prepared to wait, but we will not pay a bribe? Everybody's application cannot go to the bottom of the pile. You would, in effect, end up with the original pile itself. Rest assured. Shameless as they are, civil servants are not brazen enough to physically destroy files; nor can they "misplace" an entire bunch. That would lay them open to prosecution by the courts – and they know. So it involves all or most of us taking a firm position and standing firm. Trust me; it would be a far more effective way of tackling corruption than holding marches and wearing 'I am Anna caps'.

It is widely accepted that the police forces in India are one of the most corrupt of institutions. They rely heavily on intimidation. Fear is their instrument of choice. Dire consequences are foretold if the regular *hafta* is not paid. Hawkers are especially vulnerable because they don't have a licence; and they don't have a licence because the BMC is extremely parsimonious in handing them out. The untold intention is to force the hapless salesmen into illegality. Illegality gives the councilors and so-called law enforcers leverage to squeeze them. No one is sure why licences are withheld, or even if there are clear guidelines for granting or rejecting licences. These are the sort of questions our anti-corruption crusaders should be asking. They don't. They even accept the taking of *hafta* as just the way things are. If they expended their efforts in ensuring that honest hawkers and small shopkeepers are allowed to ply their trade legally, an important source of corruption would be cut off at the knees.

Another favourite tactic of the police for extracting unlawful gratification is to threaten to implicate their victims in false cases. The terrified individuals usually pay up. But what if they didn't? Filing a false FIR or chargesheet is not as simple as the cops make it out to be. The police could get into all sorts of trouble if discovered. For one thing, the courts would come down on them like a ton of bricks. The threats and bluster, then, are mostly blusters. If confronted boldly and collectively, this menace can be

overcome; one more weapon the crusaders don't seem to have discovered.

Corruption comes in all guises. It is not limited to taking bribes. For example, it is almost a given that all public welfare and infrastructure schemes undertaken by the Central and State governments will be delayed and go grossly over budget. Who pays for the profligacy? Certainly not the people who propose and implement these projects. The money comes out of the pocket of you and me, the tax payers. Yet we never hear of the guilty being held accountable. The watchdogs of corruption don't even have this criminal wastage on their radar. Why shouldn't the perpetrators of this public loot be penalized? One way would be to recover the excess amount from all the individuals associated. But this is not a concern of the Lokpal at present. Why not?

Finally, let us not forget that corruption is a two

way street. Why do businessmen and industrials pay huge bribes to income-tax officials? Because they have income they want to hide, or they want tax concessions. International travelers pay bribes to customs officers because they intentionally undervalue the goods they are bringing in. People driving BMWs, when caught breaking a traffic rule, prefer to slip a Rs.50 note to the cop rather than pay the nominal fine. It is the Indian mindset that reckons it preferable to pay off government officials rather than stay within the bounds of the law and render themselves immune to prosecution and harassment. By the laws of natural justice, the citizens of this country should also come within the ambit of the Lokpal. This is wildly impractical, of course. It follows then that the most effective way to curtail corruption is to cut off its source.

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Was All that a Storm in a Teacup?

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

When Anna Hazare started his crusade against corruption in April 2011 for an effective and strong Jan Lokpal Bill there was a surge of popular support never witnessed before in the post-Gandhian era. Almost simultaneously, the popular Yoga guru Baba Ramdev also started a parallel movement to bring pressure on the UPA government to bring back the black money invested in foreign banks. When he arrived at Delhi airport the UPA government rolled out the red carpet welcome with four Union Ministers-in-Waiting. The obvious intention was to woo and use him to counter Anna Hazare... But the Government's ploy went awry when Baba Ramdev after his initial dalliance with Anna's movement apparently cold to his advances the Baba embarked on a parallel movement. When his fast attracted as much crowds as did Anna Hazare's he imagined himself to be on the threshold of making history and disdained to be the government's cat's-paw or for that matter of Team Anna. When the Government found he would be of no use to them they let loose the police in a midnight swoop and used force to disperse a peaceful crowd.

The backlash from the people and the media was swift and the government found itself on the back foot. Baba Ramdev's movement lost momentum when he tried

to flee unsuccessfully and in a rather undignified fashion, was escorted back to Haridwar by the police.

Team Anna Tastes Success

On the other hand Anna Hazare's movement was assuming dimensions. Realising this the Government invited Team Anna and members of some other civil society organizations for a dialogue and Anna called off the fast. The nine-day discussions that followed were high on rhetoric but poor in substance. Though civil society succeeded in its attempt to force the government to enter into dialogue it was not satisfied with the outcome. Therefore Anna warned of going on fast again if the government did not agree to Team Anna's draft - Jan Lokpal Bill...

Anna's Second Fast and After

Not satisfied with the outcome of the discussions Anna went on an indefinite fast a second time. Anna's health started deteriorating and a worried government seeing Anna's tremendous popularity support and fearing public anger made conciliatory noises. Anna too relaxed his rigid stand but stuck to three crucial issues. This was when the large majority of members of the parliament met

and agreed to Anna's three demands. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh himself wrote to Anna Hazare conveying this view of MPs and Anna broke his fast with a veiled warning that in case the Lokpal Bill was not passed in the winter session of parliament he would resume his fast on 27th December 2011. Once the immediate crisis was over the members of the ruling coalition let loose rumours and innuendos to discredit the members of Team Anna including the accusation that those around Anna were no paragons of virtue. Also, that the movement was organized and funded by the RSS and so on.

Third Fast and a Two-Act Play

As promised the Government tabled a Lokpal Bill in the Lok Sabha on 27 December 2011 but the Bill was nowhere near what was promised to Anna Hazare that would persuade him to give up his fast which he had announced when giving up his second fast... The Government's Bill was radically different on three important points. Firstly, *it was an altogether a new Bill and not the one referred to the Standing Committee. This was a departure from the parliamentary norm*; secondly, the new Bill did not incorporate the crucial issues as promised by the Prime Minister when he conveyed the sense of the house to Anna; and thirdly, it took everybody by surprise by introducing the concept of reservation. A 4.5% reservation for minorities (meaning Muslims in the Lokpal set-up to be. The ruling coalition was well aware that this provision would not pass muster with the judiciary. Other constitutional authorities like the CAG, CVC and the CEC among others have no such reservation. The of course there was the squabble about the inclusion of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which Team Anna was adamant should be under the Lokpal and which the Government was rejected. Adding to the Government's discomfiture was the fact that their ally Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamul Congress was firmly opposed to the bringing the Lokayukta under Article 253 of the Constitution on the ground that it would impact adversely on the federal structure.

The Lokpal Bill managed to get through Lok Sabha but was stymied in the Rajya Sabha. While some attribute the logjam in the Rajya Sabha to the UPA Government's poor floor management it, it could well be that the mismanagement was deliberate. The ruling coalition's game was given away when a member of Lalu Prasad Yadav's RJD party tore the Bill under discussion and threw it into well of the House. It is well known that Lalu Prasad Yadav has always stood by the Congress despite a love-hate

relationship with the Congress because he has been saved time and again from being prosecuted for corrupt practices, in return for services rendered.

The deafening silence of the finance minister Pranab Mukherjee and prime minister Manmohan Singh who were so vocal in defending the Lokpal bill in the lower house also lent credence to the possibility that the chaos in the Rajya Sabha was deliberate to prevent the Bill becoming law.

The opposition with their 187 amendments and filibuster tactics did not cover themselves with glory either.

Back to Square One?

Meanwhile, Anna had to cut short his fast on medical advice. Perhaps this was a mixed blessing for Team Anna because Anna's fast turned out to be damp squib as the public turnout was far lower expectations. Members of Team Anna melted away and movement seemed to have lost the original vigour. It would, at the time writing, appear that Anna's plan to campaign against the Congress in the five states which are going to poll shortly has been abandoned... Though it may come as a relief to the Congress, right now the electoral environment with corruption dominating the voters' mind which BJP would have gained political advantage. It looks like the fate of the Lokpal bill is dependent upon the results of the elections.

Despite the fact that team Anna successfully brought the national focus on corruption, their demand for a strong Lokpal to combat corruption is still as far away despite the tremendous support of the people – for now. Will they be able to regain the initiative? continues to reflect the Despite a mighty people's movement that almost brought the establishment to its knees, the *ancien regime* has survived. The following quote from Ayn Rand's. 'Atlas shrugged' best describes the present Indian situation:

"When you know that in order to produce you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing; when you see that money is flowing to those who deal not in goods but in favours; when you see that men get rich more easily by graft rather than work, and your laws no longer protect you against them but protects them against you, know that your society is doomed!"

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Some Disquieting Aspects of the Hazare Movement

R. C. Saxena

It is nobody's guess that behind the persistent tirade of "a long fight" by Anna Hazare is team Anna's battle cry against the Indian model of democracy.

The passing of the Jan Lokpal in the Lok Sabha will, one hopes, allow the sane voices which were muted by the voluble media-assisted din to be more forthcoming. The deferment of the enactment following the political drama in the Rajya Sabha notwithstanding, it is time the polity of India gets on with the serious work of inclusive growth and reforms in the social and economic sectors.

Let the judiciary tackle the deficiencies of the new legislation.

However the disquieting aspects and the undercurrents of the anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare leading to the tabling of the Jan Lokpal Bill need to be examined. Behind Team Anna's idea of disowning the elected representatives of people as not being truly representative of the hopes and aspirations of the people of India lies a disturbing motive to redefine the framework of our democracy model which has shown remarkable resilience when faced both by external and internal adversities

Just consider how team Anna, ably assisted by a philistine media, especially the electronic one, as Justice Katju the new Chairman of the Press Council of India would like to believe, drummed up anti-democratic sentiments since last April misleading the public into believing that nothing, including the Constitution of India, has primacy when it comes to making its version of Jan Lokpal a national reality. Yet, on the backdrop of Anna's stage at the MMRDA venue, one could not miss seeing a calligraphed poster proclaiming "The Constitution of India" with pictures of India's national heroes, some of whom had no role to play in the drafting of the Constitution. Little wonder that team Anna's members are not sanguine that the Jan Lokpal could get a Constitutional status.

The idea propagated by team-Anna that the Indian democratic model which allows thugs and goondas becoming parliamentarians is inimical to the hopes and aspirations of modern India, and therefore needs to be redefined, smacks of a propaganda which will be gladly

welcomed by non-democratic enemy nations.

It is nobody's guess that behind the persistent tirade of "a long fight" by Anna Hazare is team Anna's battle cry against the Indian model of democracy. The constant refrain, even on the day of premature quitting of the fast by Anna Hazare, has been, "what kind of democracy is this, run by the *gaddars* (traitors)"? What was believed to have been a significant campaign against corruption assumed a dangerous anti- democracy dimension.

