

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

A RIOT WITHOUT REASON?



A man with a stone in his hand glares at the camera at Azad Maidan. Journalists too bore the brunt of the violence.
PHOTOS: ANSHUMAN POYREKARANT

'We will burn the van, with or without you, the mob warned us'



A constable walks past burning vehicles during the riot-like situation near Azad Maidan on Saturday — Anshuman Poyrekarant

PLUS

Avoiding Power Grid Trips!

Understand Olympic Performance

**It was a riot! Mob went at cops
hammer and tongs, literally**

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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

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Between Ourselves

It was all quiet on the morning of Saturday August 11 as I travelled to my office. Being the second Saturday of the month many offices were closed and so were Maharashtra government offices and traffic was light. Around 3.30 p.m. I decided to call it a day and go home in a taxi. And within minutes realised something was wrong when we were stopped by a policeman. The traffic was chaotic. And then we saw three or four motor bikes with pillion riders whizzing past defying the police. Meanwhile rumours spread like wildfire that there was massive rally of 50,000 plus Muslims at Azad Maidan and there was mayhem in and around CST railway terminus. There was fear on the faces of those heading home and no one to reassure them 'Don't worry we are here'.

There cannot be a greater failure of governance than this.

When I read of thousands of north-easterners fleeing Bangalore for the safety of their homes or refugee camps in Assam or Meghalaya or Manipur a thousand plus miles away, it was because they no longer believed the State could protect them. They were on their own. Four days later we saw the President of India who manoeuvred his way to the Presidency deliver meaningless homilies. Happy Independence Day!

Editor

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From Our Readers

Western Ghats Ecology

I have some points to add to the observations by Dr. Rca Godbole (“Western Ghats Ecology – Expert Panel’s Report”, *Freedom First*, August 2012).

There are more than 178 business interests who are waiting to exploit the Western Ghats region (which involves six states). All these business groups are anxious to see that their interests are not jeopardised by this Report. Some of them are Joint Ventures with public sector companies in which the bureaucrats and politicians have their own interests. This can be confirmed from cases filed in the Bombay High Court and before the Green Tribunal.

I agree we need to balance the needs of development with least damage to the ecology. It is in this context when I read the Gadgil report, I felt he and his group has done a good job. I have glanced through the report and found it to be a meticulous study covering all the regions with on the spot verification and involvement of the local population.

The Central Government has now formed a new committee to see whether the implementation of the Madhav Gadgil report is feasible or not. This, after objections were raised by almost all the state governments involved expressing negative views on the Report.

A. V. Gopalakrishnan, lawyer specialising in intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*

Dr. Rca Godbole clarifies

Thank you for reading my comments, and following up on this very essential aspect of our environmental conduct at large. As stated in my letter to Prof. Gadgil, I endorse most of his points, except for the ones which seem to be gratuitously inserted in it. My objections are mainly about extraneous material such as exhorting the government to allow people to protest, and the rant on recombinant DNA crops in the region, without defining the region. I feel that if this report is to be implemented, it’d better have teeth to it, such as clear demarcations and suggestions for the humans to clear out.

*

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi

In his obsession with Mr. Narendra Modi, Mr. Hirjikaka has stooped low enough to resort to untruth “The Absolute Power of Hype” *Freedom First*, August 2012.

Electricity in villages, unlike anywhere in the country, is available in Gujarat to almost all villages for 24 hours a day and not 8 hours as he states. In fact, this model has been accepted by the Planning Commission for the next Plan for the whole country.

The roads in villages are also “table top roads” if he cares to visit them. In fact, it is because of the electricity available throughout the day that diamond industries are shifting to villages giving villagers employment. Secondly, the annual *Pravasi Diwas* is organized by the Central Government and the Gujarat Government because a large number of NRIs are from Gujarat. NRIs are not fools to be dazzled; nor are they his voters. As to the statement that “it is difficult to find a Hindu Gujarati prepared to say a bad word about him, the same is not true in the rest of the country however”, I may remind Mr. Hirjikaka that about 40% voters in Gujarat have voted against Shri Modi in various elections and they cannot be all Muslims. As to the rest of the country, in the *India Today* opinion poll Mr. Modi has been adjudged as the best chief minister over the years. Modi has not been able to woo and beguile the media because a large section thereof is continuously engaged in only writing venomous articles about him.

So, Mr. Hirjikaka should check facts before jumping to conclusions with his diatribe against Mr. Modi. He should ask the Chinese and Japanese why they are foolish enough to consider investing in Gujarat. He should also contact the large number of auto companies which plan to start auto manufacturing in Gujarat because it seems that they are foolish enough to believe that there is excellent infrastructure and particularly the facility of ports in Gujarat. He should inquire from industry leaders like Ratan Tata, Ambanis, and Sunil Mittal why they praise the progress in Gujarat. There are several other areas such as agriculture where there has been stupendous growth which I have not mentioned.

I only hope that before writing one more invective against Mr. Modi, Mr. Hirjikaka checks his facts, puts his prejudice behind and makes a dispassionate analysis.

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*

Social Wisdom and Proverbs in Kannada

Dr. R. Srinivasan deserves to be congratulated for his excellent essay on “India Social Wisdom and Proverbs” vide *Freedom First*, August 2012. He has brought out very clearly with illustrations the validity and utility of proverbs,

a subject which the modern generation has lost sight of. Being a Kannadiga, I am particularly thankful to the Professor for having introduced the name of the famous Kannada poet Sarvajna who is credited with more than 2,000 proverbs in Kannada in the form of three line verses called 'Tripadis' as also small pithy sentences called 'Vachanas'. The following few lines broadly outline the life and work of Sarvajna.

The name 'Sarvajna' [which means 'All-knower' in Sanskrit] appears to be the pseudonym of the poet whose real name is Pushpadatta. He was born in a village in Dharwar District of Karnataka sometime in the 16th century. According to legend, his father by name Basavarasa, a Brahmin, met his mother by name Malli, a Shudra widow, when he was on his way to Kashi on a pilgrimage. In course of time, when Sarvajna questioned his parents about the legitimacy of his birth, they became furious. When he became persistent, he was banished from the house where after he lived in an exalted state of mind. By Divine Grace he became gifted with the power of composing extempore poems. As a wandering minstrel, he travelled all over Karnataka, collecting the essence of local culture and composed three line 'Tripadis'.

His work encompasses a variety of themes – religion, customs, society, morals, riddles and the like. He wandered all over as a bard, awakening the moral and religious sensibilities of the people through his verses with chaste beautiful poetry. In course of time, these *Tripadis* became part of everyday life in certain parts of Karnataka.

The following are a few of his *Tripadis* and *Vachanas*

1. Being a monk, he explains how he became popular as 'Sarvajna' in the following *Tripadi*:
"All-knower has not become an All-knower merely out of vanity
He learnt one bit of information from every one
And became a veritable mountain of knowledge"
2. "By wearing marks of ash
If one goes to heaven
A donkey [that rolls in ashes] surely goes to heaven"
3. "Circling around the temple without devotion is like an ox circling around a mill"
4. "Sweet as milk and nectar when it is to borrow
But when the creditor comes after you
It is painful as a broken ribcage"
5. "If you have a warm home

A good income, a good wife and a trusted friend
Set the heaven on fire".

6. "The people in every town are my relations
The men in every quarter are my friends
Whom shall I leave behind and go?"

True to his name, the 'omniscient', the poetry of Sarvajna reveals a vast knowledge of human experience. Today they are on the lips of his countrymen, centuries after he lived.

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Freedom First of June 2012

The June 2012 issue of *Freedom First*, like all the issues, is rich in its contentious contents that evoke and provoke reactions, both good and otherwise. Here are mine...

"An Obit in the *London Times*"

"R.I.P. Common Sense"

Common sense went for a dizzy knock,
Ages ago, barrel, lock and stock.
Dying a premature death, as it did,
On the human brain was put a lid.

All those, rich and poor, young and old,
O'er the eons lost their hold.
What once did Man openly expound?
Today lies ten feet underground.

Was it suicide plain or murder by vitriol?
One thing's for sure: its ancestors walked proud and tall.
Truth, Trust, Responsibility and Reason,
Were honest-to-goodness folk in every season?

Though common sense is dead and gone
– may his soul rest in peace –
Here's hoping his tribe will again soon increase.

"The President's Dream House"

She, Pratibha Patil, may be the President of India (currently) but, frankly, she's just another ordinary resident who, luckily, found herself to be in the right place, at the right time. So, why should one "blame" her, and her family, to play whoopee while the going's good? After all, Indians (in power) are like that only, right?

The crux of the whole problem – and I've

maintained this time and time again – is that we have the wrong people ruling the country; I don't mean only the Congress, BJP, Janata Party, SP, NDA, RSS, SS, ABC, PQR, XYZ or who have you - I mean the individuals at the helm who've made good for themselves and their kith and kin, all through the years, ever since Independence:

Indians in power

When he was the War Minister, and later the Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill had said, "Do not give India her independence; Indians do not know how to rule". How true and prophetic! We are a nation of blunderers ruled by plunderers who will not hesitate to sell their own mother (India). For them, their only dictum is: "Make hey (hay) while the son (sun) shines" while laughing all the way to (hidden) banks.

There is, however, an alternative to this sordid situation, which we (the janata) find ourselves in to turn it around by 180° and make India a truly great nation that can hold its head high among the others of the rest of the world. Because, honestly, the country's head is looking up its rear - and has been doing so for the last 65 years,

"Top 5 Reasons Why Congress will Lose in 2014"

Yes, India's like a ship – "S S Bottomless", with no "navigation system" worth the name. Firoze Hirjikaka maintains the Congress should ".... either steer it (safely) to safety, or jump overboard", like rats. He goes on to further comment..."half measures will not just work (rightly

so), go back to the trenches (the best place for you to hide in) and spare the people further agony? All well said but then the \$364 million – dollar question arises 'WHO NEXT?'

Adi E. Merchant, "Creative Writer/Consultant,
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*

The Gandhi Family is the Congress Party.

Some four decades back, the late Mr. Dev Kant Barua who was then President of the Indira Congress, was so elated that he coined the famous, or rather infamous, quote "Indira is India, and India is Indira" when actually an "emergency" of losing power was feared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi herself.

In similar fashion now, the former Cabinet Minister, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, whom columnist Tavleen Singh describes as "courtier in chief", recently admitted that "the Gandhi family is the Congress Party". To debate whether it is sycophancy or whether members of the Indira Congress, as a tribe, have been rendered totally spineless is, in my view, a futile debate.

Actually, this is no laughing matter. With only fake Gandhis around, it is a tragedy that the Congress of the original Gandhi has reached its nadir.

Kashinath A. Divecha, retired trade unionist
and social activist, Mumbai.

When Labour Laws harm instead of benefiting Labour

There are many lessons in the recent tragedy at the Maruti-Suzuki factory at Manesar in Gurgaon district. One of them is that labour trouble is not only a management's or a union's problem but a vital concern of the state. Haryana has not learned this lesson. It destroyed the vibrant industrial town of Faridabad more than a generation ago due to poor industrial relations. It is now bent on scaring industry away from Gurgaon as well. Last year's unrest at Maruti resulted in Rs.2,500 crore loss. This is a shockingly high figure – half a billion dollars – for any company to lose anywhere in the world from industrial trouble. For Suzuki, whose Indian operation brings in half its global profit, it is appalling. For a Japanese company to be continuously in the news for labour unrest is extraordinary when Japan has taught teamwork and industrial harmony to the world. Suzuki should ask itself if it has the right persons in charge.

*

A sensible company in India will not hire a permanent worker today because of our senseless labour laws. Instead, it hires contract workers to which it denies long-term benefits. Meant to protect workers, the laws have harmed them. They are the main reason why India has not been able to create a manufacturing revolution and create more jobs. The spread of contract labour has reduced the bargaining power of unions as well, who now represent less than 4% of India's workers. Nowhere in the world has so much harm been done by a piece of legislation.

Gurcharan Das. Excerpted from his article in *The Times of India*, August 12, 2012.

Mrinal Gore, RIP

A Leader with Courage and Commitment

J. S. Apte

Gandhiji once observed “Maharashtra is a beehive of constructive workers”. Mrinal Gore who passed away on 17th July, 2012 belonged to that category. She was born on 24th June, 1928, in a higher middle class family as Mrinal Mohite. A brilliant student in her school and college, she gave up her medical education to serve the down-trodden, the neglected, and the marginalized sections of society. In the early 1940’s she joined the Rashtra Seva Dal, a youth organization devoted to the cause of Indian independence, secular nationalism and democratic socialism. At one of the training camps of the Dal in 1946, she met her life partner Keshav alias Bandu Gore, a staunch socialist, thinker and political activist. Keshav Gore was elected Sarpanch of the Village Panchayat of Goregaon.



1928-2012

As a Panchayat member in 1953, she initiated various constructive programmes. A firm believer in the cause of family planning she promoted and spread its message with the co-operation of the All India Women’s Conference. A huge conference of slum-workers was organized at Goregaon which was presided over by Dr. Ram Mohan Lohia. The rehabilitation of displaced slum dwellers was arranged in the presence of the then Chief Minister Shri Y.B. Chavan. Rehabilitation of the Dongri Slum Dwellers was hailed as ‘The saga of Tin Dongri’ by the English print media. Her efforts for the welfare of common, needy people in general and for the slum dwellers in particular were amply rewarded; she was elected Corporator to the Mumbai Municipal Corporation in 1961. She earned the sobriquet “Paniwali Bai” in Mumbai for her efforts to facilitate the supply of drinking water to thousands of people in her constituency during her tenure as corporator.

In 1950’s she actively participated in the Goa liberation movement and Samyukta Maharashtra agitation. She, along with two socialist corporators, succeeded in passing a resolution to conduct Corporation meetings in Marathi, the state language of Maharashtra. She whole

heartedly put into practice the three approaches to political work propounded by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia - ballot box, jail and spades (belief in democracy, readiness to serve imprisonment, constructive work). She also took inspiration from the teachings of Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan.

