

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 70 No. 10
April 6, 2014

Disappointing campaign

S. Viswam

Parties ignore human rights
Kuldip Nayar

**From Mala vs Madiga
to Yadav vs Modi**
K. S. Chalam

**Indianisation of
Allopathic medicine**
S. V. Nadkarni

**Farmers must get
coverage for lost crops**
Devinder Sharma

**Reducing Distress and
Dominance**
Bharat Dogra

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

**Twenty Questions for
Modi-Rahul-Kejriwal**

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

We are perhaps at the penultimate phase of the campaign for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls with just a month left for the actual voting and two months for the nation to know what choices the voters have made. The few days after May 16 will give us an insight into the shape of things into which the voters would have placed the country for the next five years.

We have had a virulent, highly divisive and a no-holds-barred campaign, lively, contentious and focused. How we wish that the campaign had also been intellectually stimulating and also of a high debating order! In the event, it was of a pathetically low order, with those who should have known better indulging in name-calling of the worst kind, stooping to make personal allegations and throwing about serious innuendos lightly. To call A. K. Antony AK 47 and Kejriwal AK 49 may be humorous but to say that they provided strength to Pakistan is to descend to the lowest level of electioneering. Shriman Narendra Modi was not being light-hearted but crude and cheap, and one does not expect such utterances from a prime ministerial hopeful.

The campaign turned communal on occasions and we need to be thankful that the communal tone into which it was slipping was pulled back in time. The BJP nominated a communal leader like Pramod Muthalik of the Sri Ram Sene and then threw him out under party pressure. The same story was repeated with Sabir Ali who was admitted on the rebound from expulsion by the JD (U) and thrown out after party vice-president Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi disclosed that the new entrant was an associate of Indian Mujahideen terrorist Yasin Bhatkal. Who admitted these men into the party and who threw them out is not known but the development betrayed the cavalier manner in which the BJP recruits men into its fold.

Not lagging behind, the Congress too was guilty of the same mistake when it nominated Imran Masood as its candidate from Saharanpur. It chucked him out when someone recalled that Masood had threatened when he was in the Samajwadi Party eight months ago to chop Modi into pieces if he (Modi) tried to convert UP into Gujarat. Such speeches are patently incendiary and hence unacceptable. But what message

was Rahul Gandhi trying to convey to the public when he chose to go to Saharanpur and appear on the stage with Masood's family and supporters? That all is fair in war and love and elections?

Between the lines

Parties ignore human rights

Kuldip Nayar

We regret to say that the fall in the standards of electioneering owes itself to the tone which Narendra Modi has chosen to impart into his speeches. He has concentrated exclusively on attacking the Congress which is all right in a campaign but also chosen to use abusive, always derisive and personalized rhetoric against Rahul Gandhi, which is certainly not all right in a campaign. The kind of language he used against Antony and Kejriwal portraying them as Pakistani agents was certainly below the belt. Surely, a prime ministerial candidate has a great deal to talk to his voting public on issues and challenges facing the nation. Instead of telling us that he has plans up his sleeves to tackle the problems confronting the nation, he has consistently chosen to tell us that the Congress is a bad party and Congressmen bad people and Rahul Gandhi the worst of the lot. Ok, but are cheap rhetoric and below the belt attacks of a personal nature the only gems to fall all the time from the mouth of a prime ministerial candidate? Has Modi nothing else other than anti-Congressism among his political assets?

In the final analysis, it is a sobering thought that the current campaign did not set any examples of dignified debate and intellectual stimulation. On the contrary, there were instances galore of degrading and abusive language being used without restraint or moderation. A pity, because once again a chance to raise the level of election debates has been lost.

Dictatorships get a fillip when democracies falter. India committed this cardinal sin when it abstained from voting at the UN Human Rights Council. A resolution was sought to be passed to seek an international, transparent inquiry to find out whether Sri Lanka had killed in cold blood 40,000 soldiers and others in the wake of hostilities against the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE). They had surrendered unconditionally.

India's abstention reminds me of the words of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru: When aggression takes place or human rights are violated, we will not and cannot remain neutral. Yet the Manmohan Singh government has been found placating the dictatorial government headed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Colombo. New Delhi did not bother the harm it would be doing to the cause of Tamils' rights and their own say in governance.

My hunch is that bureaucrats in the Ministry of External Affairs, with their mindset, decided to stay absent what they thought was "in the interest of the country." The hapless minister, Salman Khurshid, went along. He probably wanted the release of 100 fishermen who had "strayed" into the waters claimed by Sri Lanka. What will Salman Khurshid do now when the Colombo's navy has killed four fishermen?

That DMK chief M. Karunanidhi, otherwise supporting the ruling

Congress, should accuse New Delhi of letting down the Tamils in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and other places is understandable. But what is not understandable is the policy by which the Manmohan Singh government is pursuing to uphold the sentiments and aspirations even when the election of a new government is six weeks away. Sri Lanka should not mistake the timidity of the ruling Congress for India's betrayal of democratic rights of Tamils.

I was not surprised to read the Rajapaksa government's reaction: Thank you. No doubt, New Delhi was under pressure from the democratic world, led by America, that China and Pakistan, where democracy has been reduced to a relative term, supported Colombo. India's obvious stand should have been to vote for the resolution to reiterate its policy to protect human rights. Small sovereign nations should have felt let down.

I do not regret the defeat of the LTTE which was largely a terrorists' organization. But as a humanist, I feel sad over the killing of soldiers and their supporters after the surrender. The Sri Lankan army, obviously with the blessings of President Rajapaksa and his brother, Defence Minister Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, had no remorse over their indulging in a blood bath.

The world would not have known about the killings if the enterprising BBC Channel 4 had not shown the

documentary on the killings and atrocities committed not only against the LTTE troops but also against the innocent Tamils. Colombo's own inquiry was eyewash, exonerating the army and heaping the blame on the Tamils who wanted an equal say in the affairs of Sri Lanka.

India has tried to persuade the Sinhalese, a preponderant majority, to give autonomy to the north, Jaffna. But all such efforts, going back to the days of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, have borne no fruit because New Delhi is afraid lest any corrective step should alienate a neighbor which is hobnobbing with China. But how long would we take a hypocritical stand of placating the ruling Sinhalese and assuring the Tamils of autonomous status? On paper, the Sinhalese and Tamil are two official languages. But in practice Tamil has no place. Even a police station does not entertain a complaint written in Tamil, much less in the state secretariat.

I can appreciate the argument that the estranged Sri Lanka, next door neighbour, is capable of harming India. But what worse can Colombo do when it has allowed China to have its footprints in the country? On the one hand, Beijing has been given the development of Trincomalee port and, on the other Sri Lanka has become a refuge for some anti-India elements.

We can probably do little when the Sri Lankan government is averse to accountability. It has already rejected two earlier resolutions—one of them was in conjunction with the UN Secretary General. By abstaining from a move that was meant to put pressure on the government to come clean, New

(Continued on Page 8)

From Mala vs Madiga to Yadav vs Modi

K. S. Chalam

The recent dramatic political events both at the state and national levels indicate a serious social disorder in our country. Though caste identities have been used for political purposes in the parliamentary process, where number dominates ideology, never before unscrupulous methods of dividing castes and even families for the purpose of gaining the vote share seem to have been employed. The trend reminds that caste has emerged as a political institution with social characters which some of our political sociologists have of late recognized. But, the consequences of the current political manipulations, we are afraid, would have long term adverse social impact. Interestingly, no political party has a social agenda of caste eradication; therefore the trend is accepted as a matter of fact without any dispute. Sometimes we feel deeply pained and lapse in to despondency for the way the politics in India is played. There is no honesty in the methods of political parties during the election season and some of the Left, including the socialist groups, are not far away from this forced decadence. Everyone is interested in the votes and wish to get elected through the dubious means of whipping the caste passions or sentiments by promoting the petty leaders from caste or sub caste groups within a party or outside. All the parties once again talk about the need for caste-based reservations and possibly would work against the principles once elected to power. Is this a contemporary problem in India?

Perhaps, we have examples of such incidents in our epics. The pundits and experts of our scriptures tell us that lord Sri Ram was pampered by Vasista, the Rajguru to prove that there is no unity among the kshatriyas and the kulaguru of Kshatriyas, Viswamitra, was inferior to Brahmin Vasista. There were scholars like Garbe R., who have written on such topics during the 19th century and Sharad Patil has extensively cited the works in his writings with examples from Maharashtra scholarship. As the current elections and government policies seem to broadly respect the age old Sanatana dharma irrespective of declared or concealed agendas, a brief academic reflection on the puranic characters as seen from the present political war seem to be inevitable.

It may not be out of place to bring in here puranic symbols when we talk about castes, as the legends were in a way reflections of the classical varnadharma. Lord Sri Ram was definitely the jewel of the ancient classical era or the tretayuga. Therefore, it is desirable to look for the exemplary characters in our Lords and Leaders to find parallels in the current debates conducted by our seasoned media honchos with the support of paid intellectuals/managers. As things stand now, most of the dominant parties have their own legacies, family or parivar. The former is blood related and the latter is genetically connected. The former may not have a head quarters and the latter a formal functional relationship. But, both the

institutions are deeply embedded in our ethos and control politics and openly quarrel accusing each other. In fact one of our freedom fighters from Andhra, late P. H. Gupta had written in the 1950s in Caravan about the schools of thought as Vasista, Viswamitra etc as they appear in different puranic periods as characters might be varna-based schools. He questioned how could they live so long and be present in Ramayana, Mahabharata and assumed that they are not human or divinely characters, but must be asramas advocating specific thought. The issue here is that some strong characters are projected as the formidable candidates for PM post like, Modi, Rahul, Kejriwal, Mulayam, Nithish, Chandra Babu Naidu, etc. Sadly the fair sex is deliberately dropped off in the mainstream discussions on future PM even by the lady prattlers.

Among the prospective candidates, Modi is the prince among the peers. Let us look at his personality. Does Modiji in any way inferior to lord Sri Ram in his commitment to sanatana dharma and rastra dharma though some claim that he has failed in his raj dharma? In the Kaliyug both rajdharma and rastra dharma should be merged for administrative convenience of good governance as defined in modern heaven (USA- WB). Modi has an additional qualification of belonging to Backward Class which perhaps lord Sri Ram doesn't possess. In fact, Harshvardhan of BJP in Delhi has said that "even god cannot stop Modiji to win". Or some of our experts might find that given the color of the leader resemble the dark icon, it is not difficult to paint both the characters as backward castes? Some friends have brought to my notice that in some social networks,

Sri Ram was depicted as ancient prince and projected as historical character living with flesh and blood. It might be possible during the current euphoria to project him as a backward class person given his quarrels with dhobis, Sambhuka being present backward castes. We have now the advantage of hundreds of channels and social networks in all languages to devote time and energy to recreate modern epics. May be soon we may get writings depicting such episodes. Some organizations have already placed experts outside India who are expected to do that for an international audience.

The current fight to gain control over UP reminds us the kind of games played in Andhra, a few years ago in breaking the solidarity among the dalits (there could be many reasons). In fact, the whole caste system itself is a ladder of inequities. Now the BC upsurge, some claim, seems to be a blemish for the traditional ruling classes/castes particularly their formidable dominance in terms of numbers. The chief among them is the Yadav(ahir) parivar and their ability to garner support from other socially disadvantaged including the Muslims (artisans). They might capture Delhi anytime, if left free. The OBC power in UP, Bihar and other parts of cowbelt is due to some castes like the Modis and their ubiquitous presence in places where the Yadavas are found. Unlike the Yadav and other OBCs, Modi, Sahu, Gupta (Agrahari Vaisya / sundaria-baniya) and similarly placed castes in the North as telis, oil pressures and small shop keepers /dealers are noticeable BCs. They have traditional contacts with the market and knew about the nuances. Unlike the sonis who are small in number, this group is well entrenched and might become a great threat to traditional castes

who have been enjoying power and patronage despite small number. If the Modis and Yadavs who have some economic potential to challenge the money power are allowed to emerge, they might become, to use Phuley's term the Rakshaks (not Rakshasas) of the socially disadvantaged. Or they might take away their share that reduces the major chunk now enjoyed by the traditional groups. The solution perhaps suggested by the advisers is, emulate Andhra experiment where Sudras are enjoying power by dividing the disadvantaged as ABC and D. There is no doubt that there are different gradations among the OBCs. The service castes like Dhobi, Nayi etc. are in multitudes but are always marginalized is another serious issue for political engineering. The Left from the time of Lohia have tried to win the confidence of the lower castes; of late it is alleged, alienated without any constituency and turned irrelevant with their obsolete rhetoric.

However, the current Modi-Yadav war in UP is only symbolic that it would break the nascent stage of Bahujan's power. How do we expect that in a country like India the traditional governed castes would be allowed to occupy positions of power - if at all permitted, it should be with the blessings of the gods on earth!

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Indianisation of Allopathic medicine

Consistent with the Economic Realities of the Indian Population

S. V. Nadkarni

The allopathic medical science is based on the physics and chemistry of the body function. Being a science, it is pure and extremely definitive; there cannot be any error in the conclusions drawn through this science. Now technology has added more precision to the already precise science of Allopathic medicine. But though Allopathy is a pure science, the clinical practice of allopathic science is NOT a science. As with many other fields, application of any science brings in art and commerce. The mixture of the art, science and the commerce in clinical practice makes it a new product—a variable product for that matter—which must differ from place to place, depending on the exact needs of the place. Even in the same place, the needs of the various strata of the society could be different and, therefore, the product suitable for one may not suit the other. This is the fact not realized by most of the followers of the allopathic clinical practice and a standard format/menu is served to all, irrespective of the actual needs of the local people. Unfortunately, too, it is the western model which is advocated blindly, without realizing that this western model is proved not to be suitable even for their own people belonging to the poor and lower middle class strata. ANSWER? We must formulate our own model suitable for our own needs. This is what I call Indianization of allopathic Medicine.

Are the health needs of the poor any different from those of the rich? I would say “Yes”; in fact, I dare say

that the needs of the middle class are also different from those of the poor or the rich. So, broadly, the three strata of society have different health needs and that difference is due to the economic status of each strata. This is a fact most people are not willing to accept. How can the needs be different? It is because of their economic compulsions and expectations. Their expectations are determined by what medical assistance they are presently receiving and their knowledge about the health and disease. The poor do not understand an early disease; forget the need to prevent the disease. So, they usually come late when the disease is fairly advanced. The clinical manifestations are very clear and diagnosis is relatively easy without too many modern investigations. They need to be treated fast as it is difficult for them to take treatment for a prolonged period—even if it is “free”; there are ancillary expenses and other logistic problems. Fortunately, they are satisfied with immediate relief and any prolongation of life or productivity. Not knowing much, they have to depend on the opinion of the doctor and accept the protocols prescribed without much questioning. They have to depend on the public sector - good or bad - as they can never afford the charges of the private set-up. The science remains the same, but the art and the commerce differ; hence the “product” offered is different. Efficiently managed, this product can give equally good results at a very low cost. Due to efforts of NGOs and the various “awareness programs”,

some of these poor are becoming aware of their health needs and have started demanding better health care. That is good, but when it leads to expectations beyond the financial capacity of the health centers, and the “awakened poor” demand better service FREE, grave problems arise; often the services deteriorate, as the medical professionals go on the defensive and send the patients to higher centers for “better treatment” and there will always be a paucity of “higher centers.” This attitude immensely helps the “shirkers” in the profession while the socially oriented “enthusiasts” who are willing to do their best under the prevailing facilities are totally discouraged; there rises a hanging sword of assaults or complaints / actions against them, if things go wrong. The community has to realize that better treatment is bound to cost higher, and the medical professionals have to realize and be taught to improve their “skills” to give better results without raising the costs. The rulers will have to do the balancing act.

