

Monthly No. 540 , June 2012, Rs. 20

Freedom First

60 YEARS OF
STANDING BY
FREEDOM.





Dad,
I feel
I should also
open a
Union Bank
Savings
Account

Open a Union Bank Savings Bank Account
Avail a host of benefits

- ATM cum International Debit Card
- Flexi Deposit
- Multi City Cheque Book
- Internet Banking
- SMS / Mobile Banking
- Phone Banking
- Demat Facility
- ASBA
- Online RTGS/NEFT

यूनियन बैंक
अच्छे लोग, अच्छा बैंक



Union Bank
of India
Good people to bank with

1800 22 2244 (Toll free no.) | 022 2575 1500 (Chargeable)
022 2571 9600 (For NRIs) | www.unionbankofindia.co.in

Freedom First

SENIOR CITIZEN

This month, the feisty, outspoken lady of Kala Ghoda achieves the venerable status of senior citizen. Yes, *Freedom First*, the doyen of freewheeling opinion and unalloyed liberalism has now been in continuous publication for a mind blowing 60 years, a feat very very few magazines can boast of. The old lady may show a little grey at the temples and clothed in attire that is far from the latest fashion, but the gleam in her eye remains undiminished and the fire burns just as brightly in her belly.

I am a fairly recent adoptee of *Freedom First*, barely five years old and still in awe of the stalwarts that have made this magazine required reading for senior government figures, eminent jurists, army generals and everyone else who appreciates and values the consistent liberal position it adopts. What is even more remarkable is that *Freedom First* continues to maintain this distinction on a shoestring budget and a skeleton staff. In terms of material gain, the job of editor would have to be one of the most unrewarding imaginable and yet, the present incumbent continues to display unflagging enthusiasm and commitment that guarantees that the magazine maintains the high standards it has set itself.

Taking birth on the same year and month (June 1952), as the convening of the first session of the First Lok Sabha of the Indian Republic, *Freedom First* was founded by Minoo Masani, a visionary of incorruptible principles, impeccable honesty and a towering politician belonging to a breed that is now practically extinct. His Swatantra Party, a political outfit of such integrity and moral rectitude that it would be viewed with incredulity by today's generation, was a brief, shining Camelot in the venal maelstrom of Indian politics. Unfortunately and almost inevitably, it met its demise at the hands of a Goliath Congress. Nonetheless, Masani would continue to make his voice and those of other liberal thinkers heard through the magazine he founded. After his passing, his vision has been very ably kept going by his younger associates, which is why

readers and subscribers to *Freedom First* are among the most loyal you can find anywhere.

And so the legend continues. *Freedom First* will always be a David who shows no interest in competing with other magazines that possess infinitely superior resources. It operates under financial constraints that would have overwhelmed lesser beings. Due to its sterling reputation, unsolicited and unpaid quality articles continue to pour in to keep the vision alive. The magazine is not content to rest on its laurels, however. An exhaustive digitization project is underway, which will make the wealth of articles stored in the *Freedom First* archives available at the click of a mouse. Very soon the magazine will have its own web page which will hopefully attract the growing tribe of netizens. The walking stick may give way to a wheel chair over the next few decades, but *Freedom First* will remain young at heart. God bless.

Firoze Hirjikaka

Say not the Struggle Naught availeth

SAY not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright!

Arthur Hugh Clough

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 60th Year of Publication

No.540

June 2012

C o n t e n t s

Freedom First	Firoze Hirjikaka	1	Sachin Tendulkar MP	Keshav Rau	15
Senior Citizen					
Introspection – 60 years On		2	Point Counter Point		
From Our Readers		3		Ashok Karnik	17
A Brush with Nature -	Ashish Chandola	4	Nirmal Baba is Within Us	Sharu S. Rangnekar	19
Summer Trees					
What Ails Society -	K. K. Pathak	6	Cornucopia		
Debasing Society				Firoze Hirjikaka	21
The Rural Perspective –			Book Reviews		25
Its Drought Time Again	(CSE Editorial)	7	• The Best of Quest		
The NCTC- An Assault on Federalism?			• Without Fear or Favour		
	Ashok Karnik	8	• Of Four Real Leaders • Minoo Masani		
Regionalism is Not Federalism			Freedom First.		
	Nitin G. Raut	10	This Month in June 1955		30
A Cartoon Bomb Explodes			Educating Adults		31
	Sadanand B. Kumta	12	Displaced Youth		
Rescue of Hostages			The Right to Education Act		
	Suresh C. Sharma	13			

Introspection Sixty Years On

We have crossed yet another milestone. The first was when we crossed fifty. This was in October 2002; the second when we published the 500th number in February 2009 and this month, when we have reached sixty years of age. The first two were a compendium of what the editors considered the best of *Freedom First*. Dr. Mary Thomas was the guest editor of the 50th birthday issue. The 500th issue had almost the entire Advisory Board as its contributing editors. They put together an altogether different set of articles. Yet the common thread that ran through both these numbers was this declaration excerpted from our first published article way back in June 1952:

“The open society is the objective of our Movement. While it wants the sway of freedom in every segment of life, it feels that the realm of the

mind that is its heart and home is what it must safeguard with all its might. In this stubborn allegiance to the liberties of the mind the movement draws its strength from India’s glorious traditions. The crusade for Open Society has to be fought with a widening mind and widening heart and all men who love to think freely and act openly are among its fighters”

We reiterate this determination as strongly as we did 60 years ago. And this is not empty rhetoric. One has only to go through the 15,000+ pages of this 60-year old to bear this out. We have never drawn back when there was need to swim against the tide. And soon you will have the opportunity to read everything that was written in *Freedom First* with the click of the mouse. This explains why we did not decide on a third compendium.

Founder: Minoo 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 Wagle ● **Cover:** Vivek Raju
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 Homji 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 (11nd Class Air Mail) Annual: \$20 or £10
 Cheques to be drawn in favour of **ICCF** and mailed to the publishers at the above address.

Instead, the Advisory Board which met last month had other things on its mind. How to clear the poisonous flotsam and jetsam that is threatening the republic and the steady decline in values that will surely destroy our people as surely as night follows day.

Inevitably our parliament is a mirror of our people. The first Lok Sabha may have had many members who *courted* prison; but the present and recent inmates of Tihar Jail were *put* there by free India. They face charges of criminal malfeasance.

Freedom First shares the month and year of birth with our country's first Lok Sabha. We have been in the visitor's gallery, as it were, watching and commenting on the goings on. According to a report in *The Hindu* (May 14) at a special sitting of parliament convened on *Sunday* May 13 to mark the first sitting of Parliament 60 years ago "Adjournments caused by disruptions and pandemonium, holding of dharna by members rushing to the well of the House and an unwillingness to participate

in discussions were some of the concerns expressed by MPs across party lines."

The report adds that the special session passed a resolution to "uphold the dignity and supremacy of parliament." Amen for that. Time alone will speak about their sincerity.

Meanwhile in the name of Secularism, Reservations, Minority rights, Federalism, and Socialism (so called) the country is being ripped apart even as poor management of the economy threatens to take us back to 1991.

Our task for the next forty years is clear – tackling these issues without bothering about political correctness even if this means re-defining the concepts which we have just listed and going forward with our Movement for an Open Society. This is the pledge we take on our 60th anniversary.

Editor

From Our Readers

Freedom First

The latest issue of *Freedom First* has not left out any of our burning problems for a thorough analysis - everything discussed threadbare from a highly enlightened point of view. The noteworthy point about them is that they are all easily readable also! There is so much in it for the immediate attention and favourable consideration of our decision makers.

I, for one, could not help recalling how Rajaji used to go through every page whenever Norman Cousins's *Saturday Review* reached him by mail- I am reminded of it in every page of FF.

I am also haunted frequently by the thought whether all the herculean labour in bringing it out every month is not a thankless job!

K. Vedamurthy, Chennai. kved2001@yahoo.com

*

Sportsmen No longer but Sports-professionals!

I have been watching and reading in dismay the "anti-sporting spirit" being inculcated and propagated among the youth all over the country through the endless cricket matches and equally endless cricket controversies.

As a veteran admirer of the sport, I recall the good old days when we proudly went to cheer, encourage and motivate "our" teams, whether they be of our school, town,

state or country. We felt pride in getting an autograph of a player; we were thrilled with victory, but also accepted defeat sportingly without animosity or frustration. And we actually played cricket, even if it was with a tennis ball and cracked bat in the by-lanes – we didn't just sit and watch it on TV.

Today cricket teams are "owned" by celebrities, not by the citizens. Cricketers are "auctioned" to the team who bids highest, not selected because they are residents of that place and have proved their mettle. Cheerleaders and film stars are more visible than those playing the game. The end result is that every second young boy (thankfully not too many girls yet – probably because the sport does not offer big money to girl players) has set his career goals on becoming a cricket player. Not a "sportsman" mind you, not even a sports-professional – but a glamorous cricket player who brandishes soft drinks and vehicles as their "brand ambassador" earning crores of rupees without any effort.

As a career counselor, I am genuinely concerned about this trend, and I appeal to all well-meaning adults to kindly help children understand the meaning of sportsmanship, pride of their country and institutions, physical fitness, and the difference between a hobby and a career.

Dr. Ali Khwaja, Banjara Academy, Bangalore.
www.banjaraacademy.org

A Brush with Nature

Ashish Chandola

Beginning with this issue Freedom First is privileged to introduce readers to this new column "A Brush with Nature" by the well-known wildlife photographer Ashish Chandola. He is a director/cameraman with several highly regarded wildlife documentaries. He has also been contributing book reviews and articles on nature and wildlife in magazines and books.

Summer Trees



This year we had no March rains in Bangalore and even the traditional April showers, which give this city its much-vaunted 'salubrious' climate, failed us totally. The dry heat became quite unbearable with only the trees providing us with much needed pleasant distraction.

The Erythrina or Coral tree (*Erythrina suberosa*) at our home, cloned from a native parent near the Bandipur forest, had been shedding leaves since December and showed its first blossoms in January. It only reached its totally leafless state by the middle of February but by then, it was in full bloom. And so it remained well into March, festooned all over with slim buds and petals the colour of coral - how apt its common name!

Erythrina flowers are loaded heavy with nectar and our tree attracted 4 kinds of mynas, a few small flocks of Rosy Starling, Black Drongo, Purple-rumped Sunbird, the odd Koel, Rose-ringed Parakeet and three striped palm squirrel. Interestingly, the Brown-headed Barbets that spent all the morning hours calling from a nearby Goolar (*Ficus racemosa*), never visited and neither did their spritely little cousins, the Coppersmith Barbet.

The procession of birds would start around 6 in the morning and carry on till about 8.30 by when the

gentleness of the morning sun would have given way to heat and harsh light. The birds would stop visiting then, even though the flowers would be dripping nectar the whole day in such profusion as to stain the flagging concrete below. But the birds would not come for it. Not even after the heat of the sun had ebbed and its light had taken on the warm golden hue of sunset.

We wondered, if after all, it was the heat of the sun that fermented the nectar or spoilt it in a way that made it unpalatable to the birds, or whether it was the urban environment, where due to various constraints birds are fewer in number and where after the morning liquid diet, they move on to find and feed on more substantial stuff.

But I digress. While the birds went about their business amidst the flowers of the Erythrinās, the stark unappealing limbs of the avenue of Honge that we have planted along the outer perimeter of our compound and which had remained bare and lifeless for many weeks now, started to sprout new leaves of a most appealing light parrot green color.

The Honge is a magnificent tree, which goes by the botanical name, *Pongamia pinnata*, and reaches magnificent proportions even in the city. The ones that are even remotely near any power lines are hacked and butchered mercilessly by the electricity department people who show no mercy to any tree whether young or old, in blossom or bearing fruit. Otherwise, nothing bothers this tree. Its foliage is full and dense and provides deep shade. The flowers are small and of a purple hue, infused with a pleasantly light fragrance that speaks of summer to those who know it.

Known to Mumbaikars as the Karanj, this tree though relatively slow growing, does well both in the city and the countryside as goats in particular, find the leaves unpalatable and leave the saplings alone. The oil extraction from the seedpods goes into the making of herbal

pesticide and the oilcake is used as part of natural fertilizers as it helps neutralise various pests of the soil and those that occur in farmyard manure. The timber is strong and popular in South India for making door and window frames.

But it is on the drive to Mysore and beyond, on the road to Ooty, that we are welcomed by the soothing sight of the Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) trees along the roadside. They too are in new leaf by late April and even by the second week of May, as we drive back towards Bangalore, the leaves had not turned the coarse dark green that they do when mature. From a distance the large old trees look an interesting mix of a light yellow and light green. Then we notice that they are in full

blossom now, with the pale yellow of the flowers covering the tree nearly as thickly as the leaves!

The Tamarind is so much a part of the landscape of South India that we have to remind ourselves time and again that this is a species that has been introduced to this land from Africa. My friend, Pradip Krishen writes in his book on the trees of Delhi, that the Tamarind was brought in “.... so long ago that Arab traders who came here in the 2nd century named it ‘tamar-i-hind’ (Indian date).” I wonder what came first, *Rasam* and *Sambar* or the Tamarind tree!

ASHISH CHANDOLA lives in Bangalore and can be contacted at chandola.ashish@gmail.com.

End Over-Subsidisation of Higher Education

The enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory (RTE) Education Act, 2009 and the Supreme Court’s substantial validation of its provisions by its judgement delivered on April 12, has belatedly focused national attention upon vitally important primary and upper primary education – the foundation block of national development worldwide. Despite newly independent India having adopted Soviet-style detailed central planning to ensure balanced growth in all sectors of the economy and inter-sectoral linkages, early childhood and elementary education for the masses proved to be a blindspot of India’s central planners. The price of this neglect of primary education the country has had to pay in terms of rapid population growth, poor agricultural and industrial productivity and mass illiteracy, has been very heavy. Therefore the belated acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of qualitative elementary (classes I-VIII) and vocational education, as prerequisites of national socio-economic development is as welcome as it is overdue.

But at a press conference in Bangalore on April 26, officials and members of the Education Promotion Society of India (EPSI) – an association of private colleges and universities in tertiary education – expressed alarm that the outcome of huge outlays required of the Central and state governments to implement RTE (which EPSI estimates at Rs.70,000 crore per year) will be that “higher education will end up having lesser resources”.

The fears of EPSI and other academics in higher education highlight the imperative to radically reform India’s obsolete tertiary education system driven by

massive subsidisation of higher education. Tuition fees in Central and state government higher education institutions – which constitute the great majority of the country’s 31,000 arts, science and commerce colleges and 611 universities – are among the lowest worldwide, being frozen since 1950 at Rs.15-50 per month, even in the country’s top-ranked colleges and universities. According to one survey, tuition and development fees etc contribute less than 5 percent of the annual expenditure of Central and state government colleges and universities. And shockingly, subsidisation of higher education is indiscriminate and universal, which means students from the country’s richest households pay the same tuition fees as from the poorest.

Quite clearly, universal over-subsidisation of tertiary education is iniquitous and contrary to the national interest. It’s high time therefore, that tuition fees in higher education are raised to at least 25 percent of the actual cost of education provision, indiscriminate subsidisation of higher education is abolished in favour of targeted subsidisation of needy merit students, and a system of long-term, low-interest loans for students introduced.