As member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, she mobilized woman power from all sections of the society in general, and middle and lower middle class women, in particular. The agitation took a quantum leap in

September 1972 and the humble rolling-pin (called *Latni* in Marathi) became a symbol of the massive woman power in Mumbai. In all her agitations, there was no violence in action or speech. ‘Swadhar’, an institution for women in distress was formed by her in 1983 has, since its inception, rendered guidance and counselling to thousands of women in matters of family problems and financial stress. She introduced a bill ‘Prenatal Diagnostic Technique’ in 1986, which was passed unanimously. Maharashtra was the first state in India to pass such an Act.

She opposed the emergency, went underground but was arrested in December 1975. After her release in February 1977, she was elected a Member of Parliament from North Mumbai Constituency. When she was offered the Health Ministry by the then PM Morarji Desai, she declined saying she preferred to work among the people.

One of her most significant contributions to the welfare of the downtrodden masses was the construction of 5,000 houses for the poor and needy people under the aegis of the Nagari Niwara Parishad.

J. S. Apte, Formerly Director, Family Planning Association of India, Mumbai, is currently a freelance writer on developmental issues.

For a personal tribute by V. Balachandran, a top ranking retired police officer, turn to page 7.

A Riot without Reason?

Ashok Karnik

Can ordinary rowdies get away after attacking the State in this fashion? Has permissiveness reached this level of incompetence? Is 'zero tolerance' only a phrase to be repeated after every such incident? What is the Government doing to show 'zero tolerance'?

The Mumbai riot on August 11, 2012 caught everybody unaware. Two persons were killed, hundreds injured, scores of vehicles burnt, policemen attacked and policewomen molested, police weapons stolen. It was expected to be a routine protest against the violent eviction of lakhs of innocent people in Assam and Myanmar. That the victims were Muslims was incidental; that they were suspected to be Bangladeshi was the real problem, which the Government of India has been ignoring for decades. Assam, West Bengal and Tripura are paying the price for this indulgence and the country may pay an even greater and horrendous price for it later. Alarming census figures, warnings from several Governors and Supreme Court directives have failed to move the Centre into action. This is not the place to go into demographic details. Suffice it to say that the Bodos are concerned about the demographic damage that the influx of 'outsiders' has been causing because they had fought for protection of their culture in the 1990s and were unfortunately equipped with arms to take action (July 2012) on their grievance. However, the Bodo problem is only the tip of an iceberg. It is the economic fallout of illegal migration that is of greater concern.

A Complex Problem

The Bodo problem was partially settled in 1993 by forming the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) but the continued dilution of density of the Bodo population kept the pot boiling. The July 2012 outbreak in Kokrajhar (BTAD) rendering lakhs of settlers homeless, attracted nationwide sympathy for the victims. Similar developments are taking place in Myanmar where suspected Bangladeshi settlers are being forcibly ejected from their households. In India as well as in Myanmar, the problem is of 'foreigners' settling in border districts and upsetting the population equilibrium.

The Bodo problem is much more complex as it involves Adivasis, Assamese from the plains and Bangladeshi settlers encroaching on Bodo lands. There are no easy answers but it is naive to treat it as a communal problem. The victims happen to be Muslims today but

could be others next. It is unfortunate that Muslim organisations in Mumbai (and elsewhere in the country) have decided to unite on this issue on the basis of their common faith. It would have been more appropriate to organise humanitarian aid on non-denominational basis. Giving communal colour to a human tragedy is wrong and dangerous. The reaction to such communalisation could be retaliatory communalism.

Where is the 'Zero Tolerance'?

How could a small protest demonstration turn so violent without any provocation? There are questions which are unanswered so far. The organisers of the protest expected to collect about 1500 protesters; the number grew ten-fold (some say 50,000). The police (Special Branch) claim that they had anticipated a big crowd and inflamed passions but not the kind of attack that took place and shook Mumbai. Some protesters were equipped with incendiaries and were intent on attacking the police and all vehicles within reach. This could not have been spontaneous. This happened in the busiest area of the city and affected millions of innocent citizens. If a metropolis can be held hostage by 'democratically' organised protest, where is the law and order? Mumbai still nurses the scars of 26/11 and any sign of uncontrolled violence is frightening.

Can ordinary rowdies get away after attacking the State in this fashion? Has permissiveness reached this level of incompetence? Is 'zero tolerance' only a phrase to be repeated after every such incident? What is the Government doing to show zero tolerance? The organisers must be held responsible and made to pay damages so that all future protesters are warned. It is heartening to see that Muslim religious leaders have condemned the violence and demanded action against the perpetrators. It should stop similar protests elsewhere in the country from getting out of control. The police should also identify those who turned a mere protest into a major conflagration. Beyond punishing the actual perpetrators, the police need to identify those who plotted and planned to use a protest march to launch a major offensive in the city. The brain

behind the riot must be exposed or we will have more such shocks. Twenty three persons were arrested (based on CCTV pictures) and some weapons recovered.

Lurking Dangers

This was a riot without a reason, unless there was foreign instigation. There was universal agreement that those evicted needed all help and sympathy. If everyone was in agreement, where was the need for a protest demonstration? Why attack a State apparatus that is not responsible for and had nothing to do with the injustice or the eviction of settlers? Why bring in a communal angle when nobody in Mumbai or Maharashtra had done

anything against any particular community? The communal situation in Maharashtra has been peaceful but the danger is that any such mischief could awaken the ghosts of the past. The Pune serial bomb blasts (August 1) followed by the Mumbai riot and the attack on North East students on August 12, again in Pune, are disturbing signs that things are not in control. Hate crimes are an indication of a simmering discontent in society.

ASHOK V. KARNIK formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. Freelance writer and member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in

“Paniwali Bai”

“Paniwali Bai” died on 17 July. She was 84... I came to know her in 1972 when I assumed charge of policing the sprawling Mumbai Western suburbs, which frequently saw law and order problems. We had to seek her help in pacifying a huge crowd, which was squatting on the railway tracks, disrupting traffic. The situation was getting uncontrollable and my Goregaon police inspector suggested seeking her help. Being new to Mumbai I did not know anything about her. However, her presence worked like magic and the rebellious crowd meekly obeyed her soothing words and melted away.

In 1974, I was caught in the crosshairs with her soon after I took charge of the Special Branch. Her agitation against rising prices took a new turn when she formed a group of lady “storm troopers” from all political parties. They would stealthily sneak into government offices one by one and then suddenly *gherao* (encircling the government functionary as pressure tactics) the ministers in their chambers to press their demands. Once they barged into the Cabinet Room when the full Maharashtra Cabinet under Chief Minister V. P. Naik was in session. They would not allow us to arrest them until women police arrived. Even then they had to be dragged out one by one to the glee of press photographers.

Our struggle for six months to arrest her after the infamous Emergency has been chronicled by ace Crime Branch investigator, the late P. L. Mokashi, in his Marathi book with an English title *“You are Under Arrest”* (1984). Mokashi, who was then working in the Special Branch with me, was deputed to arrest her after the protest meeting at “Hutatma Chowk” (Martyrs’ Memorial) on 25 June 1975, the day “Emergency” was proclaimed. She spoke vehemently against the

suspension of fundamental rights and vanished into thin air even as Mokashi’s team was waiting to arrest her. Our failure to arrest her caused a lot of embarrassment to the late S.B. Chavan, then Chief Minister, who used to ridicule us by saying, “Can’t you catch a woman?”

Mrs. Gore, who went “underground” also taunted the Chief Minister and Prime Minister by sending letters from different places. After she was arrested in December 1975 from a private house where she was holding a secret anti-Emergency meeting, her diary was seized as “evidence” of her “anti-Emergency” activities. But my heart bled when I read the poignant entries. She had lamented that she could not visit her only daughter who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. She asked herself what more punishment could be given to a loving mother? It was later alleged that a vindictive Home Department had ordered her detention with criminals.

In May 1976, I moved to the Central government on “deputation”. In 1977, I called on her in New Delhi. She was then a Member of Parliament, elected with a thumping majority during that year’s elections, which also saw Mrs Gandhi’s ignominious defeat. When I met her I apologised for all the troubles I had caused her. But she received me with her usual smile, without any rancour and insisted on making tea for me. She was a great soul. If I know her well, she might be trying to *gherao* the God in heaven to bring justice to the world!

Vappala Balachandran

Excerpted from his tribute to Mrs. Mrinal Gore in the *Sunday Guardian* (New Delhi) and *India on Sunday* (London) July 29, 2012.

Avoiding Power Grid Trips

- The Imperatives of Solar Energy

Govind Keshav Bhide

Our policy makers must focus on the potential of solar energy in the country. Admittedly, this subject has been more talked about both in official and non-official forums than acted upon.

Time has now come to walk the talk!

At the dawn of independence, India had a total power generation capacity of 1400 MW. According to the latest official estimates of the Central Electricity Authority, the power capacity (public utilities) has expanded to 202,979 MW by end-May 2011 – in substance recording over 140 times growth over the last six decades. By all means, this is a remarkable achievement. However, it must be recognised that in the meantime, India's population has also increased over three and a half times. At the same time, the living standards of the people, as measured by an increase in real per capita income also expanded more than seven-fold.

Growing Demand for Power

By implication, while per capita availability of electricity has increased substantially – almost forty-fold in the post-independence period – there remains a huge gap between our existing per capita availability of electricity and our potential requirements. And this gap is widening progressively. Consequently, we have to accept load shedding, which has become a permanent feature of our power supply situation. Thus, the current predicament reflects growing demands for electricity driven by a number of factors, but more predominantly due to growing “power-intensity” of economic development involving industrialisation, commercialisation, urbanisation (consequential growing needs of mass transportation like railways) and increasing standards of living.

In fact, most expert projections suggest that India would witness rapid growth of per capita electricity consumption over the next decade and beyond. At present, our per capita electricity consumption at about 600 kwh is one of the lowest in the world – in the USA it is over 20 times and, in China five times more. To even increasing our per capita consumption to at least 1200 kwh would call for more than doubling our present power capacity in the next ten years is a very tough task - but not impossible.

Formulating a Long-term Strategy

It is in such contextual framework that we need to

explore new sources to expand power generation capacity in the country with a view to ensure sustainable long-term solution to our current predicament. At present, more than 65% of total electricity generation comes from coal and oil-based thermal plants; followed by 22% from hydro power plants and only about 11% from various renewable sources. The contribution of nuclear energy so far is lower than 3%, despite the fact that India's nuclear development programme has been in operation for well over five decades despite the fact that every effort is being made to articulate the case for nuclear energy and impress upon the general public that this is going to be the only saviour to achieve energy security for our country.

Given our prevailing pattern of power generation, India has been relentlessly exploiting not only its own limited coal and other fossil fuel (crude oil) resources, but also importing oil and other fossil fuel to meet the country's growing energy requirements. Not surprisingly, experts have been repeatedly warning that such indiscriminate deployment of critical natural resources would inevitably lead to their virtual depletion by the middle of the twenty-first century. Hence, there is justifiable urgency to pursue development of nuclear energy far more vigorously than at present.

Looking Beyond Nuclear Option

However, what is critically important is to strategise a more holistic approach to the future electricity scenario of our country. This would obviously have to incorporate the concerns relating to environmental damage caused by excessive usage of coal, crude oil and natural gas as primary sources of our energy consumption. There are also genuine apprehensions on carbon emissions and how these need to be controlled in the atmosphere; indeed, this is going to be an even more challenging proposition. Moreover, we would have to keep importing our fuel requirements on large scale, since indigenous oil production is found to be inadequate, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. It is necessary therefore to accord top priority to protect our delicate environmental balance by exploring various options for developing clean energy.

Since hydro power generation causes the least damage to the environment, it undoubtedly provides a superior source of clean energy. Also, hydroelectric generation has another positive side, namely, that it is a renewable source of energy. It is, therefore, desirable to expand our hydro capacity to its full potential. However, given the current stumbling blocks (land acquisition, environmental clearances, to mention just two of the many) in the implementation of several mega power projects, it may be unrealistic for the present to revisit hydro energy as a major source of power generation.

Solar Energy – A Powerful Alternative

Against this backdrop, our policy makers must focus on the potential of solar energy in the country. Admittedly, this subject has been more talked about both in official and non-official forums than acted upon. The time has now come to walk the talk!

We envisage two alternatives for exploiting solar energy; first, the well-known photovoltaic technology, which directly captures and converts solar energy into electricity generation through deployment of solar panels. However, there are limitations to this technology, and even in the global context, there are no examples of large-scale (several tens of megawatt) power creation from such effort. Besides, as compared to traditional sources of energy (coal-based thermal, hydroelectric plants, etc), the capital cost of solar energy through photovoltaic technology is at least 20 to 30 times higher. As a consequence, this has not become an economically viable option for large scale creation of power capacity.

The second alternative relates to thermal technology, which involves conversion of solar energy into steam at high pressure and high temperature of sun's rays. It is possible to build plants with 50 to 100 mw capacity. Such projects are successfully operated in various countries and these are significantly less capital-intensive in nature.

While making an objective assessment of potential availability of solar energy, it is necessary to recognize the fact that solar energy is not available during the night and during the monsoon season. Illustratively, after accounting for this natural phenomenon and careful evaluation of the potential of solar energy, it has been estimated that in Maharashtra such energy availability is in excess of 4 kwh per day from every square metre of our land area – and all this virtually effortless, and virtually at no cost! Maharashtra has a huge geographical area measuring over 300,000 sq km, which holds the promise of huge energy potential. Even if we were to harness this

potential at a very low level of just about 3%, Maharashtra would be endowed with as much as 10 times its present total power availability. If this proposition is to be extended to the other states with their respective large geographical areas and similar solar energy availability, India would be able to achieve fuller energy security within a reasonable time span say by the next decade.