It is quite the opposite with the rich. They are apprehensive about each and every symptom/health complaint and wish to rule out *any* serious ailment which may cause trouble in future. They are not willing to accept a 0.1% error and are willing to spend any amount for investigation and/or therapy. Money is no problem; in fact, more they spend, surer they feel about the management of their symptoms by the specialists. Not that they get a perfect outcome - far from it.

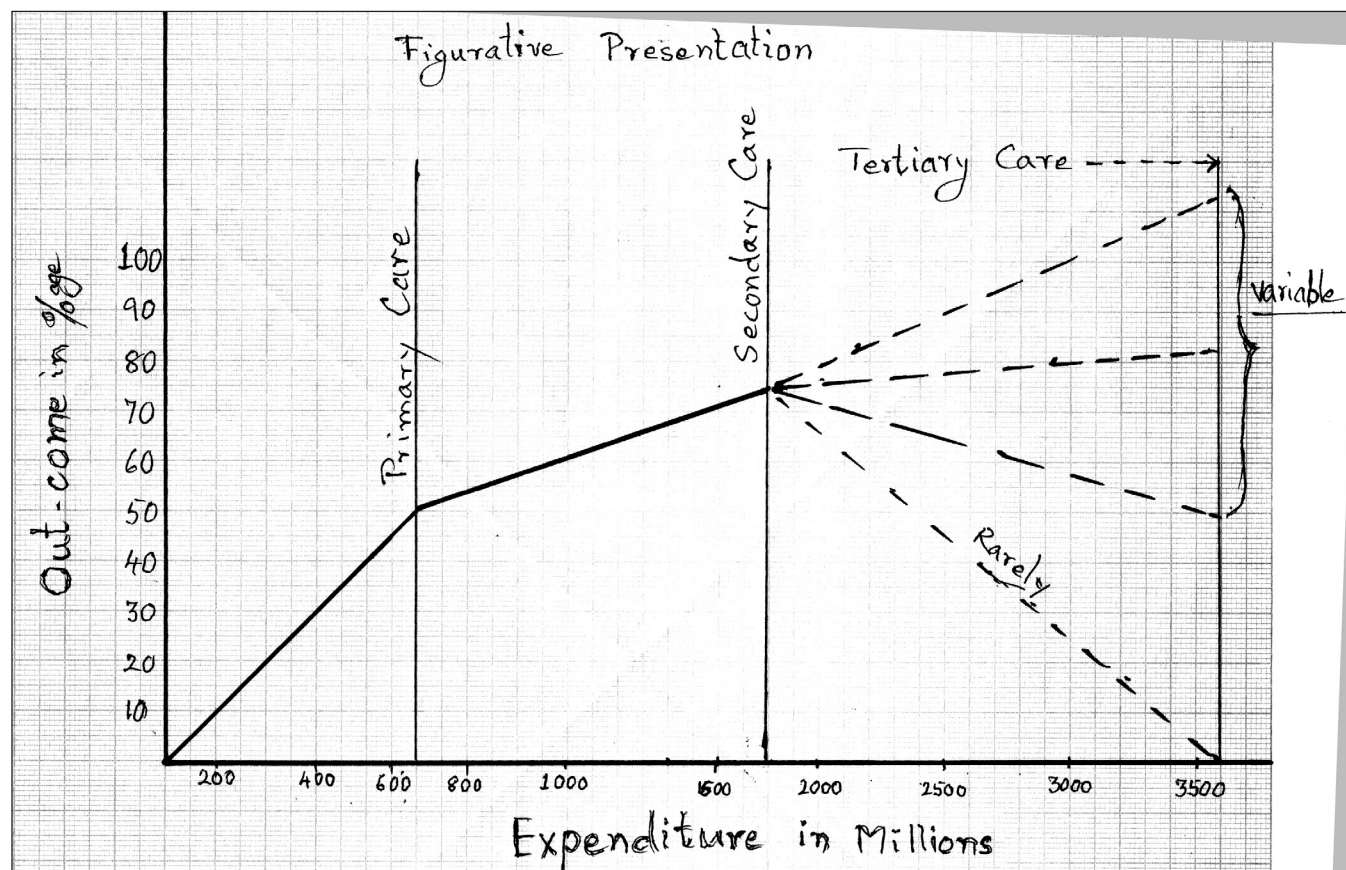
The middle class, as in Marxian philosophy, are somewhere between the two. They are health conscious but also cost conscious. They are well read but skeptical and will not swallow all “modern” propaganda easily. The health professional has to really discuss with the middle class patient to convince him about the diagnosis and the management. Personally, I feel he strikes the right balance.

The health care professionals need to be re-educated in this direction but that cannot be done unless they are made cost-conscious, and that cannot happen, unless we do costing of every treatment protocol. The diseases will have to be classified and graded as mild, moderate and severe in a standardized fashion and then only, it will be possible to co-relate the outcome to the costs incurred. Such a re-education will

lead to a search for cost-effective management protocols. The “new products” could be different depending on the facilities available. The teaching institutions will have a great role to play by doing research in this direction, because if such new products were to be developed by the teaching institutions, they will be considered as authentic. The science is now properly mixed with art and commerce to suit the existing circumstances of the local community. Each product is different but it is the most suitable for that particular locality/strata. Made to order - so to say.

On a macro level, it is seen that increasing the expenses at the primary level to up-grade them, gives maximum benefits to the community at a relatively low cost. Improving the secondary services needs much higher expenses but it

improves health care perceptibly. But when we come to the tertiary, high-tech, modern health care, the expenses mount sky high - yet the outcome is extremely variable. Some miracles do occur, but, in general, the real improvement in health care is very marginal for the community as a whole. In the hands of half-trained specialists, the higher expense could result in worse outcome - sometimes disastrous. **(see the graph)**. The outcome being so variable, it is my considered opinion that the public sector should spend the most minimum on tertiary care and make strict rules about the referral methods. Who should get the benefits of this tertiary service should also be defined strictly in the public sector. If considered “not indicated” as per the defined criteria, those who still insist on receiving this tertiary care may have to pay for this service.



(Continued on Page 15)

Farmers must get coverage for lost crops

Devinder Sharma

There is nothing more gruesome for any farmer than to see before his own eyes his lush green standing crop flattened by the vagaries of nature. All his hopes and aspirations from a bountiful harvest are grounded in a matter of few minutes. Not only the crop, but his life too is flattened.

As many as 24 lakh hectares of land in Madhya Pradesh and another 18 lakh hectares in Maharashtra have been hit by a series of frequent hailstorms in the past three weeks or so. Extensive damage has also been reported from parts of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

It is easy to call this a natural calamity. It is easy for Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar to say crop losses from excessive rain and hailstorm are not unusual, and, therefore, appeal to farmers to show courage. But for millions of small farmers who toil endlessly to tend the crops in the hope that the harvest will feed their families for a few months, all is lost. For those who didn't commit suicide, such natural disasters push back their household economy by at least three years. Already reeling under debt, life becomes as tall as a mountain for them. They know they have no one to curse except their own fate. This is an agricultural emergency.

With 43 farmers committing suicide in the Bundelkhand region and another 37 taking their own lives in Maharashtra (and still counting) ever since the freak hailstorms with

a severe magnitude lashed central India in the past three weeks, the extent of damage caused to the standing crops is all evident. Such has been the severity of the storm that as many as 900 cattle have also reportedly perished.

While Agriculture Minister Pawar says unusual rains and hailstorms are not uncommon and wants farmers to demonstrate courage, he appears more concerned with the damage done to sugarcane. Even before the expert teams have been formed to assess the damage, he has already announced that 15 percent of the standing cane crop has been damaged and has even worked out the loss to the sugar mills. But for the rest of the affected farming community, his advice is to brave this grave loss collectively.

Although both Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh each have demanded a Rs 5,000 crore relief package to be provided immediately, the loss estimates will swell by the time estimates flow in from other states. But if past experience is any indication, crop loss compensation is hardly going to be any relief. We have had in the past examples of Rs 1 to Rs 20; Rs 95 to Rs 1,470; and Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 being provided as relief. After months of waiting, when the farmers get a cheque that is not even worth presenting before a bank, it only shows the contempt and cruelty by which the farming class is treated. I am not expecting the situation to be any different this season. It is a matter of few days before the first phase of polling

begins on 10 April and farmers will disappear from the political radar once the election campaigns peak.

It was in 2007 that the world's largest weather-based crop insurance programme was launched. By 2012-13, it had expanded to 15 states, covering some 12 million farmers. Prior to this, a number of crop insurance schemes were launched beginning 1972. While all these schemes remained almost at the pilot project stage, these crop insurance schemes do not eliminate risk, but only manage to spread risk over time and space. These schemes only provide compensation based on an index rather than the actual damage, and are also based on an average over a demarcated area, often a block, rather than compensate for the actual loss.

I don't know what utility these crop insurance projects are serving. Way back in 1920, agriculture expert JS Chakravarti had written: "No insurance authority could ever maintain a supervising agency, which would be able to watch and enforce that every insured field receives the required amount of care and attention at the hands of the cultivar. Unless some method is devised by which this great difficulty is minimised, a system of crop insurance would indeed be impossible." Isn't it a reflection of our lost priorities that even after 100 years of knowing this, crop insurance continues to be riddled with the same problems and the same level of inefficiency?

I have never understood why crop insurance agencies or companies can't be made to assess the actual loss a farmer suffers. If every individual can be insured for his life, and that includes people living in remote villages, why isn't the same system extended to cover crops as well? If an individual house can be insured against theft or fire or a natural disaster, why can't a crop field be insured in the same manner? Why should the insurance agency be allowed to follow an area approach in the case of crops?

Well, the answer is very simple. The governments are not keen.

Imagine, if the 18 lakh hectares that has been hit by hailstorm in Maharashtra was insured? Farmers wouldn't have been a worried and harried lot. No farmer would have opted to kill himself. I have a few suggestions on how to achieve this.

First, the government must make it mandatory for the insurance companies to insure all farmers for their standing crops. This can begin especially by making it compulsory for the foreign insurance companies that are lobbying to raise the cap from the existing 26 to 49 percent. These companies should only be allowed to invest, provided they give an undertaking that they would provide individual crop insurance. If they can't, don't allow them in.

At the same time, all existing crop insurance schemes should be reworked to achieve the goal of providing compensation based on individual loss.

Secondly, the government must step in to provide at least two-third of the insurance premium. Even in the US, it is the government

that provides the bulk of the premium share as specified under the provisions announced under the Farm Bill 2014, which is applicable for another 10 years. In India too, state governments actually end up paying a higher compensation year after year for crop losses than what could have been the premium outgo. At the same time, it will be helpful to seek farmers' suggestions to make the crop insurance schemes really effective. The State Farmers' Commissions should be entrusted with the task to come out with models in wider consultations with farmers, civil society and experts.

(Continued from Page 3)

Delhi has tried to let Colombo off the hook. Probably, we did so because our own record on human rights is so blotched that we do not want to set a precedent of an inquiry by outsiders.

Our insensitivity can be seen from the fact that practically no political party has included violation of human rights in its election manifesto. Two main parties, the Congress and the BJP, have such a bad record of their rule that they do not encourage even a discussion on the subject. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), a political platform of NGOs, should have had human rights violations on top of its agenda. But it too is losing its way—idealism—in an effort to become an alternative to the Congress and the BJP.

People want a change. The AAP can emerge a power to reckon with. But its leader, Arvind Kejriwal, is as much surrounded by a coterie as are the Congress and the BJP leaders. The AAP can retrieve the ground it has lost provided it does

Somehow we have come to believe that crop insurance based on individual approach is totally impracticable. Unless this feeling is rectified, I don't see any glimmer of hope for the farmers. It is easy to tell farmers to pick up courage at times of natural calamities but just imagine if ever your own house or company is destroyed in a fire or an unforeseen disaster, would you have the courage to stand the loss suffered? It is difficult to rebuild affected livelihoods unless, of course, the loss is covered through insurance. Farming is no exception.

not make the election an end by itself. What the nation needs is a force to uphold the lower half to eliminate corruption and to reiterate the ideology of pluralism.

Had the Sri Lankan government kept their principles above politics of power, it would not have been facing the charge of war crimes. But it is futile to expect this from Rajapaksa who is a dictator through and through. It is a pity that New Delhi has arrayed itself with such countries, known for the suppression of common man, particularly the Tamils. The din of election has suppressed even the demand for justice.

Striking a personal note, I recall my visit to Colombo. There was a midnight knock at my hotel door and the police barged in to search the room for any discriminatory material. After some time the police force withdrew on its own. My crime was that I had held a press conference during the day to demand the removal of ban on LTTE and fight it out politically.

Twenty Questions for Modi-Rahul-Kejriwal

Pressing Issues before the people :

All three of you are in the Prime Ministerial race. But why are you not talking about the real issues facing the people? Do you have no concern with pressing problems like poverty, unemployment, backwardness, hunger, malnutrition, exploitation of workers-farmers, poor state of education and health, atrocities on Dalits and women and communalism? Why are you avoiding these real issues and indulging in trivialities and cheap dramatics?

Unemployment :

There is massive unemployment in the country. Youth have to leave their home and migrate hundreds and thousands of kilometers in search of jobs. How are you going to deal with this? Lakhs of small and cottage industries have closed down in the current phase of globalisation and liberalization. Jobs have also been lost due to mechanization. Are you ready to reverse this development which destroys employment?

Wages :

Real wages are going down, while prices are going up. In the MNREGA, government is not prepared to give even minimum wage. Jobs are not being regularized and pension is not being provided in public as well as private sectors. Why are you silent on this issue? Why did the Aam Admi Party not fulfill its promise to end contract labour system?

Seventh Pay Commission :

If the government does not have enough resources for welfare of people and development, why did it hugely increase salaries of officers-professors through fifth and sixth pay commissions? Why has it announced

again the seventh pay commission? Why are you not concerned about low income of common working masses whose hard work is actually running the country?