Short of saying "let us do away with the Constitution of India", members of team Anna have expressed, both in words and body language, during endless streams of telecasts and TV interviews including panel discussions, an utter contempt for the basic premises that define the Indian Constitution. The members of team Anna appropriated unto themselves the expression "We the People" of the preamble to the Constitution to mean "We the People notwithstanding the provisions of Constitution".

One can excuse Anna Hazare for not knowing the niceties of the Constitutional provisions that deal with the exercise of the sovereign power of the Indian State. In his speeches the separation and distribution of powers between the three organs of the State blurred into a constant diatribe expounding that nothing is supreme other than the will of the people. He is unaware of the Constitutional distinction between the Parliament and the State Assemblies which he kept on referring to as State Parliaments in his ex-tempore speeches in Hindi. But how come the other team members did not correct him? Even the media did not point out this glaring distortion. Or, was it deliberate attempt to feed the nation with such incredulities to further the individual and disparate personal ideologies of the members of Team Anna? Mr. Hazare waxed eloquent in selling the idea to the people of this country that the Gram Sabha, an unelected body of persons, would be an ideal model of democracy at the State and the Central level without explaining that the Gram Sabhas, in turn, are the electorate of the larger body

called Panchayat.

As if it is they who have a monopoly over anti-corruption, Team Anna members claimed that but for their movement the people of this country would not know what the Jan Lokpal is all about. It would of interest for Team Anna's members to know that Dr. L.M.Singhvi, father of Shri Abhishek Singhvi, who was being pilloried for not bringing in the Lokpal Bill, was the Chairman of the Government of India Committee on revitalization of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Not only this, it was he who coined the words "Lokpal" and "Lokayukta" while crusading for the Ombudsman system in India in the 'eighties.

It is not surprising to note that all the prominent Team Anna members, who were otherwise, professionally or by their stints in the Government, duty bound to uphold the Constitution, maintained conspiratorial silence whenever the Constitutional institutions were derided and ridiculed by Anna during the campaign.

The members of Team Anna, prodded by the media, and some opposition MPs, cried hoarse in adjudging that the Lok Pal Bill tabled in the Parliament as being unconstitutional and should be challenged before the Supreme Court. It is elementary knowledge that only a law enacted by the Parliament or a State Assembly can be challenged. A Bill only tabled in the Parliament or State Assembly cannot be a law. Hence the question of challenging a Bill can never arise. Yet the Bill proposed

by the Government in the Parliament was adjudged to be unconstitutional by Team Anna, the media and some parliamentarians.

The biblical saying "let him who has never sinned cast the first stone" is conveniently side-tracked as a mere aphorism by Team Anna. Whereas the unsavoury reality is that corruption in the government is the culminating effect of "We the People" being corrupt to begin with. The universal law of causation if examined in the context of corruption will reveal that it is "We the People" who are the cause of the cause of which corruption is caused. Would it be too metaphysical for team Anna to understand this universal law?

The *faux pas* by team Anna in approaching the Bombay High Court petitioning for concessional rental fees for staging its *dharna* at the MMRDA grounds resulted in the judiciary speaking out its mind, for the first time, on the Jan Lokpal movement. The judgment, with certain candid observations, of the Division Bench of the Bombay High Court rejecting the Petition of team Anna seeking the Court's intervention in the refusal of MMRDA to grant concession in fees for holding a *dharna*, should be perceived as a indication of how the judiciary is likely to deal with the issue of Jan Lokpal Bill itself as also Team Anna's *andolan* from the Constitutional stand point..

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Rs.7.25 cr spent on Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Anniversary Ads.

The government spent Rs.7.25 crore on print advertisements on the birth anniversaries of former prime ministers Rajiv and Indira Gandhi this year. The information and broadcasting ministry said Rs.4.79 crore and Rs 2.46 crore was spent on advertisements of Rajiv and Indira Gandhi respectively.

The health ministry spent the highest amount of over Rs.95 lakh on the birth anniversary of Rajiv, followed by the ministry of new and renewable energy at Rs.82 lakh.

The tourism ministry spent over Rs.79 lakh on the occasion. The ministry of housing and urban poverty alleviation spent over Rs.65 lakh, I&B ministry over Rs.58 lakh while social justice ministry spent over Rs 51 lakh for the occasion.

The I&B ministry topped the list of spenders on advertisements on the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi at over Rs.60 lakh, followed by the social justice ministry at over Rs.56 lakh.

A Times of India report reproduced on the website Karmayog



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Anarchy is as Grave a Threat as Corruption

As responsible Mumbaikars, we have to decide once and for all if we are a society governed by the rule of law - or the Wild West.

The buzz word all across the country is “corruption”. Controversy over the Lokpal Bill is providing welcome fodder to television news channels and for political parties to parade their (hypocritical) populist credentials. In addition, the usual suspects masquerading as panelists are raking in the moolah by being invited (and paid) for television debates on an almost daily basis. Everyone, it seems, is having a gala time; everyone, that is, except the common man who can only watch in bemusement and frustration. I could add the Congress to this list, except that the Grand Old Party has, by now, perfected the act of shooting itself in the foot into an art form.

Important as it is, however, corruption is not the only major ill that is dragging down our nation now and preventing it from realizing its true potential. Blatant political hooliganism, bordering on anarchy, is another grave danger. A recent example will illustrate my point.

Immediately following Dr. Ambedkar’s anniversary function at Shivaji Park, the Republican Party of India (RPI) demanded that a sizeable 12.5 acre plot, popularly known as Indu Mills, abutting the park and owned by the government, be handed over to them for constructing an Ambedkar memorial. The government offered a 4 acre portion for the memorial, but this was rebuffed. The RPI threatened to occupy the entire Indu Mills property by force.

At first, the state government decided to hang tough. It deployed a large contingent of police and other security forces at Shivaji Park, expressly to abrogate the takeover. And yet, in spite of the “heavy bandobast”, a few hundred unarmed RTI “activists easily overwhelmed the police and accomplished the very task they were to be prevented from accomplishing. It is not as if Mumbai’s policemen are ineffectual or cowardly. Once again politics is to blame. The police have such apprehension over “communal tension” and “hurting sentiments” ingrained in them by self-serving politicians that they are rendered virtually powerless. This is a green signal for hooligans masquerading as political workers to do as they please with impunity. As always, it is the common man who suffers. As responsible Mumbaikars, we have to decide once and for all if we are a society governed by the rule of law - or the Wild West.

The Bombay High Court was properly appalled at this blatant lawlessness, as well as the apparent

helplessness of the state government. It warned that such acts were taking India to the brink of anarchy. I fully endorse the Bombay High Court’s condemnation of the forcible occupation of the Indu Mills land by RPI “activists”. Leaders of political parties are increasingly condoning and even encouraging hooliganism by their workers and thereby tearing at the very fabric of civilized society - all in an uncouth and despicable exercise to attract vote banks. The real irony is that these leaders do not even genuinely believe in the cause they are ostensibly espousing. Their singular purpose is to grab or retain power. At a time when the nation is in dire economic straits, they couldn’t care less that their obstructionism and opportunism is causing the flight of capital out of the country and causing India to begin an inexorable slide into recession. They have amassed so much wealth that no recession is likely to affect them. As for their vociferous, flag-waving followers, by the time they realize their herd mentality carries the very real danger of them losing their jobs and their livelihoods, it may be too late.

This particular agitation is particularly opportunistic and unfounded. The RPI has already been offered four acres for the Ambedkar memorial, which in a space starved city like Mumbai is positively magnanimous. Even if they manage to grab the entire 12.5 acre plot, I am pretty sure that they have no concrete ideas about how to utilize it or what shape the memorial will take. In all probability, a part of the land will be usurped by apartment buildings to house political and bureaucratic bigwigs, leaving the “activists” out in the cold. At a time when there is so much brouhaha about the Lokpal bill, it is surprising and lamentable that the public is not protesting this shameless misuse of power.

At the moment, India prides itself (or, at least, the rest of the world does) as one of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, denoting second tier nations who are on the verge of achieving First World status. If we continue to be governed in this haphazard manner, however, it won’t be long before we find ourselves cast out of this elite group. As Farid Zakaria pointed out on CNN recently, the I in BRIC is likely to stand for Indonesia instead of India in the near future. If that happens, we will have no one to blame except ourselves.

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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.

Memogate

1. Pakistan's 'memogate' came to light when it was alleged that the Pak Ambassador in US (Husain Haqqani) had sought the help of a Pak businessman to hand over a secret memo/letter to Admiral Mullen, the then US Chief of Joint Staff to alert the US about the possibility of an army coup in Pakistan in the wake of the Abbottabad incident (May 2011) which led to the elimination of Osama bin Laden. The Pak army had come in for a lot of flak then for either sheltering Osama or not knowing he was in Pakistan and also for allowing the US Seals to infiltrate into Pakistan undetected and fulfil their mission of eliminating Osama. The Pak military became a target of condemnation for acts of either commission or omission - both unforgivable. President Zardari allegedly panicked that the army would try to take over power to escape criticism and approached the US to save his position. The allegation was initially rejected out of hand but the Army got Ambassador Husain Haqqani to resign. The US revealed that it had indeed received the secret memo but was sceptical about its credibility. The case reached the Pak Supreme Court through a multitude of petitions. The Court has appointed a Committee to look into the matter which is a blow to the Government. Its findings could humiliate Zardari if it is found that he was the initiator of the memo.

1. Not satisfied with the Ambassador's dismissal despite his claiming ignorance of the offending memorandum, there was a demand for a Commission of Enquiry to get to the root of the 'memogate'. The Pak Government pleaded before the Supreme Court that there was no need for an enquiry. The Army Chief Gen. Kayani gave an affidavit that 'memogate' needed to be investigated thoroughly as *l'affair* memogate amounted to an insult to the Army. President Zardari's flight to Dubai for medical treatment added spice to speculations about a conflict between the civilian Government and the military leadership. Yousaf Raza Giani, the Pak PM, mysteriously declared that Zardari had to go to Dubai because he was afraid of being assassinated in a Pakistani hospital. He further alleged that conspiracies were being hatched to get the civilian Government to "pack up". Zardari himself urged the people not to allow a change of Government through force or intimidation. Gen. Kayani asserted that the army had no plans to oust the civilian government. The speculation about a conflict between the civilian Government and the Army continue unabated. In Pakistan, the army is only a step away from a coup and therefore such rumours persist.