This potential of solar energy may not be very easy to exploit, but it is not difficult either. There have already been enough studies, even work, done on the relevant technology in this area. What is now required is to accord it the highest priority and focussed attention by undertaking a comprehensive scientific study on different facets of solar energy and develop appropriate technology.

Striving Towards Technology Indigenisation

Incidentally, there is nothing secretive about the appropriate technology concerning solar energy. In this connection it is crucial that we do not fall victims to erroneous advice which would invariably be forthcoming that in view of India's urgent need for additional power relevant plant and machinery is imported and avoid the painful route of building our own expertise to develop such technology domestically. Such an easy option is fraught with the danger of our continuous dependence on foreign countries, most of whom would readily supply us machinery and equipment, but unlikely to transfer their technology.

Hence, what is important is to have our own long-term vision for the development of solar energy technology. Keeping in view the impending global shortage of fossil fuels, solar energy will become strategically very important in the future. Therefore, India must passionately remain on the forefront of developing solar technology and exploit its full potential.

Let me, therefore, conclude by suggesting that we establish a Solar Energy Scientific Research and Development Centre on the pattern similar to nuclear energy science and development centre in the country.

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Power Minister Veerappa Moily says it will never happen again. But it is doubtful whether the miners in Jharkhand, the passengers who were in a Delhi Metro's underground tunnel, and the patients who were on life support systems, will believe him.

The Week, August 12

Understanding Olympic Performance

Ranga Kota

Iconic inspiration could lead to a tradition of superior Olympic performance over time.

While Icons inspire, what gives birth to them is difficult to understand.

Their emergence in different nations could be an accident.

The continued dominance of the Olympics by the United States of America over the last three decades; the steady performance of Russia (even after the collapse of the USSR) to retain its position at the top; the spectacular rise of China to the top three rankings in a short time; the below par performance of economic giants, Canada, Germany and Japan and the continued poor performance of emerging economies like India, Brazil and Indonesia in the Olympics would interest keen watchers of sports to look for reasons for such a divergence. I am sure there must have been serious academic investigation into this aspect. My attempt to do so is modest and lacks academic or journalistic credentials. Nevertheless I decided to ponder over the performance of nations at the Olympics in the last three decades – from Moscow (1980) to London (2012), analyzed it on a few parameters and found a few interesting facets which I would like to share with readers of this journal.

Money Does Not Buy Medals

Rich nations can create an environment that could facilitate winners in Olympics. They can build world class sporting infrastructure, provide world class training for their sports persons and offer large financial rewards. But, nothing in the data I have, suggests that Olympic performance is linked to the economic might of a nation. Canada, Germany and Japan, the economic giants, do not figure on the Olympic medal chart anywhere close to their economic might. Japan's performance is no patch on China, and of late, falls short of South Korea. Canada which mirrors the US in many respects has a very poor Olympic record. Germany, the economic power of Europe, is not the leader in the Olympic sweepstakes in Europe. South Africa, the dominant economy in Africa is not a consistent leader in the medal tally among African Nations

There Is No Democratic Dividend

The success of the US across every dimension leads to the strong conviction that democratic and liberal states deliver better, but the facts are a bit different. The success of Communist regimes like China, the erstwhile USSR and East Germany, Cuba and North Korea; and of near autocratic governments in Kenya and Ethiopia casts

a doubt about democratic dividends. The relatively poor performance of some of liberal West European and Scandinavian countries adds further to this doubt

Genes But Not Everywhere

Genes might give a clue to the divergence. The success of blacks in the US, some African nations and Jamaica and China's near monopoly in Table Tennis and Badminton are sometimes attributed to their genes. But the same genes do not seem to matter elsewhere. Brazil and South Africa with abundant black population have a poor record in the Olympics. Malaysia and Indonesia which have a sizeable Chinese population are poor performers in Olympics. Perhaps Genes may be country specific!

Iconic Inspiration

The US had produced, over the years, legendary performers in Olympics. Jesse Owens (four gold medals winner in Berlin 1936); Carl Lewis (nine gold medals winner in the Olympics and the greatest athlete of the 20th century), Michael Johnson (gold medalist in 200 and 400 meters sprint in Atlanta, 1996) and Jackie Joyner Kersee (the best female athlete of the 20th century) are all sports icons in the US and must have inspired millions of blacks. The continued supply of world class black athletes from the US may have something to do with this iconic inspiration. The US has similar iconic figures in swimming. Mark Spitz and Michael Phelps, the greatest swimmers in the Olympic history are a great inspiration for thousands of US swimmers. Close to half of US gold medals in Olympics come from these two disciplines.

Kenya and Ethiopia have produced some outstanding medium and long distance runners over the years and they are a strong inspiration to athletes in these two nations. Who can forget the legendary marathon runner, Abebe Bikila from Ethiopia, who created a sensation in Rome (1960) running barefoot and winning the gold in a record breaking time.

The iconic inspiration could lead to a tradition of superior Olympic performance over time. While Icons inspire, what gives birth to them is difficult to understand.

Their emergence in different nations could be an accident.

Focus Pays But Has a Flipside Too

Many countries seem to limit their participation to a few disciplines. US in swimming and track and field, China in diving, table tennis, badminton and weight lifting, Iran in wrestling, Cuba in boxing and Australia in swimming. They tend to do well in these events. If they do not well in their specialized events in any edition of the Olympics they could end up as big losers. Both Cuba and Australia suffered in the London Olympics (2012) because they slipped in their focused disciplines. India's focus on shooting, wrestling and boxing has delivered eight medals in the last two Olympics.

Sporting as a Way Llife

You may not have to specialize if sports becomes a way of life. Some sports like sailing, rowing and cycling are an integral part of the lives of Scandinavians, Australians and New Zealanders (Kiwis). Olympic participation for them is a fun and a sort of vindication of their skills. Many medal winners in these events in Olympics come from these countries. But the spoils are widely distributed and do not boost the Olympic performance of the winning nations

Divided We Lose But United We May Not Gain

USSR, which was a serious challenger to the US for the top rank in the medal chart till the end of the eighties lost that tag after its breakup. It moved down to the third position before London and to the fourth after London. The breakaway republics like Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus have cut Russia's Olympic might to an extent and have become its serious competitors in some disciplines

The reunification of East and West Germany should have powered a unified Germany to new heights in Olympic performance. East Germany did very well in Olympics prior to integration. The unified German performance in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona with 33 gold medals and with a number three position on the medal chart suggested that Germany had gained immensely from unification. But, German performance has fallen over the last few Olympics. The gain of unification seems temporary and defies a convincing explanation

My Home, My Glory

Sometimes nations perform much above their average if they are the hosts. Spain in Barcelona (1992), Greece in Athens (2004) and UK in London (2008) had their best performance before their home crowds. These superior performances may have something do with the

home advantage. The weather and field conditions (outdoor sports), the crowd support and a pressure to deliver in front of home crowds act as boosters to a nation's performance. How Brazil does in Rio would be very interesting to watch and this could throw more light on this factor. The data we have, suggests that the performance of a host nation may not be carried forward. Even the giants like the US and China had a dip in their performance immediately after they played as host nation nations.

Beyond tangibles

Every nation wants to excel in Olympics but not many succeed. We tend to believe the successful nations have governments that focus on achieving sporting glory. China is touted as one which places a very high premium on their Olympic performance. Russia has great stakes in maintaining their top three ranking. Now UK seems intent on maintaining their third position achieved in London. Governments can raise their investments in sporting infrastructure, fund world class training of their sports persons and reward their achievers handsomely.

Economically powerful and liberal nations have the wherewithal to do all these. They in fact must be doing so. Several of them do not seem to gain any appreciable success from their efforts.

Beyond the positive initiatives of the government, what seems to matter is the stake that people in a nation have to become Olympic medalists. In African nations like Kenya and Ethiopia, an Olympic success could lead to a new high in economic and social status of Olympic medalists. The Blacks in the US see sports, apart from music, as the areas where their performance can turn them into celebrities and commercial properties

I do not see what stakes sports persons have in a command and control atmosphere of China and the erstwhile USSR. It would be interesting to know what motivates sports persons in these countries

Recent Olympic medalists of India came mostly from Bharat. Like Blacks in the US, the underprivileged in India could see sports as a great means of raising their visibility and economic status. The government should invest on tangibles. The rising stakes of the underprivileged will produce more medal winners in future Olympics. One or two of these winners could become Indian icons to ensure a steady stream of Olympic winners.

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Madhaviah Krishnan: 1912-1996

Ashish Chandola



Chital Herd, Bandipur, October 1969. Photo copyright: The Estate of M. Krishnan.

They graze in a body, moving together as they graze on
*"The chital are grazing,
Their heads never rising,
There are forty feeding as one."*

It is said that 'impressions' gained in childhood are delightful impressions that affect the rest of one's life in a positive manner. My own personal experience is that these impressions are held very dear even as the decades roll on.

Madhaviah Krishnan is the one person who left exactly this kind of impression I am talking about. He wrote columns in newspapers, so his writings must have touched generations, but I, for once, will tread safe ground and

will talk of the man that my friends and peers knew well through the sheer dint of his creative talent. It was through the diversity of his talent as a writer, an artist but most of all his ability to communicate and make simple things come alive that he established a benchmark that delighted so many of my generation and set Krishnan apart.

It is so true that there is nothing really that surpasses Krishnan's writings when he wrote about nature; he also wrote on diverse subjects like dog shows, native

cattle and dog breeds. He loved and wrote about cricket. I believe his writings in his native Tamil are as charming as the short fiction that he wrote in English. However, it was nature, natural history and wildlife that forever held his fascination. Such a person was Madhaviah Krishnan whose birth centenary we celebrated on 30th June 2012.

He wrote for a number of newspapers and magazines, but his column the 'Country Notebook' that ran without a break for 46 years in *The Statesmen* of Calcutta, must certainly be a record. It is nearly impossible to gauge how many people were introduced to the appreciation of nature through his column and many articles.

My friend, Ramachandra Guha has a charming story about how as a young boy he vied with his father to be the first to get to read the column! Anil Kumar Nauriya, also a dear friend and a contemporary of mine, who practices at the Supreme Court of India, recounts how fondly he looked forward to reading Krishnan's articles, as he found them always exhilarating. My father, a teacher to the core, would have me read them aloud to him and though it did not do my diction much good, the exercise certainly added words to my vocabulary and convinced me, much to my father's dismay, that academics was not my vocation and watching birds quickly became first priority!

Today's top wildlife biologists and scientists like Prof. Raman Sukumar of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director of Bombay Natural History Society (now over a 100 years old), Dr. Ravi Chellam, so well known for his work on the Asiatic lion in Gir, Gujarat, are amongst the few who I know have had their lives touched by Krishnan's writings on nature. Unlike me, this did not dissuade them from academic pursuits, but then I will say without the slightest doubt that it was Krishnan's writings that influenced their thought process that led to their becoming amongst the foremost wildlife biologists of the country.

Krishnan was an extraordinary observer of nature – dispassionate accurate and analytical. This, combined with his mastery of the English language, deep interest and knowledge of art, literature and poetry, a sharp sense of humour, made his writings truly unique and in a class of their own.

Krishnan was a perfectionist in everything that he did and this apparently extended to the kitchen. Asha Harikrishnan (Krishnan's grand-daughter) says "He enjoyed cooking for people and appreciated good food. When he cooked he was very meticulous and exacting and would

cut onions and chillies extremely fine – it was not easy to be his assistant when he cooked! The recipes that he gave me reflect his eye for detail and include instructions to the uninitiated on how to operate a hot plate or how exactly to orient and cut an onion! "

Harikrishnan, Krishnan's son shares another insight – "Some have said Krishnan did not care for recognition. They have not got it right. He was as delighted as anyone to get recognition when it came, as it did when he was awarded first a Nehru Fellowship and then the Padma Shri, both of which he dearly cherished. What he did not care for was to seek recognition or to lobby for it. "

At the recent release of an anthology of Krishnan's writings on birds, in Chennai Shri Gopalkrishna Gandhi fondly recalled an incident from 1977. "The new Janata Government headed by Morarji Desai had just assumed office. Krishnan came in an auto all the way from his Edward Elliott Road to Gandhinagar to meet my mother. It was raining. He stepped out of the auto, wet in patches. "I believe", he told my mother in Tamil, "You know Morarji Desai well...I do not know him or anyone in politics for that matter...But this I can say, whatever wrong Indira Gandhi may have done politically, she did a great deal of good for wild life and nature conservation...Please use your influence on Morarji Desai to tell him that whatever he may do to undo the evils of the Emergency let him not undo the good she has done for wild life and nature conservation..."

The life and work of M. Krishnan need to be remembered and celebrated, more so in his centenary year, for, through his writings, his sketches and photography he championed the cause of nature, wildlife and forests: the conservation cause, like no one else.

Books by M. Krishnan

Jungle and Backyard ● *India's Wildlife in 1959-1970: An Ecological survey of the larger mammals of Peninsular India* ● *Nights and Days: My Book of India's Wildlife*

Edited collections:

Nature's Spokesman: M. Krishnan and Indian Wildlife, edited by Ramachandra Guha

Eye in the Jungle: M. Krishnan. Photographs and Writing, edited by Ashish & Shanthi Chandola with T. N. A. Perumal

Of Birds & Birdsong M. Krishnan, edited by Shanthi and Ashish Chandola

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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.



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.

Anna's Dilemma

1. It is a great tragedy that the movement against corruption has had to change direction and seek to become a political alternative. India against Corruption (IAC) gained huge support in 2011 and threatened to challenge UPA II. The IAC lost steam as it got involved in other issues like communalism and went after every Minister suspected of corruption. It pursued moral McCarthyism and forgot that its priority should have been passage of the Lokpal Bill; other steps would have followed once the Bill was passed. In the process, it gave up its broad-based agenda and became selective in even accepting support; it rejected both major parties because one (Congress) was the party in power and was refusing to support the Jan Lokpal Bill; the other (BJP) was considered untouchable because it was deemed to be communal. The RSS which could have supplied the cadre was also kept out for the same reason. After rejecting the major actors, what was left was the unaligned intelligentsia which neither commands the numbers – nor does it have the capacity for sustained agitation. The rest were parties on the left that had their own agendas. All the mass goodwill could not be translated into a sufficient number of *satyagrahis* or voters.