The national interest demands that government allocations for higher education are steadily reduced to release resources for primary foundational education. In the final analysis, elementary education is a public good while higher education is a personal benefit.

COURTESY: Editorial in the *EducationWorld*, May 2012.

Debasing Society

K. K. Pathak

When all are wrong, there would be no norms in society, either for disapprobation or approbation of evils that afflict our society today.

Who is responsible for debasing our Society? The question is worth asking in the face of progressively increasing degeneration of our society. All evils started from the top, percolating down to the bottom in a way which impels us to say that all are wrong, and so every one is right. No better definition of complete chaos in all walks of our national life could be given in one sentence. When all are wrong, there would be no norms in society, either for disapprobation or approbation of evils that afflict our society today.

Just imagine for a while a village in which all are thieves. Will they even call one another a thief? Not at all! A vicious circle from top to bottom has come into existence, completing the process of degeneration with frightful speed leading to ruin of all social ethos and norms of morality which make for culture and civilisation, rich enough to make a society a matter of pride. Neither political life nor social life nor even religious life is free from the virus of degeneration. We have scoundrels in all the walks of our national life, making selfishness a sign of civic virtue to lead a successful life. The basic structure of the family has been badly shaken in every home and a head of a family is no longer an ideal for its members to emulate and follow. When social life becomes devoid of all idealism that makes for social life rich enough to follow the path of righteousness, national character becomes a strong spine to lead society on the right path, rejecting evilish conduct and looking upon it with derision; and imbibing civil society with a sense of social duty and a sense of national responsibility.

Selfishness has been on the rise, becoming a social virtue for a successful conduction of life! There is no place for civic virtues either at home or at school, let alone in social life. Neither the system of education nor our leaders of society give any message of civic virtues, extolled and held in our society in the highest esteem. Such a state of affairs is nothing short of a complete degeneration of our society. Politics, social work, and religion have come to be a lucrative profession in the country. Life has become more complicated than ever before. These complications lead the common man to resort to self-deception and personal dishonesty in conducting life as a member of

our society. He is so prone to pander to the cupidity of political leaders, social workers, and religious preachers that their professions get going without any censor, let alone any check to stop this social debauchery. He does not want to get out of the quagmire he is in. Nothing induces him to take an initiative to get rid of the rot he is a part and parcel of in such a way as would not let him think of getting out of the rot he is in. How can a change to be brought about for a journey to start from degeneration to regeneration? It is a big question today.

No change that has a chance to stay on and last for some decades is possible without three factors: (1) Revival of social ethos and norms of morality that stood us in good stead in the past, (2) emergence of a noble soul like that of Mahatma Gandhi, capable of making an epoch, and (3) an uprising from below, wiping out the rot at the top. If we calmly think over these three basic conditions which could bring about a desired change for the good, we will find there are remote possibilities of any of these conditions coming to our rescue for salvation, the dominating creed of honest and thinking people pine for under the suffocating social order we have today.

Education has no civic orientation, let alone fostering and inculcating any sense of morality which motivates a society to reject evil lock, stock and barrel. A choice between greater evil and lesser evil is pollution, a cause of our debased structure of society and consequently our national life. Education has become a purposeless venture in the country. A false conception of secularism is one of the factors making education devoid of its first essential purpose – good citizenry which could sustain the benefits of our democratic set-up. We are passing through very hopeless times, with little or no prospects of seeing light at the end of the tunnel. What can an upright and honest PM like Dr. Manmohan Singh achieve in such conditions as obtaining at the moment in the country? I wonder if he could help the situation, the more so with the constraints of a coalition hotch-potch as a great impediment to any efforts in the desired direction.

K. K. PATHAK is an educationist and a political commentator based in Bharatpur, Rajasthan.



It's Drought Time Again

Nothing new in this announcement. Each year, first we have crippling droughts between December and June, and then devastating floods in the next few months. It's a cycle of despair, which is more or less predictable. But this is not an inevitable cycle of nature we must live with... This year, large parts of Maharashtra are hit by a severe drought.

... The chief minister wants money for relief; the opposition wants to score points. But in spite of programmes, plans and money, we are not moving towards any real solution to this scarcity. Why?

Why when Maharashtra has had the longest programme for drought relief in the country? It was in the 1970s, when the state was similarly afflicted, that it devised the employment guarantee Act. It guaranteed work close to where people lived so that they are not forced to migrate. As the scheme was to check migration, city dwellers and professionals paid for it. Over time, the state government improvised and put the drought relief money in works that provided relief against drought such as building check dams and percolation ponds and conserving soil. The scheme was abandoned once its successor – Centrally sponsored National Employment Guarantee Programme – was launched in mid-2000s. But the work continues.

Let's understand how we are going wrong in our strategies. First, rainfall is even more variable – scientists link this with climate change. In Maharashtra last year, rains were normal, but were either late or erratic. Farmers lost time waiting to plant the summer crop and then suffered due to intense or unseasonal rains. Increasingly capricious monsoon makes water management more urgent.

Secondly, irrigation projects have been built but not utilised. In this thirsty state, according to its own data, some 40 per cent of the potential created is not being used. Reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India speak about scandalous ways in which dams are built but canals are not and about cost escalations so high that projects become unviable and are never completed.

Thirdly, Maharashtra is the only Indian state to give industry priority over agriculture in allocation of water.

So even when an irrigation project is built, water is diverted for urban and industrial needs. In Amravati, a drought-hit district, the Upper Wardha irrigation project was taken up for implementation under the prime minister's relief package. But when water started to flow in the canals, the state decided to divert it to the Sophia thermal power project. Farmers protested vehemently. This resulted in the overturning of the policy that gave industry priority, but not in the cases where water was already allocated. Fights go on.

Today, the state's Economic Survey accepts that only 50 per cent of the utilised water in its reservoirs is being used for agriculture. With rapid urbanisation demand for water will only go up. This will add to stress unless cities and industries become water prudent now – use less water and return clean water to farmers, not sewage.

Fourthly, water use is grossly inefficient. Maharashtra has a propensity for sugarcane-type, water-guzzling crops. This dry and water-stressed state produces 66 per cent of the crushed sugar in the country – way over what Uttar Pradesh, located in the Ganga basin, manages. So water available for agriculture is also not used wisely.

Fifthly, we forget underground aquifers meet a considerable part of water demand. So we do not factor in the need for recharge of groundwater. Instead we extract more and more water, leading to scarcity.

The sixth is our inability to link investment in watershed and soil conservation to groundwater recharge. In the past few years, attention has been paid to building ponds and tanks and to protecting watersheds. But investment in these assets – coming largely through employment guarantee schemes – is hardly ever productive. The schemes provide jobs and do not care about the quality of the work. Watersheds are planted with trees but protection of trees is not ensured. The tank is desilted, but the channels or the catchment that bring water to the tank are not.

In this way, we have made droughts perpetual – rain or no rain, money or no money.

COURTESY: CSE's Fortnightly News Bulletin (May 16, 2012)

Post your comments on this editorial online at <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/six-sins-make-drought-invincible>

The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC)

An Assault on Federalism?

Ashok Karnik

The seeds of distrust between the states and the Centre have been sprouting for long and the Centre has not cared to nourish a healthy relationship with the states. A much required legislation for the setting up of the NCTC is thus on its way to the dustbin.

The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) which was to begin functioning from March 2012 is facing hurdles on account of its perceived infringement of the federal structure of the Indian Union. The bone of contention is that since law and order is a state subject, any attempt by the Centre to take over this function without the knowledge of a State amounts to breach of the Constitutional provision. The objection is technically correct as even the CBI can operate in a State only on the invitation of a state government. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) which was established in 2008 is an exception as it can investigate certain offences across state boundaries on its own. However, the difference between the NIA and NCTC is that the NIA can act on specific, registered criminal cases while the NCTC being an intelligence agency would have a much larger scope; in fact the NCTC could enlarge its scope to any level. The non-Congress state governments are worried about such unfettered jurisdiction of an intelligence agency equipped with police powers. At a meeting of CMs (May 5, 2012), the NCTC came in for attack and all but got derailed.

Why NCTC?

The NCTC is based on sound premises as an agency which has intelligence capabilities as well as powers to pursue a lead by arresting a person, seizing evidence and prosecute him if required to meet the challenges of terrorism. Terrorism is not easy to tackle even with the best of resources and anything that strengthens anti-terrorist measures should be welcome. So far central intelligence agencies (IB & R&AW) and the police have worked in different compartments and each group is known to blame the other for not giving enough inputs or not acting adequately on the intelligence provided. Each had an escape mechanism ready when things went wrong. After 26/11, it was felt that the time had come to stop the blame game and an agency which had 'intelligence' responsibility should be made accountable for further action. Hence the combination of intelligence and police powers in NCTC. Unfortunately, the Centre went about

the formation of NCTC in a ham-handed manner. Instead of taking the States into confidence as to why it was forming a new body which would assume some functions of the State police, it issued an executive order announcing that the NCTC would start functioning from March 1, 2012. The states did not know what hit them and all kinds of speculations and suspicions gathered momentum. It was as if the Centre was contemplating subverting the states through the back door.

P. Chidambaram, Home Minister, explained like a good lawyer that he is, that the Centre had completed all legal formalities and that there was no need to go to Parliament to pass a new Bill to form the NCTC; the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Ordinance/Act (2004) had already made a provision authorising the Centre to designate an Agency to fight terrorism. The NCTC was so designated by the Centre in 2011. He failed to rationalise why after 8 years, an obscure provision of an old Act was used for taking such a major step and what was the harm in calling a meeting of CMs as was done belatedly on May 5, 2012 after an uproar over the NCTC. He suggested a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the NCTC, which would ensure that the NCTC would not be misused. He suggested that the State Directors General of Police would be ex-officio members of the Governing Council of the NCTC so that it would not do anything to damage the State's integrity; the Chief of the ATS in each state would be the nodal point for NCTC action and that except for rarest of rare cases, the NCTC would not act without informing the state government concerned. This should have been enough but the seeds of distrust between the states and the Centre have been sprouting for long and the Centre has not cared to nourish a healthy relationship with the states. A much required legislation is thus on its way to the dustbin.

Objections to NCTC

The CMs had two grievances against the NCTC. Why should the NCTC go behind the back of state governments and why should it be located in the

Intelligence Bureau? There are reasons why an intelligence agency would be constrained to go behind the back of a state government: intelligence gathering by its very nature is a delicate mechanism; even within an intelligence agency, the mechanism is guarded from those not connected with the operation directly. To expose any actionable intelligence to outside entities (howsoever honest) is fraught with danger. It is possible that on a rare occasion the NCTC would be reluctant to pass on details to a state body. It may be politically incorrect to make the allegation but it needs to be stated that many state police officers are suspected to be hand in glove with the underworld and cannot be trusted with sensitive information. Restricted circulation of information is the standard procedure with all intelligence agencies.

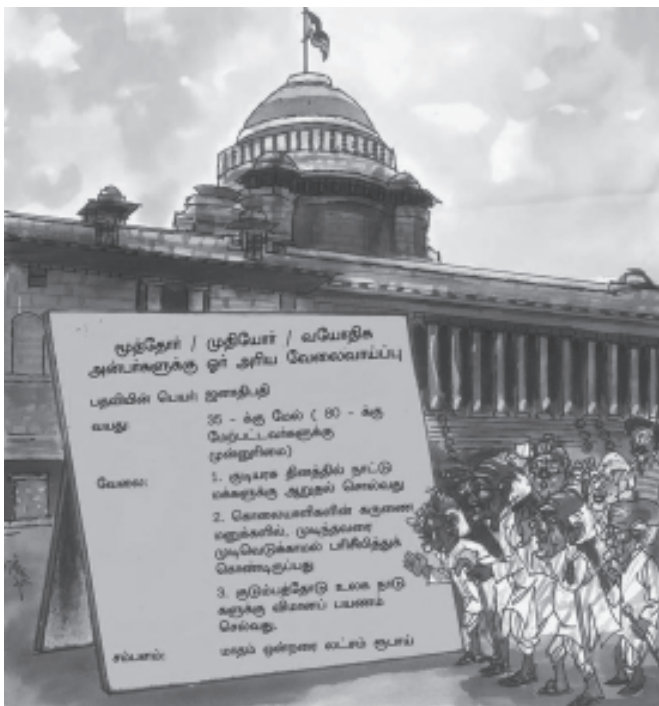
The other objection is to the location of NCTC in the Intelligence Bureau (IB). During the Emergency the IB came in for suspicion of all kinds of mischief; it may be untrue, but the perception persists that such agencies can be and are used by the Government to hinder even legitimate activities of the opposition. The NCTC can be separated from the IB but it would amount to replication of all intelligence built up by the IB for years. It would be too expensive and counter-productive as the only organisation (IB) having some expertise in dealing with terrorism would be excluded from the anti-terrorist fight at a crucial juncture. Even after that is done, where is the guarantee that the NCTC would not be used like the IB?

Mere misapprehension should not drive a debate on such crucial matters.

A Step Forward

While the NCTC is opposed by several State Governments, it is legally not dead yet. The notification for its formation has not been withdrawn so far. It should not be difficult for all the states to agree that the fight against terrorism is a national imperative and all steps needed to meet this threat have to be taken by rising above political divides. Keeping aside all prejudices, the NCTC needs to be put in place. In order to prevent its misuse, its operations can be brought under the purview of an oversight committee of Parliament. Since this would be an *ex-post facto* exercise, there would be no danger of premature exposure and security would not be breached while keeping the NCTC in check. The bogey of federalism being assailed should be buried and a more constructive debate should begin. It is not as if the NCTC is a magic wand and all our terror worries would be over once it is formed. It would be only a small step in the fight against terror; the major role has to be played by those collecting intelligence on the ground. As long as this area remains neglected, the battle would be unequal.

ASHOK V. KARNIK, formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India;freelanance writer and on the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.
Email: ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in



“Excellent job opportunity for the old, the aged and the infirm.”

Nature of job: President of India

Age: 35 and above. Preference will be given to over 80.

Job content:

- (a) Console people on Republic Day after the flag hoisting.
- (b) Keep perusing mercy petitions from murderers without taking any decision.
- (c) Frequent travel abroad with family.
- (d) Salary: Rs.1,50,000/ pm
- (e) Perks: Space is not sufficient. Booklet will be sent on payment of Rs 10/- by crossed postal order.

Translated from the Tamil

Contributed by K. Vedamurthy.

Courtesy: *Tughlak* and its editor Cho Ramaswamy.

Regionalism is Not Federalism

Nitin G. Raut

A federation envisages decentralization of power and not regionalization of the nation. It is the failure of the Centre to address legitimate regional aspirations that has encouraged the rise of regional parties which treat the federal units as their personal or family fiefdoms.

The 2012 elections to the five State Assemblies was in effect U.P. Elections given its weightage in terms of the Parliamentary and Assembly seats.

Of the two national parties, the performance of neither the BJP nor the Congress matched their Pan Indian status. If the Congress bit dust in U.P. the BJP barely managed to retain its numbers.