Dynasty of Dictators

2. Apart from monarchies, it is difficult to find dictatorial dynasties succeeding for long as a succeeding dictator always has enough ammunition to demolish the aura of the earlier one. North Korea is a modern day exception and a case for study. North Korea's Head of Government, Kim Jong-il, died 'suddenly' (Dec.17) leaving the country shaken as a dictator's demise normally does. For years, there were rumours of his ill health or even demise. A psycho-analytical study of the dictator is of interest as he was likened to Saddam Hussein in many personal traits. His cult was so great that he was believed to have magical powers to control the weather. However, the 'Dear Leader', as he was called, had taken care to groom and nominate his successor, Kim il-un, his youngest son, as the next 'Supreme Leader'; the country was saved from ravages of succession. The Kim dynasty is thus in place to lead, feed and brainwash the North Koreans for another 50

2. Thousands mourned the death of the 'Dear Leader' as they had done in 1994 when the earlier leader, Kim il Sung, founder of N. Korea, died. Thus North Korea has not seen any other family as the 'Leader' since 1948. In other totalitarian dictatorships, the dictator was disrobed soon after his death; Stalin was demonised by Khrushchev and Mao was 'demystified' and 'remeasured' by Deng. North Korea has not seen similar disillusionment because a son has followed a father twice. The latest Kim is called the 'Supreme Leader', 'Great Successor' and 'Sagacious Leader'. The country has been placed in his 'warm care'. North Korea seems to have developed succession into a fine art as three successive Leaders have emerged from the same family without a murmur of dissent – not that much can be heard from across barbed wires, bamboo screen and marching boots. The fate of dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, Saddam, Hosni Mubarak and Gaddafi has not

years as the new incumbent is only 28 and can be expected to survive that long. It does not matter if the Kims have reduced the country to a communist paradise of distributive poverty but it is a nuclear power at the same time and threatens all and sundry, particularly its southern brother. The succession has been smooth so far but one never knows in a dictatorship if a rival is sharpening his knives somewhere. The trouble free succession indicates that either the Kims are very popular or the country is more tightly controlled than Stalin's Russia.

befallen the Kims. Only defectors from that country give glimpses of what is happening inside. A story goes that in Pyongyang girls were seen crying, not because they were mourning the death of the 'Dear Leader' but because a 'Great Successor' had emerged.

It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

Aung San Suu Kyi

Law for Legislators

3. MPs and State legislators have been often seen shouting, fighting, throwing things around and tearing up papers in their respective Houses; they are at the same time making laws to punish citizens for misbehaving or acting criminally in various ways. Admirable occupation for our venerable representatives! The troubling question is how to make the representatives behave? To make a law to punish legislators is too harsh; instead of a law, strict rules could perhaps be framed to govern them or may be a gentle code of conduct may just suffice, with a head master-like person in the chair to impose the code! This is not just because one Rajniti Prasad of the RJD littered the Rajya Sabha on December 29, 2011! That is almost par with normal conduct. It was a small matter that the PM could not stop him or that Lalu Prasad Yadav, his leader, watched him with admiration; the Chairman himself had no answer for the mischief. Democracy is all about giving expression to one's views! Certainly there are better ways to express oneself. Should a code of conduct be invoked to protect the dignity of the House or Marshals called in to eject the offenders?

3. One has to be careful in dealing with those representing lakhs of citizens even if they tend to forget that they are answerable to their electorate and are supposed to set an example for the rest of the country. After disturbing proceedings, they do not show even remorse but preen about in a show of victory. They declare that their Houses are the temples of democracy and they would not allow anybody to denigrate these temples. If denigration is to be done, they would do that themselves and they often do. Seriously, people's representatives need to be handled carefully as any attempt to throw them out would be used by the ruling coalition to eject them or disqualify them on crucial occasions to secure a bogus majority. Should they be shown yellow cards (as in football) to prevent repeat offences? Adjournments due to hooliganism are the order of the day. If 35% of the time of Parliament is wasted in unruliness, what is the value placed on serious debates to decide the country's fate? Some thing needs to be done or our temples of democracy would soon be reduced to 'akhadas' (I wrestling rings), with chairpersons acting as referees!

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

Equity: The next frontier in climate talks

...climate change is not the problem of the present but past contributions. The stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has a long life. This means that any discussion on how the carbon cake will be divided, must take into account those gases emitted in the past and still present. So while China accounts for 27 per cent of the annual emissions, in cumulative terms (since 1950) it still accounts for only 11 per cent. Similarly, India contributes 6 per cent to the annual global emissions, but is only responsible for 3 per cent of the stock. The rich countries, with less than a quarter of the world's population, are responsible for some 70 per cent of this historical burden. This stock of gases is responsible for an average global temperature rise of 0.8°C and another 0.8°C in future, which is inevitable. To keep temperature rise below 2°C, the world needs to cut emissions by 50-80 per cent below the 2000 levels by 2050. Now equity is no longer a moral idea, but a tough challenge. It is for this reason that global climate negotiations reached their nadir in Durban. It is for this reason that the US and its coalition are hell bent on erasing any mention of historical emissions from all texts. It is for this reason that the rich world is pointing to the emission growth in China and India, and dismissing their need for development as their obdurate right to pollute. ... To avoid catastrophic changes it is essential to reach a collaborative agreement, which will be effective. And cooperation is not possible without fairness and equity. This is the pre-requisite. Take it because we must.

Exerpted from Sunita Narain's editorial in CSE's Fortnightly News Bulletin December 19, 2011

The Three Cs

K. K. Pathak

Our public life is progressively fragmented by caste, community and class - the three Cs. Caste distinctions in Indian society cannot be done away with. But ...

It is very unfortunate that even after 65 years of our Independence, our citizenry is by and large a passive spectator of the ugliness in public life. The socialistic dogmas of equality and equal opportunities Nehru never got tired of preaching, made people more selfish, because these dogmas are two-dimensional without the third important dimension of social ethos based on sound ethical and moral values which make for civilisation and culture rich enough to sustain the basic conditions on which the concept of democracy rests. Equality is conceptually good and idealistic enough to be extolled. But when the concept is reduced to practice, it gives rise to selfishness with little regard for fellow-feeling, without which socialism becomes a hollow drum to beguile and befool people. Nehru's efforts to bring about "a socialistic pattern of society" through enacting laws and amending the Constitution did not bear the desired results from 1955 to 1964 when he breathed his last.

Gandhiji always stood for a change of heart through compassion, fellow-feeling and compunction as an abiding instrument of restructuring our society on the lines which could have a chance to last for a durable time. Gandhiji was a far better socialist than Nehru in this essential respect about the concept of socialism.

Nature is a carnival of inequality. No two leaves of a tree are equal. Disparity from man to man cannot be abolished by any amount of human endeavour, because equality is not at all in the nature of things the world is made of. Equal opportunities don't give positive results because man possesses physical and artificial inequalities which cannot be bridged by human effort. Intellectual endowments and other physical inequalities with which man is born play a dominant role, negating the benefits of equal opportunities.

Let us consider an example of a teacher giving lectures to a class of 40 students. the lecture does not make for equal results. Understanding and expressing the gist of a lecture by 40 students, widely differ from one another, leading to inequality, though the teacher gave equal opportunity to all his students in the class. The example holds good in all walks of life, entailing a vast variety of endeavours in life.

Let us consider a case of a farmer who is 60 years old and is landless. The State gives land of 10 acres to this landless farmer who has four sons. A landless farmer cannot match with another farmer who has 10 acres of land with means to cultivate it to meet both ends of his family. There will be disparity between the two so far as production capacity is concerned. Instead of adding to the national wealth, one will be a parasite on the state and the other an asset. The landless farmer dies after 10 years, and his land gets divided among his four sons, each getting 2.1/2 acres of land. Productivity will come down quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The concept of a welfare state cannot be sustained for long with concepts which hardly go to add to national wealth. All efforts go down the drain, producing results hardly encouraging to let the State go ahead with its welfare programmes which will ultimately go to make for deficit on a progressive basis culminating in devaluation of the currency and more disparity than ever before.

Our public life is progressively fragmented by caste, community and class - the three Cs. Caste distinctions in Indian society cannot be done away with. But to exploit them for electoral purposes in our democratic set-up is definitely a criminal act on the part of our leaders of society much to the detriment of social harmony. Our society is made of different communities with different religions. Freedom to religious attachments, giving freedom to home as many religious as possible, is a good concept. But to exploit religious sentiments of one community against another is against all annals of the concept of freedom. Instead, it is a criminal act, dividing the society into segments on the basis of religion. Unfortunately enough, both public life and religious life have required a professional dimension for purposes other than the general good of the society as a whole!

Class distinctions are basically economic disparities. Marx did make efforts to suggest ways and means of having a classless society. As an ideal, it is all very good. The way industrialisation was done in the West made Marx and other thinkers of those days, to work out ways and means to do away with exploitation, making the rich richer and the poor poorer than ever before. These efforts were commendable and labour unions came

into existence as a safeguard against exploitation.

Man is prone to make misuse of everything, good or bad. Quite naturally, labour unions became a stumbling block in the smooth functioning of the organisations they belonged to. When rights are preached without any reference to duties, things are very likely to run amuck, leading to a kind of chaos which hampers progress and becomes an impediment to prosperity in general. If production goes down in all spheres of human needs, equitable distribution is not possible. Nor can prosperity be the result of these negative aspects of all good concepts. Human wisdom fails miserably when it works against general welfare, creating disparities which could be to some extent bridged by human efforts for the common good. Even if we achieve a classless society for a while, there seems to be no guarantee that the classless society once achieved will not disintegrate into more classes than ever before. Human wisdom fails when efforts are made against the eternal laws of nature, over which mankind has no control, whatever. These eternal laws operate without an operator and are beyond the scope of human efforts to change them for human convenience. Flights of ideal thinking becomes a fluttering in the void, with no positive results which have a chance to abide even for a durable period of time.

It is not to suggest that we should throw our hands in despair and stop thinking of the common good. Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship seems to be the best ideal. Even Russia now talks of the common human effort for the general good. Mahatma Gandhi stood for it throughout

his life. I am pretty confident that Gandhiji's philosophy of life will dominate throughout the world over in the 21st century. We should exercise self-restraint on consumerism, though for an economist, it may sound something like anachronism and against his basic principles of progress and prosperity. Gandhiji used to say: "When you go to the market, ask yourself before buying, Can I do without it?" Reckless consumerism, exploiting natural resources and resorting to synthetic variety to make do when natural resources give way, is not the real road to prosperity. America is learning the lesson the hard way round. Europe will soon follow since.

I shall like to conclude this discussion with one remark: Let us rediscover Mahatma Gandhi and make his thoughts post-modern thinking of mankind with no distinctions of caste, community and class, the three viral vices which have divided mankind for countless centuries, leading to crusades and jihads for domination, resulting in colonisation of the worst variety. The source has three truths: (1) Religion, (2) Class distinctions, and (3) Selfishness as the only motive behind all human effort. Let us arise, awake, or be prepared to destruction as the inevitable fate of the present thinking of mankind in the name of progress and prosperity. The ends of the three C's are more pronounced in our country these days. We are running on the path of self-ruin with frightful speed. Let us realise the after-effects of this madness. The sooner, the better!