1. It is easy to find fault with anybody undertaking the huge task of molding a nation. What was the alternative before Anna? The anti-corruption movement had to be continued and fasting had outlived its utility as an instrument of persuasion. The party which evaded the Jan Lokpal Bill had to be taught a lesson. Political challenge was the obvious answer. The confusion occurred at this stage. Instead of joining hands with parties which were opposing the ruling combine and supporting the Jan Lokpal Bill, Team Anna chose to tread a lonely path and launch a party of its own. A political party cannot have a single point agenda i.e. removal of corruption. It will have to take a stand on dozens of issues and all those who are against corruption may not agree on all such policies. The failure of the anti-corruption movement would be a tragedy for the millions who support Anna. Anna could have learnt from Jayaprakash Narayan who brought together disparate elements to defeat the Emergency. Even that movement did not last once it achieved its goal. Anna could have emulated JP tactically on the single issue of corruption by forming an all inclusive umbrella organisation. Now Anna has to hope that his erstwhile colleagues will be more inclusive in their approach to other parties and not divide and subdivide the anti-corruption movement. Anna himself appears skeptical.

Justice Defied

2. Crime has increased mainly because crime has ceased to be punished. This is a double whammy for the society: there is lessening regard for social mores and there is no fear of the law. Worse, there is no social stigma attached any longer to being hauled up for a criminal offence. There are Ministers, MPs and MLAs, strutting around without embarrassment on being charge-sheeted for offences of moral turpitude. Corruption has been with us for long but one whiff of corruption was enough for a politician to be dropped like a hot potato; now the theme song is that he is not yet convicted. A wonderful, humane idea in jurisprudence but it has become counter-productive; it is damaging the social fabric now. Suresh Kalmadi accused of a multitude of malpractices wanted to represent his Association at the Olympic Games under the plea that

2. There is a feeling that the guilty are never punished if they have enough money to engage in court battles. This is leading to rising anger against the police, the criminal justice system and the administration at large. The Government is happy reciting the mantra of 'innocent till proved guilty'. Can nothing be done about this caricature of a just society? The judiciary has to change the precept, 'let hundred criminals go free but one innocent man shall not be punished'. This is destroying the people's faith in civil society as criminals flourish. If it is so easy to escape punishment, crime could become the preferred vocation. The judiciary has the moral responsibility to ensure that criminals are not let loose on the society; it must weigh the preponderance of evidence in a criminal case and not look for petty grounds to acquit wrong

he is not yet convicted of any crime. Why Kalmadi, we have several Ministers charge-sheeted for corruption, still occupying high positions because they are yet to be convicted; those convicted have appeals pending in courts. Then we have the spectacle of CWG, 2-G and Adarsh scam accused, out on bail and pretending to be lily-white pure. The worry is that more and more criminals are at large and are unconcerned with the consequences of their actions. The society accepts them as leaders and soon many of them would get re-elected and claim acquittal by the people's court.

doers. On the positive side, the Election Commission has urged disqualification of candidates who have been charge-sheeted for offences of moral turpitude. This is a welcome suggestion but our law-makers are not likely to hurt themselves with such a measure. We are left with the weapon of social rejection of criminals among us. Let us not have the spectacle of the accused waving to their supporters with a V sign as if they have won a great battle, on being released on bail. The next step in everybody's interest is to complete the trial and appeal process within a stipulated period so that there is no time for the guilty to preen about knowing that their appeals would not come up for hearing in their life time and they will never be effectively convicted. It is time the society shows its iron fist.

Rahul the Saviour

3. The announcement that Rahul Gandhi would now play a more active role in politics and government is welcome. In these bleak times, a ray of hope is a solace even if it is shaded with doubts. Eight years ago, the possible emergence of a new youth brigade in politics made one believe that we were on the verge of a new political culture - of modern ideas, free from dogma and old prejudices. It was hoped that with a number of well educated young MPs who could rally around Rahul Gandhi, India would emerge out of the 20th Century mindset of needless polemics, outdated dogma, and the specter of opposition for the sake of opposition into a dawn of reasoned politics, economic progress and single-minded pursuit of national interests.

3. This failed to happen and Rahul remained hidden and protected from all controversies when there was a crying need for a leader to give direction to a floundering Government and failing economy; political parties sought glory in besmirching each other with exposures of scam after scam and no politician appeared to be free of blame. A few clean and brave leaders were the need of the hour. Instead, Rahul chose to remain away from all controversies; more importantly, he chose to remain safe. He was absent when needed most. Leaders are those who stick out their necks in a crisis, not save themselves to take up only populist causes. His record is not promising, but let us give Rahul a chance. We are not spoilt for choices either and anybody who can shoulder the burden is welcome! Will a deliverer emerge or are we whistling in the dark?

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

Readers who do not have the facility of a computer can also post (mail) their points of view on serious issues of the day to "Point Counter Point, C/o Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001.

The Decline of the West...

Ten years ago, America had Steve Jobs, Bob Hope and Johnny Cash. Now it has no Jobs, no Hope and no Cash. Or so the joke goes.

Only, it's no joke. The line is pretty close to reality in the US. The less said about Europe the better. Both the US and Europe are in decline. I was asked by a business channel in 2008 about recovery in the US. I mentioned 40 quarters and after that I was never invited for another discussion.

Recently, another media person asked me the same question and I answered 80 quarters. He was shocked since he was told some "sprouts" of recovery had been seen in the American economy.

It is important to recognise that the dominance of the West had been there only for the last 200-odd years. According to Angus Maddison's pioneering OECD study, India and China had nearly 50% of global GDP as late as the 1820's. Hence India and China are not emerging or rising powers. They are retrieving their original position.

In 1990, the share of the G-7 in world GDP (on a purchasing power parity basis) was 51% and that of emerging markets 36%. But in 2011, it is the reverse. So the dominant West is a myth.

Excerpted from an article by Professor R. Vaidyanathan, cited in KCCI Journal (May 2012). First published in Business Today.

The Way Out of Agriculture

Milind Murugan

Asking agriculture to shed off its population in order to raise farmers' income is putting the cart before the horse.

“Improving the well-being of farmers is difficult unless agriculture sheds some off its population. At least one member from the farmer’s family should seek livelihood opportunities outside agriculture.” Sharad Pawar made this statement recently, addressing the rally of presidents of *Gram Panchayats* (all farmers). He has often made this appeal to farmers in his home state pointing out how rich industrial countries have only a small proportion of their labour force in agriculture in contrast to that in poor countries. He did not bother to discuss whether the movement of labour out of agriculture is a cause or effect of the agricultural development in these countries.

Movement of Labour Out of Agriculture Welcome with Increased Agricultural Productivity

Most of today’s rich countries have an agrarian past; two hundred years ago most of their population was engaged in agriculture related activities. This was so because ‘food’ is a basic necessity. As they developed, new activities in industry and services emerged and a greater and greater part of the labour force moved to industry and services. It is easy to see, however, that this could not have happened unless those who remained in agriculture produced at least as much food as before. In other words, the movement of labour out of agriculture could not have taken place unless the productivity of farmers had improved correspondingly. In fact, it is easy to see that an increase in agricultural productivity allows fewer people to produce the food required by the entire population and facilitates the labour movement to other sectors. This is true of all countries except city-states like Singapore and Hong Kong who import most of their food requirements.

The other side of the labour market is the employment outside agriculture. Farmers’ sons and daughters will not need any advice to move out of agriculture if there were more lucrative jobs outside agriculture. What would make firms in industry and services hire the labour coming out of agriculture? One possible answer is a rising demand for non-agricultural goods and services either from the domestic economy or from abroad. India, unlike China and other East and Southeast Asian countries, is not yet an economy driven by exports. Admittedly, over the last few decades India has taken huge strides in boosting exports in some sectors such as software and business services but these sectors are highly skill-intensive. The labour moving out of agriculture will hardly have the skills to fill these jobs until our educational system is miraculously transformed overnight.

Agricultural development – most effective way of reducing poverty

The story is the same for our domestic demand; the increase in demand for non-agricultural goods is coming mostly from a thin layer of our urban population that is



experiencing income increases. Typically, when the incomes of these urban elite (engineers, managers and the like) go up, they tend to spend their incomes on the kind of things that the poor moving out of agriculture cannot produce. Will a software engineer in Bangalore experiencing a rising standard of living create much demand for unskilled labour? Much of the income increases are likely to go into upscale goods and services that are skill-intensive. It is for this reason that the proportion of labour force in agriculture is declining at a snail's pace. The absolute number of people in agriculture may not be declining at all. India, in this respect, cuts a very different picture than the economies of East and Southeast Asia that managed to transform their economies in a matter of two decades.

What will create rising demand for unskilled labour? It is more likely that if farmers experience increases in their incomes, they will make demand for the kind of goods and services that low skilled labour moving out of agriculture can produce. A movement of labour out of agriculture need not result in migration to cities as illustrated by the rural industrialization following the Green revolution in Punjab.

Most importantly, an increase in agricultural incomes has a direct impact on poverty as a large proportion of the poor in India are still trying to eke out a living in agriculture. Agricultural development is the most effective way of reducing poverty. All this brings us back to improvements in agricultural productivity. Let there be development of rural infrastructure – irrigation, roads, extension services, functioning credit institutions. Make new technologies available to them. Open up new markets for them. Let them diversify into high value crops and experience some income gains. The inevitable consequence of this will be a diversification of the rural economy and

all sorts of non-farming jobs will spring up for the younger generation. Labour from agriculture will be absorbed much more rapidly.

About hundred and ten years ago both Canada and United States had around forty percent of their population in agriculture. Those figures are today around two to three percent. And this massive population shift was triggered primarily by rapid agricultural development caused by public investment in irrigation and agricultural research. The process was also helped by better foodgrain prices received through grain exports to meet the demand of industrializing Europe.

China is a more relevant example for us. Martin Ravallion and Shaohua Chen have analysed China's success in poverty reduction during 1981-2001. These are two decades immediately following the initiation of the economic liberalization in China. The period saw phenomenal rate of poverty reduction. In 1981, 53% of the Chinese population was under the poverty line. This came down to about 8% by 2001, a 45% decline in just 20 years. Ravallion and Chen show that nearly 80% of this whopping poverty decline was due to agricultural growth.

Had we succeeded in improving agricultural productivity in our country we would have witnessed a natural movement out of agriculture along with declining poverty. Asking agriculture to shed off its population in order to raise farmers' income is putting the cart before the horse.

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A People's Innovator

Prakash Limaye, from Mumbai who retired from the BMC's Waterworks department earlier this year, is based 100 km from Mumbai and is single-handedly saving nearly 50 million gallons of potable water – enough for one million people daily – from flowing into the Arabian Sea every day. On an average, Mumbai consumes 750 million gallons of water a day.

The idea itself is a combination of simplicity and common sense - terms not easily associated with the civic body.

Prakash Limaye explained: "Modak Sagar fills up quickly and overflows when there is a consistent rainfall of 900 mm, while Tansa requires around 1300-1400 mm of rainfall to fill to the brim. This year we realised, that it would be difficult to fill Tansa, so we proposed that the valves of the pipes that pass on its periphery be opened up."

"We have opened up five scours of the pipe coming from Modak Sagar towards Tansa and also stopped the water supply (daily share of 100 million gallons) from Tansa. As a result the level of Tansa goes up by a foot (0.33 metres). Each day, nearly 50 million gallons of water gets transferred from Modak Sagar to Tansa, said Vilas Aher a sub-engineer who is being helped by Limaye.

Excerpted from a story filed by The Times of India's Yogesh Naik, Mumbai Mirror, August 14, 2012.



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Honesty Does Not Pay

Prithviraj Chavan's days are numbered – “Saala, khud nahi khata hai aur doosre ko bhi khane nahi deta”

First the good news: After a very long time, Maharashtra has an honest Chief Minister. I should qualify that I am using the term “honest” in the context of Indian politicians, which is far from the ideal, but the best we can hope for. The bad news is that Prithviraj Chavan's days are numbered. Ironically, the principal motivator for his imminent demise from office is the very honesty he projects.

Maharashtra's Chief Ministers haven't exactly blazed a path of glory – or even plain competence - in the past. Enriching themselves at the expense of taxpayers has long been par for the course for Indian politicians, but it was traditionally done in small increments – a percentage of a road project here, granting a favour there and so on. It was Sushilkumar Shinde who first discovered a gold mine in Mumbai's exploding real estate market. A plethora of builders spotted an opportunity to become financial czars of the city by controlling and inflating property prices to astronomical levels. However, to achieve their aim, they needed to have the head honcho of the State in their pocket – and they had very deep pockets. The CM discovered that he could amass a vast personal fortune by simply bending the rules a little. Best of all, it was all within the outer bounds of legality; not very ethical, perhaps, but when have our politicians ever bothered about ethics.

Shinde found a worthy successor in Vilasrao Deshmukh, who continued the profitable venture and he, in turn handed the baton to Ashok Chavan. By this time, the enslavement to Mumbai's builders had reached such blatant proportions that the government, egged on by media exposure, was forced to act – or at least make a

show of being concerned. The latest incumbent, Ashok Chavan, was designated as the sacrificial goat although in truth, he was no more culpable than his two predecessors. Indian politicians are not accustomed to accept their fate with stoicism. Chavan promptly passed the buck to Deshmukh who deftly lobbed it back to him. Unfortunately for Chavan, his two predecessors have a supremely powerful godmother and so he alone was left holding the can. The saga continues.