Crisis of Farming :

Farmers are the food-providers (**annadata**) of the nation. But they are continuously in crisis. More than three lakh farmers have committed suicide in last 19 years. Farmers' suicides have taken place in large numbers in Gujarat also. Are you not guilty for this? How will you change this present system based on the destruction and exploitation of agriculture and farmers?

Same Economic Policy and Development Model :

The sham of the Gujarat development model has been exposed. But, that is the model being implemented in the whole country and the present sorry state of the country is precisely result of the same. Kejriwal has not revealed what is his model and how it differs from the Modi-Manmohan model?

Corporate Rule :

Each and every government of the country is bending backwards to please corporates by displacing farmers and Adivasis, destroying forests, rivers and environment and creating scams and super-scams for the benefit of them. Are these corporates bigger or the people of this country above them? Kejriwal has targeted only one corporate house. Why can't he see that all corporate houses are the same and guilty?

Foreign Capital :

Our elders made many sacrifices for independence, but our governments are again forfeiting

it by inviting multinationals and allowing them to loot our natural resources, exploit our labour and capture our markets. Is this not a betrayal, a treason? Shriman Kejriwal, what do you have to say on it? Please clarify.

The Biggest Scam :

The Government of India has given tax exemptions of the order of Rs. 31,88,752 crores in four central taxes to the companies and the rich in the last eight years. Subsidies, cheap land-water-power-minerals-loans and tax exemptions by state governments are in addition to it. This is a loot of this poor country. You are either involved in this biggest scam of the nation or are just silent about it. Why?

Environment :

You have talked about saving Ganges and other rivers. But can't you see that the roots of their destruction lie in modern development, urbanization and modern industrialization? Why don't you speak on them? Why is protection of forests, land, air and biodiversity not on your agenda? Why are you not ready, or advocating, to ban dangerous technologies like genetically modified seeds or nuclear technology?

Business of Education :

Today only 11 out of a hundred Indian children are able to enter colleges. Sixty two children out of a hundred drop out before their tenth standard. Various governments have run away from their constitutionally mandated responsibility and put education in the hands of private profiteers. This has ensured that only people with money would get education and that too market-oriented education. Trade of

education is essentially an evil. When will the day come when each and every child of this country will get free and meaningful education without any discrimination, as envisioned in our constitution? Only a common school system based on neighborhood schools can achieve the target of the universal education. That is the experience worldwide. Do you agree with this?

Non-existing Health Services :

In the same manner, while deliberately ruining the public health services, private doctors, private hospitals and the pharmaceutical companies have been given full freedom to loot the people. Many people die a slow painful death, get indebted or are forced to go to quacks or Tantriks and get cheated. Is this 'Sushasan' or 'Swaraj'?

Dominance of English :

English rulers have left but their language continues to rule us. Crores of children and youth are frustrated and get inferiority complex, a handful of people at the top continue to maintain their monopoly and the whole nation remains a nation of imitators without original ideas due to this. Why have you done nothing about it? Why are you silent about it?

Justice for Women and Dalits :

You have done nothing and said nothing against the 'Manuwadi' system that has given low status to the women and Shudras. Destruction of the caste system and patriarchy does not appear to be your goal. Then are your statements about liberating women, Dalits and backward communities a hoax? Should we conclude that you do not want to change the system, you just want to change the government to gain power?

Alcoholism :

One major factor behind atrocities against women, crimes and ruining of families is growing addiction to alcohol, drugs, etc. Then why do all governments encourage use and sale of alcohol, gutka, cigarettes and why enough steps are not taken to free society from these evils?

Communalism :

What have you done to counter communalism which has led to fight among neighbours and spread the poison of hatred among the people? Modi is of course a product of the same, but Rahul-Kejriwal are also answerable. In spite of terrible riots in Muzaffarpur in the neighbourhood immediately before the Delhi election, AAP maintained a silence over it during that election. Kejriwal went to Gujarat, challenged Modi, but did not comment on the communal genocide of 2002. Can opportunism and compromise of this type counter the monster of communalism and fascism?

Parachute Candidates :

All parties in this election have suddenly imposed from the top high profile candidates such as film stars, retired officers, company executives, cricketers, NRIs. They are suddenly dropped from the sky. Tickets have also been in plenty to those who have switched parties and who are wealthy. Do you have any principles or not? What happened to the big talk of politics from below, participatory politics, transparency, clean politics, etc.?

Divergence between speech and action :

Sometimes you travel by Metro or local train; at other times you use a chartered plane. Have you given a thought as how much money is spent for one person to travel by a

chartered plane, how much petrol is consumed and how much carbon footprint is left? You talk of the Aam Admi but organize lunches of Rs. 20,000 per head. What is this?

Personality Cult :

A big weakness in the Indian political system is that the leaders grow bigger than the party and the principles. The leader is presented as a miracle-maker or superman as if once he comes to power, all the problems of the country will be solved. This is exactly what happens in our society where godmen or Babas or Gurus claim to work miracles and solve all problems. Aren't all three of you guilty of promoting this evil of superstition, miraculism, superstardom, personality worship and lack of ideology in Indian politics?

Lastly,

Narendra Modi,

There appears to be a combination of pro-corporate policies, communalism and dictatorial tendencies in you. This is an ideal situation for fascism. You want to make the entire country like Gujarat. Does that mean that the genocide of 2002 will be repeated throughout the country, there will be a flood of false encounters everywhere and land will be taken away from the farmers and given to companies?

Rahul Gandhi,

For the last 23 years, the anti-people policies of privatization, liberalisation and globalization have been mainly imposed and promoted by the Congress rule. Where were you when these policies brought miseries like price rise, unemployment and corruption? Shouldn't the people of India punish the Congress for the same?

Arvind Kejriwal,

The country had great hope

in you. But you did not run the government for even 50 days and fled from the battle scene. Can the country's problems be solved just by the Lokpal bill? How are your policies different from that of the Congress and the BJP? By supporting capitalism which has continuously brought newer and newer crises all over the world and which is itself undergoing a crisis, what kind of new politics you are practicing?

If you do not answer these burning questions of the people, it will be concluded that your intentions are not honest.

—Sunil, Samajwadi Jan Parishad

Defeat authoritarian forces

Citizens For Democracy (CFD) in its conference held at New Delhi on 'Challenges Before Democracy' has viewed with grave concern the manner in which RSS has come out openly to contest the present elections by hoisting Narendra Modi as the Prime-Ministerial candidate - a calculated step to impose authoritarianism in the country to serve the corporate interests. The CFD conference views the present elections as unique and critical, and has come to the conclusion that in order to save democracy it is essential to defeat BJP led by Narendra Modi. The conference has further called upon the people to vote for such a candidate in their constituency who cherishes democratic and secular values and who is in a better position to defeat the Modi-led alliance.

—Kuldip Nayar, *President*
N.D.Pancholi, *General Secretary*

To eradicate manual scavenging

Safai Karmachari Andolan welcomes historic judgment of the Supreme Court on eradication of inhuman practice of manual scavenging. In its judgment the Supreme Court has deprecated the continuance of manual scavenging in the country in blatant violation of Article 17 of the Constitution of India by which, "untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden". The court was emphatic about the duty cast on all states and union territories "to fully implement (the Law) and to take action against the violators. In a significant endorsement of concerns raised by Safai Karmachari Andolan, the Supreme Court directed the government to, "*Identify the families of all persons who have died in sewerage work (manholes, septic tanks) since 1993 and award compensation of Rs.10 lakhs for each such death to the family members depending on them*". The judgment has been given by the Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice P Sathasivam.

The court has been categorical that, "If the practice of manual scavenging has to be brought to a close and also to prevent future generations from the inhuman practice of manual scavenging, rehabilitation of manual scavengers will need to include:-

- (a) Sewer deaths – entering sewer lines without safety gears should be made a crime even in emergency situations. For each such death, compensation of Rs. 10 lakhs should be given to the family of the deceased.
- (b) Railways– should take time bound strategy to end manual scavenging on the tracks.
- (c) Persons released from manual scavenging should not have to

cross hurdles to receive what is their legitimate due under the law.

- (d) Provide support for dignified livelihood to safai karmachari women in accordance with their choice of livelihood schemes.

Court also said that rehabilitation must be based on the principles of justice and transformation. The court also directed the Indian Railways, which is the largest employer of manual scavengers in the country, to take time bound strategy to end manual scavenging on the tracks.

This is a victory of manual scavengers who have been fighting across the country for their liberation against the denial of central and various state governments repeatedly. The court acknowledged the significance of the data provided by the petitioner Safai Karmachari Andolan in its 12 years legal battle demonstrating, "that the practice of manual scavenging continues unabated. Dry latrines continue to exist notwithstanding the fact that the 1993 Act was in force for nearly two decades. States have acted in denial of the 1993 Act and the constitutional mandate to abolish untouchability."

Safai Karmachari Andolan, who has been spearheading the movement to end this obnoxious practice of manual scavenging across the country since the last thirty years, said that the judgment has been huge armor in our fight and we are not going to rest until this judgment is fully implemented in letter and spirit across the country. The mission of Safai Karmachari Andolan is not to sleep until the last manual scavenger is liberated and rehabilitated with a dignified profession.

—Bezawada Wilson, *National Convenor, Safai Karmachari Andolan*

Reducing Distress and Dominance

Bharat Dogra

The greatest relevance of human life consists in trying to reduce distress, pain and suffering. It needs to be clearly specified that this includes the pain and suffering of not only human beings but of all forms of life. Secondly, this includes the pain and suffering not only of this generation but of future generations as well. The present generation should strive to reduce air pollution, cut down on greenhouse gases, conserve water, abandon nuclear weapons and more generally leave for the next generation a world which is safer and healthier.

While reduction of distress is clearly the most relevant endeavour of human life, this should be interpreted more broadly to mean not just the manifestation of distress but, what is even more important, the basic causes of distress. Unless the main factors which cause endless suffering in the present day world are carefully identified, as soon as some tears are wiped out at one place many more tears will appear at other places. Even though a beginning may be made by treating just the outer manifestation of distress, this should lead towards a careful identification of causes of this distress and then trying to treat the causes of this distress.

While the causes of distress in this world are many, diverse and complex, if only one cause is to be identified in which almost all others (other than those relating to accidental factors or natural disasters, of course) can be included then this cause relates to the wide prevalence and persistence of relations of dominance.

It has been a very widespread and enduring practice of human

beings to try to dominate others, to get personal benefit at the cost of others, to try to get ahead of others, to impose their own viewpoint. This tendency may be rooted in greed (the urge to get more than others, regardless of one's needs) or in ego (the urge to impose one's own thinking and viewpoints, without giving a patient and fair hearing to the other viewpoint), but its impact is always harmful. This tendency can be seen in the relationships of individuals, groups and entire nations.

These relationships of dominance and exploitation of course destroy the dominated and exploited people. But in addition, and this should be emphasized, they also slowly but surely destroy the perpetrators of exploitation and domination. As I've written elsewhere, "The persons who fill their coffers by inflicting injustice and cruelty on others have to live with a guilt complex that can destroy their peace. To get rid of this guilt they have to lower themselves to such a level of insensitivity that deprives them of simple yet precious joys of life. The suppressing of spiritual values (that is required to be able to commit injustice) creates distortions in the persons (or the societies) due to which they are denied even that happiness which many poor people can experience freely and in plenty."

These relationships of dominance can be seen at the level of persons, groups, or nations. This can also be seen in gender level relations. This relationship of dominance can be seen in the efforts of the present generations to use up most resources depriving future generation of a

fair share. The relationship of exploitation can be seen in the man-nature relationship, in the efforts to subjugate and dominate nature instead of striving to live in harmony with nature. Perhaps most important of all these relationships can be seen in the tendency to dominate other living species to such an extent that many of these are in grave danger of extinction.

It is a task of the greatest importance to understand the destructiveness inherent in relationships of dominance. Having understood the importance of this, we can then start the liberating process of getting rid of relationships of dominance and replacing these with relationship of co-existence and co-operation. This fundamental change must become the base of our educational system for a peaceful, friendly and just world.

Acharya Javadekar



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir

Bharucha Marg,

Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.

Archives

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Mahatma Gandhi had much in common with the socialists whom he engaged in constant debate on his vision to remake India.

Gandhiji subscribed from the earliest days of his public career to the principle of social justice and practiced it according to his own lights, though he may not have exactly called himself a socialist in the academic sense. By founding the Tolstoy Farm and the building up of a colony on certain stern principles, abjuring private property, striving towards community ownership and responsibility, he laid claim to be one of the early founder members of the peasants' and workers' republic.' This may be challenged by those who claim to be scientific socialists. Gandhiji pointed to his own Ashram and allied institutions run

under his guidance under the ruling principle of 'To each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity'. The one basic difference lay in their being founded on nonviolence. Somebody, who once ate in the common kitchen of Talimi Sangh in Sevagram remarked humorously: 'Gandhiji calls this (common kitchen) *rasoda* and it sounds commonplace. The communists would call it 'Commune' and everybody would be impressed.' Gandhiji was essentially a humanist and to him the substance and quality of the content was of supreme importance, not so much the jargon, though he was meticulously precise in the use of his vocabulary. In his own novel fashion he explains:

Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of the *Isopanishad*. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problems that face the scientific socialists. It is true however that my approach is through unadulterated non-violence.

A beautiful word

All these professions of his were recorded in the thirties. In his inimitable manner he summed it all up in homely but vivid fashion:

Socialism is a beautiful word, and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of the society are equal - none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as parts of the body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

Translating them in terms of Indian independence, "the *swaraj* of my dream' as he Picturesquely termed it, 'it meant the creation of a state where the necessities of life would be enjoyed by all.' He said:

I have not the slightest doubt that *swaraj* is not *purna swaraj* until these amenities are guaranteed to all under it.'

On the eve of the Salt Satyagraha, he made a direct reference to vested interests, without mincing words:

The greatest obstacle in the path of nonviolence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of moneyed men, speculators, scrip-holders, land holders, factory-owners and the like. All these do not always realize that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they are. If they could but realize that they must give up their blood-stained gains', the battle is won for non-violence.... But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British principals. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert.

These utterances may more or less be taken as the bedrock of his faith, the bare essence. In defining individual aspects, however, great variations emerged.

This was inevitable. For his was a living, moving, thinking mind, in constant ferment, revolution and appraisal. There could be nothing static about his thinking. If that had happened he would have lost his dynamism. Drawing attention to this, Ram Manohar Lohia says:

A great man, if he is connected for half a century or more with public life, must have made contradictory statements. Mahatma Gandhi, with

his rare insight, made nevertheless certain conflicting assertions. From his belief that the caste system a part of religion, he went on to say that it was a sin. From his belief that the sum-total of the British Empire tended to act for good, he went on to say that it was Satanic, and from a certain underlying belief in the sanctity of private property, he went on to demand its confiscation without compensation and termination of land ownership.