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The Mathematical Genius

B. M. N. Murthy

One hundred and twenty five years have passed since the passing away of an Indian Mathematical genius, Srinivasa Ramanujan, a child prodigy born to a poor devout Brahmin family in the small city of Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. When Ramanujan died at the young age of 32 he left a strange, raw legacy of about 4,000 mathematical formulas written on the pages of three note books and some scrap paper.

Ramanujan was born on 22nd December 1887 in Erode in Tamil Nadu as the eldest son in a family of 6 children. Even when he was just 7 years old, he gave clear evidence of his mathematical gifts. He could reel off the square root of a natural number to the specified number of places and he could point to the indeterminate nature of zero divided by zero. The family was extremely poor and purchasing books for her son was beyond her; Ramanujan's mother took in a few college students as boarders, who, noticing Ramanujan's interest in Mathematics, brought him the necessary books on Mathematics from the college library. Loney's trigonometry was one such book which Ramanujan mastered.

Ramanujan's mother sang *Bhajans* at a nearby temple. Nearly half the proceeds from her Bhajan group performances went to the temple, the other half to the singers and barely a few rupees were retained for herself. With her husband earning about twenty rupees a month as a clerk in a local Saurashtra firm, the five or ten rupees she earned through Bhajans did matter to the family income. Ramanujan grew up in a strictly orthodox and devout family. Even at an early age, he started praying in front of stone images in temples. All through his life Ramanujan took counsel from his family goddess Namagiri Thayar at Namakkal, declaring it was she to whom his mathematical insights were owed.

With the high academic record in school, Ramanujan joined F.A. Course [Equivalent to modern Pre University Course(PUC)] in 1904 but unfortunately failed in English Composition with the result that he lost his scholarship. At the age of 22, he got married to Janaki who was just 9. He tried his luck again in F.A. in 1906, but failed again. One more attempt was made again in 1907, but luck did not favour him even in his 3rd attempt. This marked the end of his formal education. With an extraordinary passion for Mathematics and an indomitable determination to pursue it, he carved out his own course, selected his own books, and picked up results in which he saw possibilities of creation. He studied those results carefully, assimilated

them and thus educated himself to be a mathematician, rather than becoming a mere university graduate. And this he did with an unbelievable sincerity and rigid discipline. By the age of 22, Ramanujan was already a mathematician, mature and self-reliant, but not yet recognized.

As a part of the self-discipline which he imposed upon himself for self-education, Ramanujan maintained a careful and systematic record of his findings. The notebooks in which he kept a record of all his findings are known as "Ramanujan's Notebooks". They contain all his discoveries right from his school days till he went to Cambridge in 1914. It is believed that these notebooks contain nearly 4,000 theorems.

Ramanujan's much-needed recognition first came locally by the Madras University and internationally from Prof. G. H. Hardy of Trinity College, Cambridge, who had, by that time made a name as a Mathematician of repute. Ramanujan, on the advice of his local mentors, had already started correspondence with Prof. Hardy. When Ramanujan communicated the results of 120 theorems from his Notebooks to Prof. Hardy, Hardy was stunned and at once could recognize the genius in Ramanujan. He started moving heaven and earth to get Ramanujan to Cambridge, in spite of the fact that Ramanujan was his junior in age by 10 years.

With the initiative taken by Hardy and the subsequent follow-up action taken by his local mentors, it was finally decided that Ramanujan should go to Cambridge. Strangely enough, Ramanujan refused to go to England, probably on account of his orthodox views on overseas travel. However, one of his uncles persuaded him to go. Reluctantly, Ramanujan agreed. Before departure for England, he went to Namakkal to receive the blessings of Goddess Namagiri Thayar, the family deity. When he visited the temple and offered pooja that night, Goddess Namagiri Thayar appeared in his dream and commanded him to go to England.

Ramanujan sailed for England in 1914 and stayed

in Cambridge for 5 years. About what he achieved there during these 5 years in the field of mathematics is history. The famous historian, J. R. Newman, wrote in 1968, the following lines about Ramanujan:

“Ramanujan arrived in England abreast and often ahead of contemporary mathematical knowledge. Thus, in a lone mighty sweep, he had succeeded in recreating in his field, through his own unaided powers, a rich half-century of European Mathematics. One may doubt whether so prodigious a feat had ever been accomplished in the history of human thought.”

Being a strict vegetarian, lack of proper food and nourishment had its inevitable toll. It is said that during his stay in Cambridge, Ramanujan used to cook his own vegetarian food. He was so puritanical in his vegetarianism that having had Ovaltine at a friend's place [and discovering later that the contents involved powdered egg], he left immediately with his bag and later wrote to the landlady that when he approached the railway station, there was heavy bombing; he was convinced that the raid was a punishment for his act!

He took sick in 1917 and recovered sometime later. However, it was felt that more congenial surroundings and a homely environment would be a better medicine for his falling health. He therefore returned to India in 1919 still ailing and weak. Within a year thereafter, he died on 26th April 1920 at the age of 33.

Just before Ramanujan's return to India, the Madras University had intimated that they would continue his fellowship for a further period. When Ramanujan received this intimation, he was already in a nursing home in England and from the hospital bed, he wrote the following letter to the Registrar, Madras University:

“I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 9th December 1918 and gratefully accept the very generous help which the University offers me.

“I feel however, that after my return to India, which I expect to happen as soon as arrangements are made, the total amount of money to which I am entitled will be much more than I shall require. I should hope that after my expenses in England have been paid, 50 pounds a year will be paid to my parents and that the surplus, after my necessary expenses are met, should be used for some educational purpose, such as the reduction of school fees for poor boys and orphans and provision of books in schools. No doubt it will be possible to make an arrangement about this after

my return.

“I feel very sorry that as I have not been well, I have not been able to do so much mathematics during the last two years as before. I hope that I shall soon be able to do more and will certainly do my best to deserve the help that has been given to me”

This letter which speaks more than it writes speaks of a genius of the 20th century who had a noble heart full of humility, kindness and gratitude.

Ramanujan's mentor Hardy was a confirmed atheist. Yet, when Hardy died, one mourner spoke of his “profound conviction that the truths of mathematics described a bright and clear universe, exquisite and beautiful in its structure, in comparison with which the physical world was turbid and confused. It was this which made his friends think - think that in his attitude to mathematics there was something which, being essentially spiritual, was near to religion”

The same, but more emphatically, goes for Ramanujan, who all his life believed in the Hindu Gods and made the landscape of the Infinite, in realms both mathematical and spiritual, his home. Ramanujan is unquestionably a direct descendant of the great heritage of our ancient Rishis which saw the discovery of ‘Zero’ as a mathematical concept. Then, Brahmagupta, a century later, laid down the rules of the use of zero.

Ramanujan once said “*An equation for me has no meaning unless it expresses a thought of God*”

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A MISSING BOY

To The Editor of the “Hindu”

Sir,

Kindly insert the following in your widely circulated journal:

“A Brahmin boy of the Vaishnava (Thengalai) sect, named Ramanujam, of fair complexion and aged about 18 years was till recently a student of the Kumbakonam College. He left his home on some misunderstanding. His guardian is very solicitous about the boy's returning home. He stayed at Rajahmundry for about a month, and was last seen there some five days back. Those who happen to see him are kindly requested to persuade him to return home, and to communicate his whereabouts to:

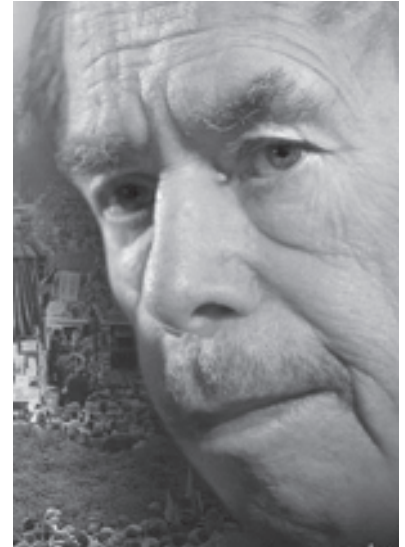
J. Sreenivas Raghava Ayangar,
18, Sarangapani Sannidhi Street,
Kumbakonam.

September 2, 1905.

Vaclav Havel (1936-2011)

The unassuming man who taught, through plays and politics, how tyranny may be defied and overcome.

Had communists not seized power in his homeland in 1948, Vaclav Havel would have been simply a distinguished Central European intellectual. That is how, triumphantly, he ended his career. In between came imprisonment, interrogations, house searches, isolation, heartbreak and betrayals – and adulation on the national and international stage.



Although a highly successful politician, three times head of state and the leader of one of the most famous revolutions in history, he was not a natural public figure. A sincere, impatient and humble man, he detested the pomposity, superficiality and phoney intimacy of politics.

Mr. Havel was never a communist. And he lacked formal academic education. He came from a rich family that had had most of its property nationalised after 1948. As a further punishment, he had to leave school at 15 and was allowed only a technical education, not the literary one he craved.

As Czechoslovak communism softened in the 1960s, talented outsiders could begin to make their mark on the country's cultural life. His first full-length play, "The Garden Party", was performed in 1963. It was a wry look at the nonsense world of communist clichés. His next play, "The Memorandum", first performed in 1966, dealt with an invented language, *Ptydepe*, designed (like communism) to eliminate ambiguity and promote efficiency, but with little regard for practicality or humanity.

The plays were staged in New York and elsewhere, but their author – like millions of others now a prisoner in his own country – was unable to see them. Banned from working in the theatre, he briefly took a menial job in a brewery; he wrote about that in another play, "Audience".

In early 1975 he wrote a caustic letter to the communist leader Gustav Husak, saying that the "calm" which the authorities regarded as their great achievement was in fact a "musty inertia...like the morgue or a grave. With a handful of allies Mr. Havel then collected 242 public supporters for what would be the first open

manifestation of dissent inside the Soviet empire: Charter 77, a declaration that highlighted the authorities' breaches of the international human rights standards to which they had notionally subscribed. The reaction was venomous. Those who refused to denounce the document brought severe punishment on themselves and their families. One of the three founding spokesmen, Jan Patocka, a philosophy professor, died during a gruelling 11-hour interrogation. Mr. Havel, another, spent five months behind bars in 1977, with a further three months in 1978.

In 1979 he received a five-year prison sentence. This was the darkest time of his life. The outside world showed little interest. The dissident movement was shrivelling under the harassment of the STB, the Czechoslovak counterpart of the KGB. In Poland, Solidarity was crushed by martial law. And in prison he could not write, barring a weekly letter to his wife.

He was released early, with severe pneumonia, in 1983. His health never recovered, and his heavy smoking gave it little chance to.