The new poster boy of the media is the U.P. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. Such is the euphoria over his elevation and Samajwadi Party (SP) victory that masks the larger national issues. Regional parties in the flush of excitement are seen as personifying federalism. But before the dust settles the bigger contours of Indian polity with its inherent contradictions between national and regional issues will emerge. The violence of the SP is already there to be seen.

The larger question is whether the weakening of national parties and the growing strength of regional parties reflects federalism or leads to compromises on issues of national importance. About six states are under regional parties, which is a reality and the national parties have to coexist with them. But how?

If the Centre becomes weak in the manner that there is a policy *impasse*, the two national parties are to be blamed.

The BJP which advocates a strong Centre is unable to expand in the South and North East. Even in the Hindi heartland, once its *forte*, it has faltered as can be seen from the 2012 results in UP. For the BJP anti-Congressism or comparison with the Congress performance is a negative and myopic way of perceiving its performance. It has to stress on good governance and make Gujarat its role model where a corruption free leadership of Narendra Modi is showing results. Critics will of course try to obfuscate the issue by raising the Godhra carnage and its aftermath but that should hardly distract anyone from its good governance.

The Congress is a pale shadow of its past. Corruption, scams, misgovernance and dynastic ambitions have derailed its directions. The UP results have shown that voters are no longer enamoured of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. If anything, it has exploded the myth of the self arrogated right to rule. No longer can the legacy of a family

name fetch votes to perpetuate generational dynasty. If Congress is bereft of leadership it cannot identify the nation with its problems. Its dependence on the Nehru dynasty is its problem. But when it impacts the nation and when the Congress UPA II hobbles on crutches provided by extra constitutional outfits like the National Advisory Council only to provide the dynasty some locus, it loses focus and imperils and sabotages the democratic process. Can such a party even claim a national outlook.

The nation is in no mood to forgo its self respect. Internet and education have created an awareness and bred a new class of thinking youngsters who have no sentimental attachment to names. In UP the rejection of the Rahul Gandhi brand proves that leadership cannot be marketed or sold like a package with the label of a family's legacy. Is he a mass leader or a show piece to be displayed like expensive crystals on occasions? In the 21st century only authoritarian regimes like Syria, North Korea, Libya or absolute monarchies like Saudi Arabia make way for their children as successors without even a semblance of democratic mandate. Voters want development and economic progress and not sops like reservations. It wants a radical change in leadership.

The decline of national parties and the rise of regional parties need not be in consonance with the aims and objectives of a federal polity. Fissiparous tendencies can destroy federalism inasmuch as a strong and authoritarian Centre can cripple the states' powers.

When the Congress-UPA Government tried to resolve the Teesta water dispute with Bangladesh, the Trinamool Congress – an ally of the UPA – scuttled it because of its regional political interests. What was a foreign policy issue of national importance became hostage to regional vote bank politics. Relations with neighbours like Bangladesh are sensitive issues which require tact and some amount of give and take more so with China encircling India.

The Congress-UPA Government's decision to vote against Srilanka on the US resolution for alleged violation of human rights, in the U.N. Human Rights Commission has reduced adherence to the *dharma* of coalition politics into a theatre of the absurd. Can placating the AIADMK, the DMK and other Tamil parties mean sacrificing the national interest? India ought to have rationalized the issue

of human rights and national interests. Blanket support to the resolution will push Sri Lanka into Chinese arms. It would be a fallacy to say that the Congress UPA was concerned for human rights violation. Rather it was a vote for Congress-UPA political survival even if it meant compromising India's vital defence and strategic interests.

If regional parties are going to set the foreign policy agenda, the day is not far when India will have foreign policies and not policy.

If India has to play an effective role as an emerging power, both regional and global, which is consistent with her geo-strategic importance it has to accelerate the pace of reforms and push up exports, India needs to strengthen agriculture production to improve its living standards. Bold decisions will have to be taken to cut subsidies especially for those schemes which are populist and election-oriented or simply because it is a fancy of some leaders. A strong and effective anti-terror law and policy has to be put in place and implemented irrespective of its political ramification or vote banks. India has to expeditiously modernize its Armed Forces to ensure that at least basic arms are immediately obtained. In fact the plans for next generation arms in 2020 should have been ready in the boardroom today.

A motley group of weak national parties and strong and obstinate regional groupings will weaken governance and scuttle political consensus on policy reforms and foreign affairs. The intricacies of 'coalition dharma' (read coalition survival) will adversely affect key reforms and crucial foreign investments. It is only when the Indian economy integrates with the global economy that there can be sustainable progress. Will the regional parties have this foresight? And will the national party dependant on regional satraps have the political will to overrule regional parties? When policy implications differ, national interests are bound to suffer. The perceptible differences will conflict with regional approaches and national responses. Decision making will suffer. Focus is bound to shift from reforms to populist schemes which will devour resources in the way PSUs did in the 70s and 80s. It is difficult to believe that regional parties will compromise their regional interest with national interest. The projected growth is now pegged at 7% and the political climate for higher rate is not conducive. In what way do TN regional overlords or the TMC boss appreciate larger defence and strategic interests? Regionalism coupled with policy paralysis at the Centre will affect India's global image as an emerging power.

The idea of a Third Front floated following the UP elections is a remedy worse than the disease. Its various avatars like the Janata Party in 1977-78, the V. P. Singh led National Front in 1989-90 or the United Front in 1990, under Inder Kumar Gujral and Deve Gowda will raise the spectre of political instability and comedy that the nation

can ill afford. Do the leaders of regional parties have a global image or governance experience or even elementary understanding of foreign and defence affairs?

The hope lies in the emergence of two federal political formations – one led by the BJP and other by the Congress. Such a federal formation should have a twin agenda where the State Government is left to address regional issues while the larger national issues are addressed by the Centre without allowing regional considerations to interfere with national policy as is the case with the formation of the National Counter Terrorism Centre. In the process what suffers is the anti terror law and its operationalisation. A weak Centre and combative States do not mean federalism. It is the political subversion of the Constitution by divisive forces that is a threat to a federal set up. A federation envisages decentralization of power and not regionalization of the nation. It is the failure the Centre to address legitimate regional aspirations that has encouraged the rise of regional parties which treat the federal units as their personal or family fiefdoms.

In India it was the Constituent Assembly that gifted the Constitution to India and not by the states coming together unlike the U.S. Constitution where the erstwhile colonies came together at the Philadelphia Congress to form a Federation with a Federal Constitution. Therefore Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee used the word 'Union' and not 'Federation' with no right to secede. Even the U.S. Constitution does not recognize the right to secede; otherwise President Lincoln would not have waged war against the South leading to the American Civil War. Federation ensures juridical division of the nation for better governance. In India linguistic and cultural diversities is another reason for a federal Constitution with features of a unitary Constitution.

Addressing the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, B. R. Ambedkar stated:

"The Draft Constitution has sought to forge means and methods whereby India will have federation and at the same time will have uniformity in all basic matters which are essential to maintain the unity of the country. The means adopted by the Draft Constitution are three:

A single judiciary;

Uniformity in fundamental laws, civil and criminal; and

A common All-India Civil Service to man important posts".

This then is the essence of our federal structure; if only our elected representatives bother to read and understand our Constitution.

MR. NITIN G. RAUT is an advocate by profession and a member of the Editorial Board of *Freedom First*.

A Cartoon Bomb Explodes

Sadanand B. Kumta

The cartoon incident confirms a disturbing reality that we are not a mature democracy. With large sections of the population kept uneducated and even illiterate, their emotions can be easily aroused to achieve electoral ambitions of its political leaders.



"The Cartoon used as a social science textbook for class XI 'Indian Constitution at Work' was a comment on the then slow process of drafting the Constitution" – Ed.

development in Parliament as atrocious. A cartoon made and published in 1949 found a place in the NCERT textbook in 2006 which has suddenly, after 6 years, become a matter of raging controversy. This is an example of politicians being ruled by emotions, rejecting another man's viewpoint and displaying intolerance of the slightest criticism.

Why this sudden outburst? Was it finding an issue over which all political parties could indulge in competitive adulation of a scholar of national stature like Ambedkar, and also protesting against presumed insult to a dalit God, secretly expecting a big share of dalit votes in the coming elections? Was it also an occasion for some defeated leaders to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the public?

Where are we heading as a nation? What kind of leadership is this country going to have? This is a blow to all intellectuals who are conscious of the need of academic freedom. Who will decide what should or should not be taught? Has the Government realised what long term damage has been done to academia in the whole country? It is the country that is now on trial – not the contents of a cartoon.

Why did the HRD minister hasten to apologise and what crime did he commit?

These are days when top leaders are desperately keen to hold on to power despite devils taking the hind legs of good governance and clean administration.

The so-called national controversy has raised three major issues: poor understanding of historical facts, rising intolerance in society and tyranny of caste factors. Finally, the cartoon incident confirms a disturbing reality that we are not a mature democracy. With large sections of the population kept uneducated and even illiterate, their emotions can be easily aroused to achieve electoral ambitions of its political leaders.

MR. SADANAND KUMTA retired as Director of Technical Education, Government of Gujarat. He is a resident of Pune and can be contacted at sbkumta@rediffmail.com.

A cartoon drawn by the legendary cartoonist of yesteryears Shankar Pillai in 1949, buried under layers of time, was exhumed on 11 May, 2012. It was then brought into Parliament, where this cartoon of a bomb strangely exploded. Its splinters hit the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) – a prestigious, old institution of learning – on its face. Two of its learned advisors – both renowned political scientists were also hit and they resigned within hours of the furore by the MPs. The outburst of fury in Parliament made the Honorable Minister of Human Resources Development (HRD) to buckle under pressure compelling him to announce the withdrawal of 11th Standard textbook. It had unfortunately carried, since 2006, the ill-fated cartoon.

One of the two advisors who resigned said in utter frustration, "A law must be passed to ban all cartoons". All cartoonists in India, both practicing and budding, will now be under threat of their freedom being in danger. A cartoon is essentially a caricature of the real with its characteristic distortion to provoke satire and laughter. Another advisor who resigned feels that the cartoon was a symbol of progressive outlook on education which is now undermined by the HRD Ministry. NCERT itself says that the cartoons were introduced to make learning more enjoyable for students.

Most academicians have considered this

Rescue of Hostages

Suresh C. Sharma

We need to examine the response of the administration to kidnapping in India and abroad to evolve a hostage policy.

The kidnapping of two Italian tourists, and of BJD MLA Jina Hikaka of Odisha and Sukma District Collector Alex Paul Menon in Jharkhand by the Maoists kept the Government busy with negotiations through mediators. The IAS Association passed a resolution demanding the release of the Collector and the Police Association commented that they would not fight Maoists in future if the jailed Maoist leaders were let off. The victims have been released. The Chief Minister of Jharkhand has clarified that no swap offer was made and has suggested that there should be a national hostage policy. It may take some time before the terms of release are known. According to *The Times of India* report the Odisha (Orissa) Government has agreed to release thirty ultras. The Jharkhand Government has agreed to review the cases of Naxal prisoners. The Maoists' demand for release of Naxal leaders for setting kidnapped Police Inspector Francis Indvaar was rejected. No attempt was made for mediation and Francis was killed by the Naxals. The insurgents have realized that taking important officials is an easier way to get jailed comrades released or securing political demands rather than face bullets or follow the legal route. The death of Inspector Francis, the kidnapping of five people in Mizoram and killing of the two security guards of Collector Menon did not receive the same attention by the media.

We need to examine the response of the administration to kidnapping in India and abroad to evolve a hostage policy. The abductions by rebels are not a new development. It has been in practice in the North East and Kashmir. In Kashmir, there have been more than one hundred cases of abduction of marked officials and innocent citizens, particularly of girls. A group of foreign tourists was kidnapped in 1989 by Al Faran in Kashmir. The security forces were not able to locate or save them. The offer by the Western powers, notably the USA, of military help was not accepted. The Government gave in to the demands of the kidnappers of Dr. Rubiya, daughter of Kashmir political leader Mufti Sayeed Mohamad, on 8 December 1989, the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar in December 1991 and the hostage takers at the Hazratbal shrine in November 1983. To the surprise of the security personnel conducting the siege of Hazratbal,

food was provided to the militants under the intervention by the court, while they (the security forces or the hostages) were neglected. No attempt was made to appeal against the court order of supplying food to the militants. Members of V. P. Singh's cabinet rushed to Srinagar to put pressure on the State Government to set five militants free in exchange for Rubiya's release. The same Government made no efforts for negotiations when an HMT (Hindustan Machine Tools (a GOI Undertaking) Engineer was kidnapped and killed. In 1991, Kashmir Governor Saxena wanted to follow a tough policy in the case of the kidnapping of the oil executive Doraiswamy but the Government of Narasimha Rao directed the release of twelve militants to get Doraiswamy free. The terrorists who attacked Parliament House and an Ahmedabad temple were killed or taken prisoner. Kidnapping of innocent citizens in Kashmir has generally been tackled by rescue missions by security forces. There does not seem to be a uniform policy. Similar indifference is noticed in actions by governments in foreign countries.

The traditional policy of the USA was not to pay ransom for release of prisoners. In the 1970s, two diplomats each of the USA and USSR were abducted in Lebanon. The US Government declined to pay ransom but businessman Perot offered to pay the amount. Only the dead body of one diplomat was received on payment of half the ransom. The second diplomat was released after a general agreement. The response of the USSR was to abduct and kill a local militant leader with threat of more such punishment. Both the Russian diplomats were released unharmed. The USA did put pressure on Israel to release Arab prisoners in exchange for Americans. Israel carefully considers the option of rescue by force or by conceding the demand for swap. In 2002, the US Government changed their policy regarding payment of ransom. In 2000, four Americans working in Ecuador were freed after their company paid the ransom. The authorities in USA, Ecuador and Columbia worked together to recover the ransom after ensuring the safety of hostages.

The declared policy continues to be of no concession to hostage takers as it increases the danger of more citizens being taken hostage. The Government

does not interfere if the relations and friends pay ransom.

The Dutch have so far not given in to the demands of terrorists. Their marines stormed the militants who took over a train on 23 May 1977. Three militants and two hostages died in the attack. No one was hurt when, on 11 June 1977, the marines stormed the militants holding teachers in a school as hostages.

The UK policy has been not to surrender to the demands of the militants for release of prisoners or ransom and not to give any special privileges to the captured insurgents. Generally, UK has agreed only to give safe passage to the kidnappers. Two French hostages died in a rescue attempt in Mali. The French government clarified that safety of their citizens was the prime concern and rescue was attempted only when the situation appeared to be favourable. Russia has zero tolerance for terror acts. Fifty heavily armed militants had threatened to kill 850 victims in a theatre in Moscow on 23 October 2002. In the rescue operation on 26 October, 39 militants and 129 victims died. Russia does not concede demands of the attackers.

The experience of Germany brings out the options available to the administration. Their Crisis Team obtained the release of German engineer Rudolf Blachs Schmidt taken hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan. They paid several thousand dollars as ransom and released five prisoners. The Afghan Intelligence had almost torpedoed the deal by arresting the two messengers of the Taliban. It was the first time that a compromise deal was made by the Crisis Team after 1975 when seven prisoners were released in exchange for the Chairman of the German Christian Democratic Union. It was against the declared policy of the present German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, not to surrender to blackmail.