Enter Prithviraj Chavan, hitherto a pretty harmless functionary in the Prime Minister's Office. Chavan was thrust into the CM's chair because he appeared to be relatively honest; and the Congress needed a temporary fix to douse the flames. A few months after he took the reins, however, Maharashtra's legislators found out to their dismay that Chavan's honesty was not merely a façade, but a reality. Their initial bewilderment soon gave way to outrage as he began to ask inconvenient questions about their cosy *quid pro quo* deals. It can be best expressed in the vernacular: “Saala, khud nahi khata hai aur doosre ko bhi khane nahi deta.” The writing was on the wall. Chavan had to go.

Expert at camouflaging their nefarious designs with “respectable” phrases, legislators from Maharashtra's Congress and their coalition partner have taken objection to Chavan's “style of functioning”, but the public is astute enough to guess the true reason. If the CM is allowed to continue, he would set a disastrous precedent from the politicians' point of view. It would turn the *raison d'être* for entering politics on its head. The man is a positive menace. We will miss him.

The Old Order Changeth

The pesky public had the temerity to ask where their money came from?

Our ministers today are a bemused and bewildered lot. The political system they had nurtured and perfected over the past 60 years is under threat of being turned on its head. After six decades of indifference or ignorance, the public has inexplicably woken up and was beginning to ask awkward questions. Questions like what was the

source of their immense wealth; how was it that a common fruit seller managed to amass hundreds of crores after joining politics? Hitherto such arrogant queries emerged only from the mouths of political rivals but were not taken seriously because the accusers were just as culpable as the accused. It was all a *tamasha* and everyone knew it.

So the opposition members raised a ruckus in parliament – after making sure the television cameras were trained on them – and then quietly went about their business as usual.

And now the pesky public had the temerity to ask where their money came from? Did they have the slightest notion of how the game of politics has always been played in India? Didn't they realize that it took enormous funds to buy votes and nurture vote banks? Why was it so unreasonable for a politician, once elected, to seek a return on his investment? And if that return was well over a thousand percent, what of it? Why couldn't they appreciate the effort and ingenuity it took to manage the bundles of cash: floating bogus corporations and establishing bogus trusts, buying *benami* properties and ensuring the financial wellbeing of their progeny? And if that wasn't bad enough, do-gooders like Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev were sticking their noses into affairs that did not concern them. Really, it was too much!

Take the case of Sunil Tatkare, Maharashtra's "honourable" minister for Irrigation and Water Projects. So the cost of the dams has escalated by a few thousand percent; so many of them will probably never be completed; so the 40% kickback from the contractors has gone towards securing the financial future of his kith and kin? So what? The contractors are not complaining, so why should anyone else? Why is the urban middle class raising a stink? The dams are not meant for them anyway. They are for the country bumpkins who usually do not even enter their consciousness? Why are they making such a fuss?

Next there are the top dogs in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) who have suddenly found themselves under scrutiny by vigilance officers. Scrutiny for what? For doing what their predecessors have been doing for decades? In India, the most powerful implement you can possess is influence. Your position of authority, what you can do with it, or even just who you know can

open doors firmly shut to ordinary citizens. The DGCA honchos stand exposed for pressurizing private airlines into granting them special favours, most notably plum jobs for their progeny. It is no wonder they are now scratching their heads in frustration. What is the point of having influence if you don't use it? Besides, haven't our top political leaders been using their clout to further the prospects of their kin for decades? Why are the public and the media making such a big deal out of it now?

The people are making a fuss because the long somnolent Indian public has finally woken up to the reality that all this largesse and pocket-lining is coming out of *their* pockets, *their* taxes. *They* are paying for it in terms of runaway inflation and higher taxes. The government is always short of funds because less than half the taxes collected are actually utilized for the purpose they were meant for. They did not elect their representatives to skim off the cream and live in the lap of luxury at their expense. Their ministers are not replacements for their erstwhile British masters, but public servants in the true sense of the term. The institutions they control; the bureaucracy, the police and so on, are not part of their personal fiefdom. They are paid – by us – to serve the public.

The average Indian has finally shed his traditional awe and reverence of people placed in positions of authority. He has realized that these worthies owe their exalted position to ordinary people like him. He has built them up and he can bring them down. It is a slow awakening, but it is happening. We the people still have a long way to go, of course. As long as we allow unscrupulous politicians to exploit caste differences; to instigate religious communities against each other; to be swayed by empty slogans and unkept promises; we will never be really free. We will never achieve the democracy our Constitution has bequeathed us. We have taken the small first steps, but we need to do a lot more. We need to take our country back from the charlatans and crooks who govern us.

My Googlish Last Name

A cross to bear or a tremendous ego boost? On the internet, uniqueness is a coveted asset.

What's in a name? quite a lot, actually, especially in the internet age. Take my own case. My grandfather in his wisdom chose to bless/curse his descendants with a freakishly unusual last name. It doesn't fit any traditional mould of community, tribe or caste. In fact, a stranger hearing it would have no clue as to whether I was a Parsi, or an alien from Mars. And back in the day when they

still published telephone directories, Hirjika was the single entity with a listed phone number in the entire metropolis of Bombay – a city of over 10 million people.

As you can imagine, the unique moniker was a cross I've had to bear for most of my life. In school and at college, teachers routinely stumbled over my name during

roll call. During my working career, I found it more convenient to simply hand over my business card rather than say it out loud and face the looks of incomprehension in the face of my clients. At social functions, I would fend off embarrassment with banal remarks like “you won’t be able to pronounce it; just call me Firoze.”

But all this was before I discovered Google. It is a common fallacy that you can speedily find who and what you’re looking for by the simple expedient of a Google search. Well, I suppose you can eventually, but quite often it involves wading through a labyrinth of secondary searches and cross references – and you might be tempted to give up halfway. Let me give you an example. Supposing you met a pretty girl at a party and you do not know much about her except her name, Rachael Jones. So you

type “Rachael Jones” in the Google search box and you will probably get 20,000 pages, only one percent of which may pertain to the Rachael Jones you are looking for. Will you really have the time and patience to sift through each individual entry? You see what I mean.

However, type in “Firoze Hirjikaka” and you will get around 6000 pages, 98% of which refer to yours truly – exclusively. It’s a tremendous ego boost, trust me. When new acquaintances want to know more about you, it enables you to nonchalantly say “Oh, just look me up on Google”. On the internet, uniqueness is a coveted asset. Thank you, Grandpa.

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Our Treatment of Hindus

Excerpts from an editorial in the *Daily Times* of August 11 published from Lahore, Pakistan.

The reports in the media that 60 Hindu families of Jacobabad, Sindh, have migrated to India because of insecurity are highly disturbing. In recent days, there have been a number of cases of Hindu girls converting to Islam because of the ostensible desire to marry Muslim boys. However, in almost all these cases, it is difficult to pin down the truth whether the conversions were freely undertaken or a combination of emotional, psychological, social and coercive factors. The increasing trend of Hindu traders and families’ complaints that their shops are looted, houses ransacked, women forcibly converted to Islam and kidnappings for ransom carried out paint a sorry picture of the plight of this peaceful and inoffensive minority community. What is even more disturbing than the actual ground realities that afflict the Hindu community in Sindh and Balochistan is the state of denial our authorities and government high officials are in.

Chief Minister Sindh Qaim Ali Shah at least had the decency to respond to the reports by setting up a three-member committee led by Sindh Minister for Minority Affairs Mukesh Kumar Chawla to report back on the issue within a week.. However, the minister has already compromised the credibility of the committee even before it has started its work by stating that the reports of migration are exaggerated and Hindu girls are eloping with Muslim boys of their own free will. The SSP Jacobabad has delivered the priceless comment that security is being provided to the Hindu community. In other words all is well in the best of all possible worlds and the SSP can therefore go back to sleep. But the cake is taken by Interior Minister Rehman Malik. With his usual penchant for a strange and twisted take on most things, the interior minister

sees conspiracies under every bed and behind every bush. This migration issue too, according to Rehman Malik’s wisdom, is a conspiracy involving the Indian High Commission for issuing visas for India to 250 Hindu citizens of Pakistan, ostensibly for religious pilgrimage...

Reports indicate that the 60 families who have torn themselves away from their and their forefathers’ homeland may only be the tip of the iceberg, or a possible tidal wave to follow.

Ironically, while tearful relatives were bidding goodbye to the families leaving from the Lahore Railway Station, Pakistan’s ambassador to the US was reassuring an American audience that Pakistan protects the rights of religious minorities. On the very same day, President Asif Ali Zardari was speaking at a commemoration of National Minorities Day, declared on every August 11 in recognition of the message in the Quaid’s speech to the constituent assembly in 1947. The president stated that misuse of the blasphemy law would not be allowed. Both Ambassador Rehman and President Zardari’s statements are well intentioned and reflect the best of principles, but with due respect, they are divorced from our ground realities. Four decades of promotion of religious extremism in the name of jihad are now bearing their over-ripe malign fruit. Pakistani society today is riven with intolerance, religious prejudice and violence against religious minorities. In the case of the blasphemy law, it has not even spared Muslims. One only has to recall the tragedy of Governor Salmaan Taseer’s assassination to grasp the truth of this argument.

Independence Day Reflections

M. D. Kini

India celebrated its 65th Independence Day on August 15, 2012 amidst looming drought in many parts of the country. India's economic, social and political developments are a mixed bag of achievements and failures.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Democracy & Food Security: A democratic set-up which has weathered the storms of dictatorial mind-set (the 19-months emergency regime) and the many challenges to its unity (the rise of sub-nationalism) with political tact and accommodation. It has banished famine. Currently it has 80 million tons of foodgrains as buffer stock, thanks to increased irrigation facilities, hybrid seeds and fertilizers introduced since the Green Revolution. The country has come a long way from the famine conditions in 1965-66 when India had to depend on US wheat imports to feed its teeming millions.

Economic Growth, Technology and Defence: It is one of the few countries which have mastered space technology and one of the leading countries in the software sector. It is one of the fast-growing economies of the world after the change of direction in its economic policies from the statist to a market driven economy initiated in 1991 by the then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and ably implemented by the then finance minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. It has also joined the select few in the world with its own nuclear technology and atomic weapons with which USA and other countries have nuclear agreements. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee courageously exploded and stockpiled a few atomic weapons to ensure India's defence in a region full of these weapons. The decade of the 'nineties took India to the top table.

FAILURES

While the achievements are significant, economic and political problems persist.

Poverty: Among the most serious problems of the country is the persistence of poverty. While experts and economists discuss the poverty line, whether it is Rs. 28.65 or Rs. 22.42 per day, whether it should be related to caloric food intake, infant mortality rate, education, health or employment, all are agreed that more than one-third of the population, which would be about 400 million, are poor. A recent report states that ten percent of rural people

live on less than Rs.17 per day.

Faulty Schemes: The latest policy of offering 100 days of work for the poor under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is riddled with design faults - it does not create any permanent asset, it does not train the uneducated for any job, and is full of corruption - not paying the workers in full and on time, the local politicians in league with the officials manipulating the workers' attendance to enrich themselves. You cannot build a nation on doles. There has to be a policy to empower the poor with various training programmes. The small landholders should be able to get more returns from their holding with proper advice from the agricultural experts. The landless should be trained in some profession or job which can extend from brick-laying to electrician which every village, town or city requires.

Mahatma Gandhi was right. India lives in its villages. He dreamt of village republics as self-sufficient in most of its needs. He believed in self-reliance, decentralisation of political and economic power to empower the poor. His vision is now being appreciated by many as global warming is becoming a universal menace due to the energy-intensive lifestyle which creates demand for more goods. He said, long ago, that there is enough in the world for everybody's needs but not for everybody's greed. President Abdul Kalam, a visionary himself, has put forward a plan to uplift villages - PURA (Providing Urban facilities to Rural Areas) with multiple connectivity (knowledge, technology and marketing).

Corruption: Corruption may be a universal phenomenon to realists and cynics but to the poor, it is a curse. People have to pay for every legitimate government service such as getting a ration card, a birth or a death certificate, registering an FIR (First Information Report) in a police station, getting admission for their children in a school, getting a water connection ... the list can go on. The Madhya Pradesh and Bihar governments have now made it mandatory to provide these services within a time-frame with a fine for defaulting officials.

The recent scams such as 2G spectrum sale, Commonwealth Games Scam and Coal-fields allotments are just the tip of the iceberg of corruption which has a long history in India going back to the jeep scandal during the early years of our freedom. Many well-known politicians are involved. Cases, even when they are in the court, take a long time to investigate and punish the culprits.

Misuse of the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation).

The CBI is under the Prime Minister's jurisdiction and the politicians have the tendency to misuse it. In recent years cases have been filed against two former chief ministers for possessing disproportionate wealth. Both are supporters of the ruling coalition at the centre. No wonder, Anna Hazare and his NGO, India Against Corruption, have demanded that CBI should be under the jurisdiction of a Lokpal (Ombudsman) who can take up cases involving politicians and the bureaucracy *suo moto* for investigation and prosecution. The institution of Lokpal was a suggestion made by the first ARC (Administrative Reform Commission) almost 42 years ago but has never been implemented by any of the administrations till now. The least that the government has to do is to make CBI as independent as the Election Commission.

Terrorism: India has two types of terrorism to tackle; one is left-wing terrorism which wants to change the Indian polity through violence, and the other, promoted by Pakistan, first in Jammu and Kashmir and now all over India.

Naxalite terrorism, started by some left-wing intellectuals, and has spread its tentacles to many states, has claimed the lives of many innocent people who do not join them but help government sponsored social welfare programmes such as schools and hospitals. Instead of preventing the misuse of power by the politicians and the officials, the movement has prevented social welfare programmes reaching the poor. The government has to appoint young and highly motivated officials who can mobilise the support of the youth of the region to frustrate the efforts of these terrorists. And the officials should be adequately protected by a well-equipped police force.