That gloom proved to be the nadir. Once the enforcer of communist orthodoxy, the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev became a spur to change: that shift inspired democrats and sapped their persecutors. In Hungary and Poland the regimes were weakening visibly by the late 1980s, but Czechoslovakia's Communist blockheads continued to beat, bully and jail their opponents. Mr. Havel was sentenced to eight months for

“hooliganism” in early 1989. But this time his jailing sparked outrage, not apathy. In Poland one of his plays was performed publicly – with the communist prime minister in the audience. Citing his “exemplary behaviour”, the Prague regime in April freed its most famous prisoner early.

A moral compass

Yet Czechoslovakia’s dissident movement was still tiny and amateurish. Mr. Havel and his pals were all but unknown in their own country. The authorities tried to tar the dissidents as CIA stooges, and Mr. Havel as the scion of a family of Nazi collaborators. But propaganda was no substitute for reform. Though the dissidents were feeble, they were kicking at a rotten door.

Mr. Havel was fast becoming a political leader. It was not a role he enjoyed. Hungarians and Austrians picnicked on what had once been the Iron Curtain’s barbed-wire cordon. Even loyal East Germany wobbled and toppled. When the Prague riot police brutally broke up a student demonstration on November 17th 1989, Mr. Havel and his colleagues set up the Civic Forum – a determinedly non-partisan group with, at first, no leaders.

On November 24th, during a press conference, the news came through that the entire leadership of the Communist Party had resigned. The regime had in effect surrendered, and the country’s destiny was in the writer’s hands. In 24 hours in early December, in what he later said was the most difficult decision of his life, Mr. Havel reluctantly agreed to stand for president; He was elected unanimously by the discredited communist-era parliament, and again in June by its freely elected successor.

In what would be a hallmark of his later political life, he made a point of helping beleaguered but like-minded figures. He became a close friend of the Dalai Lama, who was almost the first foreign dignitary he received as president. In 1991 he lobbied for Aung San Suu Kyi’s Nobel peace prize, when it could have been his. His last public statements were to support political prisoners in Belarus and the opposition protests in Russia. In return, the Kremlin issued insultingly sparse condolences. But in Moscow on December 24th (*see article*) 80,000 pro-democracy demonstrators held a minute’s silence in his memory.

Courtesy: *The Economist*. Excerpted from their issue of 31 December, 2011.



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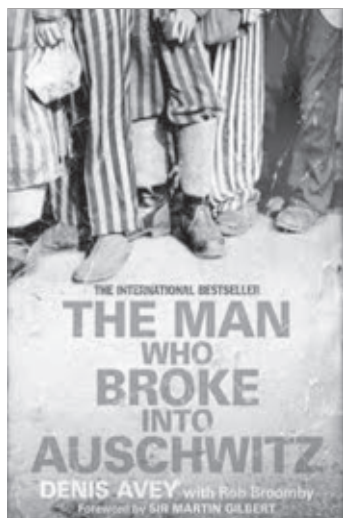
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BOOK REVIEWS



THE MAN WHO BROKE INTO AUSCHWITZ by Denis Avey with Rob Broomby and Foreword by Sir Martin Gilbert • Published by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London • 2011 • Pages 276 • £7.99

Reviewed by V. Krishna Moorthy, based at Mysore is a retired Bank Executive.
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The Man Who Broke into Auschwitz is a long and terrible story of Denis Avey's courage and humanity. The tale offers a unique insight into the mind of an ordinary man whose moral and physical courage are almost beyond belief.

The author narrates his experiences in World War II both as soldier and as a prisoner of war. A significant portion of Avey's story relates to his experiences in the war against the Axis powers. Only two chapters or about 10 per cent of this well written and thought provoking story deals with his actual encounters in the labour camp at Auschwitz III. In this labour camp there were 35,118 prisoners of whom 2095 were female prisoners. Avey's experience of the Nazi treatment is disturbing even for a world dominated by cruelty.

The author, now in his early 90s with a glass eye - a legacy of Auschwitz - who as a young man of 29 joined as a Rifleman in the British Army in World War II, was honoured as one of the 27 'British Jews of the Holocaust' and awarded the medal inscribed '*In the Service of Humanity*' by the British government. While 25 of them were given the award posthumously, Avey was one of the two living British citizens who were given the award in March 2010 when still alive. The other was Sir Nicholas Winton, who had saved more than 600 children from Czechoslovakia during those dark days.

Why did the Nazis behave the way they did with the Jews? The answer appears to be Hitler who in 1929, at the age of 40 was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party. He believed that Germany could not live in peace unless the 'traitorous Jewish Bolshevik bankers' were exterminated, and Germany's hegemony was extended to the West and to the East. Yet another strong reason for this was because of a document known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that surfaced in Russia in 1905. This document was 'a fraudulent, anti-semitic text

purporting to describe a Jewish plan for achieving global domination'. Though this was reportedly the deadliest hoax in modern history and was quickly proven a blatant forgery, a whole continent believed it.

In the present story, Denis George Avey, son of a First World War veteran, grew up in the first quarter of the last century in a world of moral certainties. He was taught to respect humans and animals equally and stand up for what was right. After his engineering studies, Avey at 29, enlisted in the British Army for the sheer hell of it and for the adventure it would provide, and not exactly to fight for King and the Country.

After getting caught by the Nazis, Avey was sent to a labour camp with other Allied prisoners. After a while he was moved to a Polish town called Oswiecim, the Germanised name of this was Auschwitz, to work for the chemicals giant I.G. Farben, in one of their factories.

Of the three Nazi concentration camps located near the town of Auschwitz, Auschwitz III camp was the most important to the Nazis because its factories were essential to the German war effort. The Jews who were sent to Auschwitz were assigned to work at the Monowitz factory. They had a much better chance of survival because they were considered too valuable to be sent to the gas chamber, at least while they were still able to work. Two famous survivors who worked at Monowitz were Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi, both of whom wrote extensively about the Holocaust.

At the labour camp the Russians were being treated as badly as the Jews. At the worksite they sucked the life and labour from each exhausted man who was doing over 11 hours of backbreaking work; and once he was spent, sent out to be killed in the gas chamber. Narrating another story Avey says that in a prison camp with Russians at a coal mine, the prisoners were being served rations which were so meagre, the prisoners were getting starved to death. To get some extra food, some POWs even kept their dead colleagues alongside them in their bunks to claim their food quota for a few extra days! The Jews had their human dignity stripped from them and the

Soviet POWs were victims of the first experiments using poisoned gas – Zyklon B.

In a separate camp Denis saw the Jewish prisoners wearing ill-fitting striped shirts and trousers, more like pyjamas – nick named “stripeys,” put to work with contractors for shifting and carrying materials and heavy pipes for the chemicals giant I G Farben.

Avey who was held in a POW labour camp near Auschwitz had earlier heard of the brutality meted out to the prisoners there and he was determined to witness whatever he could. He became aware of the other prisoners he came into contact with, who were not protected by his uniform or the Geneva Convention unlike him. He felt he had to bear witness to what was happening to the Jewish inmates —the violence, murder, degradation, starvation and inhumanity etc. Meanwhile, Avey had developed close acquaintance with Hans, a Dutch Jew, well educated and his family had a department store in Amsterdam before the War. Hans was working in the adjoining labour camp meant for Jews and appeared to be in danger.

Avey hatched a plan to swap places with Jewish inmate Hans, and smuggled himself into their camp. After meticulous planning and observation and bribing the guard with 25 cigarettes, Avey, on his own volition exchanged his British Army battle uniform for the striped rags with Hans, thus giving away in a way the protection of the Geneva Convention – his lifeline, and his best chance of surviving in that dreadful place, just for the sake of experiencing life in the Jewish labour camp.

It was the middle of 1944, when Avey moved into the Jewish section of the vast slave labour camp zone at Auschwitz III, thus becoming a witness to what happened at the camp, closed to the outside world. Avey spent the night there on two occasions and experienced at first hand the cruelty of a place whose slave workers had been sentenced to death through hard labour. There is another incident which the author narrates as to how the

complaints about the breaches of Geneva Convention were dealt with. When a complaint was made about the manner and kind of work that the prisoners were forced to do in breach of the Geneva Convention, the complaint was listened to by a senior Nazi officer. After listening to the complaint, the officer took out his Luger pistol from its holster, slammed it on the table and said: ‘*That’s my Geneva Convention. You will do what I say*’ and they were sent back to work.

The *New York Times* recently reported that Azikas Mendelsonai, 89, the last Jew in Zagare, a small Lithuanian town renowned for its cherries – a town occupied by Soviets first later by the Nazis, once again by the Soviets, currently independent and part of the NATO – died last September. At Mendelsonai’s birth in 1922 Zagare had over 2000 Jews, with its own seven synagogues, its Hebrew School and its Jewish People’s Bank. In swift succession the town came under Soviet annexation followed by the Nazis bent on the annihilation of the town’s Jews. Without losing much time, in June 1941 the Jews of Zagare were herded into a ghetto. On October 2, 1941 they were ordered into the town’s main square before being taken into the woods for execution by Nazi SS killers and their Lithuanian accomplices. SS Standartenfuhrer Karl Jager stated in a report that day that 2,236 Jews were killed in Zagare. In 1944, the Soviets, who had fought their way back, examined a mass grave and found 2,402 corpses (530 men, 1223 women, 625 children, and 24 babies). Any visitor to Zagare these days will find in the woods of birch and pine a sign reading: *Graves of the Victims of the Jewish Genocide*.

Denis Avey’s story is an extraordinary true story of a British soldier who marched willingly and on his own volition into Buna-Monuwitz, the concentration camp known as Auschwitz III. After his escape, for decades Avey could not bring himself to revisit the past that haunted his dreams. He was sick and had nightmares of the awful scenes he had witnessed during his time at Auschwitz III.

Recharging Growth Strategy – Fiscal Challenges *(Cont’d. from page 5)*

economic growth is flagging; the investment cycle is in reverse gear; the confidence of stakeholders has been badly shaken. One could go on with many more gloomy causes for concern. Recharging growth momentum through fiscal strategy in such an environment, not only requires fiscal acumen, but political courage and sagacity to take the reforms agenda forward irrespective of coalition compulsions

and fractured polity. The question is whether the veteran FM will do it? Or will he be driven by political expediency emanating from the outcome of impending assembly elections? If the answer is yes, he will do it, we have hopes of a turnaround! If not, India will sacrifice her potential growth aspirations!