It is noticed that only the Netherlands, UK and Russia have stuck to the policy of no ransom or swapping of prisoners. Other countries have followed a pragmatic path to suit the particular situation. Police in Europe do not interfere if relations of those held hostage want to pay ransom. They keep a watch and act after the release of the victims. Often they succeed in apprehending the culprits and recovery of the ransom. Rescue attempt by France resulted in the death of its own nationals. More people have died by police action than by militants. Lives of citizens are important.

It is equally important not to give in easily and create an impression of being a soft state, which has happened in India. It is unwise to lay down a rigid hostage policy as voiced by the Jharkhand Chief Minister. The policy should be flexible and the course of action adopted with due regard to the safety of the victims; the likely fall out on future operations and the nature of the demand. There is a need to lay down a standard operating procedure of command and composition of the negotiating team. There was a clear difference between the actions by the Odisha and Jharkhand Governments. Jharkhand immediately appointed a cabinet committee to oversee the negotiations and made it clear to the ultras that they are prepared to talk as long as the demands were reasonable. In the USA, the FBI has a hostage rescue team. A condition like withdrawal of all army from Kashmir or Chechnya cannot be accepted. In India, the likely effect on the fortunes of a political party has often been a consideration. This should not be so. Nor should there be a variation based on the rank of the victim.

Brig. Suresh C. Sharma (Retd.) is adviser to the telecom industry, a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com

Dr. Harshida Pandit, RIP



We learnt with sorrow that Dr. Harshida Pandit passed away on February 27, 2012. She was the wife of the Late Ramu Pandit, economist, Secretary General of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Mumbai and a valued member of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and on the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.

Dr. Harshida Pandit headed the Department of Psychology, SNDT University, a consultant psychologist and well known Gujarati writer and occasionally reviewed books for *Freedom First*. In May last year we were touched to receive a call from an ailing Harshidaben that, in response to our appeal to our readers for assistance in funding the digitizing project, she had decided to contribute a sum of Rs. One lakh in her husband's memory, the largest single contribution from an individual.

ICCF and *Freedom First* deeply mourn her loss and convey our deepest sympathies to her children.

Sachin Tendulkar MP

Pointless Hullabaloo

Keshav Rau

On April 26, the President of India announced the nomination of Cricket's Living Legend Sachin Tendulkar, film star of yesteryears Rekha and prominent businesswoman and National Advisory Council Member, Anu Aga to the Rajya Sabha under Article 80(3) of the Constitution of India providing for nomination of 12 persons "having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as the following: literature, science, art and social sciences." Put simply, citizens who had gained eminence in the fields in question.

The nomination of Sachin, in particular, has evoked varied reactions. While all sections in Parliament and many others have welcomed the move, there has been strong criticism from other quarters, including the media – print as well as electronic.

Contrast such varied reaction with the near universal cry from all sections for conferring on Sachin the country's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna. This clamour had begun even before Sachin had established an *all-time* record of a century of 100s in international cricket. Even veteran cricketers like Saurav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid joined in the chorus. The likes of Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev were not far behind. Even the objection of the omniscient 'Babu' with the Government of India that a sportsperson could not be conferred a Bharat Ratna because it's to be conferred only on those who had excelled towards advancement of art, literature, science and public service of the highest order, was quickly overcome by the "Babu" himself with his knack of suggesting and pushing through an amendment so that Bharat Ratna can now be awarded "in recognition of exceptional performance in any field of human endeavour". Wonder why it had to be qualified that service or performance had to be in the field of *human* endeavour!

But when it comes to nomination to the Rajya Sabha, there are several dissenting voices. Prominent print and electronic media went berserk in reporting the news. Three English language newspapers in Delhi, which command maximum readership, made it their lead story of the day. One of them – the Delhi edition of *The Times of India* – came out with a screaming headline: "God Has A New House."

The Hindustan Times went to the extent of coming out with an editorial on the subject, the underlying theme of which was "Being a celebrity cannot be the sole qualification for Rajya Sabha nomination". The newspaper,

while not disputing Sachin being "eminently qualified to raise the issue of sportspersons in India" went on to argue "when a person is otherwise preoccupied he will not live up to the expectations of those who think that his greatness as a cricketer will translate automatically to the political arena." *The Times of India* in its "Times View" footnote to its lead story commented: "His new role will force Sachin to choose between his duty to the team and his job as a parliamentarian. It's an unfair choice, one we should not compel him to make."

Former cricketer and now TV commentator, Sanjay Manjrekar, who for several years has been closely associated with Sachin, in a panel discussion on a TV channel, was of the view that Sachin not having ever taken any stand on any issue on cricketers and their interests, he could not possibly be expected to take a forthright stand, particularly on matters pertaining to sports and sportsmen – cricket and cricketers specifically. Former India captain and coach, Ajit Wadekar, hoped that Sachin did not suffer the same fate as another legend, Amitabh Bachchan because, according to him, "Politics was a big game." A "surprised" Madan Lal, member of the team which won the 1983 World Cup title for India, said "The kind of person Sachin is, we never expected him to take up politics."

Reservations to Sachin's nomination rest essentially on: (a) one never expected Sachin to take to politics (b) past experience has shown that celebrities do not make any contribution to Parliamentary debates – let alone enhancing them (c) a sportsperson, who has still not hung up his boots, will not be able to devote adequate/required time to the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha (d) Sachin has never been known to take any stand on matters affecting cricketers.

The entire hullabaloo is pointless. For one thing, a Rajya Sabha nomination does not necessarily mean that

Sachin has joined politics. He has, no doubt, been nominated by the UPA Government led by the Congress, but in no way is he accountable to the Party or bound by its diktats. He will not be expected to vote along with the Party. The whip issued by the latter on its members will not apply to him. The Anti-Defection law will also not apply to him. It should also be remembered that Parliament discussions and debates are not always confined to matters concerning politics. Various other issues without having even a tinge of political colour in them are taken up for discussion in Parliament. Thus, a mere nomination to the Rajya Sabha would not amount to Sachin entering politics.

It is unfortunate that it is only Sachin's nomination that has been used as a peg to launch a debate over the utility or otherwise of continuing with the policy of nominating celebrities to Parliament. Ever since the Founding Fathers brought in this provision in the Constitution, 104 persons have been nominated to the Rajya Sabha. The provision gave room for bringing into Parliament persons who are unwilling or did not possess the wherewithal or resources to participate in the rough

and tumble of an election process. Yet, they are extremely capable, qualified and competent to bring in new suggestions and ideas for consideration of Parliament and present a balanced approach to the various issues confronting the country.

Past performance of film personalities, sportspersons and artists may not be anything much to write home about, but that could be said of many of the professional economists, journalists, scientists also, who have been nominated under this provision.

It has also been argued that Sachin never having taken in the past any definite stand on matters concerning cricket or cricketers, he cannot be expected to do so in the Rajya Sabha either. It would be too premature to come to such a conclusion at this stage. At any rate, what view he held or did not hold on any particular issue in the past could not be made the basis for not nominating him under the eminent citizens' category.

KESHAV RAU is a freelance writer. Email: keshav.rau@gmail.com.

"Politics is in my blood...If I am made president of the youth wing, I will never speak against Nitish uncle but only highlight his misdeeds."

Tejashwi Yadav, son of Lalu Prasad Yadav, in *The Week* May 20



VIRAT INDUSTRIES LTD.

(An ISO 9001:2008 Company)

**A Leading Manufacturer & Exporter of
EXCELLENT QUALITY SOCKS**

Our Export Markets include UK, Switzerland and U.A.E.

Our main customers are John Lewis, Ted Baker and Jaeger in the UK, Migros in Switzerland and Shoemart in UAE.

We produce Mens, Ladies and Childrens Dress and Sports Socks.

We also produce speciality Football and Rugby Socks.

For more information, you may visit our website: www.viratindustries.com

Corporate Head Office:

605, Veena Killedar Industrial Estate
10/14 Pais Street, Byculla (West)
Mumbai 400 011 (India)
Tel: (022) 3294 4131 or 3294 4217 /
Fax: (022) 2306 0486
Email: sales@viratindustries.com

Regd. Office & Factory:

A-1/2, GIDC Industrial Estate
Kabilpore
Navsari 396 424
Tel: (91-2637) 265 011 or 22 / 325805
Email: factory@viratindustries.com

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.

Hostage Swap

1. Terrorism extracts a very high price from society. Mass murders, mindless destruction of property, so-called 'liberation' of areas are among the manoeuvres to bend the State to the terrorists' will. The goal is political i.e. to overthrow the State. The belief that a weak government would collapse under the weight of these assaults, though misplaced, can create havoc. Holding innocent people as hostages to secure certain demands of the terrorists is an ancient strategy. The State has to decide well in advance how to deal with this phenomenon. Once the terrorists strike, it is too late to think of a solution. The State is weighed down by the hue and cry raised by the families of the victims, public perception of being heartless, not caring for the lives of the innocent and simultaneously of being unable to halt terrorism. A State that has not thought through the entire exercise, falters and gives in, not realising that it is opening itself up for more of the same. The Orissa and Chhattisgarh abductions and the price paid for the release of hostages held by the Naxalites is a prime example. The Government avoids revealing the price paid but the subtexts of negotiations make it clear that the price is high. How many more hostages do we need to rescue and at what cost?

Our NCTC propagandists, who are "over-selling" it as a magic wand which will prevent or deal all terrorism including Maoist insurgency should know that at best it will only make information sharing better.

V. Balachandran, in his column 'Police & State' *Sunday Guardian* May 13

1. India has not yet evolved a clear cut policy to deal with hostage situations. Its history points to meek capitulation. The daughter of the then Home Minister, Mufti Mohd Syed, was held hostage by J&K terrorists and was released on their terms; the infamous Kandahar plane hijacking and the release of 5 dreaded terrorists is still haunting us. The country has had to pay an incalculable price for bowing to save the lives of 158 passengers by losing thousands more. The lesson has yet to sink in at the strategy level. At the beginning of UPA-I, M.K. Narayanan, NSA, had declared that India was determined not to give in to terrorists' terms. This was a bold declaration but in the absence of follow up action, totally meaningless. What was required was a resolution of Parliament declaring that no Government would give in to terrorists' demands. It would have removed the burden on succeeding PMs or CMs of having to decide to sacrifice the lives of hostages. In the absence of such a resolve, the sacrifices made by security forces in arresting terrorists would go waste as the arrested terrorists' release would be secured by their colleagues in a routine manner. The entire hostage swap policy needs urgent attention. Belatedly, the Union Home Minister declared that he would initiate a dialogue with Naxalite-affected states to decide on a policy to deal with hostage situations. The Chhattisgarh CM has also demanded a national hostage policy. An important factor to work on is whether the terrorists would really kill hostages? It would put them in poor light as self-appointed crusaders. Some experts advocate a flexible policy with a mix of negotiations and hard hits but it is impossible to decide when and where talks should end and hard hits begin.

Bofors Redux

2. The ghost of Bofors refuses to disappear. After 25 years, Sten Lindstrom, the Police investigator-turned whistleblower, who first pointed out that the Swedish gun-makers had indeed paid a bribe to secure the gun deal in India, came out to reveal his own identity; he made several claims: He declared that Rajiv Gandhi had not received any bribe and Amitabh Bachchan was diabolically dragged into the case. He wondered why Quattrochi (Q), who had swung the deal, was not brought to justice and why nobody had questioned Sonia Gandhi as she was the connection

2. Even without Lindstrom's claims it was well-known that Q was a part of the infamous deal and was allowed to escape because the CBI, guided by the then Government, had decided to close the Bofors chapter as a politically embarrassing case. The death of Rajiv Gandhi had put an end to his opponents' interest in the case. V. P. Singh who had whipped up a political storm against Rajiv Gandhi had lost the motivation to pursue the matter. Of the succeeding Governments, only the NDA showed some interest and a charge-sheet was filed belatedly after 10-

between the GOI and Q. His main contention was that there was a cover-up to save Q. The revival of the bribery debate throws light on the unaccountability of politicians and use of the CBI as a tool of the party in power but apart from digging out dirt, will it do any good?

What has come over us? Have we completely lost the faculty of humour?

Soli Sorabjee, *The Sunday Express*, May 20

Sachin as MP

3. Sachin Tendulkar's nomination as member of the Rajya Sabha caused the usual storm in the tea cup. The media is a busybody, trying to dig out dirt where none exists. It was projected as if Sachin had joined the Congress; he had betrayed Cricket and he had sold out! He had to clarify that he was honoured as a cricketer after 22 years of service and he decided to accept the honour; he had not entered politics and he would remain a sportsman. The only objection critics could have is that he got it too early and he should wait at least for 20 more years before he is so honoured. Age is mistaken for wisdom in this country. The problem is that Sachin's success is so huge that he invites envy, jealousy and often mindless criticism.

12 years. Till 2004 the case was at least alive but once the Congress came back to power, the CBI backtracked and the case was not only buried but Q was allowed to collect his booty from a Swiss bank and disappear. Is anything to be gained by reopening the case now except perhaps to cause embarrassment to Sonia Gandhi? The legal case is already lost in the cross currents of politics. What remains is the post mortem of the CBI's role and Sonia Gandhi's connection.

3. The Constitution provides for nomination of 12 personalities from outside politics so that the Rajya Sabha is enriched by the wisdom of eminent personalities from different walks of life. A doubt can be raised whether they do enrich the proceedings or merely fill the numbers, hardly ever remaining present in the House. They are merely decorative and are not active enough to be of any use. If so, the Constitutional provision for nomination of such personalities needs to be abolished. It has nothing to do with Sachin's acceptance of RS membership. But then we would have to give up the pleasure of pulling down successful people! As for Sachin, we hope he uses his position to get the politicians to look at sports more positively.

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

An Obituary printed in the *London Times*

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who had been with us for decades. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- The minority change to fit the majority;
- and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not the children, are in charge).

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do, in disciplining their unruly children.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a further beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home but the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers;
I Know My Rights
I Want It Now
Someone Else Is To Blame
I'm A Victim

Not many attended his funeral because so few even realized he was gone.

If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

From the Net. Contributed by Kumar Ramachandran.

Nirmal Baba is Within Us

Sharu S. Rangnekar

In recent weeks there has been a campaign on various TV channels attacking Nirmal Baba. Babas are not new to the Indian public. Right from Satya Saibaba to the Yoga expert Ramdev Baba, many babas have played their role and are still playing it. It is interesting to understand where these babas come from and how they become 'successful'.

Every human being wants to be successful in life. His success depends on the equation: 'Ability multiplied by Effort multiplied by Luck is equal to Success'.

When a person is satisfied with his success he boasts of his ability and effort. However, when he fails he blames luck. But he is not satisfied only blaming luck. He would like to find the cause of the bad luck and do something to improve his luck. This desire in the hearts of people gave rise to the *babas*.