The other terrorism is Pakistan sponsored and spans many of our neighbouring countries as well. It started in Jammu and Kashmir in 1989 challenging the rigging of elections by the ruling party of the State, and later, questioning the State's integration with India, It has spread all over India. It has inflicted many wounds on

Pakistan itself.

Despite numerous acts of terrorism organised and/or encouraged by Pakistan executed by the non-state actors with the support by State agencies, India's attempts to extend its hand of friendship has been misunderstood as a sign of weakness. The least that the government of India can do it is to equip our police with intelligence gathering mechanism to prevent such activities, when it occurs, investigate speedily and punish the culprits without delay. It is widely believed that vote-bank politics is behind India's responding with reluctance in dealing with terrorism engineered from across the border.

THE NEED FOR NEW POLITICS AND NEW ECONOMICS

Indian politics has been driven by slogans which are touted as principles. While the Constitution envisages a society of equals, its politics is based on group interests. The only tools it has in its armoury for welfare are reservation and subsidies which have distorted our economy and politics. The only principle which can promote welfare of all (*sarvodaya*) is good governance.

We have to use all our resources, men and materials, to create employment and wealth. Here are some examples particularly relating to poor infrastructure:

Water: We have drought in many areas and at the same time there are floods in other areas. There has to be a vigorous campaign to promote conservation of rainwater through bunds and check-dams, and afforestation to attract more rain in the drought-prone areas. Plans should be drawn to divert flood waters to dry areas.

Electricity: The recent headline all over the world says it all - "India in the dark, 600 million people hit by world's worst blackout". Electricity generation is far behind demand, as a result thousands of villages and millions of households have no supply even 65 years after independence; and where there is supply, it is erratic. All state-controlled electricity boards are in the red. India has 300 days of sunshine and it should be pioneering solar power.

Surface transport: The state of roads and railways is deplorable. Road connectivity particularly in rural India, even today, is sadly neglected making it difficult for the movement of people and goods – agricultural produce to towns and manufactured goods to villages. Railway accidents are becoming more frequent indicating a lack of funding to maintain and modernise rolling stock and systems.

Storage facilities: Every village or a group of villages should have grain silos and refrigeration facilities to store foodgrains, vegetables, fruits, even flowers. In their absence agriculturists, horticulturists and the like often resort to distress or panic-selling of their largely of perishable produce.

Health, Education and Housing: One could go on about the poor state of health care, primary education and housing. Politicians need to treat India as one and Indian people as one. People will respond as one. The

government policies should unleash the hidden talents and aspirations of our people. It is in this context that one has to view movements launched by Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev. They have shown that it is possible to change the *status quo* and mobilize the people to change the system. Changing the system is not easy but it is not impossible. That is the way to change our *swaraj* into *suraj*.

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The Indian Economic Liberalisation Story – An Audit from a Liberal Perspective



Ten years ago the Project for Economic Education organized a seminar on December 4 and 5, 2002 to examine the progress of economic reforms initiated 10 years earlier by a (marginally) minority Congress government led by the late prime minister Narasimha Rao. The seminar concluded then, that the initial momentum egged

on by a desperately critical balance of payment situation, was already faltering. It could be steadied only through aggressive changes on several fronts such as cutting red tape, phasing out subsidies, reviving the stalled disinvestment process and enacting legislation ensuring fiscal responsibility, amending the Companies Act, ensuring fair competition and amending the country's labour laws. Barring the last mentioned, the others were taken up and some legislation passed even if their implementation has left much to be desired. A booklet on the subject entitled 'Liberalisation: A Balance Sheet' authored by Seetha affirmed unambiguously: "Reforms in the judiciary, administration, politics, elections are equally necessary. Economic reforms cannot be carried out in isolation."

The surprise win by the Congress-led coalition in the 2009 general elections saw the sensex shooting up to a staggering 28 percent in a day. The country was so upbeat that when the global economic crisis broke out around that time, the crisis did not have a major impact on India. On the other hand the country actually saw a surge in overseas investments. India

was no longer a 'developing country' but 'an emerging nation' and the hope was that it would be the third richest country in the world after China and the USA.

This is fast turning into a mirage.

For a while it seemed so but what we had not reckoned with was that deadly concept called "Coalition Dharma" a euphemism for the survival in power of a coalition of disparate political parties. UPA1 blamed the 'left' parties for the near suspension of economic reforms. UPA2, though free of the 'left' now has to contend with state parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal who really call the shots. Add these to the Anna Hazare-led agitation against corruption and the constant downpour of scams, has not only halted economic reforms but has paralysed governance itself.

This seminar guided by eminent liberal economists has drawn attention to the fact that it is not only "Coalition Dharma" but a number of other factors that are responsible for the present situation in which the country finds itself dangerously perched on a cliff and could well topple back to the bad old days. This audit is an honest assessment of what is going wrong and what needs to be done to back away from the fall.

Papers by Sunil S. Bhandare, Seetha, C. S. Deshpande with introductory remarks from the Chair by Niranjana Rajadhyaksha, Minoo Shroff, V. S. Palekar.

A limited number of copies have been printed. Copies can be had from the office of the Project for Economic Education, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001 on working days between 12 noon and 4.30 p.m. Soft copies are available on request. Email us at freedomfirst1952@gmail.com

The Tale of Two Chief Ministers

T. H. Chowdary

One Chief Minister distributes (borrowed) money; does not exhort people to work, but by various wealth-squandering “welfare” schemes tries to please and inveigle people; promoting dependence and entitlement. The other Chief Minister creates employment opportunities; people are motivated to work and lift themselves up, out of dependence and poverty.

Andhra Pradesh has its third Chief Minister (CM) in 3 years since the general elections of 2009. He is not elected by the legislators of the ruling party but has been appointed by the ‘I’-command in Delhi. Many aspirants have filed complaints against his style of working. He cares little for them because it is not they who chose him. He visits Delhi frequently to give explanations and keeps the ‘I’-command in good humour to safeguard his position. However, the frequency and volume of complaints against him from other aspirants for the Chief Minister’s chair are such that the ‘I’-command had to appoint a supervisor (a cabinet minister from Delhi) to periodically visit Hyderabad and hold co-ordination meetings and lecture the CM and his colleagues on how they should behave. They are also periodically summoned to Delhi to be instructed.

Keeping ‘I’-command and Voters Happy

In order to gain popularity and upstage his detractors, the incumbent CM is engaged in inventing new programmes of welfare because a faction of the Congress Legislature Party rebelled against him and the Congress (I) itself. In the ensuing by-elections, the candidates chosen by the ‘I’-command have been humiliatingly defeated in 16 of the 18 constituencies where polling took place. Even the most trusted, obedient financier and business magnate, currently a member of the Rajya Sabha, who was sent to contest a by-election for a Lok Sabha seat, was routed by the defected faction. To overcome these humiliations the CM is ever engaged in announcing one welfare scheme after another: free rice, *Arogyasree* – medical treatment for all, bicycles for minority girl students in the primary and secondary schools, shoes and clothes for 60 lakhs students, sanitary napkins for all girls above 13 years of age in schools and colleges, *talibottu* (*mangalasuthra*) for all women getting married for the first time, installation of Indira Gandhi’s statues in every village, naming schemes and projects after Rajiv Gandhi. The State is reeling under a power shortage and industries are working at a fraction of their capacity. As a consequence revenues by way of excise duty and sales tax are falling.

He goes to the villages and spends a day or two, and in the places he visits, like Rahul Gandhi did in UP, he sleeps on the floor instead of a cot. He reportedly plays cricket and announces that nobody can defeat him. The CM is busy extending fee reimbursement to about 85% of the students in the 719 engineering colleges in the State. 218 of them were sanctioned in the year 2008, a year prior to 2009 election. The State is producing young men and women *certified* as engineers *but not qualified* to be employed. Tens of thousands of them, unemployable and not motivated are great fodder for Maoist insurgents.

Purchasing loyalty

In order to prop up the Party from the ever looming threat of more defections and fall of Congress rule, the ‘I’-Command has purchased a regional party headed by a former film actor. 18 MLAs of that party have been inducted into the Congress Party and two of them have been made ministers with cabinet rank. The leader of that party has been given a Rajya Sabha seat. He is kept waiting for a ministership in Delhi. In the by-election due to this leader’s resignation, the candidate he campaigned for was routed by the defector Jagan Congress.

The Other Chief Minister

While this is the story of one CM, there is the other of the CM of Gujarat - Narendra Modi. He is incessantly reviled and vilified by a professional group of so-called ‘secularists’. This gang gets cases after cases filed against him. In the gang are groups of evangelists and NGOs going by wonderful names such as ‘World Vision’. They receive millions of US dollars from several sources. With that money and access to the western media, church and evangelical groups, they vilify Narendra Modi despite the judicial courts and special investigation teams giving clean chits to him.

As never before in the history of any state in India, Narendra Modi’s Gujarat has been recording 8% to 10% increase in agricultural output in his State. The Narmada river dam project which had been languishing for decades

saw completion during his tenure. Its waters reached Kutch on the Pakistan border. The stinking stagnant Sabarmathi River in Ahmedabad (like Moosi in Hyderabad) is now full with fresh water and its banks are lined with gardens and promenades. Gujarat is not only self-sufficient in electric power; but also exporting it to other States connected to the grid. In fact, many of the power stations in the private sector in the State have scaled down production as the State has surplus power. Andhra Pradesh cannot import that power because the southern grid is not connected to the Gujarat grid. Industries are coming up and lakhs of crores of investment are flowing into Gujarat from all over India as well as from abroad.

Just one more instance of the contrast between two Chief Ministers: the Tata small car (Nano) project ran into trouble in West Bengal, thanks to Mamata Benerjee and her populist activities. Modi got in touch with Ratan Tata and within a few months, the factory to produce the peoples' car Nano has gone on stream in Gujarat. Modi is busy showcasing Gujarat as the best place for every industrial and business activity. None has complained of

cuts and corruption in his government. Two defectors prompted and propped by Congress (I) keep making veiled charges but to no effect.

One CM distributes (borrowed) money; does not exhort people to work, does not inspire self-help or deliver quality education; but by various wealth-squandering 'welfare' schemes tries to please and inveigle people; promoting dependence and entitlement. The other CM creates employment opportunities; people are motivated to work and lift themselves up, out of dependence and poverty.

This tale of two Chief Ministers exposes the relative character and patriotism of the parties behind their CMs.

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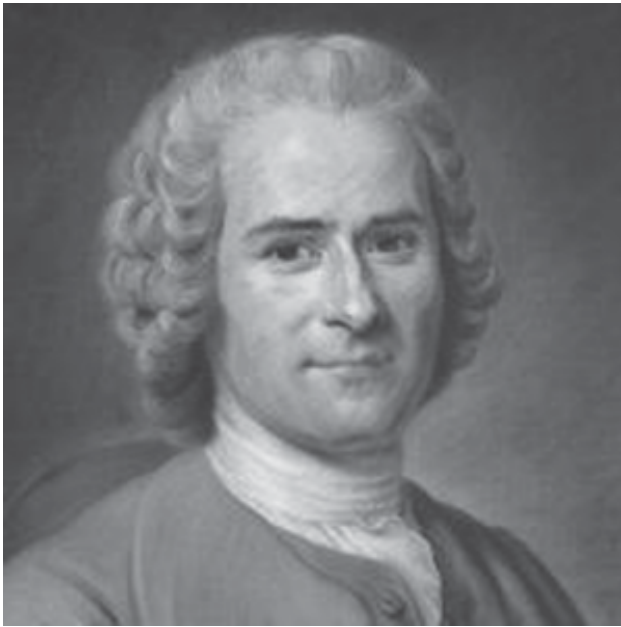
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Rousseau's U-Turn

Thoughts on his Tricentennial

Sheryar Ookerjee



Bound in social chains, men lose their essence and violate a natural law. Living in society is 'artificial' but 'indispensable'.

"Man was born free, and is everywhere in chains". A trumpet declaration of the moral descent of man from the 'state of nature' to the civil state. Thus opens *Social Contract* by Rousseau, who was born 300 years ago in Geneva. Published in 1762, it was banned in France and burnt in Geneva because it was considered 'subversive' of government and religion. It was said to inspire revolt. The French Revolution occurred 27 years after its publication and 11 years after Rousseau's death. Today it makes disturbing reading, not because it is subversive, but for an exactly opposite reason.

The 'subversive' views had been expressed by the author in 1755 in his 'Discourse on the Origin of Inequality'. Here he says that pre-social man was 'naturally good' and, lacking 'reason and wisdom', obeyed the 'whispers of humanity', but in society reason engenders 'self-love' and 'makes him shrink into himself'. He becomes 'inevitably evil'. This view is strange in one who was considered to be associated with the Encyclopaedists, who included Voltaire, Diderot and Montesquieu, the champions of reason.

Social Contract says that men in a state of nature were free and self-sufficient, able to preserve their individuality and essential nature. Bound in social chains, they lose their essence and violate a *natural* law. It is their duty to throw them off.

Social Contract Theory

How, then, did men get their chains? The answer: the Social Contract theory. Men are essentially atomic units, seeking like the animals, to satisfy only their personal, selfish needs, uncaring about their fellows. However, being highly intelligent, they realized their lives to be exceedingly precarious against the forces of nature and even against other men. So they formed themselves into a society (or societies) for mutual support and cooperation. This did not make them any the less self-seeking. They still remained atomic units, not living together out of love for each other but merely as a means of expediency. And so they continue. Society (or now the State) is likened to a machine whose parts are what they are, whether put together to form the machine or not; their essential nature does not change. At heart each is, as Hobbes said, at war with all others. Hobbes and Locke seem to believe this story literally as describing what really happened in the far forgotten past.

Rousseau probably took it to be a philosophical myth to explain why men live in society in spite of, at heart, not wanting to. The progress to sociality is irreversible; we cannot go back to Nature. The early part of 'Social Contract' says that living in society is 'artificial' but 'indispensable'. The contract demands a total alienation of oneself and one's personal rights. Thereby 'people' become 'a people'. But later the book goes on to say that it is not a 'real alienation', for one has only made an advantageous exchange of a 'material independence' for real 'liberty'.