It has, however, to be remembered that though Gandhiji did write voluminously, writing was not a mental exercise for him. It was only a corollary to action. His life, his way of living his programme of action to meet a situation or a challenge, those were his true expressions. They were not treatises for mental stimulation. They were inextricably related to what he was engaged in doing and only in that context do they fall into the proper perspective and become meaningful. Gandhiji was therefore more specific than any of our religious leaders in the past had been. For his life was the book of faith, open to anyone to read.

That is how countless people the world over found in him their spokesman, the solace and the cure for their griefs, almost an answer to their yearnings and cries.

Nevertheless there were batches of young people rising out of the growing ferment with irrepressible questions, for which they could not find ready answers in Gandhiji. The predominant element that influenced the incipient socialists was Marxism and the Russian Revolution.

The dumb millions

Socialism did not come to the national Congress only after the

formation of the Socialist Party inside it. A growing trend had already begun to make itself felt even in the late twenties, expressing radical views and socialist principles in a general way through the youth and the younger leaders, which finally matured into an organized party. In *Why Socialism?* Jayaprakash Narayan has tried to answer that moot question and the several wide differences between Gandhiji and socialists at the time. These socialists asserted that capturing the national state machinery was a prerequisite to the implementation of a socialist programme. For this the national Congress had to be made into an effective revolutionary vehicle for direct action. With all, their wider differences, Gandhiji and the Congress socialists did touch at a point somewhere deep in the depths. He was a revolutionary though not cast in the convention ally accepted mould; he was wedded to direct action as revolutionaries must be. In spite of temporary variations, the touching points grew and met more and more. Gandhiji had said:

Above all, Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of India. . . if there is a genuine clash of interests I have no hesitation in saving on behalf of the Congress that it will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions”

Nevertheless the Congress lacked a clear-cut socio-economic programme to draw the enthusiasm of the masses. Acharya Narendra Deva as the President of the first Conference of the Congress socialist party clearly stated:

The national struggle is coming more and more to be identified with

the struggle of the oppressed classes and a full recognition of this fact alone will enable us to formulate correct policies for the future.

While the older Congress leadership in a way resented the emergence of this young militant group, regarding it as a disruptive force, they also did not see the need for building up workers’ and peasants’ organizations, as for them their existing machinery was good enough. Gandhiji’s reaction was, however, totally different. He said he welcomed the socialists but did not favour some of the planks of their programme, such as class war; but if the socialists agreed to adhere to non-violence, he had no objection to Congressmen joining such a struggle.

As a matter of fact Gandhiji’s endeavour to lift the economic battle to a political plane began as far back as 1918 when, during the peasant struggle in Kaira for suspension of land revenue, he declared:

The Kaira-riots are solving an imperial problem of the first magnitude... this is a struggle for self-government.

Theory of trusteeship

There were however other thorny problem, such as Gandhiji’s adherence to Trusteeship, of which the socialists were highly critical. According to them it should either be acknowledged that the wealth of the wealthy was unjustly acquired and its expropriation should be demanded or we should accept it as rightfully theirs to do what they liked with. Property they held had to be scientifically analyzed according to the method of its production and distribution and not treated as a question of ethics or morality, in a

sentimental sense. Because to them this was not a matter that a change of heart could set right. It was a social and economic set-up which had to be overthrown and substituted by another, more equitable and conforming to justice. The socialist solution therefore lay in a social revolution, which alone would create the proper environment for a different human relationship and not something which concerned just a few individuals.

Though everybody is familiar with Gandhiji's concept of Trusteeship, I would like to quote a few of his expressions on it" we must however begin at the beginning and it is this: He was not only a humanist, he also leaned towards austerity. Thus while one may believe in socialism and also an affluent society by increasing production through science and technology, and expanding our needs proportionately, Gandhiji believed in a simple life as one believes in aesthetics. To him wanting or

possessing anything over and above one's minimum needs was stealing. He went even further: 'A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it. 'Apparently those who styled themselves scientific socialists had no meeting point with an ascetic principle; for logically, as Gandhiji himself admitted, this must ultimately lead to 'total renunciation and learning to use the body for the purpose of service alone.'

(to be Concluded)

(Continued from Page 6)

How to make common man cost-conscious? For the success of the scheme of universal health coverage (UHC), it is absolutely necessary that the community becomes extremely cost-conscious; otherwise, the demands mount sky high or the expenditure is easily wasted on wrong priorities. I have suggested two methods. One is to give him the actual bill of expenses (it can be called "cost statement" and not a bill). The other - more effective way - is to make every patient in public sector, beyond primary care, pay at least 10 per cent of the actual bill. In my modified format of UHC, I have made it merely 8 per cent, while local self-government bodies will bear another 12 per cent. Both will become cost conscious. Even presuming that 30 per cent of the people are below poverty line, the scheme is yet possible, as the government will pay for them—this is the real subsidy which now goes exactly to those who need it.

It is not only the professionals who need to be re-educated, it is the whole community and their leaders who need to be educated on the real value of health services, namely a) - all health services are

not needs; some are demands; some are sheer luxuries, b) - the health service costs. And c) - as a corollary, therefore, while essential services must be a social obligation, other services must be tailored according to the capacity of the individual or the community to pay -individually or collectively. d) - all services have to be paid for - public services through health related taxes with contribution from all, and private services through additional health insurance or personal expenses. The medical professionals who are going to treat the poor and the lower middle class, need to be re-educated as to how to treat effectively at reduced costs within the available facilities by improving one's skills. (Strong incentives would be necessary for this.)

The role of medical colleges is grossly under-estimated. It is totally wrong to look at the college hospitals as merely tertiary centers for the treatment of complex cases. The college and its hospital are centers to create competent doctors/ specialists for the entire spectrum of health services. Therefore, it must have the widest canvas of diseases and from all possible strata of society. It is

then only that the students (and the teachers) will understand the subtle differences in management of early and late diseases in various strata of society. Today, the over-whelming percentage of the poor patients in medical college/hospitals is giving them a distorted training of the art of communication and of dealing with the complaints of the patients. Secondly, we are not training doctors to be family physicians at all. There ought to be a training course of two to three years for General Practitioners (primary health providers, I prefer to call them). The whole time-table of hospital working must be looked into to accommodate the complex needs of the nation as a whole but it is a big chapter and cannot be discussed here.

In brief, the socio-economic influences on the actual clinical practice ought to be taken into account at every step from medical education to the formulation of health policies to the actual clinical practice. Unfortunately, vague ideology and euphemism are hindering the right approach and causing untold harm to the health services. We all need to be re-educated.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 70 No. 11
April 13, 2014

Demolition of pluralism
Kuldip Nayar

Does economic growth
ease social tensions?
K. S. Chalam

Rush for Muslim Votes
Irfan Engineer

Real Gujarat:
An Underreported Story
Himanshu Thakkar

Lessons from Geneva
V. Suryanarayan

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists -II
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Sudha Varde
1930-2014

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Voting begins

S. Viswam

We are in the thick of the first major phase of polling, and soon enough we will be caught in the final phases even as campaigning will end and the hustle and bustle of General Elections 2014 will fade away. The campaigning has received saturation coverage from the print and electronic media and there is possibly nothing new that can be said now about the electoral scene that has not been already said. Hence, as the nation waits for five more weeks to know how the electorate have voted, it is best to highlight and react to some of the latest developments and events on the poll front.

It is just as well that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Bannerji toned down her rage and agreed to follow the Election Commission's directive on the transfer of seven senior police and administrative officers on eve of the polls in the state. As things stood on the morning of April 8, Tuesday, a first class constitutional crisis was cooking up in Kolkata. Mamata charged the Commission with hatching a conspiracy against her and her party with a view to enabling the Congress to win the polls. She went to the

extent of saying that she would even court arrest and go to jail but she would not obey the Commission's orders. A crisis was averted as wiser counsels prevailed and Mamata backed down. Actually, she was overreacting to a routine procedure of the Commission to which no deep political meanings need to be attached. The Commission orders shifts and transfers of officials either on its own or in response to complaints from parties and candidates about the impartiality or otherwise of some officials. The transfer does not mean any kind of punishment or even that the complaints stand proved. It is just to eliminate any suspicion of malafides on the part of officialdom. Mamata said the transfers would create chaos and law and order problem for which she would not take responsibility!

The Commission would have been justified in invoking Article 324 of the Constitution which empowers it to conduct the elections and hold full control over its direction. Indeed, the Commission has the constitutional powers to superintend all aspects of an election, and the state government was arguing from a

weak position in defying the EC's powers. Thankfully, the matter was sorted out mutually satisfactorily, with the Commission insisting that transfers be carried out and agreeing to the state government choosing the replacements for the transferred officers. The moral of the story is that it is unwise for any constitutional authority or any two constitutional authorities to take any conflict or difference of views between them to a flash point. Moderation is the key, and leaders like Mamata must learn to control their tempers and give the same respect to others as they expect to receive from them!

The language used by some of the candidates during campaigning has been bad enough. Last week we drew our readers' attention to the decline in the standards of public debate and discourse. This week we have to deplore that some parties and candidates resort to physical violence to make their point. For the fifth time and the second occasion in Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal has been physically attacked during the campaign. He was slapped hard on his face by a 38-year-old autorickshaw driver for the fault of "betraying" auto drivers. Whether the charge is valid or not is beside the point. The issue is that resort to physical violence against candidates (or against anybody for that matter) is unacceptable during elections. All political parties must set good examples in this respect and train their workers adequately to hold their tempers and behave peacefully during campaigns.

That manifestos, however skillfully drafted, and regardless of the slew of assurances and promises they contain, count for very little in elections was a known fact. During

Between the lines

Demolition of pluralism

Kuldip Nayar

I may question the timing, practically on the eve of polling for the Lok Sabha election, of the disclosure of conspiracy behind the demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in 1992. I do not know how this has helped the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) at the polls during which it shed the development factor and came out in true colours, the pro-Hindu stance. Its election manifesto is a bit accommodative on the mandir and seeks solution within the constitutional framework. But the BJP remains adamant on Article 370 which is an integral part of the process of Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India.

The other main party, the Congress, did not lag behind in communalizing the environment. The party marshaled Shahi Imam Bukhari and other Muslim clerics behind. The party did not care about the oft-repeated allegation against it that the Congress goes out of the way to appease the Muslims.

Yet, I commend the meticulous job of piecing together the bits of information through sting operations spread over three years to bring to light the plan to destroy the masjid. The news portal, which has divulged the details, says that the demolition was an "act of planned sabotage." It was meticulously planned, rehearsed and executed.

This confirms what Justice M.S. Liberhan had said in his report on the demolition. He has reiterated in a press interview: "It stands beyond

doubt that the events of the day were neither spontaneous nor unplanned, nor an unforeseen overflowing of the people's emotion. Narendra Modi was part of the L.K. Advani's rath yatra in support of mandir."

What has pained me is the fact that both Atal Behari Vajpayee and Advani knew about the proposed demolition—the plan and the exercise carried out for demolition. I was honestly taken in by Vajpayee's argument that it was an act of people's spontaneous emotions and had no prior planning behind it. When Advani resigned from the Lok Sabha taking moral responsibility, I really believed that he was speaking the truth. I feel cheated. The alacrity with which he withdrew the resignation within 24 hours indicates the hypocrisy. And Vajpayee still plugs the line that it was a spontaneous reaction of the crowd. This is not true because half a million sevaks were assembled from different parts of the country, particularly Maharashtra, on December 6, 1992.

The Justice Liberhan report is an indictment of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which has taken 22 years to complete the probe as it claims to have done. More than that it is an indictment of public figures that were part of the conspiracy but parade themselves as an apostle of virtues. Other BJP leaders, some of whom I see on various channels of television, do not minimize the sin by arguing that no sting operation has been carried out in the case of

(Continued on Page 3)

corruption deals by the Congress. This can be done even belatedly. But the Sangh parivar cannot be absolved of its nefarious activities.

I knew all along that Narasimha Rao, then the Congress Prime Minister, had blessed the destruction. He had the army deployed in the vicinity and was bound to use it when the Supreme Court had said to maintain the status quo, that is, to protect the Babri masjid. Not a single soldier was moved to defend the mosque, nor ever the proposal to surround the structure with tanks to ward off any attack.

What Socialist leader Madhu Limaye had told left me with no room for any doubt about Rao's involvement. Limaye said that when the demolition began, Rao sat for puja. There were frantic calls from his colleagues to reach him out to take action against those who were engaged in destroying the mosque, but he had instructed that he should not be disturbed. When the destruction was complete, Rao's aide whispered into his ears that the process was complete. Rao finished his puja.

The masjid's demolition was followed by communal riots, particularly in Mumbai. Rao invited some senior journalists to seek media help to normalize the situation. I was one of the invitees. I asked Rao how a small temple had come to be built overnight when the centre had taken over the administration after dismissing the state government ruled by the BJP. He answered me: the temple would not be there for long.

Twenty-two years have gone by since the demolition. I had reminded Rao of his assurance on several

occasions when he was still in power. But no action has been taken despite my repeated writings. The small temple stands there even today and the talk to accommodate the Muslims by building a mosque next to the mandir is not heard anymore.

I can understand and even appreciate the arguments of those who claim that it was the Ram janam bhoomi and not the Babri masjid. But when lakhs of Ram sevaks gather there and even beat up a few Gandhites who objected to violence, the dictum sought to be proved is that the majority community would have the way through peace, if possible, or by force, if necessary.

In fact, the Babri masjid's destruction is a watershed in our country's ethos of pluralism. The Muslim community began to tilt on the side of extremists since. Its faith in the secular society was shaken and it went even to the extent of not protesting against the terrorists.

If I were to trace militancy among the Muslims I would find the demolition of Babri masjid as the beginning. The community feels insecure, particularly on the prospects of Modi becoming the prime minister. All that I can say is that India is a multi-religious society for centuries and the society has learnt to live that way.

If Modi tries to undo the reality, he will find defiance all over. He may even jeopardize the country's integrity. I wish the BJP election manifesto had mentioned at least once the word of secularism. Although the new converts to the BJP argue that when the party swears by the Constitution, it expresses its faith in secularism without spelling it out. I wish it were

so because when the Babri masjid was demolished it was done despite the Constitution.

(Continued from Page 2)

the current campaign, the futility of expecting the manifestos to be studied and taken seriously has again been exposed. The Congress manifesto hardly evoked media attention partly because it was released on time. The fact that it was the first manifesto to be drafted and whetted by Rahul Gandhi made no difference to the reader interest it evoked. The BJP manifesto received better coverage because it was released after the poll had begun and its authorship was attributed to Narendra Modi. However, we are sure that both the manifestos have already been forgotten and are doomed to gather dust in some shelf of the two parties, to be dusted and studied again on the eve of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls!