Nirmal Baba has been attacked mainly because of his success. In a matter of 15 years he has evolved from Nirmal Singh Narula, a floundering small businessman, into Nirmal Baba a greatly successful operator. He is somewhat different from other *babas* in the following aspects:

1. Other *babas* like Satya Saibaba have made their impact on the basis of their performing 'miracles'. Nirmal Baba claims no miracles.
2. Many *babas* blame "bad luck" or some planetary or other influences like *Shani, Mangal, Rahu*, etc. Nirmal Baba maintains that the origin of good luck is from powers (*shakti*) which are constantly granting favours (*kripa*) to all people in the world. However, some people create impediments in the flow of *kripa* and this is what causes "bad luck". Nirmal Baba claims he diagnoses the impediments and gives some simple remedies to remove the impediments to keep the flow of *kripa*. In fact he is like a plumber who removes impediments in a pipe to keep the flow going. His remedies are very simple. They basically consist of
 - a) Keeping in touch with the *shaktis* so that they are induced to keep the *kripa* flowing. He advises his devotees to visit temples regularly so that *kripa* will continue flowing.
 - b) He advocates giving of charity like free food to be distributed to poor people to support the flow of *kripa*.

c) He identifies some action of the devotee which creates impediments in the flow of *kripa*. For example he feels the reason a devotee does not conceive a child is because she is eating samosa with red sauce instead of green *chatni*, consequently showing red signal to the flow of *kripa*. If she eats the samosa with green *chatni*, the signal will become green and the *kripa* will start flowing again. He advocates keeping a money plant in a glass bottle to keep the money flowing. He advises devotees to close their eyes and open their purses or wallets so that the *kripa* will flow into the purses or wallets and eventually fill them with money.

3. He has classified devotees' intentions: getting money, getting child, getting job, getting growth in business, among other things, and he gives a simple plan of action to remove impediments in the flow of *kripa*. This encourages the devotees to follow the plan of action. If the steps are successful and devotees get money Nirmal Baba suggests 10% of the money should be given to him. He also charges Rs.2000/- per devotee attending the conference which he calls "*samagam*". From the point of view of the devotees who are mostly middle class these are steps easy to take. In the period he specifies, some devotees get some success which they attribute to Nirmal Baba's blessings (*aashirwad*). Other devotees wait for some more time. Once they start believing in Nirmal Baba they credit anything good happening, to his blessings. One devotee who got into a car accident and damaged his car said he was saved because of Nirmal Baba's blessing. Only the car was damaged!

Thus, Nirmal Baba has created a safe and simple system of keeping the *kripa* flowing and improving his devotee's luck. Compared to other *babas*, this does not involve any black magic or rituals to pacify or counter the planetary influence of *Shani, Mangal, Rahu*, etc and is simple to follow. Those who cannot afford to pay Rs.2000/- to attend the "*samagam*", can watch it on TV

and still get the flow of *kripa* and the blessings of Nirmal Baba free. They can also follow the advice given by Nirmal Baba to the devotees who attend in person in case they find that advice is applicable to them and get the benefit free of cost! He does not advocate any specific medicines so that he does not come under the mischief of the Magical Remedies Act. He does not take any money from the devotees except attendance fee for the *samagam*. The devotees pay 10% of the profit if they wish to pay. Thus the entire process seems to involve no special cost and not surprisingly the number of devotees has grown to a few lakhs (Nirmal Baba claims one crore of devotees all over the world). Nearly 40 TV channels telecast the Nirmal Baba programme every day (as paid advertisement) and

for many people it is a good substitute for the news channel and even the entertainment soaps.

The success of Nirmal Baba has created a lot of jealousy because he estimated his own annual income at Rs.238 cores without having any power to create miracles or any special knowledge of Yoga or *Reiki*, *Vastushastra* or astrology. He has merely the gift of the gab which sustains him through his discourses. He is essentially successful because he focuses on the luck factor. Everybody wants to be lucky and Nirmal Baba provides an easy and economic way to be favoured by luck!

SHARU S. RANGNEKAR is a well known Management Consultant. www.sharurangnekar.com.

Military Matters

When Officers Were Gentlemen

Noshir Grant

“Nothing has gone wrong my boy, except that, instead of dispatching the 3/4 Gorkhas, you sent away the 3 Dogras to Sumatra”

Operation ‘Zipper’ and ‘Mailfist’ - the plans for the invasion of Malaya and the island of Singapore were prepared while Japan was still belligerent. The Fourteenth Army, under Gen. Sir Miles Dempsey, bore the responsibility for the operation. The initial sea-borne assault on Malaya was to be delivered by the 34th Indian Corps under Lt.Gen. Roberts. Towards the end of August 1945, a great armada sailed from Bombay, Madras, Cochin, Vizakapatnam and Rangoon. I was nominated as Adjutant of the flag troop ship from Bombay under the command of Col. A. S. Bromfield, a real Colonel Blimp of a man.

We sailed in perfect formation until the night of 10th September, when we passed a convoy and moved in single line ahead to get through some minefields. At 1130 hrs, I was sent for by Col. Bromfield, who informed me about a signal received from 34th Corps, stating that, the 3/4 Gorkhas who were earmarked for Port Dickson, would now proceed to Sumatra, but that 3 Dogras would continue to Port Dickson. The signal also mentioned of a ship S S Tankum which would affect this transfer. The Colonel appeared to be running a fever and asked me to handle this, as he was going to bed. I did not bother to see the signal myself, and left the room. At 1430 hrs, S S Tankum came along side, and by 1600 hrs the transfer was all over.

I was elated at having done a good job, when at 2000 hrs, I was asked to report to the Colonel immediately.

He motioned me to sit down, but said nothing. I took the initiative and enquired whether something had gone wrong. After a minute he looked up and said “Nothing has gone wrong my boy, except that, instead of dispatching the 3/4 Gorkhas, you sent away the 3 Dogras to Sumatra, but beyond that, nothing has gone wrong; after all, what’s in a name, whether it is Gorkhas or Dogras?” I knew that I had goofed, I saluted and left. I could not even bring myself to say sorry.

Next day, before leaving for the mainland to join my new road construction unit, I asked to see Col Bromfield to bid him, farewell. He was expecting me. I said, “I am extremely sorry Sir, I let you down.” He shook hands with me and gave me a letter for the CO of my new unit - I already guessed its contents and resigned to my fate. My new CO Maj. Munnings, opened it, and said, “What whisky were you serving the old man on your ship?” and gave me the letter to read. Col Bromfield had given me a smashing report, praising me to the skies for my work as Adjutant of the Ship, during the voyage. He did not take it out on me for a genuine single slip, no doubt a very serious one – he took full responsibility for it! Ah, but then, those were the days when officers were gentlemen.

This anecdotal episode by the late Brigadier Noshir Grant excerpted from the Military Papers he left behind, is brought to the notice of *Freedom First* readers by Brigadier Furdooon S. B. Mehta (retd.) with the permission of Brig. Grant’s widow Mrs. Minnie Grant.



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

The President's Dream House

Author's note: This article was written on 1st May. By the time it appears in print, the name of the next President may well be announced. I hope I am proved wrong

Pop quiz. Who is the current President of India? I'm sure many Indians would take some time to think of the correct answer. And can you really blame them? The stature and suitability of India's Presidents have been in steady decline ever since Independence. From the humility and incorruptibility of Rajendra Prasad and the elegance and brilliance of Dr. Radhakrishnan, we have descended to the banality of Pratibha Patil, a lady sadly lacking in dignity and principles.

What can one say about Pratibha Patil? India has had its sprinkling of Presidents, some of whom have been controversial and others have grown into the job, but never had we had a non-entity like this lady. She leaves the Presidency as clueless as when she entered it. That is not to imply that she does not possess street smarts, however. However indifferent a President she may have been, she milked her high office for all its worth. Her numerous state visits have cost the taxpayers in excess of Rs.200 crores. Not surprising when you consider that she travelled with an enormous entourage of relatives, hangers-on and underlings that would have done a Roman emperor proud. Even after her extravagance was exposed in the media, she has been thick skinned enough to embark on her final junket to Seychelles and South Africa with the same legion of relatives in tow. And if her "state" visits have achieved anything tangible in terms of increased trade or improved bilateral relations, it has been a well kept secret from the public.

As a farewell gift to herself, Patil commissioned a palatial retirement home in Pune, close to her *muluk*. The carpet area and opulence of the dwelling would have been far in excess of her entitlement, but she is not the type to let such minor details bother her. Even worse, the plot of the bungalow was reserved for the military and for providing housing for war widows, among others, a fact she must have been well aware of. Even after this travesty was exposed in the media, she did her best to ignore the resultant clamour until it got so intense that she was forced to relent – probably at the prodding of Sonia Gandhi. Amidst a plethora of recent embarrassments, this was one the Congress could well do without.

India now has the rare distinction of having both a puppet Prime Minister and a puppet President and this trend is likely to continue. It is not that this country does not possess personalities with the dignity and world view to be President. Some have suggested Narayana Murthy and Ratan Tata. There is no doubt that both gentlemen are eminently worthy of the high office, should they aspire to it; and it is for this very reason that they would never be considered. The only qualification for becoming President these days is to be a subservient puppet to the ruling party. And considering the venality of those who populate our government, it is not a happy prospect.

Author's note: This article was written on 1st May. By the time it appears in print, the name of the next President may well be announced. I hope I am proved wrong.

Top 5 Reasons Why Congress Will Lose in 2014

The ship of India is drifting aimlessly. The Congress needs to either steer it to safety, or jump overboard. Half measures will just not work. If you cannot govern, go back to the trenches and spare the people further agony.

It now seems increasingly likely that the Congress party will be unseated from power in 2014 – or even earlier. It is a party and government in its final death throes. This is in the fitness of things. In its desperate bid to hold on to power at any cost, the Congress has squandered its advantages and allowed itself to become the favourite whipping boy of all parties, including its so-called allies. Here are, in my opinion, the top 5 reasons why Congress deserves to lose the next general election.

Reason no.5: Despite big ticket scams like 2G and the Commonwealth Games, the Congress is overall no more corrupt than the other political parties. Under attack, it should have been able to give as good as it gets. Unfortunately, it has squandered this opportunity by immediately getting defensive. With proper due diligence, the Congress should not find it too difficult to unearth rotten apples among its political rivals. The fruit may not be as large as Raja, Kalmadi and company, but numerous

small rotten apples raise just as big a stink. Somebody should remind the Congress that offense is often the best form of defence.

Reason no.4: The Q factor. This man Quatarocci has done incalculable harm to the common man's perception of the grand old party. It is obvious to everyone, including Congressmen that a suave crook who indulged in a blatant act of corruption has been allowed to get off scot free and enjoy the illegal fruits of his misdeeds. Even worse, his escape was abetted by compliant government machinery. It fostered the impression that the Congress provides a safe haven for criminals. More than anything else, this sordid episode has outraged the average Indian. Raja and Kalmadi may be crooks of the first order, but they are *our* crooks. Why was this damn foreigner allowed to loot our wealth? The days of the Raj are over, aren't they? The simple answer is that he was afforded such largesse merely because of Sonia Gandhi's blind loyalty and affection for the man. She made it clear that Q was to be protected at all costs, even if it led to the decline of the party she heads.

Reason no.3: India has a puppet Prime Minister. For sure, he is a man of integrity and probity and very few doubt that, even in the Opposition. Unfortunately, he has mortgaged his soul to stay in office. After a few initial but ultimately futile efforts at economic reforms, he is now content to sit back and enjoy the perquisites and privileges of being PM. He has become self-effacing to the point of invisibility. He has adopted the dictum that no one can accuse you of wrongdoing if you do nothing at all. So he just beams his beatific smile and allows the Opposition's barbs and criticisms to wash over him like water off a duck's back. If the nation he notionally leads remains in a state of limbo, it's the problem of his remote control, not him.

Reason no.2: The head honcho of the Congress is a petulant housewife. The lady lacks the power of independent thought, is very susceptible to sycophancy and blind to the faults, even crimes, of her favourites. She heeds the self-serving advice from her sycophants, but

ignores the sage counsel of those party members who have spent a lifetime in politics. Her party is crumbling all around her, but she still can't wake up and smell the manure. There is no logical reason or justification for her to be the big boss. However, for some inexplicable reason, infinitely more capable and seasoned Congressmen cannot shake themselves from subservience to the dynasty. The heir apparent, who seems to be earnest and sincere, holds out a faint hope of restitution in the distant future, but for now he is just getting his feet wet.

Reason no.1: The top reason why the Congress will most probably lose in 2014 is because it has divested itself of the last vestiges of dignity. Using the crutch of "coalition politics", it routinely allows itself to be bullied and cowed down by adamant, irrational allies. It is prepared to use any form of appeasement, however humiliating, in its desperate and craven bid to stay in power. It grovels to an increasingly megalomaniacal Mamata Bannerjee, who is allowed to throw temper tantrums and make outrageous demands – and stall vitally needed economic reforms – with impunity. Even the recent downgrade of India's economic rating has not succeeded in shaking the government out of its apathy. Nowadays, the chief emotion the Congress evokes from the general public is utter contempt. Even now, it is not too late for the party to salvage its self respect, if it stands its ground and risks a vote of no-confidence in Parliament – a vote it would probably win. The ship of India is drifting aimlessly. The Congress needs to either steer it to safety, or jump overboard. Half measures will just not work. If you cannot govern, go back to the trenches and spare the people further agony.

So post-Congress, are better times ahead for India? I am not too optimistic. If the Congress has an incompetent supremo, the BJP has too many cooks in the kitchen. Two top contenders, Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj hate each other's guts; and they only share a common antipathy towards Narendra Modi. It is going to be a slugfest for the top post; but no matter who wins, India will continue to lose.

Hang Them High!

***You just cannot go around hanging everybody who does not meet your unreasonable standards.
This is not a Clint Eastwood western.***

Increasing exposure to the public and in the media is confirming what some people have long suspected. Anna Hazare is little more than a glorified rural simpleton and a bit of a buffoon to boot. His unsolicited public pronouncements and summary verdicts are becoming monotonously predictable and are frankly ludicrous. He

fancies himself as a kind of demagogue, but comes off looking ridiculous. You've had your 15 minutes of fame, Annaji. It is time to go home and meditate.

As long as Anna confined his crusade to the issue of corruption, he had a degree of credibility and even

enthusiastic support. But when he sets himself up as judge and jury on everything under the sun, he just comes across looking pathetic. His latest outburst against Congress spokesman Abhishek Manu Singhvi takes the cake.

As is well reported by now, Singhvi was apparently filmed in a compromising position with a lady of his acquaintance. Anna was prompt to deliver his verdict. "If he is found guilty, he should be hanged" he pronounced portentously.

Hanged for what? Since when is a sexual liaison between two consenting adults considered a crime? In my opinion, Singhvi got unnecessarily defensive by

resigning his Parliamentary posts. He did not rape the woman, for heaven's sake. What went on behind closed doors is nobody's business except his and the lady in question. I am aware that we have hypocritical public figures who delight in setting themselves up as moral policemen and Anna probably wants to lead that brigade. Even so, to decree that Singhvi's transgression deserves capital punishment is the height of absurdity and intolerance. You just cannot go around hanging everybody who does not meet your unreasonable standards. This is not a Clint Eastwood western.