Distortion of the Organic Theory of Society

A new voice had entered Rousseau's song. While, earlier, civil life was tolerated as an evil necessity, it is now a 'sacred right', the 'basis of all rights'. A 'multitude' has become 'a whole', a State with a life of its own above and beyond the lives of its members. It is the State that makes them what they are. He writes:

The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces in man a very remarkable change... his ideas are expanded; his feelings are ennobled; his whole soul is exalted to such a degree...that he ought to bless without ceasing the happy moment that... transformed him from a stupid and ignorant animal into an intelligent being and a man.

This is the Organic Theory of Society.

But a newer and more sinister voice now distorts this theory. The State is said to be the embodiment of the General Will, a will above all the particular wills of the citizens. It is concerned with the 'general wellbeing' of all: Its 'enlightened' principles, always 'clean and luminous', tend to the 'public interests'. If my private will and interests clash with it, it 'simply shows I was mistaken'. Each person puts himself 'under the supreme direction of the general will'. The State is the general will and the general will is the State. It is the Sovereign having no interest 'conflicting with those of the citizen'. This is later amended: a citizen puts, not his whole, but only a part of himself under the Sovereign, the part important to the community. However, 'the Sovereign [i.e. the State] alone is the judge of what is important', and the Sovereign is above judge and laws; so much for the Rule of Law.

But surely the citizens have interests that do not coincide with those of the State. The answer: (1) The State is the people's own creation, and so its interest are the same as their own, and 2) the people, like the State, 'always desire the good' (echoes of Plato and Aristotle), but they 'do not always see it' to be so – the standard argument of dictators. The social contract 'tacitly concludes' that 'disobedient members shall be controlled by the whole body' for their good. Their good is always their happiness and their freedom. They are, thus 'forced to be free'. Big Brother has now firmly taken over.

Rousseau wants all diversity of opinion among the citizens to be outgrown, just as Plato, in the *Laws*, wanted. In a perfect State all should feel sad; be glad at the same things and all notions of 'mine' and 'thine' must vanish. Dead uniformity has here been substituted for unity, unity in diversity. 'The greater the harmony that resides in public assemblies', Rousseau says, 'the more the general will is dominant'.

Government by Aristocracy or Political Freedom

Rousseau recommends a government by an aristocracy and believes that though the people are not wise enough to govern, they are wise enough to select men of 'honesty, sagacity and experience' to govern them.

Rousseau argues thus: Since the people would select the rulers and the rulers would make the laws, the people would be making the laws, and by obeying them, each citizen would be free, morally free, which would be true freedom. Even if this argument be accepted, what the people in chains have always wanted is not moral freedom but freedom from those social chains which it was earlier said to be the citizens' duty to break asunder. This may be called political freedom.

Rousseau also confuses this political freedom with another concept of freedom where a man is the 'master of himself' but not being a slave to his own appetites (freedom in Spinoza's sense), where he obeys the laws of his own higher nature. This has nothing to do with the laws of the State.

Rousseau suggests the appointment of a 'Censorial Tribune', like our 'moral police', to 'regulate' morals by 'preventing opinions from being corrupted' and, in times of peril, of a 'most worthy man' by a 'special act'. He 'may silence all the laws' (as in a national emergency). And yet – by a miracle – 'the General Will, will remain 'not dormant'.

Rousseau, by the end of his famous treatise, had made a U-turn. The chains he had urged man to cast off to gain his freedom, his 'natural', common or garden freedom, are not simply to be cast off. They are to be exchanged for a set of stronger chains by which the State gives him – or so it claims to give – a higher kind of 'freedom' which he may not want but which the State thinks is good for him

PROFESSOR SHERYAR OOKERJEE, author, educationist and retired head of the department of philosophy, Wilson College, Mumbai.



COURTESY: Shreyas Navare and Hindustan Times, 7th July 2012

Discussion

Secularism – A Liberal Perspective

R. C. Saxena

Secularism is generally spoken of in India to mean “bin-sampradayikta” which means non-sectarianism; which is not quite correct. Secularism comes closer to the word “dharma nirpekshita” which means indifference to religion to be observed by the State.

Secularism falls in the exclusive realm of the State and Secular life therefore falls in the domain of the affairs of the State. Hence it is the State alone which can be secular. In terms of the western meaning of secularism, it meant protest against theological oppression and the tyranny of religion. Secularism meant separation of the authority of religion from that of the State and therefore preventing the State from sponsoring, authorizing and even protecting any particular religion. The meaning of secularism was based on the premise that the function of the State was governance and religion was the preserve of individuals comprising the State.

Concept of the Secular State in the Indian Context

In the modern context, secularism mandates that there cannot be any state-sponsored and/or state-supported religion. It is not for a particular religion to be secular. It is for the State to be secular by not sponsoring, protecting or supporting any religion. What should be important to understand is that while it is desirable for the citizens to respect secularism, it is doubly important for the State not only to be secular but also enforce secularism.

The concept of the Secular State as it exists in the West is quite different from the Secularism of the kind being discussed in India. The concept of Secularism, as it exists in the preamble to the Constitution of India, is too nebulous and juristically quite vague. According to the famous jurist M. C. Setalvad, a Secular State is not easy to define. A Secular State is neither anti-religion nor hostile to religion but holds itself neutral in matters of religion. In the West where religion is monotheistic, a complete separation between the Church and the State is possible, in a polyglot and multi-religious society, as in India, a complete separation between religion and the State is not possible.

The Indian Constitution on Secularism

The Constitution of India has, therefore, made provisions in Articles 25 to 30, which provide for religious tolerance, equal treatment to all religions and protection

of religious groups. Thus the Constitution, instead of building a wall of separation between the State and religion, has attempted to guarantee and incorporate religious freedom by dealing with the individual as a citizen of the country irrespective of his faith and religious belief. This means that while freedom of belief is guaranteed to all persons in India, the religion, faith or belief of a person is immaterial from the point of view of the State. In a judgment delivered by a nine member Constitutional Bench in the case of S R Bommai and others V/s. UOI and others, 1994 AIR 1918 (SC), the Supreme Court of India observed that in matters of State, religion has no place. No political party can simultaneously be a religious party. Politics and religion cannot be mixed. This however does not mean that the State has no say whatsoever in matters of religion. Laws can be made to regulate the affairs of temples, mosques and other places of worship. The power of Parliament to reform and rationalize the personal laws is unquestioned (Article 44).

Dharma Nirpekshita

Secularism is generally spoken of in India to mean “bin-sampradayikta” which means non-sectarianism; which is not quite correct. Secularism comes closer to the word “dharma nirpekshita” which means indifference to religion to be observed by the State. Thus permitting the holding of *namaz* in public places is as much non-secular as holding *maha-artis* in public places. Equally non-secular is a practice by government leaders to invite minorities on religious occasions like *iftar* parties or government funded universities inviting spiritual heads for religious discourses.

Need for a Liberal Blend of Religious Freedom

What is needed is a liberal blend of religious freedom, as guaranteed under the Constitution, with a firm resolve of the State not to advocate, sponsor or promote any particular religion through its organs and instrumentalities, directly or indirectly.

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N O T E S

Right to Travel

Is the right to travel in the country and also outside a fundamental right of citizens or is it a privilege to be allowed at the caprice of the government? The right to travel abroad is restricted by the necessity of securing a passport, without which no citizen can leave his country and go abroad. The authority to issue passports is vested in the Government. But can the Government refuse to issue a passport to a citizen without just cause and without giving the citizen an opportunity to meet any allegations that may be made against him?

The question was raised in a number of recent cases in the United States of America. American courts have upheld the citizen's right to travel and have ruled that the executive government cannot claim the unfettered right to refuse passports to anybody that they liked. In the very recent case of Solzhenitsyn, the Court of Appeals held: "The denial of a passport causes a deprivation of liberty that a citizen otherwise would have. The right to travel, to go from place to place as the means of transportation permit, is a natural right subject to the rights of others and to reasonable regulation under law. A restraint imposed by the United States upon this liberty, therefore, must conform with the provision of the Fifth Amendment that, 'No person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law.'

In India, passports are refused on a variety of grounds which on most occasions are not disclosed to applicants. During the British regime, passports were refused many a time to patriots who wanted to go abroad. Even in free India, citizens do not get passports as a matter of right. Recently there has been the case of a refusal of passport to an Indian publicist who wanted to go to Formosa to attend an anti-communist Asian conference. This was a strange exercise of executive authority when literally hundreds are given passports to go abroad to attend communist or communist front conferences and notorious communists commute freely between Moscow and Delhi.

So far, nobody had challenged in a court of law the arbitrary use of authority. Only recently however a citizen has filed a petition in the High Court of Bombay to vindicate his right to get a passport. A writ has been issued. The result of the case will be awaited with keen interest by all lovers of freedom.

Hartals and Demonstrations

Hartals and street demonstrations have come to occupy an unduly prominent place in our public life. They played a large part in the national movement and were a useful instrument in the struggle against a foreign government. But eight years have passed since we became independent, and yet *hartals* and street demonstrations are as much in vogue as before. The people do not yet appear to have realized sufficiently that a very significant change has taken place in the character of the State. It is no longer a foreign regime imposed upon the people against their will. It is a government of their own which they can change from time to time and whose policies they can shape through their elected representatives.

The attitude to be adopted towards this government and its agencies like the police cannot be the same as that towards the old foreign government. It is an insufficient appreciation of this fact which persuades people to indulge in *hartals* and street demonstrations on the slightest provocation. *Hartals* and demonstrations have a place even in a democracy, but democracy also imposes certain restrictions. The people who may be out on the streets cannot take the law in their own hands, cannot coerce others to join their demonstrations and cannot indulge in anti-social acts like trespass, stone-throwing, intimidating or molesting persons and interfering with traffic...

What happened in Bombay on August 16, when a citywide hartal was observed in honour of those who died in the Goa struggle, bears out what is stated above. There were on that day several acts of stone throwing at buses, trams and trains, unlawful interference with the normal activities of citizens, wanton destruction of property and defiance of authority. Parts of the city were, as a matter of fact, for several hours in the hands of mobs intent upon imposing their will on all sundry. The sanctity of foreign consulates was also violated for which the Prime Minister had to tender an apology..

Political parties and leaders of public opinion should pay attention to these recurring phenomena of *hartals* and demonstrations and think about ways and means for ensuring their peaceful and orderly character. Democracy gives the people the right to demonstrate, but does not give demonstrators the licence to terrorise others or to indulge in anti-social and unlawful acts.

Educating Adults

The Right to Education Act (4)¹

Suresh C. Sharma

Education for children in the age group 6 to 14 years is compulsory under the RTE Act. It is also their right. There is a contradiction in right and compulsion. It is like making voting compulsory but leaving it to the voter to exercise this right. There are some reservations about the implementation of the provisions.

Noble thoughts alone do not work. Two years after the implementation of the Act, enrolment of girls is stuck at 48%, while the SC enrolment has declined from 20 to 19%. There is no change in the school going figure for ST children. It is envisaged that children will have a school within one km of their homes. No thought appears to have been given to varying conditions of terrain and domestic violence. 180 districts in India are in the grip of escalating violence and parents will be reluctant to let children go to school after every violent event. 40,000 children in seven districts of Chhattisgarh are not attending schools regularly. At one time, all the teachers of schools in Doda district in Kashmir stayed in Jammu and not a single child went to school. Children who run away from home just loiter around or take to begging. There are 50,000 street children in Delhi alone. Who will send them to school?

Responsibility to enrol all children in schools has been listed in the charter of the management committees. They have no authority to punish. Are they going to persuade the parents by reasoning with them? That may not always work. If it is compulsory, there must be means to enforce it. In Singapore, parents or guardians whose wards do not attend school can be fined up to 5000 Singapore dollars or/and imprisonment up to 12 months. In USA, absence from school without permission of the principal or parents is investigated and dealt with by the school itself. The student is made aware of the advantages of qualifying at high school level. Unemployment rate for

drop outs is 8.5 % as compared to 3.1% for high school qualified students and 2.8% for post graduate qualified personnel. The governments encourage education as they find that 75% of the jail inmates are school drop outs. A drop out child suffers loss of self esteem. If it remains unresolved in spite of counseling, it is referred to the court who may award fine and/ or imprisonment to child/ parents. The punishment affects driving license and employment prospects.

There are genuine difficulties in families where children help in family business, be it a shop or artisan workshop. Girls have to assist in household work. May be a less ambitious plan of limited school hours will help in overcoming the problems faced by such families. While we can talk about a child's right to education, recreation and play, it must be noted that participation in family business helps him/her to improve his/her skills for taking over the family business or start his own. I asked a kid helping in the family's fruit shop why he did not go to school. An elder in the family replied that further education would render him useless for the family business. He would want an office job which is difficult to get in Mumbai. Looking after sick members develops a sense of responsibility and forges the security of a joint family.

Australia has a provision for exemption from compulsory attendance in schools for children who take up full time jobs. Leaving school earlier than the compulsory age is allowed in Canada under special circumstances. In India, sections of the Muslim community protested against the RTE Act since it will come in the way of attendance in *madrassas* where children are trained

¹ The earlier parts on the Right to Education Act by Brig. Suresh C. Sharma (Retd.), appeared in the March, May, June, and July issues of *Freedom First*.



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to become *maulvis*. If it is accepted, patrons of other religions may follow suit.