Books by Surendra Mohan

1. **Vikas Ka Rasta: Nai Arthik Neetiyon ka vishleshan..** Price 600 rupees.
2. **Samajwad, Dharma Nirapekshata aur Samajik Nyaya** Reissued as second edition; Price 500 rupees
- Published by Rajkamal Prakashan, 2a Netaji Subhash Road, New Delhi 11002
3. **Vartaman Rajneeti ki Jwalant Chunaotiyan.** Price 400 rupees.
4. **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ki Neetiyon:** (This booklet was published late last year.) Price 25 rupees.

Published by Anamika Publishers and Distributors, Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002

Does economic growth ease social tensions?

K. S. Chalam

The schedule for the 16th parliamentary elections in the months of April-May and the bifurcation of Telangana seem to have shifted the wrangling in the public domain from social turmoil to political squabbles. Yet, the election manifestos and the tall promises of political parties in Andhra Pradesh (two states) and at all India level show that economic issues are haunting the parties. It appears that the major issue before the parties is not about the social or political control over power in the legislative bodies, but about economic resources. Interestingly, those parties that have openhandedly invited the LPG and have sincerely implemented the dictates of the funding agencies are now throwing blame on to the ruling dispensation and governance for the adverse consequences. In fact, there seem to be no difference between the ruling and opposition parties as far as liberalization is concerned, but it is seen only in the media management. The ruling coalition has tried to conceal the harsh influence of their policies on the poor through some palliatives in the name of human face of development. But the fact remains that corporates, Indian and multi-national, are running the show like the folk puppets, each choosing its own puppet. Therefore, the results after May 16 are of no consequence to common man except that in the case of a moderate party or coalition coming to power there will be some social peace.

Economists till very recently were busy in projecting the high rates of growth almost on a monthly basis,

bereft of the social tensions based on the ground realities. Social tension is understood as the feeling caused by lack of trust between people, groups or nations who do not agree upon certain social issues. The social tensions and economic opportunities are always related. The divides and despairs that are created in the process of lopsided development lead to the crisis of trust deficit among different competing groups. Therefore, the last two decades of faster economic growth in India have not been able to reduce these social tensions. In fact, social tensions are spreading into new areas of operation. Language and region were considered as minor irritants. But now along with caste, gender, religion, class and development, these issues are increasingly causing tensions between groups and between government and victimized groups. It was expected that the process of inclusion with faster rates of economic growth would resolve these tensions. However, there seem to be no respite in the latent competence of neo-liberalism that helps to intensify inequity with every unit of increase in the rate of economic growth. It appears that the mid-term appraisal of XI plan could not capture these tensions in terms of the progress reported in each sector planned. A cursory look into the appraisal of the XI plan show that the traditional sectors such as transport, irrigation, etc, did not mention how far the plan programmes have bridged the divides between rich and poor, social groups, rural-urban, and others

identified by the planning commission.

It is disheartening to notice that the 12th plan 2012-17, has identified 25 targets that were not attained and therefore repeated once again. Out of the 25 targets, four relate to economic growth like GDP growth at 8 per cent, poverty, education, to reduce gender and social gap, health, to reduce Infant Mortality Rate to 25, infrastructure that includes 10 lakh crores of investment, drinking water to 50 per cent villages, environmental considerations - creating one million hectares of green coverage per year, and service delivery consisting of banking services to 90 per cent of households. Is it possible to achieve the targets in the next three years?

It is doubtful given the kind of promises made by our leaders through their manifestos. The vulnerability of the conditions of the poor as projected by the planning commission itself (through its targets) speaks about the reality. Further, the targets and the legislative action to achieve them have been alleged to be a serious threat to social peace. The recent developments in the social legislation like Forest Dwellers Rights, NAREGA, RTE, etc. seem to have created instruments of strength of the dispossessed while at the same time triggering new tensions. For instance, the local farmers' community feels that the empowerment of the wage laborers in the rural areas has reduced the free flow of labor supply at a given

wage. The empowerment of tribals with the right to own land and to access minor forest produce deprived the contractor class to have free access to the resources of the tribals which they have been enjoying so far. The construction of major irrigation projects, unbridled expansion of mining in tribal areas, expansion of infrastructure without a rehabilitation package, etc, are displacing tribals, dalits and other marginalized groups. In other words, every step in the direction of creation of wealth without proper understanding of the implications of displacement and despair that is inherent in such development projects leading to further tensions in the society. Even the vicissitudes of money markets including the share markets have their own toll of tensions that are not generally reported in the media. In fact, the key in manipulating the Indian economy is under its control closely guarded by 30 business houses. They are so powerful that no one dares to touch them!

It is reported that the monetary transactions in the rural areas with the circulation of money through different schemes created an unusual situation. Almost every individual in the villages gets sufficient cash on hand but, it vanishes by the end of the day. It is by way of persuading the consumer to buy talk-time, IMFL, entertainment and other consumer goods, MNC foods and not nutritious food. But, the rates of poverty estimated by government agencies and experts like Prof. Tendulkar have placed the figures at 27.5 percent and 37.2 percent respectively in the urban and rural India. Even the methodology of estimating the poverty ratios has been a subject of great debate

among economists for the last five decades while other social scientists are amused by and excluded in such exercises. However, committed bureaucrats like N. C Saxena gave a different meaning to poverty and the methods of estimation placing the poor at 50 per cent of the population.

This is what is projected as the outcome through Millennium Development Goals for the entire world (halve between 1990-2015 population living below \$1.25 per day). Most of the countries that were below the level that India was placed at one time seem to have accomplished in some of the targets. It is a civilizational advancement and all the nations are expected to grow and join the mainstream. However, there is no perceptible change in the social tensions in terms of rise in the crime

rate in India as reported by NCRB that stood at 23.87 lakhs in 2012 escalated from 23.25 lakhs in 2011.

It is very interesting to find that in majority of the government documents, programs to reduce tensions include schemes like social welfare scholarships, paltry investment fund for NSCFDC, rehabilitation centers for the physically challenged, 15-point programme for religious minorities, etc. But, the implementation of such measures at the grass root level and their impact in reducing the social tensions are hardly studied and reported. This may be because of the management approach to economic growth that takes care of only the outcomes in economic terms (GDP) but not the larger issues of social justice and inclusion.

Defeat communal forces

Citizens For Democracy views with grave concern certain declarations which have been included by the BJP in its election manifesto released recently. Such programmes like construction of Ram Mandir, scrapping of article 370 of the Constitution and revision of n-doctrine are divisive and not in public interest.

The campaign for 'Ram Janambhoomi' launched by BJP was its first major assault on Indian democracy leading to demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992, and giving rise to feeling of resentment and insecurity in the Muslim community. The demolition has also afforded a pretext to international Jihadi terrorist organizations to interfere and expand their terrorist activities in India. Now the BJP is again trying to stoke the same fire. In a multi-religious country like India

democracy can subsist only on the basis of the policy of inclusiveness and brotherhood.

In 1998, as soon as the BJP coalition government was formed, its first act was to launch a programme to have nuclear weapons claiming that it would ensure the security of India, but this act in fact has enhanced India's insecurity. With its very limited nuclear weapons, India is rapidly becoming a puppet state of the U.S.A., while Pakistan was also forced to acquire nuclear weapons. This has led to the fearful prospect of the possibility of *Jehadi* groups or rogue generals in Pakistan getting control of the nuclear weapons. In this process, the continuous huge expenditure in acquiring and maintaining nuclear weapons has diminished Indian

(Continued on Page 12)

Sudha Varde

Sudhatai Varde (1930-2014) was extremely lively, cheerful person with dream of egalitarian society in her eyes. She was petite, demure in her looks, at the same time, extremely forthright, upfront and dedicated to the cause of women's liberation. She passed away on 8th April, 2014 at the age of 84. Hers was a life lived for her commitment for progressive and secular values and socialist and humanist ethos.

Right from her childhood Sudha Kotwal had great fascination for dancing. She used this talent for her social cause as a volunteer for Rashtra Seva Dal (RSD) which she joined as a teenager. She was involved in the freedom movement through RSD. She met her soul-mate Prof. Sadanand Varde who was also a mainstay of RSD and in due course she married him. Both of them were gracious and full of life and remained active workers in the social movement as patriotic socialists.

In the post-independence period, Sudhatai played pivotal role in the development of cultural wing of RSD. She also encouraged her daughter Jhelum to be a classical dancer. She shared beautiful relationship with her daughter and always talked highly of her.

Sudhatai was closely associated with Mrinaltai Gore, Kamaltai Desai and Pramiltai Dandwate. Sudhatai's involvement in women's movement began with anti-price rise struggles in the early 1970s. She participated in the anti-rape campaign in 1980. She attended all events of new women's groups in response to cyclostyled invitations sent by post to her residence in Bandra (W) which was initially an office of Mahila Daxata Samiti (MDS). She worked for anti-dowry agitations (1981), Brides are not for burning campaign, *Parityakta Mukti Morcha* (Deserted Women's Liberation Front), solidarity for textile strike (1982). In a campaign against dowry harassment, I remember Sudhatai shouting slogan against murderers of Manjushree Sarda and Vibha Shukla when we had protest demonstrations within Bombay High Court in 1988. She was a sympathiser of Swadhar that provided support to women in social distress. Sudhatai attended all *shibirs*, meetings, rallies, sit-ins and public meetings of united front of women's groups and state level coordination committee for women's liberation, *Stree Mukti Andolan Sampark Samiti*.

After communal riots in Bhivandi in 1984, women's organisations such as NFIW, AIDWA, MDS, SMS, Women's Centre, Forum Against Oppression of Women formed Committee Against Religious Fanaticism. Sudhatai was actively involved in the same. In 1987, she was with feminists to protest against emergence of sati temples in Mumbai and re-naming of road in suburban Mumbai as *Maha Sati Road*. As a representative of MDS she took active interest in Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex Selection. She attended study circles on technical issues such as implication of hormone based injectable contraceptives on women lives before joining the agitation against it. She was a supporter of Narmada Bachao Andolan.

During 1991 as a Director (I/C) of Research Centre for Women's Studies for a brief period, I had to organize a National Round Table on Women in Decision Making. I requested Sudhatai to present a status paper on Women in Decision Making in Western India. She was so overwhelmed with emotion that said, "It is so rewarding to feel that you, younger lot of firebrand feminists see value in our thinking!!" To prepare her paper, she frequently visited RCWS Documentation Centre and went through all the reports, resolutions, books concerning the subject and made a brilliant presentation at the Round Table.

She was shaken by Mumbai riots in 1992 and in a meeting organized by Stree Mukti Sangahtan at Bhupesh Gupta Bhavan, she asked, "Where did my generation go wrong? How do you explain that children of secular generation are turning out to be religious fanatics?" She made a resolve to focus more on Rashtra Seva Dal's activities with children to change their mindset towards humanism.

In 1993, both Sudhatai and Sadanandji founded *Aple Ghar* to care for orphans after earthquake in Latur.

When she came for 75th birth anniversary function of Mrinaltai in 2003, Sudhatai looked frail. Two years back in the memorial meeting of Mrinaltai, I had her glimpse.

Sudhatai's inspiring and charming persona and flavor of her good deeds will have a lasting imprint on glorious HERSTORY of women's liberation movement in Maharashtra.

—Vibhuti Patel

Rush for Muslim Votes

Irfan Engineer

The BJP strongly protested against Imam Bukhari of the Jama Masjid calling upon the Muslim community to vote of Congress in order to defeat the communal forces in the country. Imam Bukhari's dabbling into politics is highly undesirable and should be condemned by all those who respect democracy and secular values. Imam Bukhari's writ does not run outside the premises of Jama Masjid many say and it is proved as well. The Imam opposed Shoaib Iqbal in Matiya Mahal Assembly Constituency in the Jama Masjid area. However, Shoaib Iqbal won thrice despite the fatwas against him. When Imam Bukhari appealed to Muslims to vote for BSP in the 2007 UP Assembly and 2009 Lok Sabha elections, most Muslim candidates of BSP did not win. Then Imam Bukhari appealed to vote SP in the 2012 UP Assembly elections. The Imam's son-in-law Umar Ali Khan had been given ticket by the SP. Khan lost though he was the only Muslim candidate in Behat which has 80 per cent Muslim constituency! Other SP candidates won despite the Imam's appeal. Then the Imam asked Rajya Sabha seat for his brother and ministerial berth for Khan, which was refused. Hence the fall out between the SP and the Imam.

The father of the present Shahi Imam—Syed Abdullah Bukhari first came to limelight when he dared to oppose demolition of the slums of Turkman Gate on Sanjay Gandhi's intervention during the Emergency. When Janata Party was formed, Atal

Behari Vajpayee and Chandrashekhar went to meet the Imam and bless the party. The Imam obliged and addressed several meetings along with Atal Behar Vajpayee in the 1977 general elections asking Muslims to vote for Janata Party. Muslims did, because the mood in the country was anti-Congress. The Imam thereafter deftly tried to maintain his brand image and driving hard bargains from political parties. The Imam also appealed to Muslims to vote for the BJP in the 2004 elections! The BJP did not protest then.

Political parties of all ideologies are appealing to various ethnic, linguistic and interest groups as well as castes and religious communities to poll committed votes. The BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, is also endeavouring to do the same and appealing to different interest groups and people belonging to varied identities in the language they want to hear and offering solutions and policy interventions they want. These promises are insincere. However, one interest group that Modi professedly would not cater to is that of Muslims. He wears all kinds of head gears but refused to wear skull cap offered to him in one of his Sadbhavana Mission. Though he does not want any targeted interventions to ameliorate the legitimate grievances of one of the most backward community in India—Muslims, he is not shying away from targeting the community for their votes. In his Rajasthan election rally, Modi's men were busy

distributing veils and skull caps to demonstrate before the media that Muslims too were supporting him. Rajnath Singh, President of the BJP met Muslim leaders and apologized for any "mistakes" they may have made without acknowledging that they made any mistakes. Such a meeting was obviously an attempt to garner some votes of the Muslim community.

The BJP never protests if any political party appeals to or endeavours to mobilize committed votes of any caste or linguistic groups other than Muslims. In Maharashtra, their ally Shiv Sena has spread hatred against the North Indians in order to mobilize committed votes of the Marathi speaking without any whisper of protest by the BJP. Akali Dal, a NDA ally in Punjab appeals to identity issues and specific interests of the Sikh community with approval from the BJP. The BJP and other front organization from the Sangh Parivar themselves take up partisan and religious issues of the Hindu community. Their attempt is to progressively transform the diverse religious community into a homogenous political community to establish a Hindu cultural state. To achieve their objective, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar has taken assistance from and defended various "godmen", some of them even wayward. When in power, they make the resources of the state available at the feet of the godmen supporting them to promote conservatism and Hindu nationalism.