FIROZE HIRJIKAKA is a retired civil engineer, a blogger and freelance writer. He is a member of the Advisory Board of Freedom First. Email: leonardo8_@yahoo.com

A Silver Lining Amid Economic Gloom

In recent months, there has been little but gloom about India's economic prospects in the financial markets....

... (But) Indian companies continue to dazzle abroad, but even these firms appear sceptical about their own country's investment climate. The following story summarises this trend: at the end of 2011, Indians had invested in businesses overseas more than foreigners were investing in India — a stark reversal of 2008 figures, when foreigners poured roughly twice as much direct investment into India - US\$33 billion - as Indians ploughed into businesses overseas.

... With their global ambitions, India's leading companies now bestride the international stage. They have been responsible for both high and low-profile mergers and acquisitions in recent years, to the tune of nearly \$116 billion in overseas acquisitions from 2000 to April 2012. But corporate India will need to lead the way domestically, too. Put bluntly, investment is essential to India's growth story. So it is disturbing to hear Jamshyd Godrej, one of India's most distinguished business leaders, comment that: 'If you are an honest businessman in India, it's very difficult to start up anything ... Companies are going to operate where they see the best opportunities and efficiency for their capital'.

The bottom line? There is plenty of gloom and doom. And much of it seems to emanate from India itself. Still, it is useful to temper this outlook with a view to recent history and an eye to India's states.

For one, India has consistently surprised the world for two decades with sustained high growth. And with India's reform prospects stalled by political bickering and interest group politics, it is useful to remember that, in one country at least, you can still squeeze out plenty of growth without very much reform...

To be sure, bold reform would be best, but there is still room for greater predictability, stability and transparency, even though it is clear that India's fractious

politics are unlikely to settle down before the 2014 general election.

Third, India's most exciting stories are now in the states, not at the federal level. And the reality is that companies and investors will increasingly find opportunities in business-friendly states that are less regulated by New Delhi, and thus less subject to government control.

India's constitution divides jurisdiction between New Delhi and the states in far-reaching and significant ways. The centre has power over finance, defence, trade, telecommunications, foreign investment policy and some infrastructure. But the states have wide authorities, too, on subjects that matter greatly to India's investment climate, not least over power, agriculture, land, domestic investment and policing.

India's states, then, are increasingly masters of their own fate. And those most likely to succeed will be those that also recognise the need for good governance. After all, good governance turns out to be smart politics: while India has seen the highest rates of anti-incumbency of any democratic country in the world, there are now strong signs that this trend is slowing. This is especially true at the state level, where governments that have successfully improved governance, for example in Bihar and Orissa, have held on to power. Strong managers and competent chief ministers have, in some places, delivered striking results. And the good news is that such improvements should be good for growth and, ultimately, for investment too.

Excerpted from a paper by Evan A. Feigenbaum Adjunct Senior Fellow for East, Central and South Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations, East Asia Forum. May 17, 2012. For the complete article visit :

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/05/17/india-s-states-a-silver-lining-amid-economic-gloom/>

**Contributed by Ram Narayanan.
Ram_Wins@Roadrunner.com**

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

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

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the or-

ganisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a milieu of progress.

Based on our country's needs, and exploiting the country's own resources, Godrej have diversified.

Made to international standards and backed by continuous technical innovation, their products range from locks and security equipment, machine tools, forklift trucks, architecture and furniture, typewriters, refrigerators, computers and electronic business

systems as well as soaps, detergents, toiletries, chemicals, animal feeds, agro-products and edible oils.

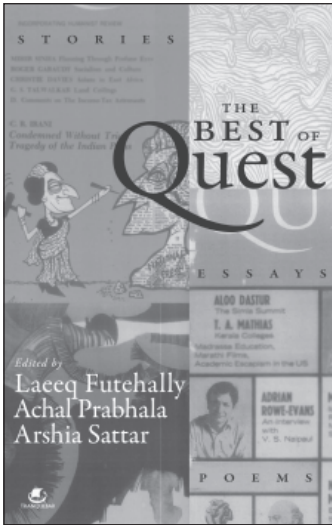
The Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli-Pirojshanagar is an example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family-planning benefits...

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



BOOK REVIEWS



THE BEST OF QUEST, edited by Laeeq Futehally, Achal Prabhala, Arshia Sattar, Tranquebar Press, Venkat Towers, 165, P. H. Road, Maduravoyal, Chennai 600095
● 2011 ● pp.xxxi+660 ● Rs.695

Reviewed by Havovi Anklesaria, a freelance writer and editor. She has, with assistance from Santan Rodrigues edited a commemoration volume entitled Nissim Ezekiel Remembered published by the Sahitya Akademi.

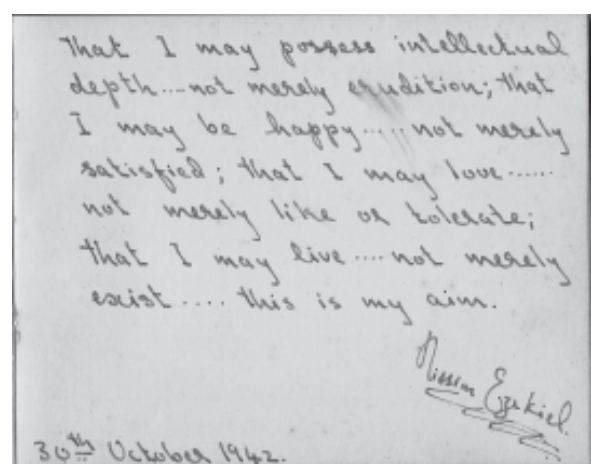
The Best of Quest is lucky to have Laeeq Futehally, *Quest*'s first and only literary editor, collaborating with Achal Prabhala and Arshia Sattar to produce a most alluring package of essays,

poetry and fiction. The selected articles retain their freewheeling flavour and a historical relevance. An ebullient 'D' pops up frequently to be revealed as Dilip Chitre in a valedictory essay. Thick-pencilled, sketches of Konarak sculptures by Satyajit Ray complement Marie Seton's article on the great Sun Temple. Appended to the back cover is a glossy pullout of a collage of various *Quest* covers. And between the pages of lofty comment on the relevance of 'Direct Action' in the political arena and Hindu life and it's impact on foreign policy appear *Quest*'s more quixotic moments – a saucy Air-India advertisement, a porky figure in a suicidal summer stupor being advised to 'Turn on Rallifan and be the coolest man in town'.

Prabhala's first encounter with *Quest* was a result of 'a re-arrangement of space' when his parents were refurbishing their old house. Sattar's links were more personal - her mother worked for *Quest* and Nissim Ezekiel, it's first editor. Thirty years later she worked for *New Quest* and Dilip Chitre. Futehally writes at some length about Nissim Ezekiel's relationship with *Quest*: the principles he laid down for himself – that all items must have some relevance to India and must be by Indians, for Indians shaped the character of the journal. Sattar explains that in the process of publication Futehally had expressed a desire to dedicate the book to Ezekiel. But no dedication follows. Instead we have Sattar's personal take on Ezekiel: '...it became apparent that we needed to mine the rich vein of Nissim-lore... Nissim influenced at least two generations of young writers...As Nissim held us tenuously together when he was alive, so too, he has given us a chance to come together long after his death'

(pp.xxiv-xxv). Hence a chapter entitled 'Moments with Nissim', which includes snippets and personal anecdotes by friends and acquaintances. Jane Bhandari makes an inconsequential admission – she never met Ezekiel, but after reading his love poems she regretted she hadn't. And Shanta Gokhale's account has some mystifying inaccuracies: she offered Nissim a lift home, it was obvious that he was not well, symptoms of Alzheimer's were already apparent. Nearing Bombay Central (station) he was confused, he didn't know which way to turn. 'Then suddenly he got out of the cab and said he would walk home. Before I could pay off the cab and follow him, he had disappeared. I called his place as soon as I got back and found, to my immense relief, that he had reached' (p.xxvii). Ezekiel had no phone in his house for decades and lived entirely on his own. Who then could she have called or spoken to? And who but he, no longer aware of his surroundings, could have answered the phone? And if one episode throws up crucial question marks, what quality of memory is that?

In the hands of these three editors *Quest* emerges



From an autograph book maintained by the late Abraham Solomon, President of the Indian Secular Society and a close friend of Nissim Ezekiel.

as an idiosyncratic and iconoclastic literary and cultural magazine. At no point in this 660 page book is its subtitle ‘a quarterly of inquiry, criticism and ideas’ evoked. An overwhelming sense of nostalgia for the life and times of Nissim Ezekiel and Dilip Chitre pervades the book and, more decisively, subverts *Quest*’s contemporary relevance. Apart from brief statements by Laeeq Futehally and Professor Srinivasan, there is little sense of *Quest*’s *raison d’etre* – that it was a product of the Cold War, a counterbalance to the influence of the USSR, a radical exponent of free speech and thought. And that it managed to carve out a *niche* for itself in an atmosphere of left-wing intolerance, attracting fierce loyalties and the prima donnas of the Indian intelligentsia.

The crucial presence of A. B. Shah who as managing editor and publisher kept the journal going for over two decades is unacknowledged. The contributions of Abu Sayed Ayub and Amlan Dutta who edited *Quest* for over a decade are virtually absent and the witty and erudite V. V. John never mentioned. Futehally refers to Abu Sayed Ayub dismissively as that ‘someone else (who) turned out to be A. S. Ayub. He was a good editor. But he was not Nissim’ (p.xxi). If Ezekiel is to be credited with introducing non-partisanship into the journal, Ayub and Dutta sustained it, steering it through the very difficult ‘CIA exposure period’ when it was pilloried in every journal and newspaper in the country.

The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom’s ongoing project to digitize all the issues of *Quest* is in progress. *The Best of Quest* might still have carved out a shelf life of its own because a book to have and hold is much more than a repository of knowledge. But shoddy copy-editing and proof-reading has taken away much of its sheen. There is no agreement on the formatting and styles to be adopted. The title *Quest* is sometimes italicized, sometimes in plain text, and this is evident from the title page. Single and double quotation marks are whimsically used. Arrangement of sections is inconsistent: ‘Essays and Opinions’ is vaguely chronological, ‘Poetry’ and ‘Fiction’ is alphabetical. I say ‘vaguely’ because the essays, poetry and fiction sourced from an earlier book *Ten Years of Quest* are un-dated. Typos are too numerous to identify but here is an irresistible gem: ‘Minoo (Masani) was twenty years older than A. B. Shah and came from an entirely different background. He was from a Gujarati Jain family near Surat, but came to Poona for his higher education and settled there, becoming a part of Maharashtrian society...’ (p.654). It was not Minoo who was from a Gujarati Jain family but A. B. Shah. And finally, an unforgivable lapse – the book lacks that most useful tool for seeking out and cross-referencing information and ideas – an Index.

The Best of Quest is a laudable enterprise, indifferently executed.

Freedom First

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Phone: (022) 2284 3416 • email: freedom@vsnl.com

SUBSCRIPTION FORM (In Block Letters Please)

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

_____ PIN

PHONE / MOBILE NUMBER :

EMAIL : _____

SUBSCRIPTIONS PAYABLE BY CHEQUE / DD **DRAWN IN FAVOUR OF ICCF** AND PAYABLE AT PAR IN MUMBAI.
IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE THEN PLEASE ADD BANK CHARGES RS.50 FOR OUTSTATION CHEQUES WITHIN
INDIA. SUBSCRIPTIONS CAN ALSO BE PAID BY MONEY ORDER

Subscription

Within India & SAARC countries

☐ 1 Year : Rs.200

☐ 2 Years : Rs.350

☐ 3 Years : Rs.500

Overseas

(By Second Class Airmail)

Annual: \$20 / £ 10



WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR by Dr. T. H. Chowdary, CTMS Publications, No.8. P&T Colony, Secunderabad, Hyderabad 500009 • 2011 • Pages 275 • Rs.100

Reviewed by Brig. S. C. Sharma (retd.) Advisor to the telecom industry, a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com

The book is a collection of articles written in 2004-05. The introduction of separate electorate for Muslims in 1909 led to an unbridgeable divide amongst Hindus and Muslims. The Congress continued the British policy of

attract politicians and he has made an excellent suggestion that the people should stop offering money in Government controlled temples. They should instead contribute to a trust associated with the temple. This trust should be responsible to look after temples and work for the betterment of the Hindus. Newspapers and TV media could be effective instruments for inspiring devotees. Understanding Hinduism is essential to understanding India. Sardar Panikkar has echoed similar thought in his *Survey of Indian History* - history of India is essentially the history of Hindu India.

favours to the Muslims. Every move towards self-rule was an occasion for Muslims to press for and get privileges. The BJP rule under NDA improved the economic condition but failed in its basic philosophy of arresting disintegrative forces. He questions the relevance of reservation for Muslims in jobs and educational institutions. Their backwardness is self-inflicted. Affirmative action should be based on economic condition. The sight of a poor Muslim is not uglier than that of a poor Brahmin.

An advocate of a competitive economy, he convinced Rajiv Gandhi to convert the Department of Telecom into a Corporation and bring in the culture of efficiency in PSUs. A large number of PSUs were running losses in the name of social commitments. While in service, he was one of the few officers who worked for liberal rules in place of the archaic Telegraph Act enacted in 1885. Rajiv had brought in Sam Pitroda as telecom chief who appointed a study group to recommend changes in the Telegraph Act. The recommendations of the study group were accepted by Pitroda but Rajiv Gandhi resigned before the changes could be implemented.

The author expresses anguish at the skewed secular policy of the Congress party. In 1952, it formed an alliance with the Muslim League to win the elections in Kerala. The Hindu majority areas of Sind were neglected at the time of partition and no attempt has been made to check illegal immigration from Bangladesh. Other points raised by him are liberal Haj subsidy and open support to anti-Hindu speeches by the Church. The leftists too join the Congress in these efforts. This policy continues.

The Government's control of temples is a negation of secularism. It has never dared take over the management of a mosque or church. Vast sums of money in the temples

Indian culture dominated China without any military conquest. It is difficult to agree with the author that India never invaded any country and extended its rule over Indonesia and parts of Malaya without any military conquest. Magadha of Kalinga, the Pandyas and the Cholas invaded Sri Lanka and established kingdoms there. Admiral Sridharan has written in the *Maritime History of India* that naval victory led to their monopoly of trade in the Indian Ocean and annexation of Indonesia and parts of Malaya.

One of the few good things that happened under British rule was the migration of Indians to various colonies – Mauritius, Trinidad, Surinam and Tobago. They have progressed well in these countries in trade, industry, professions and politics. A taxi driver in Singapore told me that the Indians lost their leading position in commerce because they did not invest the profits in Singapore and instead took it to their homeland. Tamil is an the official language in Singapore. Not only Tamil, all Indian languages have been recognized there. This was a clever move by which one Indian community got fragmented on the basis of languages.