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THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS 1889-1921
by Prabha Ravi Shankar • New Delhi • Promilla and Co. • Year: 2011 • No. of
pages 347 • Price: Rs.900/- • www.biblioasia.com

Reviewed by Dr. R. Srinivasan, retired Professor of Political Science, Mumbai University, Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

The British Committee was founded in 1889, a few years *after* the establishment of the Indian National Congress. It was mainly to function in England as a body to represent the Congress in British public life, giving

publicity to its activities, to try to inform members of parliament of the activities of the Indian National Congress and to create a climate of opinion favourable to the party. For nearly twenty years it did commendable work to further the cause of India in England. This book is an account of the Committee and will be valuable even for educated Indians for many would not have heard of it. This is the first exhaustive study of the Committee and will remain an indispensable work of reference. The bibliography is extensive and an incredible amount of research has gone into the writing of this.

The Committee located in London for twenty years was akin to a pressure group, keeping alive the case for India in Britain. It was served with great diligence by a number of experienced British Indian civilians who had intimate knowledge of Indian problems, who tried to educate through the Press, platform and the Liberal Party the case for India. In doing this, they were engaged in a thankless task for the British public had scant interest in India, which was a strange far off land of which they had fancy notions derived from school boyish reminiscences of Kipling's writings. Also to the common man British responsibilities were seen as civilizing the inferiors.

The book examines the history of its founding, its record and attempts an assessment of its active members. A more committed body of people could not have been found in England then. At great personal sacrifice of time and money as well, they served the Committee with scarcely any remuneration. In fact, from its very beginning, the body was hamstrung by totally inadequate resources and the remittances from the Indian National Congress were tardy and far from adequate to run the institution. Its journal, *India*, was perhaps one of the most valuable periodicals then containing information on the sub-continent. It organized public meetings when the case for India was put forward with clarity.

Resolutions of sympathy expressed in the meetings were sent to the House of Commons. The success of the Committee was in large measure due to the efforts of people like William Digby and others. Gokhale, when he came to England, addressed fifty meetings which made a deep impression upon the British people. Tilak too went in 1918 to England and his lecture tours were to be influential and he tried to foster a relationship with the leftist groups as well. The Indian case was now better understood by the interested public.

The Indian National Congress was the mainspring of the nationalist movement and the British Committee represented its views of the Congress in Britain, and should be regarded as ancillary to that body. But in the minds of the early leaders such as Hume, the Committee needed independence to function at an optimum level. Being in the field, it knew more intimately the ground realities in Britain and what could be optimum effectiveness. As long as the Congress in India and the Committee in London were with the moderates, things went well but with the extremists dominating the Congress, strains began. Funds always were an issue and the Committee was haunted by paucity of funds and the parent Congress body was not sufficiently aware of this. Digby, who was one of the stalwarts of the Committee was also acting on behalf of a private business Corporation in Madras and there was a feeling that this would do no good to the Congress. "The early nationalists had a filial regard for Hume and Wedderburn bordering almost an ideology." But this could not last. Indian political opinion was gradually changing and the Liberals in the Congress could not guide them with the assurance they did in earlier years. Rumbles of discontent reverberated and the happenings in Surat reflected this. Wedderburn was requested to bring the sections together. Strains too developed within the inner circles with one section feeling that trusted people like Hume were exceeding their brief which was unheard of during the earlier years.

Even earlier, the Committee was sagacious in zeroing upon Bradlough for speaking in Parliament on Indian affairs for he was a champion of worthy public causes. He introduced Indian reform in parliament. He had visited India. In Parliament he spoke on the need for electing Indians to Councils, on Indian issues of famine and economic exploitation. His contribution to Indian causes in parliament was highly appreciated. Wedderburn

organized the Indian Parliamentary Committee to highlight Indian issues. The Committee succeeded in introducing in Parliament a resolution for holding simultaneous examinations in India for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. It also tried to introduce a Royal Commission to enquire into the civil and military expenditure in India. Wedderburn became spokesman for Indian causes in parliament.

For the first time during the first decade of the 20th century, Parliament witnessed the presence of a number of friends of the Indian cause. It was significant that they represented different political parties and the Indian case was presented with unprecedented vigour. Unrest in India was seen as the response to the repressive policies of the Government. The Committee missed no opportunity to highlight the grievances of the people and expose the draconian policies of the Government. A champion for India, Mr. Mackarnus lost no occasion to plead the case for the country. His name should be inscribed in gold for the unremitting fact that he engaged himself in advancing the cause for India. Equally significant was the contribution of Keir Hardie and India was particularly fortunate in having the support of this eminent member in Parliament. The Committee joining the cause of a number of journalists who were severely punished, indicated a new sympathetic mood in parliament.

If in parliament the Indian cause had a powerful lobby in the public platforms too the Indian case did not go unnoticed. Digby was an untiring spokesman for India. He played an important part in the election of Dadabhai Naoroji as M.P. for Finsbury, the first Indian to be elected to Parliament. The Committee was also responsible for the success of the First Congress Delegation that came to

England to educate the British public on matters relating to India. It was a distinguished group that publicly addressed the grievances of the Indians. The Indian Committee delegation went to Oxford and addressed the Oxford Union, generally regarded as a centre of conservatism. There was a mood of optimism, for the early leaders of the Congress in its first decade shared the liberal persuasion of British statesmen. The names of Bright and Cobden were highly respected and the speeches of John Bright on India in Parliament evoked great hopes for there was almost a religious fervour in those speeches.

However, this mood of optimism was not to last. The passing of the Rowlatt Act, 1919 legitimising oppressive legislation, the unrest in Punjab, the Jallianwala Bagh happenings and the Khilafat question all muddled the earlier limpid waters of the Congress. In spite of these, the Committee to command a store of goodwill and its delegation to Nagpur was welcomed.

In summing up and estimating the work of the Committee, the author reminds the reader that the Congress whole-heartedly acknowledged its service to the Indian cause. The stalwarts of the Committee as well as the Congress passed away; the Congress came under the control of the Extremists who wanted total independence in its policies and cut off the leadership strings of the moderates. With the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi, many "lost faith in conducting propaganda in England".

By 1921, the Committee decided to dissolve itself, much to the chagrin of the Liberals. Indian politics now took a new turn with the emergence of a rejuvenated Congress Party under the leadership of the Mahatma and a new era began in Indian politics.

The New Population Bomb

Jack A. Goldstone

What will the global population be in 2050, and how should policymakers consider population growth in Muslim-majority countries?

Forty-two years ago, the biologist Paul Ehrlich warned in *The Population Bomb* that mass starvation would strike in the 1970s and 1980s, with the world's population growth outpacing the production of food and other critical resources. Thanks to innovations and efforts such as the "green revolution" in farming and the widespread adoption of family planning, Ehrlich's worst fears did not come to pass. In fact, since the 1970s, global economic output has increased and fertility has fallen dramatically, especially in developing countries.

The United Nations Population Division now projects that global population growth will nearly halt by 2050. By that date, the world's population will have stabilized at 9.15 billion people, according to the "medium growth" variant of the UN's authoritative population database World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision. (Today's global population is 6.83 billion). Barring a cataclysmic climate crisis or a complete failure to recover from the current economic malaise, global economic output is expected to increase by two to three percent per year, meaning that global income will increase far more than population over the next four decades.

But twenty-first-century international security will depend less on how many people inhabit the world than on how the global population is composed and distributed: where populations are declining and where they are growing, which countries are relatively older and which are more youthful, and how demographics will influence population movements across regions.

Courtesy: Foreign Affairs Newsletter, January/February 2010

N O T E S

Scientific Spirit

Prime Minister Nehru's inaugural address to the Indian Science Congress, recently held in Baroda, was a remarkable piece of liberal-democratic thinking which is becoming so rare in recent times. It was therefore most welcome. It must have come as an agreeable shock to the scientists present, especially to those from Soviet Russia, to see the leader of the Indian Government come before them and advise them "not to just bow down to governmental or nationalistic pressures, but to create an atmosphere of free enquiry which was so necessary for scientific development." The definition of the scientific spirit which he offered should have also come as a shock (not necessarily agreeable) to those emissaries of the crowning of science" which has been offered as the quintessence of truth by those countries which have recently become special objects of love and admiration in this country.

Mr. Nehru described the scientific spirit as humility before truth and the refusal to submit to dogma. Of special note was his insistence on values, the concept of which is sometimes regarded as inconsistent with the spirit and teachings of science. Said Mr. Nehru: "I do not see what it will profit an individual or a country to progress at the cost of values we hold important. But I hope India will progress and yet preserve those qualities she has always valued." Everyone will fervently hope so, but it is hard to see how the hope will be realised unless this consciousness of values affects all our national and international policies and does not merely provide an occasion for magnificent eloquence at scientific gatherings. We are happy to see that, on this important occasion, the Prime Minister has given a message which the Movement for Cultural Freedom is assiduously trying to spread. If one will read the Proceedings (published by Seeker and Warburg) of the Congress on "Science and Freedom," held in Hamburg through the joint endeavour of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the University of Hamburg, one will see that the celebrated scientists gathered at the Congress were considering the problems precisely in the spirit defined by the Prime Minister and raising precisely the same problems within the framework of the same values.

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Rajaji's Appeal

It is difficult to understand the propriety and utility of Mr. Rajagopalachari's call to the United States of America to scrap its atomic arsenal. America is asked to take this step unilaterally and without waiting for any guarantees from Soviet Russia. Mr. Rajagopalachari has made this call upon America because, according to him, it is "she who committed the mistake first". It is true that the atom bomb was invented first by America, but it should not be forgotten that Hitler was on the point of making the discovery. It is easy to imagine what would have happened to the world, if, instead of America, Hitlerite Germany had succeeded in building the first atom bomb.

Mr. Rajagopalachari was candid enough to admit that he made the appeal to America because she was "morally big enough" and that he had no hopes that any newspaper in Russia would take a letter from him. This latter fact should have given him an idea of the issues involved in the struggle between the two countries. In his State of the Union message to the Congress, President Eisenhower outlined in clear terms the real nature of the struggle. He said: "It is not a struggle merely of economic theories, or of forms of Government, or of military power. At issue is the true nature of man. Either man is the creature whom the Psalmist described as "crowned with glory and honour, holding dominion over the works of his Creator;" or man is "a soulless animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the State for its own glorification."

When stakes are so high can one legitimately ask the strongest Power in the free world to throw away, what an American publicist has called, its deterrent power, the power which prevents the Soviet Union from using its vast military strength to make more conquests? The only way to save the world from the atomic destruction that threatens it is to create the climate of peace. The atoms for peace plan propounded by President Eisenhower is a significant step in that direction. Mr. Rajagopalachari should have applied his great talents to the elaboration and progress of such a plan. His appeal, we regret to say, can under the present circumstances serve no useful purpose, except to add grist to the mill of communist propaganda.

Congress is immovable like an over-burdened ass. Instead of taking one thing at a time, they have undertaken a thousand schemes which they cannot fulfil.

- Acharya Vinoba Bhave,

Times of India, January 20, 1955.