Godmen like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

and Ramdev have always courted the BJP, though Sri Sri does so more subtly than Ramdev. Modi hugged Ramdev and allowed himself to be photographed in that posture. Ramdev has endorsed Modi for Prime Ministership. How is it different from Imam Bukhari's appeal to vote for Congress? Sri Sri is often seen in the company of BJP leaders releasing the autobiography of L K Advani, but also compilation of speeches of Nitin Gadkari! He appealed to the voters to vote for 'morally upright' leaders (going by the company he keeps, it would be clear to his followers who are they). He further appealed not to elect khichadi sarkar (so the third front is out) and opined that people had lost hope in AAP. The only party left is the BJP! He condemned Sonia Gandhi for meeting religious leader of only one religion for vote banks.

In MP, Shivraj Chouhan has protected and promoted scores of self-styled godmen who enjoy enormous political clout. After the Assembly polls, Chouhan and his wife sought the blessings of Sant Shri Rawatpura Sarkar — an influential religious who enjoys special status under the BJP rule. Rawatpura has several commercial interests and has registered himself as 'A-type' contractor with the MP PWD. Similarly, Sant Sadhvi Maa Kankeshwari Devi and Bhaiyyu Maharaj have Shivraj Chouhan and his minister — Kailash Vijayvargiya among followers. Some of these godmen face criminal charges which include land grabbing, rape etc. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur was arrested from Indore for bomb blasts in Malegaon and was defended by Rajnath Singh, the BJP President alleging that Hindu religious leaders were being targeted.

The Sangh Parivar has promoted the so- called Dharma Sansad and the task has been allocated to the VHP from the Parivar. The aim is to mobilize the godmen from varied traditions of Hindu community for the political project of Hindutva. The First Dharma Sansad was organized in Vigyan Bhavan on 7-8 April 1984 and presided by Shankaracharya Shantanand Maharaj and the keynote address was given by Chinmayanada Maharaj. 558 Dharmacharyas belonging to 76 Panths of Hindu community participated. Among their demands were to create indispensable place for Dharmic education within the present education and to establish Sanskrit language as the national language and developing it as a language for daily ordinary conversations. The next resolution is even more political and direct: "To foil by every means the conspiratorial attempts of by the adherents of alien faiths to reduce the Hindu population and by forcing the administration to have commitment to the Hindu interests." The last words are directly against the Indian Constitution wherein state is required to treat all its citizens equally irrespective of their religion and all persons enjoy freedom to practice, profess and propagate their religion. Among other political demands, the Sansad also demands that Ramjanmabhoomi, Kashi Vishwanth and Krishnanjanmasthan be returned to Hindus (in violation of the law that mandates that status-quo pertaining to religious institutions as it existed in 1947 be maintained).

In the 4th Dharma Sansad, 4,000 sants attended immediately after the demolition of Babri Masjid. This Dharma Sansad is rumoured to have proposed constitution of Hindu Rashtra — a totalitarian and

expansionist state. The Sansad demanded that Janmabhoomi be handed over to Shriram Janmabhoomi Nyas and Hindus were called upon to vote such a government that would do so (i.e. the BJP) and the Hindus were warned to beware of country-wide 'Muslim plans' of annihilation of Hindus against countrywide goondaism to protect honour of Hindu womenfolk. The Sansad is self congratulatory in its achievement of getting people of Hindutva ideology elected.

Mahant Aavidyanath Maharaj presided over the 10th Dharma Sansad held in February 2003 and keynote address was given by Ashok Singhal, President, VHP. Aavidyanath is also President of Shriram Janmabhoomi Mandir Andolan. 9,000 Sants from all over the country participated in the Sansad. The Sansad resolved to "re-establish" Hindu Rashtra. The position therefore is that India was always a Hindu Rashtra to be "re-established". The pre-independence Indian society was based on birth based hierarchies of privileges based on caste, gender and religion disadvantageous to the OBCs, dalits and women who were required to serve the minority of upper-caste landlords and elite. The 10th Sansad of godmen convened by the Sangh Parivar with active involvement of all front organisations, including the BJP is therefore directly in conflict with the Constitutional values of equality and inclusive citizenship. It also resolves to establish Akhand Bharat on the basis of Savarkarian formula of pitrubhu-punjabhu. Akhand Bharat is usually a call for forcible undoing of partition and annexing other sovereign nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan and certain territories of China. It further calls upon to ban

Madrasas, including Islamic institutions like Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband which it calls as breeding ground of terrorism! Needless to say that Dar-ul-Uloom produced many freedom fighters. Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, an organization formed of Ulemas of Deoband actively opposed Partition of the country and propagated composite nationalism. However, blinded by hate, they chose to ignore history. They demanded death penalty for Jihad — a highly contested term for sufis too undertook jihad to control their desires. For lack of space we are not going into all the resolutions passed by the Sansad, but they also in a very aggressive and offensive language asking training camps in Pakistan and Bangladesh be “smashed”, deportation of “3 crore “Bangladeshis infiltrators”, dismissal of West Bengal Government (without specifying any grounds for their dismissal) and demanding conversions to be made serious offence (all conversions, even those undertaken voluntarily without coercion, inducement or fraud)

The 1994 Dharma Sansad attended by 30,000 sadhus even demanded that the Government not sign Dunkel proposal on international trade!! That Sansad was attended by Murli Manohar Joshi who briefed them on Dunkel proposals. Sahib Singh Verma, then a minister in Delhi, rushed to attend the Sansad to seek their blessings for the anti-cow slaughter legislation of Delhi Government. The sadhus became so politically ambitious that RSS had to ask them to refrain from seeking tickets for the coming elections! BJP has always distributed tickets to sadhus and sought their help in electoral campaigns.

(Continued on Page 15)

Real Gujarat: an underreported story

Himanshu Thakkar

It seems large part of the mainstream national media have gone underground these days. If you view most English news channels and some Hindi ones or most English and Hindi newspapers, you will suddenly find a proliferation of reports favouring Narendra Modi and the BJP. The repeated highlighting of doctored pre-poll analysis without attempts to do an in-depth investigation into the credentials of the agencies doing such predictions is only one troublesome part. But even in reporting the news, there is a clearly discernible pro-BJP tendency and an attempt to blackout, under-report or misreport news about the BJP's rivals, particularly news about the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). This was most evident in reporting AAP's trip to Gujarat in the first week of March.

Any objective viewer will have no doubts that AAP's trip punctured the well-crafted balloon of Gujarat's development image. To many Gujaratis like me, this was not such big breaking news. The media, that is supposed to report realities in an objective manner, should have been happy reporting this significant development. Arvind Kejriwal's hour-long speech in Ahmedabad at a hugely attended meeting should have been reported extensively. Strangely, large parts of the mainstream media, both print and electronic, almost blacked this out.

This, no doubt, reflected poorly on the media that has been accepting

the claims of Modi and the BJP as gospel truth. An independent media should have exposed the reality of these claims on its own through trips like the one the AAP members made. The speech in Ahmedabad on 8 March was a good opportunity for the media to correct its own failure. Instead, by not reporting or under-reporting or misreporting, the media has further discredited itself.

This reminds me of an episode in Gujarat not long ago. “One morning some years ago, Gujarat's residents found a newspaper on their doorstep. They hadn't subscribed to it, and it carried a vaguely familiar masthead. It was called Gujarat Satya Samachar (literally meaning True News of Gujarat), to make it resemble the state's largest circulated newspaper, *Gujarat Samachar*. It was produced by Gujarat's information department (a portfolio held by Chief Minister Narendra Modi) and contained reports of the state government's achievements,” wrote Aakar Patel, former editor of *Divya Bhaskar* (the Gujarati edition from the Bhaskar group) in his column in *Mint* on 1 March.

The reason the state government resorted to bring out Gujarat Satya Samachar was “the belief that the local media was either suppressing stories about the government's successes or was critical of Modi to the point of antagonism.” The Gujarat Satya Samachar did not last more than a couple of issues since the Gujarati media quickly fell in line, the way the government wanted it

to. In fact, this episode should not give readers the misleading picture that the Gujarati media was depicting the realities of Gujarat's development before the government resorted to Gujarat Satya Samachar. Far from it.

While travelling through various parts of Gujarat, I have seen the frustration of the aam Gujarati about the way the state is ruled since the past decade and more. Repeatedly, during my numerous trips to the state, common people on the street have told me about corruption, the breakdown of regular basic facilities like schooling (everyone, it seems, has to go for tuition). "Then what are the schools for?" one frustrated auto-rickshaw driver told me. There are complaints about electricity and water and the pro-big industries bias of the state establishment. Intellectuals and independent observers have talked about the huge gap between the claims of the state government of Gujarat and the stark reality for long.

Ahmedabad is supposed to be shining with the development of the Sabaramati riverfront. But if you go a dozen kilometres upstream or downstream you realise that this is just for the benefit of the city's real estate developers. The state of the river elsewhere is as bad as the Yamuna in Delhi. Even the water you see flowing in the Sabarmati is through a fraud. This water is from the Narmada project. Not a drop from it was planned or allocated for Ahmedabad city or the Sabarmati river.

The project was proposed and justified for drought-prone areas of Kutch, Saurashtra and north Gujarat. They are not getting this water. Instead, the farmers of

Saurashtra are fighting FIRs and cases for using Narmada water! Farmers everywhere feel discriminated against when the state government favours big industries at their expense and without transparency or due justice or their participation. The tribal belt is not only neglected, it is facing the prospect of more and more displacement and deforestation in the name of dams, river-linking projects, industrial zones and corridors.

While travelling through tribal areas near the Sardar Sarovar dam, Savitaben Tadvī of Indravarna village told us about the repression they faced while peacefully opposing the Garudeshwar dam on the Narmada river, which has neither any valid approval nor any impact assessment or consent from the affected villages located upstream or downstream. Lakhan Musafir of Umarva village took us to the washed-out portion below the Sardar Sarovar dam, including the viewer's park, about which there is so little information in the public domain. Rohit Prajapati of the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti, showing the proposed site of the Statue of Unity, publicised as the world's highest statue, just downstream of the Sardar Sarovar dam, related how the foundation stone was laid on 31 October 2013 by arresting the tribals peacefully opposing the project that neither has any impact assessment, nor any of the statutorily required approvals. As Nandini Oza, after travelling for over 1,000 km in Gujarat recently said, "You can actually smell development at Vapi, Ankleshwar, Baroda and several other industrial areas!"

BJP's prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, who as chief minister, resorted to Gujarat Satya Samachar to show the slightly critical Gujarati media its place and succeeded in arm-twisting them, has been resorting to less satya (truth) in his electioneering. Just to illustrate, during his trip to the north-eastern states, he did not mention his support for either large hydro projects or interlinking of rivers, which are facing huge opposition in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and other states.

But during his speech the following week on 26 February in Madhya Pradesh, he talked about the northeast region being "heaven for hydro power generation." In that same state of Madhya Pradesh, his party's chief minister flashed full-page advertisements (at public expense) for three straight days about the Narmada Kshipra link as the harbinger of the ILR dream of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. In reality, it is just a pipeline water supply project with questionable viability and justifiability, without even impact assessment or participation of the people of the Narmada or Malwa region. There is already opposition to the project from farmers of the Narmada Valley.

The trouble is, a large part of mainstream media has blacked out all this critical news. This situation is no doubt very bad for Indian democracy. As a senior journalist from a financial paper told me, whenever there is an extraordinarily positive report about any company or political party, the first question that arises is: how much has the reporter been paid to write such a story! Media should be wary of such a perception.

Lessons from Geneva

V. Suryanarayan

Gross human violations that took place in Sri Lanka during the last stages of the Fourth Eelam War have come into sharp focus once again. The UN Human Rights Council, on March 27, after taking note of the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner, highlighted the “need for an international inquiry mechanism”. The resolution was supported by 23 members, 12 voted against and 12, including India, abstained.

It should be pointed out that when human rights violations figured in the UN soon after the Fourth Eelam War, India, along with Russia and China, opposed the move and bailed out the Sri Lankan government. What is more, India went ahead and got a resolution passed which congratulated the Lankan government for defeating one of the most ruthless terrorist organisations in the world. But as the Lankan government began to show its true colours, went back on assurances for credible internal investigation and implementation of devolution proposals, New Delhi had to revise its policy. There was also a domestic compulsion, namely the political parties in Tamil Nadu were insisting on punishing the guilty in Sri Lanka. Hence, in 2012 and 2013, India voted against Sri Lanka. In fact, behind the scenes, Indian diplomats were trying to get the resolution worded strongly. But the thrust of the resolution was to persuade Sri Lanka to have its own investigative mechanism and speed up the process of ethnic reconciliation.

The 2014 resolution represented a basic departure from the earlier ones. Mandate for international investigation means intrusion into the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. Amb. Dilip Sinha pointed out that by asking the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to “investigate, assess and monitor the human rights situation” the resolution ignored the progress Sri Lanka has made like the holding of the Northern Provincial Council election and the successful rehabilitation of the internally displaced people. The Indian delegate highlighted that the resolution was “inconsistent and impractical” because it asks both Colombo and the OHCHR to simultaneously conduct investigation. Amb. Sinha concluded that it had been India’s firm conviction that an “intrusive approach that undermines national sovereignty and integrity is counter-productive”.

The Indian abstention represents a definite victory for Indian bureaucracy. They are of the view that Indian voting in the 2012 and 2013 meetings was an aberration and it needs to be corrected. They feel that if New Delhi supports an intrusive approach, at a future date, it can also be used against India itself. New Delhi has many skeletons in the cupboard—human rights violations in Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Mizoram and encounter killings in the Naxalite-hit areas. It should also be pointed out that in 2012 and 2013 the Tamil Nadu factor was very decisive. But

the situation has changed today. The mandarins in South Block know that Indian abstention will be subjected to severe criticism in Tamil Nadu. After weighing the pros and cons the government agreed with the bureaucrats, because whatever may be the nature of voting the ruling Congress party will not be able to win a single seat in Tamil Nadu.

Colombo is determined to stonewall any effort to institute an international inquiry mechanism. Amb. Dayan Jayatilaka echoed the feelings of the majority Sinhalese when he wrote: “As Sri Lankans our rejection of an international inquiry must be unconditional. Such an inquiry is unfair, hypocritical and an affront to our self respect as a nation.” The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that got a resolution passed in the Northern Provincial Council for international investigation naturally welcomed the UN resolution.

From an Indian point of view it will be relevant to compare and contrast Mahinda Rajapaksa’s earlier views on UN humanitarian intervention and his present policy. The Sinhalese generally refer to the period, 1987-89, as Bishana Samaya, Days of Terror. The Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) had unleashed unprecedented violence following the conclusion of the India-Sri Lanka Accord and the induction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). The brutality of the JVP was more than matched by the savage reprisals of the Lankan armed forces. As Lionel Bopage,

former JVP leader, has written, "For every one person killed by the JVP, the security forces killed ten". Rajapaksa was a budding Sinhalese politician; he left the shores of Sri Lanka, camped in Geneva and demanded UN humanitarian intervention to save his people. Obviously, he would not like to be reminded of his earlier stance on UN humanitarian intervention.