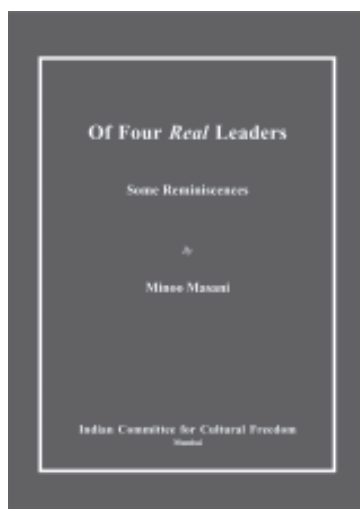
Locating engineering colleges in rural areas was based on the faulty premise that it would bring about development in the villages. Even IIT Kharagpur or BITS, Pilani have not made any difference to the surrounding area. It is one more instance of needless interference by the government in education. Improvement in university education will save valuable foreign exchange since students need not go to USA or Australia.

The Leftists and the Church denounce Sanatan Dharma as Brahmanical. Much is made of foreign assistance to SC/ST by missionaries. Their annual contribution is

about Rs 8000 crores. The subsidies to the poor contributed mostly by Hindus through taxes amount to Rs 80000 crores. Yet the myth is being propagated that the high caste Hindus are doing nothing for the poor. He has made reference to privileges to the Anglo-Indians. This appears to be incorrect. They lost their privileges of assured jobs in railways and telegraph department after Independence. I must acknowledge their contribution in the Armed Forces and in hockey. Large number of them left for Australia since they were apprehensive of discrimination in free India. On the contrary they faced difficulties in Australia in getting jobs matching their qualifications. A colonel with a telecom

engineering degree was employed as postman. A general worked as a teller in a bank. They accepted that status in the interests of a bright future for their children.

The author has been fair. He has criticized Congress for deviations from secularism but has given due compliments to Rajiv Gandhi for trying to bring efficiency in the PSUs. Advani gets adverse comments for his utterances in Karachi. It is a useful book to understand the failures of the Establishment both Congress and non-Congress.



Of Four Real Leaders by Minoo Masani – A Review¹

Minoo Masani, by S. V. Raju² – Some Comments

Review and Comments
by S. C. Panda, Bhubaneswar.
Email: balinki@yahoo.com

This is a summary of two publications the first of which is the booklet “*Of Four Real Leaders*” published by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom in 2011. This has not yet been reviewed in *Freedom First* and we are delighted to publish this assessment by Mr. S. C. Panda.



The second are his comments on the brief biography of *Minoo Masani* published by the

National Book Trust in 2007. It was reviewed earlier in *Freedom First* which too we welcome.

Of Four Real Leaders by Minoo Masani

Mahatma Gandhi

1. Masani was no slavish follower of the Mahatma. He had courage to be impertinent with him (p.11)
2. It is Interesting to know that it was Masani who introduced V. K. Krishna Menon to Jawaharlal Nehru (p.16)
3. Masani’s unflattering remark that Sardar had the habit of lying needs be investigated (p.17)
4. Masani’s opinion – that one of Gandhiji’s greatest mistakes was to put Nehru as his successor costing India very dearly – was very apt (p.18) This view was echoed by J. R. D. Tata in an interview a few years before his death.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Masani brings out the fact that Nehru did not possess a sense of humour. (p.21)

2. Nehru is exposed as a blind Stalinist and wanted to take India to Communism by democratic methods (p.23)
3. Masani showed his indomitable courage in saying to Nehru on his face: “You think you are God Almighty...” (p.24)
4. Masani rightly blames Nehru for the Kashmir imbroglio (p.25)

C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji)

1. Masani was one of the few leaders who thought, and rightly so, that Rajaji was undoubtedly next to the Mahatma (p.26) But Congress propaganda machine made Nehru next to Gandhiji.
2. Piloo Mody’s presiding over the funeral of the Swatantra Party is briefly mentioned. (p.30)

Jayaprakash Narayan (JP)

1. JP was a Communist and was not as influenced by Gandhiji as Masani was.

2. JP was honest to acknowledge that Masani's view on Communism was correct and he (JP) was wrong (p.33).
3. JP's reason – for not joining the Constituent Assembly was that he was not convinced of the sincerity of the British leaving India (p.34) – looks bizarre.
4. JP was against the partition of India (p.34).
5. Masani states: "This (Partition) was proved by the massacre of one million Muslims and one million Hindus and Sikhs later.." (p.34). I do not agree with this. The fact is that it was All India Muslim League which started the riots and killed Hindus and Sikhs as a result of M. A. Jinnah's call of 'Day of Direct Action' on 16th August 1946. Hindus and Sikhs later retaliated. Regarding casualties, Hindus and Sikhs suffered higher as much as three times as that of Muslims.
6. Masani correctly points out that JP wrongly blamed Sardar for failing to protect Mahatma's life. (p.35)
7. JP's abandonment of Communism by reading Masani's book, "Socialism Reconsidered" is very important. (p.36)
8. There is high humour when Masani quotes Marx e.g. Marx himself says, "Thank God, I am not a Marxist" (p.35)
9. It is indeed great of JP that despite what Indira Gandhi did to him, he did not bear any personal bitterness against her. He was against her dictatorial and unconstitutional rule.
5. He reinforces Gandhiji's oft repeated words, 'End and means are interlinked'. (p.32)
6. He was described by his socialist friends as "The Fallen Angel of Socialism" was true and yet humorous. (p.34).
7. A great quality of Masani: His heart rarely ruled his head (p.35)
8. Masani clearly visualised State ownership and management are bound to impair efficiency and retard industrial progress. (p.39)
9. Masani's opinion that to participate in political work, a person should have an income of his own independent of politics (p.43). This is outstanding.
10. He correctly branded Finance Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's budget of February 1947 as a parting kick to Indian industry before the Partition (p.52)
11. Masani's parting advice to the members of Swatantra Party intending to join a regional party (that of Ch. Charan Singh's) that zero plus zero results zero, though prophetic was not heeded. (p.84)
12. Masani was a great democrat and did not believe that Opposition should always oppose the government as exemplified by his support to prime minister Indira Gandhi's devaluation of the rupee (p.87).
13. He preached and practiced the notion that an MP/MLA need to submit his/her report regularly to the Constituency (p.91).

The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom needs be congratulated for bringing out posthumously this gem of a booklet of historical importance by Minoo Masani.

Minoo Masani
by S. V. Raju

1. The genesis of Parsi exodus due to religious persecution by Muslim invaders is well stated (p.1).
2. The Congress under Mahatma Gandhi did a great mistake by resigning from various provincial governments protesting British joining the War without consulting it (the Congress). The power vacuum so created was filled in by the Muslim League (p.22).
3. Masani's admiration of and commitment to democracy and free enquiry are well stated (p.22,38)
4. He (Masani) minces no words while talking of rights and duties. (p.30)
15. There are excellent black and white photographs but captions of some lacked data on places and dates.

S. C. PANDA, Bhubaneswar. Email balinki@yahoo.com
(Endnotes)

1. For a copy email ilg@vsnl.net. Rs.40 a copy. Postage: Book Post Rs.30. Courier: Rs.50
2. Published by National Book Trust. Price Hard Copy Rs.100/-, Paperback: Rs.40. Also available in Hindi. Rs.50/- National Book Trust, Nehru Bhavan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070.

This month in June 1955

NOTES

Film Censorship

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress has not acted wisely in giving in to the clamour of prudes and moralists in favour of a more rigid censorship of films. Acting upon a representation of sixty-four Members of Parliament, it has recommended to the Government a stricter enforcement of censorship regulations.

The film industry is not opposed, as pointed out by Mr. S. S. Vasani, the President of the Film Federation of India, to censorship as such. But it is clear that unreasonable and unnecessarily rigid censorship would mar the progress of the industry. Producers would then, says Mr. Vasani, shudder to touch contemporary themes and would go in only for stale stunts, folklore and mythology full of superstitions.

The cry against films is raised by narrow-minded politicians and social reactionaries who desire to improve the morals of the people through governmental regulations. They should remember the wise words of the Prime Minister quoted by Mr. Vasani: "There is danger in the Government taking upon itself the role of judging people's morals. I do not think it desirable for the Government to become a judge of this kind."

*

Letters to the Editor

The Role of Muslims in India

Dear Sir,

Since 1947 the Muslim citizens of India as a whole have withdrawn from the political and social life of the country. The reason for this is that there is confusion in their minds about the role they have to play in India. They appear to be unaware of the privileges which the Constitution of India confers on all citizens irrespective of their religion, and they seem to be negligent of the duties expected of them.

This deplorable state must now end, and it was, therefore, timely that a meeting of some of the leading Muslims of Bombay was held to discuss and find ways of inducing Muslims to take a healthy interest in the local

and central affairs of their country.

The convener of the meeting, Mr. Saif F. B. Tyabji, said that India is a secular democracy, and the power resides with the people. It is the duty, therefore, of every Indian to know his political rights and privileges, and to exercise these rights and privileges. The meeting decided that the first and most urgent necessity was to impress on all sections of the community the value and importance of their vote, and to rouse the people from their apathy, so that they could exercise their votes to the best of their intelligence. The meeting wisely decided that it was not desirable to form a new organization to further these objects; the co-operation of existing organizations together with individual effort would be sufficient to fulfil these ends.

Bombay, 5th May, 1955.

ZAFAR FATEHALLY

Out Shortly

QUEST

A bi-monthly of arts and ideas sponsored by
the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

Edited By: NISSIM EZEKIEL

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS:

BHOODAN AND SARVODAYA BY M. G. Bailur, a critique of some popular Indian political ideas

SAP By Narendra Mitra, a short story translated from Bengali by Lecla Ray

ALL PLAY AND NO WORK By S. Ookerjee, a description and analysis of Indian student life .

PONDICHERRY JOURNAL By J. Vijayatunga, a journalist's diary of a critical mood

"GATE OF HELL" By D. G. Kadkarni, a dissenting opinion of a Japanese film

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN MUSIC By Comolata Dutt, some constructive suggestions

AN INDIAN IN PARIS By Jean Bout, a letter about Laxman Pai

THE LONG NORTH WIND By M. Krishnan, notes on a classic of Sangam poetry

FEVER IN THE SOUTH By T. R. Ramiah, an account of Southern separatism

POEMS, BOOK REVIEWS

NOTES ON FILM, MUSIC. THEATRE. DANCE.

Single Copy: Re 1/-

Annual Rs.6/-

Army and Navy Building, 3rd Floor,
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1.

Educating Adults

Displaced Youth

Enabling and Empowering Displaced Youth

Jyoti Marwah

It is paradoxical that the more advanced and more developed our country becomes the greater the numbers of displaced youth and their families.

His voice quivered as he narrated the tragic partition woes of 1947. Then a young man of 25 doing his studies in medicine Dr. Om Prakash Duggal (my Father) was stripped off his vocation, “We lived in the village Jamalpur Sobtia and did not board the train to India from Lahore due to the riots but walked several kilometers to the Jammu Kashmir border and as a new route was being made we had to stay at Jammu before boarding the train to India.”

He reminisced how the family left behind everything – house, belongings, animals, large tracts of cultivated land, relatives, friends, bank accounts and a motor car. Thus stripped of all means of survival the family reached Lucknow and made a fresh start. Simpler for them as his father was a doctor too and making a living was easier for those in this profession.

History is replete with innumerable examples of how any movement good or bad has had an impact on the young and able bodied representatives who herald change and if enabled and empowered become the most precious assets of a nation. Conversely, if left stranded due to displacement and negligible rehabilitation they can turn out to be dreaded forces of destruction.

Displacement could be the consequence of not one but a number of reasons – wars and conflicts, natural calamity, land acquisition by the State for infrastructure development or for housing, or projects for public utility such as dams, highways, hospitals, new cities/SEZs. This results in the movement of large numbers of people across boundaries/frontiers of their country or from one region

to another within their country. In the former case they are referred to as refugees and in the latter as Internally Displaced People (IDP). The trauma is incalculable particularly for young women and children. It is paradoxical that the more advanced and more developed our country becomes the greater the numbers of displaced youth and their families.

The UNHRC rules and regulations have developed with the passage of time to care for the status and concerns of those crossing boundaries but direct application of UNHRC rules is not possible in the case of IDP, though their rules are considered as guidelines for ‘humanitarian intervention’. IDP are increasing in number because of the changing nature of warfare due to a sharp rise in internal conflicts arising from separatist movements, ethnicity, religious fanaticism, communalism, racism and casteism to name a few. To resettle and rehabilitate this perpetually inflating figure is a phenomenal task. In 2010 there were 42 million IDPs worldwide due to natural disasters, since 2006 – 400 Afghans flee their homes daily due to escalating conflict with nearly 75% having experienced displacement at sometime or the other. Also, in the last 20 years nearly one million people have fled their homes in North-East India due to ethnic violence.

Displaced people are often stigmatized and viewed with suspicion and hostility and often vulnerable to violence, human rights violation and sexual abuse. They seek shelter in camps, abandoned buildings, slums, roadside areas, and such other inhospitable and unhealthy environment. They face problems of food, shelter, employment and above all lack of privacy and respect.



A Feature Sponsored by

Adult Education Institute,

Registered under the Public Trusts Act N.E-4282

Contact: Email:freedomfirst1952@gmail.com

This results in generating within the youth an attraction for terrorist and anti-social groups. A typical example is of the displaced Santhals in western Assam, who, finding no governmental support formed the '*Adivasi Cobra Militant Force*', and the '*Birsa Commando Force*'. Conflict with the administration led to further terror.

In India the responsibilities of the human rights commissions are limited to making recommendations. Also the Centre has no national policy to resolve issues of conflict arising from displacement as this is the responsibility of the states.

However it cannot be denied that as citizens, IDPs retain their rights and need to be protected under human rights and International Humanitarian Law as they face physical and psychosocial trauma. The worst being disruption of schooling, personality impairment and unemployment for their children and adolescents. Language barrier, social stigma and lack of identity leads to extreme distress and bad health conditions which has long term implications and implies that the future is in the hands of a feeble generation.

It is clear that displacement is an ongoing phenomenon due to various reasons it is but right that the youth are aware of this development and prepared to face changes. They must also be instrumental in becoming vehicles of relief wherever needed, whatever be the pattern, cause and background of displacement. All this needs an enlightened and empowered youth and India has no dearth of young men and women.

DR. JYOTI MARWAH, Head of the Department of History, ICLES' Motilal Jhunjunwala College of Art, Science and Commerce, Navi Mumbai.
Email: jmarwah01@yahoo.in

*

Frustrated Youth is the Country's Loss

Prajakta Shenoy

Today's youth is tomorrow's Future. Nine of Ten youth live in developing countries. Youth is the phase in every person's life when he or she has aspirations, goals to attain and a desire to go forward in life. There are many reasons which result in youth getting displaced. These could arise from human or natural calamities be it famine, drought, earthquake. Among man made calamities are war, poverty even false beliefs. When these occur, families are uprooted and separated and education suffers.

Displaced youth without proper schooling or vocational training get frustrated and often turn to violence and criminal activities. When this happens their enormous potential to contribute to their families, the society and their country is lost.