In today's society, there are citizens who voice protest against any compulsory measure. They have raised the issue that compulsory attendance in schools is an infringement of parental authority and obligations. Each individual is unique regarding level of intelligence and interests. Some students can understand a subject readily while others may take more time. The brighter students are handicapped in developing their skills to the maximum as the teacher has to cater for the entire class. The ideal system to have one teacher for one student is not possible in a school but can be achieved by parents or by a private tutor. A school where a teacher attends to a class of 20 or 30 students is an inferior system. A student may be good in a particular subject and dull in others. He should not be forced to study all the subjects and may be restricted to subjects of his choice. Schools have sometimes tried to divide students in sections based on their learning ability. This causes trauma to those segregated as inferior in learning. These conscientious objectors believe that the parents know their children best

and are the best guardians of their interests. This is possible only if the parents are well educated and have the time to coach their children. Even for school going children, parents have to help with home work or arrange private coaching.

In UK, education other than schooling is accepted, subject to inspection by the local authority. Parents may choose the national syllabus or devise their own. In our context, it is not a realistic approach. In practice, parents take interest in supplementing the school studies by help at home. Besides at school a child develops ability to deal with others and develop his/her personality. In USA, the popularity of home schooling has increased dramatically between 1997 and 2002, and two million children were home schooled during the 1999-2000 period. In Delhi, cinema houses were directed not to allow school children to see pictures during school timings. We will find enrolment level of 100% difficult to achieve and may have to lower our target.

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Youth And The Environment

This is the second and concluding part of the discussion on Youth and the Environment.

Save Our Earth

Amrita Jana

It's youths' responsibility to spread the plea "Save Our Earth" to one and all. Some of the things which we can do in saving our environment are buying unprocessed food instead of processed or frozen food, switching to energy efficient light bulbs, turning off appliances at the power point, avoiding air-conditioners as much as possible, using clothes-line instead of the dryer, using environment friendly chemicals at home. Our constant endeavour will

promote a cleaner safer and healthy environment. Ultimately, the collective wisdoms of our citizens, gained through education, will be the most compelling and the most successful strategy for saving our environment.

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Environment Protection: Youth Expressing Concern

Flossy Fernandes

The nation's youth have special responsibilities with regard to protection of the environment and should be engaged in various forms of action thereby generating effective responses to ecological challenges. Future

generations will also be benefitted by today's course of action because their future depends on the extent to which they address concerns such as the degradation of the environment, depletion of natural resources, the loss of

bio-diversity and enormous radioactive wastes. The youth can introduce fresh ideas and outlook to environment-related issues because anti-ecological ways of thinking and behaving are not ingrained in them. A major reason why the youth ought to take the lead in protecting the environment is their better awareness of the issues and a greater stake in long-term sustainability.

A healthy ecosystem, will lead to a healthy future. For example, burning of farm wastes instead of allowing them to decompose naturally disrupts nature's cycle. In burning, most of the organic compounds are lost. The combustion of products brings greater havoc as in the case of carbon dioxide build-up, which results in the

warming of the earth, or the so-called "greenhouse" effect. Deforestation in the mountains may affect the lowlands through floods, drought, and erosion. At times environmental changes in one country may affect other countries too. An example of this is the Chernobyl accident which affected a lot of countries through the transfer of radioactive substances by natural agents such as wind and water, as well as human activities like the export of contaminated food.

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Wake Up and Join Hands to Protect the Environment

Ruchik Savla

The youth of today need to express their concern for the protection of the environment and associate themselves with different organizations or institutions which are working towards this cause such as: Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), Bombay Natural History Society and many others.

Spreading Awareness of Dangers of Pollution

We, the present youth, have to take up the responsibility of spreading awareness and educating people about the dangers of polluted environment in our day to day life. Educational programmes, campaigns, street plays etc. can be used for sensitizing people on such

issues. Recent research shows that around 30 acres of mangroves were destroyed at Sewri Bay (in Mumbai). The Sewri Bay area consists of mudflats, wetlands, and mangroves. Factors like coal storage nearby and the constant pumping of BMC's waste into the area is a matter of great concern and needs immediate attention. Sewri Bay is known as the home of the migrating flamingos since many years and their numbers may dwindle year by year if the Bay is not protected from pollutants and we may miss the beauty of watching these beautiful birds. I wish to spread this message to all the youth of today.

**Mr. Ruchik Savla, TYBA,
G. N. Khalsa College, Mumbai**

Youth Aim: A Healthy Environment

Flavia Fernandes

Healthy environment provides a healthy life and this can continue to happen if we protect the environment from being polluted. Environment gets polluted through various sources such as factory wastes, electronic wastes, destroying the natural habitations of various species to mention a few. This polluted air causes health problems, particularly for children and the elders. Pollution not only increases expenses on health care, but also decreases working ability. Thus the youth of today needs to spread awareness and work towards putting a check on pollution

to protect our environment. Preservation and conservation of resources in the environment will go a long way in providing a healthy and undisturbed ecosystem. To avoid serious environmental problems, pollution levels should be reduced to a minimal level.

Youth involvement in environmental protection can be at the grassroots level, such as participation in conservation projects, NGOs and policy-making bodies. UNEP, for example, has a Youth Advisory Council that

plays a supportive role. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been conducting training in environmental education for teachers of CPCE in an effort to influence its incorporation into the school system. The EPA has also conducted extensive environmental education

training programmes with groups and organizations at various levels of society.

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Youth and Earth

Anuj Chand

“If we do not check our ways, nature will check us in its own way”

Ours is a finite earth. It has limited resources. This needs serious reflection. How long will the earth be able to fulfill the demands of man's never ending greed? Awareness of the earth's limited resources leads to a conscious effort to save the environment. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), youth comprise nearly 30% of the world's population. Thus the involvement of today's generation in environment up-gradation is essential.

Almost all of us know that we cannot continue in the future as we have done in the past by lavishly using our natural resources. We can see that our deserts are

expanding, forests are diminishing, agricultural land is becoming less fertile, while the population is constantly increasing. “If we do not check our ways, nature will check us in its own way”.

We can save Mother Earth if the young generation acts as a catalyst in saving it. The youth needs to immediately start working towards saving the environment in every possible and practical way. For the fate of Earth lies not in mere **talking** of the ways to save it, but in actually **acting** in ways to do it.

Anuj Chand S.Y. BMM
ICLES M J College, Navi Mumbai

Youth as Activists

Sonali Ghosh

“We won't have a society if we destroy the environment

We exist because of the environment; environment does not exist because of us. We, the youth, should understand the state of environment and the effect of global warming to live in a happier tomorrow. We should take responsibility for the pollution that we have been creating. We should accept the fact that these resources are not going to last forever. If we want the coming generations to enjoy the flora and fauna, youth should understand that our environment is deteriorating day by day and we all are solely responsible if it is destroyed.

As an individual one should start with small steps

to make the population more eco - friendly. Opt for walking short distances, recycling of cardboard boxes and milk cartons, re-using of plastic water bottles. Few steps can resist a large disaster.

Youth should keep in mind that “An Activist is not the one who complains that the river is dirty; instead an Activist is the one who cleans it.”

Sonali Ghosh, SYB.Com
ICLES M J College, Navi Mumbai

It is profoundly sickening to be compelled to remain silent when there is need for expression. It is tyranny at its worst to compel men not to think as they do, to compel men to express thoughts that are not their own. The limitation of freedom of thought is not only an attack on specific political and social rights, but an attack on the Human Being as such.

Milovan Djilas in *The New Class*, (Praeger 1957)
Posted by Gopalakrishnan Raman in the blog Indians for Peace and Progress

Youth and Use of Plastic

Zeeshan Baig

Earth is not a gift from our parents; it is a loan from our children!

We would be living in a more optimistic society if the young generation spent less time proving that they can outwit nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting it.

To know the problems of tomorrow, the youth should hear what the older generation refuses to tell. The elderly should understand that children have never been very good at listening to adults but they have never failed to imitate them, so they must act accordingly. The youth

should understand that our environment is deteriorating day by day because of the excessive use of plastic. We, the youth should understand that pLASTic may **LAST** forever, but our environment may **NOT**!

One should always keep in mind that “It takes a noble man to plant a seed for a tree that will someday give shade to people he may never meet.” - David Trueblood

Zeeshan Baig, SYBMM
ICLES M J College, Navi Mumbai

Environment and the Responsibility of Youth

Meghana Pawar

We all are highly affected by our environment and we also depend on it for our various needs. Youths are full of energy and enthusiasm. The age group in which we fall gives us the power and the energy to act and work more efficiently.

So youth have a greater responsibility towards the environment. We need to understand how much nature gives us and its importance. Its protection, conservation and awareness are the need of the hour. And for that we are not expected to suddenly bring about a 360 degree

change but doing small things which are possible for every one of us, such as switching off the lights and fans when not needed, not taking the ATM receipts and making the maximum use of Internet for paying bills, recharging, money transfers and so on. All these small things, if made a habit, can save a tremendous amount of power, water and tress. Directing our energy towards positive things and initiatives such as planting one tree and taking care of it for one year can do wonders for the environment.

Ms. Meghana Pawar, TY BMM
ICLES M J College, Navi Mumbai

Youth and the Environment

Ms. Manjusri Ganguly

The world is not in a steady state, but constantly changing. Today's complexity of life needs awareness, wise judgment, decisions in achieving a level of equilibrium and living in harmony with nature.

Greater vulnerability of youth

Young people constitute a larger part of the world's population. These youth are very vulnerable to environmental hazards and risks in many ways. In addition, these young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current environmental decisions than will their elders. Youth should have both, special concerns and special responsibility, in relation to the environment.

In the present world, like feminism, environmentalism can be the best example of a new social movement. Young people will be compelled to engage in new forms of action and activism that will generate effective responses to ecological challenges.

Youth's participation

The role of youth in environmental protection ranges from grass-root activism and participation in conservation projects to policy making bodies and NGO'S. Recently it has been observed that the participation of youth is more extensive in International Organizations than at the national level. The UNEP has a Youth Advisory

Council that plays a supportive role and conducts training for young environmental leaders.

Through their participation in the World Summit on sustainable development, young people recently demonstrated that they could inject social values and notions of equity into the debate. Much of the environmentally significant information that young people

receive comes not from formal education but from the media. Therefore, Environmental Education and the Media should make greater and more concerted efforts to promote a larger process of social learning for sustainable development.

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A Finite Earth with Limited Resources

Anuj Chand

Ours is a finite earth. It has limited resources. This question needs serious reflection as to how long would the earth be able to fulfil the demands of man's never ending greed.

Awareness of the earth's limited resources leads to a conscious effort in saving environment. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), youth comprise nearly 30% of the world's population. Thus the involvement of today's generation in environment preservation is essential.

Almost all of us know that we cannot continue in future as we have done in the past by lavishly exploiting

natural resources. We can see that our deserts are expanding, forests are contracting; agriculture land is becoming less fertile, while the population is constantly increasing. "If we don't check our ways, nature will check us in its own way".

We can save Mother Earth if the young generation acts as a catalyst in saving it.

Above all, youth needs to immediately start providing relief to the environment starting from now in every possible and practical way.

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Environment is our Mother Nature

Dhiraj Sharma

"We have to heal our wounded world. The chaos, despair and senseless destruction we see today are a result of the alienation that people feel from each other and their environment."

– Michael Jackson

Environment, our Mother Nature is the life sustainer. Everything comes from it, and returns to it. Just as the environment is our gem, that needs to be protected by the guardians of tomorrow's future, the youth, our environment has unfortunately been deteriorating over the years - fewer trees, more pollution. In the fast paced life, the environment is being ignored - litter all around, plastic choking up gutters, waste dumped carelessly into the sea, excessive use of fossil fuels etc, and the list is endless. The youth of today are much more aware today than they were 10 or 15 years ago, and are poised to take the nation to heights unimaginable, and aware that conserving the environment is an important part of that. Even little things

count, like picking up a waste plastic bag and putting it in the bin will be one less plastic bag to the drains. Slowly, by our actions, we, the youth, can spread the message of conservation, through our actions, and make our future worthy, and make our world the paradise we wish it to be, just like we wish it to be. Let's make use of energy saving products, refuse plastic bags, and make use of public transport or, if possible bicycles, and encourage people to do it whenever possible. Let's be the Guardians of tomorrow's future and make our world not a better, but the best place to live, for us the children to come.

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THE LAST WORD

THE RESERVATION CONUNDRUM

The makers of the Constitution had provided for protective discrimination in the form of reservations for the SCs and STs, till such time as the necessary foundations of an egalitarian society were established firmly. Such reservations were meant to be 'enabling provisions' for a limited period only. But the politics of identity and opportunism have overshadowed the egalitarian dream. The political parties and leaders, ever in need of more and more of voter support, seek to expand the network of reservations; the various castes and groups, lured with the intention of reaping benefits, strive to be included in the charmed circle of beneficiaries. After the appointment of the Mandal Commission and the implementation of its report, caste has now emerged as both the most decisive and divisive factor in the political calculus.

The electoral system played up the potential of caste, and particularly marginalized castes and sections in the political arena. The gain of mobility and power by the OBCs has added to the intricacies of the power game. The position differs from state to state and even within a particular state. In addition, the internal dynamics of our highly heterogeneous society are complex, giving rise to conflicts of all of all kinds ethnic, communal, religious, casteist and regional and at all levels, from local to national.

Stark realities are often camouflaged under the colourful slogans. Social inequality cannot be seen divorced from economic inequality. Social justice has to be considered with economic well being.

If birth identity takes precedence over other identities, the identity of an equal and responsible citizen takes a backseat. Social justice cannot be converted into numerical calculations; never can commitment to democratic norms be proclaimed by taking recourse to the blame game. Political correctness cannot stifle openness of ideas. Rational arguments based on democratic norms have to override narrow considerations.

The reservation for the SCs and STs are a part of the Poona Pact of 1932 between Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi who was in prison and are a part of the Constitution of India. This is sacrosanct and cannot be tampered with.

All but the last paragraph are excerpted from a paper presented by Dr.Usha Thakkar and the last paragraph from the paper presented by Dr.R.K.Hebsur at a seminar on Reservation organised by Freedom First and Indian Liberal Group on June 10,2006.

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