While Rajapaksa's support base among the majority Sinhalese is intact, evident from recent win in the council elections in the Western and Southern Provinces, there are dark clouds hovering in the horizon. As the resolution in the UN aptly pointed out, "there are continuing reports of violation of human rights, including sexual and gender violence, enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture and violation of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, threats to judicial independence and rule of law as well as intimidation of and reprisals against human rights defenders, members of civil society, lawyers and journalists. There are also attacks against religious minority groups, Hindus, Moslems and against Christians".

A recent violent incident in Kilinochchi district in the Northern Province needs mention. The shooting was attributed to Gopi, a former Tiger guerrilla. A virtual man hunt followed. According to government spokesmen, it was an illustration of LTTE resurgence. The TNA maintained it was a government excuse to justify the continuing military presence in the Tamil areas. The TNA, under the leadership of Wigneswaran and Sampanthan, represents the saner elements in the Tamil society who are eager to find

a political solution within a united Sri Lanka. If the TNA gets weakened and marginalised in the hands of the government, it is likely to be replaced by more extremist forces. And there are fringe groups in the Tamil diaspora who would like to resurrect the Tigers and finance the armed struggle.

It is necessary to recall that Sri Lankan Tamils were reluctant

secessionists and the genesis and growth of Tamil militancy was a consequence of the many acts of discrimination perpetuated by Sinhalese-dominated governments. Sri Lanka's future hinges on whether Sinhalese leaders will draw the right lessons from history. Those who do not learn will be compelled to relive history.

—*The New Indian Express*

(Continued from Page 5)

resources for reducing mass poverty and unemployment — thus adversely affecting the process of economic development.

Now BJP's intention expressed in its manifesto to revise the 'No-First Use' of nuclear weapons will further add to tensions in international relations and would expose Indian people to uncertain dangerous situations, while cost of maintaining and manufacturing nuclear weapons would add to economic pauperization of the Indian masses. So far as political opportunism and corruption is concerned, other political parties also do not have a better record. But the manner in which RSS has come out openly in support of the BJP is a serious cause of concern - for RSS has a definite and proclaimed ideology which is not in tune with our constitutional principles of inclusiveness. The manner in which the BJP campaign is going on with huge amount of money and massive propaganda appear to be a calculated step to bring India under authoritarian rule to serve corporate interests. The rule of a communalist party like BJP can never benefit our country. Therefore in such a situation it has become necessary to prevent BJP-RSS combine from coming into

power in order to save democracy and Indian Constitution.

We therefore appeal to the voters to vote for such a candidate in their constituency who cherishes democratic and secular values and who is in a better position to ensure the defeat of BJP-RSS alliance.

—N. D. Pancholi,
General Secretary

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque
on

Mumbai Bank
in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists -II

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

The theory of Trusteeship is devised because non-violence is incompatible with a feudalistic and capitalistic society. Gandhiji admits that accumulation and preservation of wealth inevitably involve violence, and Trusteeship was conceived to avoid confiscation. But Gandhiji did not leave it as a pious wish. He gave a very stern warning through the *Harijan* of 25-5-1947:

If the present owning class did not of its own accord become trustees, force of circumstance would compel the reform, or the alternative would be utter destruction. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-cooperate with the evil of zamindari and capitalism it must die of inanition...

The argument that when one possesses more than what one strictly needs one deprives someone else of it, is today largely fallacious. True, we are still in a transitional stage in the developing countries where production lags behind. Even so, man holds the key to unlimited wealth. He has found the 'open sesame' to the treasure trove. Modern science and technology can easily wipe off poverty and want, and fill mankind with abundance. That this is not happening is due to other causes, not because it is physically impossible. The world has woken up to this realization. It is impossible to preach to such a world self-denial which would have to be on a colossal scale. For today we live in intimate

contact with another way of life which seems so overwhelmingly full of promise of what may be called the good things of life. As someone has said, such a life of self-denial could only be possible in a monastery.

Jayaprakash's Picture

Another point of difference that Gandhiji had with the socialists was the nature of the movement in the 'Indian States' which existed at the time. For, while the socialists were for full and integrated participation of the people of these states in the national freedom struggle, Gandhiji had certain strong reservations. In April 1940, Jayaprakash Narayan submitted a resolution to the Congress Working Committee on the Socialist Party's picture of an independent India, covering every important sector of the national life, which Gandhiji admitted he liked and reproduced in full in the *Harijan* under the caption: 'Jayaprakash's Picture', with his own comments. The socialist proposition on land and the cultivator was that the former should belong to the latter, and none should own more land than is necessary to support his family. On this Gandhiji wrote:

Shri Jayaprakash's propositions may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

He however declined to endorse the proposition on the Indian states. He seemed to accept the substance but not the procedure. He was optimistic that the princes would surrender their autocracy when the time came. He laid the ultimate responsibility for realization of this transformation on ourselves. In conclusion he said:

The princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are halfhearted. The way to freedom will never be through half-heartedness.

World War II was a crucial event in world politics, particularly to the colonial countries. In our domestic scene it marked serious shift in the Congress when it resolved to offer conditional cooperation in the war effort in spite of Gandhiji's opposition. One may say that this was perhaps the beginning of a long chain of changes in Congress-Gandhi relations. The old ties were really never re-forged. In fact they became looser.

Similarly a shift also came over the Socialist Party's postures vis-a-vis the Congress and this marked the beginning of a new relationship at least amongst the leaders who were shaping it. The socialists not only dissociated themselves from the Congress resolution on the War, but called upon it to start a nationwide fight against the British regime. The party decided to rally fully round the Congress to make it an effective

instrument for the final struggle. In fact the first anti-war resolution of the Congress at the Lucknow session had come originally from the socialists, which was reaffirmed subsequently at other Congress sessions. The Socialist Party now took its stand on the Ranigarh Congress resolution calling it an 'imperialist war' and saying that a national struggle was inevitable. The Party dissociated itself from other Left groups which kept attacking the Congress, particularly calling for a change in the leadership. On the contrary the socialists emphasized the need for unity and for strengthening the hands of the leaders, particularly Gandhi, arguing that raising the issue of socialism v. Gandhism was at the moment irrelevant. The original thesis that without a mass base and composition and programmatic transformations the Congress could become a proper vehicle of struggle was by implication played down. The socialists accepted the fact that no one but Gandhiji could lead a national struggle, and its content and technique could be determined by him alone; and they were pretty confident he would not compromise on the issue of war and national freedom. They were right.

Here the socialists stood with Gandhiji firmly even while the Congress wavered. In a matter of weeks with the failure of the Crips Mission, Gandhiji began to electrify the people with the 'Quit India' slogan, the Socialist Party's complete identification with this brought into sharp relief the new role of the Communist Party, now made

legal as a war-time ally by the British rulers, which had set itself to work against this national struggle.

Post-Quit India period

The period following the Quit India movement marked a new phase in Indian politics and Congress-Gandhi relations. The crack which had started during the War period became wider. The British proposals to India did not meet with

Gandhiji's approval. Later, on the partition question he took a strong stand. But the Congress chose to ignore his views.

Once more the Congress socialists and Gandhiji stood together. The socialists tried to prevail upon him to lead once more the struggle until India could be free on her own terms of integrity and self-respect. He was obviously in great mental agony. As he confessed, he saw nothing but darkness before him. One can imagine Gandhiji's distress when he saw this painful end to his life's work. This situation brought some of the important socialists and him together, as never before. There was growing a closer kinship between these few socialists and Gandhiji. They discussed the alternatives. There was really only one, a mass struggle, and the socialists were very confident that even if he could not carry the Congress, the people would certainly rally round Gandhiji. Gandhiji, however, decided otherwise. Why he did so is anybody's guess. What is more, he wanted the Congress to present a united front, so he prevailed upon the socialists not to oppose

the Congress resolution on the British proposals. So sensitive was the socialist leadership to Gandhiji's feelings and wishes that the socialist AICC-members could only abstain from voting. From then on a new era seemed to have begun in this

relationship, more in a personal way perhaps, but reflected nevertheless in other spheres too.

The post-Quit India period opened a new phase for the Socialist Party. While the new party thesis professed the party's adherence to the revolutionary path, it declared also its belief that where democracy and civil liberties operated, the transition to socialism must be peaceful and through democratic means which included civil resistance, satyagraha and strikes. This was a definite departure from the old pronouncedly Marxian socialism though the party reiterated that it was still based on Marxism, largely perhaps because the rank and file would not be able to conceive of socialism away from Marxism. The Indian socialists could not any more find their identity with the Western socialists in the democratic countries because of their failure to support the colonial struggle whole-heartedly, their attitude in some cases being pretty dubious. The communists had become wholly discredited after the record of the Indian communists during war. Socialist thought itself was in a ferment in the country and much rethinking had started in the Socialist Party though it was some time before concrete signs could become visible.

Gandhiji's martyrdom intensified the emotional ties. The compulsion became more and more pressing to take on and complete the good work he had left undone, the legacy we had inherited. The shake-up that resulted seemed to put things in their proper perspective. From then on the image of Gandhi was a portent to reckon with. There had been a large influx of new elements into the Socialist Party after the 1942 struggle. They had no political

background, particularly of the Congress and Gandhiji's leadership. They had been drawn by the freedom struggle which fired youthful imagination. While they showed fervour and enthusiasm, they had no political maturity or socialist discipline and they often struck impossible postures and made impractical demands which generally led to confusion in the party.

Gradually the leadership seemed to melt away. Two vigorous stalwarts, Yusuf Meherally and Acharya Narendra Deva passed away. Jayaprakash Narayan, who became finally convinced that the present rigid party governments could not solve India's problems, turned to the Gandhian path of Sarvodaya and Bhoodan with Bhave and others of Gandhiji's

close colleagues. Some quit politics and turned to what Gandhiji had termed constructive work. Some wrote on the new thinking in socialism and Gandhism. Dr Lohia has written voluminously on this, as on the incompleteness and fallacies of Marxism.

(to be Concluded)

(Continued from Page 9)

In the last Kumbh Mela held in Allahabad in 2013, the RSS and BJP leaders rushed to seek endorsement for Modi in the 2014 elections! The sadhus did the needful!

BJP has double standards. While it actively seeks blessing of the Hindu religious leaders for its political and electoral campaigns, they condemn other parties doing so, particularly from Muslim religious

leaders. They stigmatize it as anti-secular, minority appeasement and vote bank politics. That comes from the perspective of Hinduism is national religion whereas Islam and Christianity are foreign religions, a distinction that our Constitution does not make and no democratic nation should. Though we condemn Congress for visiting Imam Bukhari to seek Muslim votes, the justification provided by both — the

Imam and Sonia Gandhi were at least sought to be on Constitutional value of secularism — to prevent split in secular votes. That ground is spurious as why split only in Muslim votes should be termed as split in secular votes? However BJP is actively seeking patronage of sadhus to wreck the Constitutional principles and the make them take up various anti-Constitutional demands like Hindu Rashtra and Akhand Bharat.

Dangerous for Democracy

The political principles professed by Narendra Modi are based on communal hatred. Narendra Modi, who has suppressed somewhat liberal leaders within the BJP and the Sangh Pariwar, will never become prime minister of India. Shri Modi becoming the prime minister will be extremely dangerous for unity and democracy of the country.

Lok Bharati will undertake a campaign to create awareness amongst masses to vote for candidates belonging to secular parties and having clean image, in order to stop the communal forces. Lok Bharati opposes and will continue to oppose communal, corrupt and politics based on foreign funding.

Modi and Arvind Kejriwal are propagating presidential democracy and that will pose a major challenge before our parliamentary democratic system. Even with the party in power, Congress, a group is propagating presidential democracy and therefore it is essential for Congress to make its stand on the issue clear. It is, therefore, required to defeat those, who are propagating presidential democracy and thus want to bring in dictatorship, by crushing our existing system of parliamentary democracy.

—**Kapil Patil**
President, Lok Bharati

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

100

Price : Rupees Five

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 12

April 20, 2014

Jumble of Indian politics

Kuldip Nayar

Role of academics

K. S. Chalam

Be wary of tall claims ...

Rajni Bakshi

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists -III

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Kranta Darsi Lohia

C. Upendranadh

Education for Swaraj

Manorama Savur

(1927-2014)

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Landmark judgement

S. Viswam

The Supreme Court pronouncement classifying transgenders as the "third gender" was long overdue. Its arrival marks an important milestone in free India's attempt to ensure equality for all its citizens in all spheres of social, economic, political and cultural activity. The judgement will be widely welcomed by human rights activists the world over as evidence of India's commitment to the introduction of progressive laws, rules and regulations in furtherance of its liberal and forward-looking constitution.

The transgenders of India have been victims of social discrimination and the community known by the generic term "hijras" endured social stigma for generations in a society which remained immune to their being treated as national outcasts. Thanks to their un-determined sexual status, they had to endure a variety of indignities. They were hitherto neither socially acceptable as legitimate members of the Indian society nor were their rights, privileges and entitlements legally defined. The judgement now legally accords them legal status as the third sex apart from the two recognized sexes of males and females.

The Apex Court was disposing of a public interest litigation filed by the National Legal Services Authority pointing out that a large section of the population was deprived of the fundamental rights that were available to males and females whose legal and social status was well defined. Apart from the disability which a cruel nature imposes on the transgenders, the isolation and alienation by the society imposes an emotional and psychological hardship on them. The acceptance by the society, which will hopefully follow the implementation of the court verdict, will offer the community some solace. However, this process may be time-consuming since ingrained prejudices take a long time to get rid of.

The significance and importance of the latest verdict becomes clear when the crucial issue facing the transgenders is posed in proper perspective. The rights of transgenders to the same set of privileges and rights enjoyed by other members of the society will be available to them from now onwards. The verdict will enable the society to assimilate into its fold members of the third sex who are now outcasts for all practical purposes and they have

to live on the tender mercies of the society. Lakshmi Narayan Tripathi, a well-known face of the transgender community, is quoted in the media as stating: " Why can a transgender not become a political leader, doctor, police officer or even a safai karmachari? Why does he/she have to beg on the streets and face discrimination? " Why, indeed?

The court's observations are noteworthy. The verdict says that it is society's moral failure in its unwillingness to contain or embrace different gender identities. The court's directions on the enforcement of its verdict are to be welcomed since the problem of rehabilitating the transgenders is complicated and calls for a sympathetic and enlightened approach. The court's decision to recognize the transgenders as socially and economically backward sections paves the way for the community to secure economic and society security. They can compete with the two sexes to obtain jobs in accordance with their capabilities and talents. It is the government's responsibility now to open the doors of opportunity to the community by first offering them the means of education, and a job at professional training for various types of employment. Once the social stigma fades, the transgenders will be as good (or bad) as the other two sexes in contributing to the economy instead of living on it as they do now. On its par, the society has to exert itself to bring pressure on the government to de-criminalise homosexuality and do away with section 377 of the IPC. This is a step also long overdue in order to ensure freedom of choice to all males and females (and now transgenders) to determine their own sexual

(Continued on Page 10)

Between the lines

Jumble of Indian politics

Kuldip Nayar

India is halfway through the Lok Sabha election process. Two factors have come to the fore so far: caste and money. I am dismayed about the caste. I had imagined that in some 67 years since independence, the nation would have matured enough not to be swayed by baser instincts. Lately, religion has been inducted by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).