Educating Adults

Education

Higher Education In India

Dr. Jyoti Marwah has put down her thoughts on the subject and invited contributions from fellow faculty and students of some colleges in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. We begin a discussion on this subject and invite readers to participate.

Widening Horizons in 2012

India has a long tradition of innovation with a significant pool of qualified people engaged in innovative activities with many of them heading institutes in USA – Niti Nohria (Harvard Business School), Dipak Jain (Kellogg and then INSEAD), Sunil Kumar (University of Chicago's Booth School of Business) and Soumitra Dutta (Cornell's SCJ Graduate School of Management). There is need to foster this talent within the country and capture the multiple innovations happening in various domains to give an impetus to the innovation process within the country. Universities and Research Institutes become centres for innovation, to leverage this talent pool and drive the innovation agenda.

The President of India has declared 2010-2020 as the 'Decade of Innovation' and the National Innovation Council has designed a framework for innovation hoping to attract new and unique applications of old technologies to develop new products and services, new processes and structures to improve performance in diverse areas. For this, India's leading Universities and Institutions – health, energy, environment, management and infrastructure development, need to research with an aim to apply their understanding to real-life problems, thus resulting in an indigenous model of development suited to Indian needs and challenges. This could be a more meaningful objective rather than an aimless wild goose chase to compete with 'world-class' institutions which have been created over hundreds of years or to maintain a record of publications

in international journals, seminars attended and organized. Also Indian Universities need to discipline themselves by equating performance with reward. Higher education must re-anchor the real needs, strengths, resources and life goals so that inclusive growth does not remain a meaningless phrase.

It has also, been rightly pointed out that in aspiring to become a super power, India's attempt at setting up unrealistic targets is not only demoralizing but also an obstruction in the path of achieving what is achievable. India's debut at the prestigious Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 was dismal, ranking near the bottom in all categories to outscore only Kyrgyzstan. So, while we harp on becoming a world power we have to steadily work towards building abilities through substantial improvements in the performance of our institutions – political, social, economic and educational.

With modest exceptions, Science and Technology establishments continue to be divorced from real and pressing challenges in national development. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's lament that China has overtaken India in Science needs to be understood in the light of the use of appropriate or 'Swadeshi' or indigenous Science and Technology as suggested by Sudheendra Kulkarni (*The Indian Express*, January 8 2012).

Research must be directed towards providing solutions to chronic problems of energy, water and food security for the people as these are of critical concern.

India's asset is her young population. With 570 million people below the age of 25 and at every age between 0 to 25 the numbers figure at 20 to 27 million, it is understandable that educating them would be a boost to the economy. The population of a country converts it



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into a boon if its ability is enhanced to contribute to the creation of wealth by education and skill enhancement. So skill development should become the highest economic and social priority to create an educated and employable population. As Germany did after the Second World War by compulsory vocational education at schools and colleges, likewise Indian national institutions need to set their priorities right and respond to this requirement.

Worldwide the market for higher education is intensely competitive. However, in India there is no worthwhile competition, all institutions – IITs, IIMs, IISc, Universities, Schools and Departments are accredited and

ranked on performance which is the only criteria for ascertaining standards. The 14 National Innovation Universities may inject higher quality into the University system but we need to wait and watch to see whether these ‘Centres of Excellence’ become ‘Centres of Relevance.’

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Fostering Public-Private partnership in Higher Education

Louisa Rodrigues

The National Knowledge Commission (2007) painted a dismal picture of higher education in India though “Universities are the lifeblood of Higher Education.” It declared that after sixty years of independence, there is not even one university in India, which is “the best” to find its place among the “top fifty, in the world”. We will agree that with a few exceptions, higher education in India is in bad shape at every level, from high profile institutions to ordinary colleges, for it is not easily accessible, it lacks quality and is inadequately funded.

One of the challenges facing the universities is the increasing pressure of privatization of higher education. Privatization does contribute by recruiting the best and the brightest faculty with higher pay packets that they deserve. Private colleges and universities being better tuned to the needs of the industry will help to remove the disconnect between the Academia and Industry.

However, it can create a new set of problems for higher education as it distorts the very nature and purpose of higher education. For large-scale entry of private sector both domestic and foreign, could push higher education away from the realm of the public to the realm of the private and define its relevance only in terms of economy and

industry without social and public concern. Also, it may transform higher education into a commodity in a market where affordability would largely decide how much and what kind of education one gets. Thus enabling access to higher education for the students from the upper classes, due to the high price tag attached to it.

What we need is a much more visible and higher commitment to public education in India. We also require more public money and other resources. This requires a vigorous debate about how to reform public institution of higher education to make them more accountable, inclusive and alert to the needs of the excluded groups instead of simplistically advocating market as the panacea for all ills in education.

To strengthen universities as integral units of social life offering both research and higher education, we need to provide more universities offering quality education to a larger number of student population than to a mere seven per cent in the age group of 18 and 24, as we do today.

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So why is Margaret Thatcher now so much despised by Britons who she nourished with individual liberty and economic prosperity? Perhaps because she was a woman who showed men what it means to have steel in one's backbone.

Excerpted from Vishal Kumar Singh's post on Facebook

Revamping Indian Universities to Meet New Challenges In Higher Education

Preeta Nilesch

Creation and dissemination of knowledge are important challenges for higher education. The other challenges are improving professional skills and employment for which re-shaping the systems of higher education and ensuring their global competitiveness become imperative.

It is important for Indian Universities to make full use of the advances in the information technology sector, to build on and share resources. The need of the hour is also to have a strict performance evaluation of Institutions and to review their accreditation periodically and systematically.

The abilities and analytical skills of students studying in Indian universities need to be tapped and appreciated through competition and incentives. Comprehensive project work can help to enhance skills and create an active and vibrant environment for developing relevant competencies and aptitudes of performers. For non-performers it may contribute in enabling them put up a better performance, thus making these centers of higher learning more meaningful.

Performance based funding for teaching and cutting-edge research will also help by injecting dynamism in higher education. The quest for knowledge, research and talent has to be an on-going process since these parameters are the indicators of the prestige of any university. Indian universities need to meet the demand for professionalism so programs with higher employability are likely to give Indian universities a better bargaining power .

It is important for Universities in India to devise systems to keep a safe distance from manipulations in matters of appointments and administration. Also, financial corruption and personalized dealings in education need to be firmly dealt with. Proactive involvement of the private sector in higher education, special financial allocations and a selective approach in the utilization of public funds can help in nurturing excellence.

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Can Indian Universities Compete with Foreign Universities?

Varun Nilesch

India has improved immensely in terms of education since 1947. Improving the levels of literacy and education in India has always been the major priority of the government. Our reputed and prestigious institutes like Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) from where world-class engineers and MBAs pass out are indeed a proof of excellence. But the question still arises, 'Can Indian Universities compete with Foreign Universities?'

The biggest demerit of the education system in India is the use of 'teaching methodology' as against the western style of 'learning methodology'. The emphasis under the teaching methodology is on the teacher completing the given syllabus. However, the learning methodology is less of teaching and more of learning through self-study, group studies, assignments, case studies etc. Yet another demerit could be attributed to the lack of flexibility in choosing courses of one's interest.

Also, foreign universities offer a better academic infrastructure, greater freedom of choice and inspirational teaching. Another very important advantage of international education is that students get a chance to add an internationally accepted degree from a renowned university to their academic credit.

Indian education is also highly competition-oriented with heavy emphasis on rote-learning and examination, which is not the case with foreign universities. The high levels of stress generated thereof, inability to provide job-oriented nature of education and above all minimal emphasis on personality-development are important points of distinction between the two. These differences make our universities incapable of competing with foreign universities.

**Varun Nilesch, First Year B.Com Student, R.A.Podar
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Delhi University Plans a 4-Year Degree Course!

Delhi University is planning to add another year to its 3 year undergraduate courses from 2013, in a move that is aimed at giving students a wider choice and an “opportunity to discover their talent”. It is also expected to help students migrate to other universities with a similar system particularly if they planning to go abroad.

According to the plan, the 4-year degree course will comprise general studies in the first year, while students will have to choose their specialization in the second year. If a student drops out in the third year, he/she will still get a diploma or a general Degree. However, those completing four years will get a specialized Degree.

The BA, B.Sc and B.Com courses are likely to be structured in such a manner that even if a student opts out before completing 4 years, either a diploma or a lesser degree will be awarded. Students will also get to study a wider range of subjects in the first year before deciding what to specialize in according to Dinesh Singh, Vice Chancellor of Delhi University. He said that experts are working on a mechanism to address possible problems that the switchover may create.

“A student in the present course structure does not get the necessary opportunity to understand his talent”. A 4-year degree course will ensure a platform to discover his inner talent, his or her area of interest after studying a wide range of subjects believes Dr. Singh.

**Julpisha Kazi, Second Year B.A. Student,
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Let’s close this discussion for now with the following excerpt from an editorial in *EducationWorld*, the outstanding Human Development magazine published from Bangalore by its Founding Editor Dilip Thakore.

One of the numerous logical inconsistencies and paradoxes of post-liberalisation India’s sputtering economic development effort is that too many people - especially the nation’s political leaders, captains of industry and intellectuals – seem to believe this third world country can magically transform into an economic superpower, incredible India, member of the Security Council etc, without bothering about the poor quality of education dispensed in its 1.26 million government

schools, 31,000 colleges and 603 universities. That’s wishful thinking.

It’s patently obvious that everything has gone wrong with Indian education, particularly after independence when in pursuance of a “socialistic pattern of society”, the commanding heights of the Indian economy were captured by the State, i.e the Central and state governments. Suddenly promotion, administration and management of industry, the economy and education system passed into the hands of an empowered but wholly unprepared and under-qualified *neta-babu* (politician-bureaucrat) fraternity which has since morphed into a gigantic 20 million-strong kleptocracy.

While Indian industry muddled through and has modestly prospered, the damage inflicted upon post-independence India’s education system has been devastating, especially in higher education rigidly controlled by the Central and state governments to prevent “commercialisation of education”. Firstly, because private investment in higher education is actively discouraged, capacity building has been grossly inadequate. Currently India’s colleges, universities and institutions of higher education can accommodate a mere 11 percent of the country’s youth in the age group 18-24 years (*cf.* 23 percent in China and 83 percent in the US). Moreover, learning outcomes in contemporary India’s under-funded colleges and universities, in which the lack of libraries and laboratories infrastructure is glaringly evident, are so poor that a 2005 NASSCOM-McKinsey World Institute study concluded that 75 percent of graduates of India’s engineering and 85 percent of science, arts and commerce colleges are unqualified for employment in multinational companies.