Female youth who, though interested in getting educated and willing to stand on their own, are often prevented because of gender based violence and discrimination. The Indian culture which still believes in the old tradition of the girl child to be kept at home for household chores especially in the rural areas are deprived of their chance to develop. The Indian Constitution which has given the right to education for all the citizens of the country is yet to penetrate remote areas.

If the displaced youth are empowered the future of the country will become bright.

Prajakta Shenoy, ICLES College.

*

Mumbai's Street Children

Rita Bhambi

Street children are an urban phenomenon and this problem is growing very fast in Mumbai where there are over two lakh children on the streets. They are in the formative group of 10 to 15 years and most of them are illiterates and school drop outs. They are roofless, rootless and alienated from the society. The place of their abode is the footpath, railway stations, bridges, beneath flyovers, in the precinct of temples and dargahs. They have to fend for themselves for their survival. Civic amenities are beyond their reach. Malnutrition and hunger are wide spread and they suffered from ailments many of them of a serious nature and infectious..

To ensure that no child should live on the street and every child has an inherent right to dignity and respect, organisations like Amcha Ghar, Hamara Foundation, Fulora Foundation and AAMRAE are working towards creating the environment in which every child enjoys the right to survival, development, protection, and, hopefully, a happy childhood. Amcha Ghar-A Home for Girls aims to educate girls in an English medium school, to train and transform them into skilled adult women who are able to live an independent life..

While working for the overall development and empowerment of street children, these organisations take up

the issues of their life situations with a larger purpose of creating public awareness and creating sensitivity amongst the masses regarding this growing problem. Their common goals are to empower children on the street so that they can have alternatives for a better life. Their major objective is reaching out to street children, providing them need based services for their growth and development. Due to their efforts many children have become self reliant and responsible citizens.

Mrs. Rita P. Bhambi, Associate Professor and Head, Department of History, G. N. Khalsa College, Mumbai. Rita_bhambi@yahoo.co.in

*

CIDCO's Role

Pooja Ghorpade

The process of making new cities results in a major upheaval in the lives of those who have inhabited the region for probably decades or even centuries. This refers to not only human beings but to all the other creations of God, in the areas around. For people make a livelihood in a set pattern of relationships to the existing resources in and around the region that they inhabit. City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) developed the city of Navi Mumbai to make it a sister city to Mumbai and help decongest it. Realizing the implication of displacement arising from land acquisition the need for rehabilitation of Project Affected People/Families (PAP) has been a major concern for CIDCO.

Their rehabilitation measures have laid a major emphasis on the young in the families. To empower them they have designed policies to provide educational, economic, social and employment support to PAPs. To mention a few important ones;

- 1) Blank forms for stipends are forwarded to educational institutes every year in the month of June. Attendance records are maintained and checked before disbursement of the stipend. Cheques are sent to the respective institutions for distribution. This support is given to wards of PAP from 11th standard to graduation on successful completion of the year. PAPs obtaining 1st class Degree are entitled to stipend for Post Graduation.
- 2) Computer Training is given free of cost to the wards of PAPs. The wards are selected once in a lifetime for a cover and one candidate from each family is entitled to this benefit. This training is given in

government recognized institutes.

- 3) As per the Land Pricing and Land Disposal Policy social facility plots like cultural complexes, samaj mandir, cultural education for women, mahila mandal, gymnasium, study centre are allotted by the Rehabilitation Section to eligible institutions/trusts formed by PAPs. Also, plots are identified by the Planning Department for religious activities and allotted to Public Charitable Trusts formed by PAPs which fulfil the required criteria.
- 4) Qualified PAP youngsters are also given jobs of a suitable nature with CIDCO in its projects elsewhere in the state.

**Pooja Ghorpade
TYBA ICLES' MJ College**

*

Displaced Tribal Youth

Ravinder Kaur Cheema

An effort initiated by a group of medicos of Karnataka aimed at starting a movement to bring a change in the life of the poor and marginalized, led to the establishment of a development organisation named Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) in 1984. The vision: A caring and equitable society, free of deprivation and strife, and the mission: to develop and facilitate processes that improve quality of life of people. The SVYM has been strongly inspired by the ideologies of great thinkers and philosophers like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi which is visible through the values embraced in the functioning of the SVYM. Health, Education and Socio-economic empowerment are the areas of concern and importance of the SVYM.

They envisage building a civil society based on the subaltern approach which encompasses grass-root level working and adopt policies for the development of the displaced tribes. They reach out health facilities not only to the poor but also to the deprived and displaced forest based tribes of Heggadadevanakote Taluka in Mysore District which became their main area of activities. The tribes comprised of five different clans namely Jenukuruba, Kadukuruba, Yerava, Paniya and Bunde Soliga. They were displaced twice due to the development projects of the Government, namely Project Tiger, and Kabini Reservoir, forcing them to stay in destitution and away from their natural home on the peripheries of the Bandipur National

Park. By 2009 the SVYM has rehabilitated more than 150 tribal families affected by development projects.

The vital need for the future generation of the tribes is education and health facility. Education would help them develop a better understanding. The first step towards it was the starting of an informal school for the tribal kids in Brahmagiri which is about 80 kms from Mysore city.

A Viveka Tribal Learning Center (VTCL) at Hosahalli, started by SVYM in 1988, in a thatched hut with a few students, is today a government recognized semi-residential school imparting quality education to more than 400 tribal children – the first generation to enter a school; helping them fit into the mainstream while retaining pride in, and contact with, their tribal heritage. It is heartening to know that the tribal girls are almost equal in number to boys in this school and complete their education up to class 10, thus empowering them to go for higher education. The VTCL is the first tribal school to introduce the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Unit for girls that helps the students to develop leadership qualities, discipline, the secular approach and the value of selfless service.

The Teacher training and Research Centre started the organisation at Hosahalli is like a window to the world of professional education for the tribal students as well as others in the area.

The SVYM also aims at reducing dropouts by encouraging the participation of the community in various issues related to the child's education which are addressed through display of posters and street plays that also spread awareness about need of education in society.

The SVYM, acting as a key promoter-facilitator in the community's efforts towards self-reliance and empowerment, is developing local, innovative and cost-effective solutions to sustain community-driven progress. SVYM is also rooted to its values of *Satya*, *Ahimsa*, *Seva* and *Tyaga* in its functioning.

SVYM is a non-political, non-religious, not-for-profit, registered, voluntary organisation. The group does not aim at only announcing programmes in count; rather it strives to provide amenities to larger displaced and deprived masses. The spirit and contribution of the SVYM towards creating a new civil society- a new generation, from the grass-root population is remarkable. It seems like Youth creating an army of Youth, the future of our society. Their achievements and accomplishments are enormous

that make us so proud and are reason to emulate. So we all together need to use our dynamics for the growth and development of the ignored community and reaching the unreached should be our motto.

Dr. Ravinder Kaur Cheema
Dept. of History
G. N. Khalsa College,
Mumbai

*

The Displaced Youth of Kashmir Nobody Cares For Them

Susannah Malkan

The inspiration to express concern over the issues facing the Kashmiri youth today is due to an incident I witnessed about a year ago. On one of the regular afternoons during the week, I answered the doorbell to two Kashmiri students who stood at my doorstep carrying a hope for their future. As I heard them narrate their plight, the teacher-mentor and mother in me felt strongly for the student youth of a traumatised Kashmir.

Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir is in shambles. The youth have no life, nowhere to go, nothing to do after 5 pm. Many are facebook junkies, others are in deep depression. If a few gather at some corner, they are detained under Public Security Act (PSA). Some go to Delhi and other cities for work and find that they cannot get a house or a job and are often looked upon as 'terrorists'. Their eyes are angry, their voices tense. They are the youth of Kashmir who are being targeted by the police and the state administration. They feel insecure in their own land as they believe that the security forces give them no security as many are perceived as terrorists.

Is this the identity of the Kashmir youth today?

As lakhs of Kashmiri youth get displaced from the once peaceful valley, the youth suffer specifically from transitory situational maladjustment problems, severe neurotic symptoms like acute anxiety, depression, hysterical reactions etc. The women folk suffer more as they are worried about their new settlements in refugee camps. While reasons stated for this displacement have been mainly due to the external dimensions of the conflict in the form of ongoing violent militancy in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, our main concern should be the future of our nation, our youth, as we give way to a generation that thrives in fear, insecurity and hopelessness.

The two Kashmiri youth at my doorstep asking for

help to sponsor the education of many others in their state initially raised doubts in my mind. But as I pondered over the incident, I felt a sense of shame at my suspicions. As educationists, we are philanthropists, but are we seriously giving a thought as to how we can contribute to a degenerating student community and the youth of our troubled times?

Prof. Susannah Malkan,
Head, Departmentt of Sociology, S. K. Somaiya
College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai.
profsusannah@gmail.com

*

Travails of Kashmiri Youth

Arjun Jedhe

Jammu & Kashmir is the northernmost state of India. Most of the state is situated in the Great Himalayan Ranges. Jammu & Kashmir share the border internationally with the Peoples Republic of China to the north and east, and with Pakistan Administered Territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, to the west and northwest.

Owing to the geographical factors Jammu & Kashmir has a strategically important place in the region. This has caused Jammu & Kashmir to be in dispute since the independence. This territory is disputed by China, India & Pakistan. The territories under the control of China are known as Aksai China and the areas under the control of Pakistan are known as Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) within India.

According to the statistics based on the 2001 census in India, Jammu & Kashmir has a population of 10,143,100 of which 66.97% are Muslim, 29.63% are Hindu, 2.03% is Sikh and 1.36% Buddhists and other religions. There are roughly 1.5 million refugees from PoK and an estimated 50-100,000 Kashmiri Muslims and 150-300,000 Kashmiri Pandits have been internally displaced due to militancy.

Due to all these factors the state of Jammu & Kashmir is in chaos. Politics, corruption have affected every level of the infrastructure of the state. Due to constant fights between Hindus and Muslims, this area is very sensitive. Curfews are regularly imposed due to religious and political factors. This in turn hits the economy of the state and the state incurs more loss than profit in all sections.

One of the worst hit is the education department. Education is handled by the Jammu & Kashmir State Board of School Education (JKBOSE). There are even 'Kendriya

Vidyalayas' and various private and public schools and colleges in the state. But because of the area being sensitive the schools and colleges have often to be shut down during curfew. This creates a negative impact on the minds of the students.

The student life in Jammu & Kashmir may not be considered as good as in other Indian States. In Jammu & Kashmir the problem makers try to attract and create a sense of revolt in the minds of the youth. Now a days there is special importance given to the youth wing of all political parties. All these factors succeed in taking the mindset of these youth off from education.

It's said that education helps to build a nation. It helps to create a good infrastructure, which in turn creates a good, successful and efficient government. It also helps to enrich the culture of the region, which helps tourism to grow and all these factors give the economy a good chance to grow.

Therefore, we must work together for the cause of the student community in Jammu and Kashmir, so that we can build a better future for the country as a whole.

ARJUN JEDHE,
Second Year B.A. student in Sociology,
S. K. Somaiya College of Arts,
Science and Commerce, Mumbai.

*

The Plight of the Kashmiri Pandits

Davinderpal Kaur Bhasin

Displacement is one of the stark realities faced by the Kashmiri Pandits. The outbreak of militancy and violence in the late 80's resulted in the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley. This displacement is a phenomenon unprecedented in the history of India. Almost the entire community was forced into exile due to the violent militancy that prevailed in the valley. There are contradictory views being held by the people while pointing out to the cause of displacement. While some blame the Muslim community in Kashmir, the others are of the opinion that it is the work of armed extremist groups backed by Pakistan. Whatever may be the cause, the fact is that the environment of Kashmir is hostile to the existence of the Pandits.

Initially the Pandits felt that this displacement may be of a temporary nature and they continued to dream of returning to their homeland but somehow it seems to have

gained the status of permanent displacement. The displaced have undergone great misery and their lives have changed irrevocably. Many of them have fled to safer places due to the fear of persecution. The upper economic strata have migrated to metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai and those of the lower economic strata continued to live in camps at Jammu. They have suffered immense economic losses. The militancy in the valley has disrupted the education of the Pandit students. The trauma of displacement and the problems of adjustment to an entirely different and hostile environment have affected them physically as well as mentally.

It is high time the government thinks seriously about the rehabilitation and resettlement of the community through social integration and economic reconstruction.

Positive steps need to be taken in the direction of rebuilding the confidence and harmony between the Muslim majority and the Kashmiri Pandits. The state has to take an initiative in this direction and ensure that peace prevails in the valley. Urgent measures need to be taken to address the problems of the displaced Pandits. Despite the claims made by the government that all necessary facilities are being provided to the displaced, the fact is that the Kashmiri Pandits continue to lead a miserable life and suffer from a sense of deprivation and alienation.

Prof. Davinderpal Kaur Bhasin
Associate Professor and Head,
Department of Philosophy,
G. N. Khalsa College, Mumbai.
dkbhasin@ymail.com

*

Funding the Right to Education Act (3)

Suresh C. Sharma

Education is the foundation of success of individuals and leads to prosperity of society. The Right to Education (RTE) Act envisages compulsory and free education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. It is a commendable thought.

Management Committee of School

The RTE Act stipulates that the management committees of schools other than unaided schools will have 75% members from parents and guardians of students. The remaining 25% members will be equally shared by elected members of the local authority, teachers and local educationists. The Head Master will be ex-officio member. The Committee will ensure that teachers are not burdened with non-academic work and children attend classes regularly. It will monitor mid-day meals and prepare accounts. All the stake holders of education are well represented. No guidelines have been laid down for selection of members from the various categories. Some teachers may interpret non-academic work rigidly and accountability for safety of school buildings has not been specified. All work connected with schools should be considered legitimate activity. It is not clear as to how the Committee will ensure that children attend classes.

It would be prudent not to have a large number of members in the committee as it would be difficult to reach a decision. The number could be restricted to twelve. It will have 9 members from parents/guardians and one each from the elected local body, teachers and local educationists. The quality of education largely depends on the ability and commitment of teachers. The advice and views of

Head Master and one lone teacher member may not carry weight with others. It is presumed that the committee will have the responsibility to appoint teachers and evolve criteria for admission of students. Children are supposed to study in neighbourhood schools. It is likely that parents would like to admit their children into well managed schools instead. Choice of medium of instruction and caste based reservation in staffing and admissions may be points of discord between parents, local representative and State Administration. Poor parents who make their living by daily wages or work may find it difficult to spare the time to attend meetings. We can notice the thin attendance in State assemblies and parliament even when the members are well paid. Parents who are not educated may easily be misguided. Some criteria need to be laid down for nomination of members. Discipline of teachers and students should be left to the Head Master. Students are prone to violent behaviour in certain areas. It is noticed not only during examinations but even in daily routine studies on flimsy grounds. Parents can help in such situations. In some schools, 25% teachers were found to be absent and 50% of those present were not engaged in teaching. The Head Master should be given authority and support to deal with errant staff. Interference by management committee will demoralize the staff.

(to be continued)

Mother's Day, May 13, 2012



Contributed by Melanie Silveira.

Need we say anything more?

Space Courtesy: Adult Education Institute

WE BELIEVE

Freedom First believes in an open society based on minimum government and maximum freedom tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow; we reject any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.