That India’s universities and higher education system is in a shambles, is confirmed by the World University Rankings almost simultaneously published by the London-based Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd, a global education research and consultancy, and *Times Higher Education* weekly (THE). Apart from the IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology) which strictly speaking, are not universities, India’s

highest ranked multi-disciplinary varsity is Delhi University which just about squeezes into the QS league table of the world's 400 top varsities. And the top-ranked Indian 'university' in the THE table is IIT-Bombay, awarded a non-specific ranking of 301-350. The causes and effects of the sliding

reputation of India's once respected universities are discussed and debated in this sad end-of-year issue's cover story.

Courtesy: EducationWorld.

Email: educationworld@vsnl.net

(Visit www.educationworldonline.net)

Right To Education

In 1947, literacy in India was merely 12 %. The Colonial authorities' plan to eradicate illiteracy in 64 years was considered too slow by the nationalist leaders. It was well realized that education was the key to improved living standards. Consequently, a provision for universal and compulsory education was included in Article 45 of the Directive Policy of the Constitution. Through efforts of the government, NGOs and parents, the literacy figure has increased to 75% in 2011. The average for the world is 84%. In India, literacy for males is 84% while that for females is 65%. The figures for USA for literacy, higher secondary and post higher secondary qualification are 99%, 85% and 27% respectively. Notice the sharp drop in post higher secondary qualification. Only students aiming for research and professional career opt for it.

Progress in India from 12 to 75% may appear to be remarkable but the hard fact is that the number of illiterate individuals today is more than the total population of the country in 1947. Also, the quality of education is subject to question.

In order to speed up the process, parliament has

now approved the 86th Amendment to the Constitution making education a fundamental right. It aims at free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. Currently, there are 22 crore children in this category. There are some other gaps like training adequate number of teachers, school buildings and responsibility of parents. We have a record number of laws which are never implemented. The thought is noble and praiseworthy. Can the delivery system achieve the target?

Funds will be provided from the 2% surcharge imposed on income tax. All private schools will be obliged to provide 25% seats to children from the economically weaker section. No fees will be charged from them. It is a wrong presumption that all students in private schools come from the affluent class. There are many parents who go through hard times to educate their children. A first step could be to ensure a school seat for every child who wants to study. We are aware of the hassles of getting admission for nursery and elementary classes. Some provision also needs to be made for adult education.

Brig. S. C. Sharma (retd.)

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Parikrma Foundation – A Pioneering Institution

"Two batches of Parikrma students followed their dreams to college. As part of our Final Leap program which helps us get our children into college and prepare them for high-valued jobs, 41 of our students are now at the university. In 2010, six of our students were in Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com), 1 in Bachelor of Science (BSc), 2 in Bachelor of Visual Art (BVA), 2 in Bachelor of Engineering (BE), 1 in Bachelor of Dentistry, 3 in Bachelor of Hotel Management (BHM) and 1 in Diploma in Teaching.

"In 2011, we were excited to see a dramatic increase in the number of students who got into college, and a greater variety in the courses they chose. This year, we have 14 children in BCom, 2 in BSc, 2 in Law, 4 in BHM

and 1 in BE. Some of our students had to start working to become independent quickly, and are balancing part-time jobs while studying. A few have completed certificate courses and started working. One of our students, Tong Mong, has pursued his passion for football and is playing for the Indian Bank team in Chennai.

"It makes us proud to see how well our children are integrating in mainstream colleges and growing into responsible adults. Not only are they adjusting well to this transition, but are tasting success every step of the way. Santosh, who is studying in Presidency College of Hotel Management, has big culinary dreams. He completed his traineeship at The Leela Palace, a five-star hotel in

Bangalore, and recently won a cooking competition at an Inter-Collegiate event. We're sure he's on his way to Master Chef India!

"It costs us, on average, \$1000 per year to send a child to college. Over the next few years, we want to build a scholarship fund to ensure that our children have the financial support to go through college.

"We are keeping to the promise we made when we began in 2003 - to give every child an education that will enable that child to break the cycle of poverty. And already 41 children are showing that they are well on their way to access the best opportunities the world has to offer."

The above quote is from their Newsletter *Parikrma News* which takes legitimate pride also in the successful organisation of a football tournament in which "14 of the

best teams in the city (Bangalore), with a team each from Kerala and Goa, were swept up in football fever. The Parikrma Champions League was a tournament like no other. It was organized by the Parikrma Foundation to create a forum for talent to rise to new heights, giving children access to the best opportunities in sport. 16 teams played 48 matches in the battle for the Equality Cup, a trophy symbolizing the breaking down of barriers. Our aim was to show that even the poorest, when given the opportunity, can rise to be the best and that, as a non-profit organization, we could deliver excellence. Along the way, Parikrma established many firsts, setting the benchmark for future tournaments".

For more about this organization visit www.parikrmafoundation.org.

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Citizenship

On Citizen Candidates - For Whom the Votes Poll

Meera Sanyal

It is very heartening to see the number of citizen candidates who are standing for the upcoming elections, both for the 5 state assembly polls and for the Municipal Corporation elections in Pune and Mumbai. Many of these candidates have reached out to me over the past few months to share their stories, and seek support.

As I speak with them, I am reminded of an encounter that took place a few months after the 2009 Lok Sabha elections (Meera Sanyal contested the Lok Sabha seat from South Mumbai - *Ed.*). We were standing in a small group at a Social gathering, when a senior politician from a well-connected political family, and belonging to a major political party, came and joined us."So" he said, referring to my campaign, "are you going to stand again?" Without waiting for an answer, he continued condescendingly, "*Idea chod do - is zindagi mein tum kabhi jeet nahi sakogi*" ("Give up the idea - in this lifetime you will never win!")

Somewhat taken aback, I looked carefully at him. Past the arrogant bravado, there seemed to be a glimmer of fear in his eyes. So I responded gently, that while he may be right, I was confident that in our lifetime, the nature of politics in India would change. Politics would once again

be considered as an opportunity to serve one's country and not as a dynastic prerogative where the "*gaddi*" or entitlement to rule is passed from one generation to the next. While it could be that I may never win, ordinary citizens like me will win one day - and India would be a better place for it.

It is therefore a matter of great happiness to see so many citizens candidates supported by grassroots citizens groups, enter the fray just 3 years after the 2009 elections.

In Pune the Pune Nagrik Sanghatan (PNS) has selected and is supporting candidates like Binod Ojha, Sana Patil, and Advocate Sunil Jagtap, who have a track record of service and a reputation for integrity. For details look up the PNS facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/PNS-Pune-Nagarik-Sanghatana-Clean-Politics-for->

a-Better-Pune/224762500939523.

In Mumbai, so far 37 citizen candidates, have come forward to stand for the Corporation elections. *Mumbai 227*, (who also have a facebook page by the same name) have followed a rigorous process to select potential Corporators.

Similarly the Lok Satta Party, headed by the charismatic JP Narayan, is putting up amongst others, Sangeeta Sharma for ward 76 and Dr. Parag Jhaveri for Ward 216. The Mumbai Nagrik Satta led by Adolf D'Souza is supporting 7 candidates and the Mumbai Nagrik Manch led by Hansel D 'Souza is putting up 3.

What is common amongst all these citizen candidates is that:

- none of them is a career politician
- they are standing independent of established political parties
- they each have a track record of performance and integrity in their current professions
- each is driven by a desire to improve their ward/locality/ city/ state/country
- they are not afraid to lose!

The entry of this large number of citizen candidates has the potential to be a game changer – particularly at the Corporation level in Mumbai and Pune.

It comes at the same time that nearly 70 % of the

existing corporators will lose their seats, due to reservations. The situation in Mumbai illustrates this clearly: out of 227 seats, 114 are reserved for Women, 61 for Other Backward Castes, and 13 for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes – leaving only 39 seats unreserved!

This explains the friction that the parties in all major political alliances are currently undergoing. It is no longer a scramble to find “safe” seats – it is hard enough finding any seats at all to stand from!

The upcoming elections provide us a unique opportunity. We can stop complaining about the problems of inadequate infrastructure, corruption and poor leadership and instead take positive action. Let us take the trouble, to get to know the candidates who are standing, make a reasoned choice about who the best individual is, and make the effort to support her/him. **Last but not least, let us take the trouble to go out and vote on election day – if we vote for better candidates we will have better Governance. It really is that simple.**

In his lyrical book *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Earnest Hemingway reminds us “*Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*”

If ever there were a time to remember this, it is now – it is not these citizen candidates who will win or lose – it is us, you and me.

From Meera Sanyal's blog Meera's Musings. Printed with her permission. Posted on January 16, 2012

Dealing with Breaking Tweets & Blogs

The buzzword is no longer “Breaking News”. It is “Breaking Tweets” and “Breaking Blogs”, which have started disseminating news and comments faster than the TV channels.

Journalists no longer first rush to policy and opinion makers to find out their views on important developments. They rush to the Twitter sites of important personalities to find out what they have tweeted about such developments. Personal interactions continue to be important for journalists, but twitter and other microblog interactions are assuming increasing importance in assessing public opinion.

Now, “Breaking Tweets” and “Breaking Blogs” are becoming as important as “Breaking News” for keeping oneself informed instantaneously of what is happening around us.

There is now a recognition that public opinion is increasingly and better reflected in the TV news channels and microblogs than in the print media. For the traditional, old generation elite, the print media continues to be an important source of reliable news and in-depth analysis. But, for Gen Next of the civil society and the Internet-bred elite, which have no time or patience for esoteric analyses, the TV news channels and microblogs have become the preferred tools for knowing and thinking.

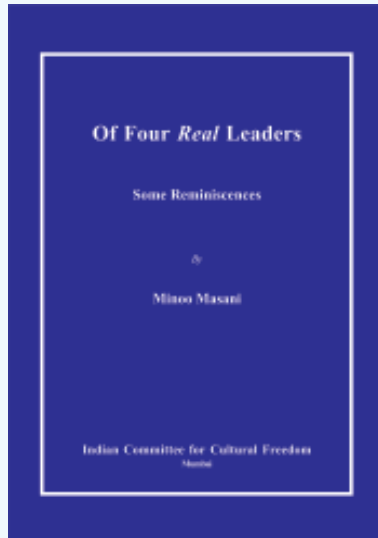
2011 was a turning point in the evolution of our media strategies. Those who realised the importance of TV news channels and microblogs in reaching out to the public and mobilising public opinion did better as political and social activists than those who continued to be stuck to the print media.

B. Raman is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, New Delhi, and, at present, Director, Institute for Topical Studies, Chennai). Excerpted from his paper in C3S Paper No.928 dated January 20, 2012. Visit www.c3sindia.org for the full paper

Just released!

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 only this month 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.

Price Rs.50/-. Add Rs.30 if you wish to receive the booklet by courier.

Payment by cheque (cheque to be drawn in favour of ICCF) or money order to Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Bldg. 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. If payment by cheque please ensure that it is payable at par in Mumbai.

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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