The appeal in the name of religion in the nineteenfifties was understandable because the country had been partitioned on the basis of religion in August 1947. The world's biggest holocaust took place, followed by the exodus of 3.5 crore of people. The exchange of population was fairly rejected by both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, the arbiters of the country's future.

First, Mahatma Gandhi and then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru saw to it that religion was not mixed with politics. This worked for a few years. In the nineteensixties the defeat at the hands of the Chinese was the topic of elections. Nehru's negligence not to prepare the country's defence had engaged the voters' attention.

The seventies saw the domination of autocrat Indira Gandhi who also suspended the Constitution and detained one lakh people without trial. Her Congress party was wiped out in the northern India. Her return in 1980 was due to the squabbles in successor Janata Party. It was not her triumph but the rejection of the Janata. Thus far the caste had played a minor role. Some who

highlighted it were generally defeated.

Money, of course, has counted from day one. The Election Commission fixed the limit for a candidate's expenditure at Rs. 40 lakh in 1951 when the first general election was held. Now it has been raised to Rs. 70 lakh. Still this is far less than what a candidate splurges—an average of Rs 3 crore is spent by a Lok Sabha candidate. Many spend at least triple the amount.

Despite the rules the Election Commission has laid down, no candidate has ever been disqualified on the ground of excessive spending. The catch is that political parties are not governed by any law or rule that forces them not to spend more than the ceiling prescribed. In fact, the parties' dishonesty is the real problem. The political parties are under no obligation to have any upper limit on their expenditure. They have unanimously rejected the application of Right to Information (RTI) to their internal working.

If expenses during elections are to be curbed some accountability is necessary. An accountability commission can be appointed since the Election Commission has been too soft to take action. Since MPs are the ones to pass legislation on this, they would never adopt a bill which will curb them. Both the Congress and the BJP spend lavishly. The BJP tops the list because the corporate sector is fully behind the party, believing that Narendra Modi will be the next Prime Minister and

would leave the field open to them.

Religion has, no doubt, taken a back seat. Modi's most virulent speeches skirt around Hindutva but do not mention it specifically because secularism has a general appeal. The fact is that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is openly participating in canvassing although it claims to be a cultural organization. RSS chief Mohan Bahgwat sat in election committees selecting the BJP candidates. This is ominous for the future.

My fear is that the religion will be increasingly mentioned with politics. True, no party is running down secularism, not even the BJP. The party's manifesto does not use secularism even once. Yet the BJP talks about the freedom struggle and does not write off the sacrifices of leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. But the cat is out of the bag when it does not mention Nehru, the torch-bearer of independence struggle. What is disconcerting in the manifesto is that India will admit the persecuted Hindus from every clime and country. This is in line with the policy of Israel which says that it is a homeland of every Jew, who can walk in whenever he or she feels doing so.

Against this stance of the BJP, it is not surprising to find the party supporting to Modi's Man Friday, Amit Shah, who said in UP to take "revenge" in the Lok Sabha elections. He did not mention the word, Muslim, but everyone could infer what he meant was that they should be punished at the polls.

The Samajwadi Party's Azam Khan, trying to be Muslims' Modi, has had no shame in his attempt to communalize the armed forces. He has neither withdrawn his words nor is he apologizing. His remark that only Indian Muslim soldiers captured

the Kargil heights, not the Hindus, indicates his polluted thinking. He even does not know that it is the regiments which fight and they have soldiers of all communities. A regiment wins or loses, not soldiers of a particular community.

Such persons, including Amit Shah, should have been disqualified from contesting the elections. Yet the Election Commission has preferred to impose a ban on them from making speeches in UP, the state to which the two belong. The punishment should have been more severe.

The caste factor which has affected the electorate, in fact, is the sub-caste. Dalits have many castes and the creamy layer dictates the government. The upper castes have Marathas, Rajputs, Jats and so on. Today, the baradari (community) members of the same caste are negating the fair election in a democratic society. How effectively

we fight against the sub-caste menace will indicate whether we are really a democratic and pluralistic society. The manner in which the political parties compromise and conquer such malpractices will prove if democracy is really ingrained in us.

The current Lok Sabha election gives little hope because the candidates are stopping at nothing to increase votes. The use of money, however difficult, can be tracked. Even religious appeals can be curbed. But the caste cannot be. I do not know how long it would take us to raise above all these considerations. Until we do so, we should remain democratic on paper, not in the way the Western democracies are. And what do we do about personal attacks and abuses which leaders of political parties are exchanging? This is another story to tell.

April 16th, 2014

Shri V. S. Sampath
Chief Election Commissioner
Election Commission of India, New Delhi

Dear Shri Sampath,

We wish to draw your attention to the report that agreement has been arrived at between the governments of India and France on the cost of power to be supplied by the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP).

It is now reliably learnt that the AREVA-NPCIL memorandum of understanding papers have been sent to the PMO's office for approval. We submit that the signing of any agreement between the governments in respect of the cost of power from the JNPP is a matter with major financial implications and repercussions which will impose a binding commitment on the nation to expenditure running into lakhs of crores of rupees.

It is therefore necessary that the Government of India be directed not to enter into any such agreement without the prior clearance/approval of the Election Commission, till the new Government is formed.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we request you to issue such direction immediately.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Vivek Monteiro, Adwait Pednekar, Prakash Reddy, Arun Velaskar, Madhu Mohite
for Konkan Bachao Samiti - Mumbai

Role of academics in paradigm shift

K. S. Chalam

The concept of 'paradigm' and the related term 'paradigm shift' were made popular by T. S. Kuhn in his 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' in the year 1962. The term entered the mainstream discourse through cultural studies and is being used widely by several writers. The paradigm shift in the methodology of scientific studies itself was made possible by this extraordinary book that saved scientific enquiry from abrupt collapse in the 1960s. Social sciences like economics and other related academic disciplines have seen tremendous growth and reach of diverse groups in different parts of the World as it was translated into several languages. Academics have popularised the concepts, though scholars do also talk about the need for anarchy in scientific enquiry?

There is a subtle dispute between the policy makers and academics, the former claim capability to understand and manipulate anything that comes under their jurisdiction either by law or by coercion. The latter assert that it is through their research and toil that innovations are made and therefore, they are legitimate owners of the knowledge. The policy makers, mostly the bureaucrats intelligently argue that unless the innovations are put to use through their authority, they fail to get recognition. It is very difficult to resolve this problem for both the functionaries have their own entitlements. But the fact remains that the policy makers, everyone knows, get their authority through the Constitution of the country that they quite often ignore. Therefore, they

cease to get recognition once they superannuate. But, academics, if they are active or not, continue to command respect as long as their ideas or innovations are socially relevant. However, it is a moot question to assert whether academics have any role to play in the policy making. The ubiquitous presence of the bureaucrat as a permanent functionary of government makes him/her a predominant player in devising policies in consonance with the party in power. But the policy shift is a prerogative of the political class in power while the executive tinkers with small changes.

The presence of independent institutes supported by NGOs and funding organisations to conduct studies on the given agenda of issues is an unusual phenomenon in socio-economic-political discourse in recent years. Some of the honest and committed NGOs in different parts of the world under the upsurge of LPG and through the process of Social Forum have brought out some distinctive issues for public debate. Very few of them have been considered serious in academic writing and are being used as research material and cited in references of young scholars. Except in the form of perfunctory mention, these writings are not given credibility if they are critical about the international organisations like the World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc. by the academics who subscribe to their agenda. There are scholars who work in the autonomous institutes and universities under the pure academic form of neutrality. But, they

do not get any attention or recognition; it is alleged, with Nobel Prizes if they fail to subscribe to market efficacy. This is not only true in the case of economics and related disciplines that qualify for the prize, but appears to be so even for the scientific research out put that would have limited market stance. But that does not mean the efforts of scientists and academics would be of no consequence for the humanity. They persist as part of collective contributions of scientific community accumulating value over a period of time sufficient to bring in significant change and finally shift the contemporary paradigm. This is true not only for pure scientific innovations but also social science theories and principles chronicled in academic writings.

The common man recognises only the explicit socio-economic trends that are of immediate relevance and passes others as matters of routine. However, the transition of each discipline from one stage to the other is recorded in the history of the subject and the academics have a responsibility to look into their course of journey before arriving at judgement on their obsolescence. This is perhaps missing in some of the social sciences discourse in recent years under the hegemony of bigoted schools of thought. In fact, they have declared social sciences as redundant as they do not comprehend or are unwilling to accept the fact that as long as human society persists, social sciences or human sciences endure. But the present market paradigm is so strong and wicked that the genuine studies

that incorporate the aspirations of the majority of humanity would be subjected to disruption and disrepute. Nevertheless, the history of modern discourse is only a few hundred years and it would overcome the temporary miscarriage and ultimately triumph.

The above overview of the process of paradigm shift is universal. There could be country specific frameworks. In this context, we might reflect on the recent debates conducted by known scholars on the development models in India. The PR establishments of some political parties have been popularising particular brands like that of a soap or toothpaste product, few months before the current election season. We should appreciate the professional role of PR firms that are interested in income and not in your ideology. They do their job for consideration. The problem is only with academics that claim scholarship but join the group that works for remuneration. Academics are free individuals or experts that do not bother about the consequences and only talk about the truth that they discovered. If this simple criterion is applied to some of our academics who publish and discourse on development model with blatant lies and statistics (that is termed lies, damn lies and statistics), how do we account for that?

It is noticed in the media as part of general reportage that a particular state is advanced due to its innovative model and the leader should be emulated. This is fine. We can understand the journo who wants to be rich overnight through paid news. There are cases where the media companies have become superrich with the so-called unethical practices. Perhaps, this is the only institution in

a democratic system that is not amenable to any accountability but demands the same from every other party? But how can we reason out academics doing it?

The data supported by experiences narrated and posted by scholars clearly show that Bihar, Tamilnadu, Odisha have performed better than most of the states during a period of one decade. But, academics particularly those who are branded as development economists and

aspiring to collect a Nobel, doing this devious exercise with manipulated and premeditated effort do not augur well for the profession. Academics irrespective of the ideological persuasions should condemn such unprofessional style that is disastrous for the credibility of scholars. They are unashamed of their findings and studies and boast of bringing a paradigm shift. Is it possible to bring a theoretical shift with political manoeuvring?

Education for Swaraj

Education has become a big business for domestic and foreign corporates. They have promoted, launched or sponsored entities, societies and trusts with a view to usurp the whole spectrum of the educational sector. A good few of them have made foray into this field. Others are also in the process of making inroads.

In the present era of corporate-led globalisation, education has been included in the 'Services' sector under the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in services) of the WTO (World Trade Organisation). This has prompted the governments to withdraw their engagement from the sector of education that has the potential by means of which the people can perceive, interpret, analyse and ultimately transform the existing social order. The space thus vacated by governments is being handed over to corporats. They are now set to reign over the field of education. The corporatisation of education would invariably accelerate the momentum of commercialisation, marketisation and commodification of education. Education would thus become a

tradeable commodity or service. It would no longer remain a weapon of social change, nation-building or consciousness-raising. It would rather be a tool in the hands of corporate-led colonialism for creating mentally enslaved minds.

Leading social activist, anti-corporate agitationist and world-renowned fundamental mathematician Prof. Banwari Lal Sharma was of the firm opinion that without decolonising the human mind, Swaraj would never be realised. With this specific aim, he founded the Swaraj Vidyapeeth, an educational endeavour in the 'people' sector, i.e., free from corporate ambit and government control.

Present education is designed so as to produce human resources for the corporate behemoths. Paulo Freire has aptly commented, "The educated man is the adapted man, because he is more 'fit' for the world." Education has nothing to do with salvation, liberation, enlightenment, originality or creativity. It does not develop the ability to critically and creatively challenge the reality. It rather moulds

(Continued on Page 12)

Manorama Savur (1927-2014)

Dr. Manorama Savur was an exemplary teacher who mentored hundreds of students who opted for Master's and doctoral programmes for Sociology from Mumbai University. She taught for three decades in the sociology department and was influenced by Prof. A. R. Desai, a stalwart committed to Marxism. She had courage of conviction and freely and fearlessly expressed her views. In 1975 when the Emergency Rule was imposed, she vehemently and openly opposed it. She always had gracious smile that added charm to her beautiful persona. She was very helpful to her students and all those who came in contact with her.

1977 when University of Mumbai was throbbing with ideological debates, her room was an adda. She had an open door policy and students, scholars and academicians of different ideological moorings could have access to her. During 1980s, she introduced a paper on 'Sociology of Women' in Mumbai University.

Dr. Savur was not an ivory tower academician; she was down to earth and responded to unfolding socio-political reality with utmost zeal. She loved plants and when new campus of Mumbai University was established in Santacruz (E) in 1974, she took active part in planting saplings which have grown into giant trees over 40 years. Till her last days she fought to protect the trees. She was also an animal lover and till she retired, she always brought two chapatis for a dog in the university campus.

Prof. Manorama Savur's areas of specialisation were environmental sociology, sociology of health and rural sociology. She retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai in 1987. After her retirement, she became a volunteer of Women's Centre that provides institutional support to women survivors of violence. Her presence had a humanising impact among fire-brand feminists. Even in her late sixties she would go to Women's Centre from her home by bus.

Dr. Savur's research work was always on socially relevant issues. She edited archival material on trade union movement in India. Through her research she also exposed built-in weaknesses of the Employees State

Insurance Scheme in India, and compared its operation with that of similar schemes abroad.

Prof. Manorama Savur never shied of arduous field work. Her painstaking effort for over one decade resulted in two extremely valuable volumes published in 2003 on the political economy of bamboo. This book "And the Bamboo Flowers in the Indian Forests: What did the Pulp and the Paper Industry Do? Vol. I & II, Manohar Publications, Delhi" was the outcome of a multi-sourced (archival, library and field based research) and interdisciplinary work to highlight the environmental and socio-economic implications on the forest dwellers and workers as a result of the paper and synthetic fibre industry and the policy concerning bamboo farming, from the colonial times to the present. She supported environmentally regenerative bamboo-use practices and was for a rational and scientific approach towards felling of bamboo. She opposed arbitrary and intensive use of bamboo by commercial vested interests that destroy forest lives and damage forest dwellers livelihoods. She declared, "To clearfell the bamboo forests in the Northeast would be an ecological disaster. Bamboo does have many uses for the local people - but let us not forget it is also the green gold of the forests."

Prof. Manorama Savur and Prof. Indra Munshi co-edited "Contradictions in Indian Society: Essays in Honour of Professor A.R. Desai" that was published by Rawat Publications.

For last two decades, she managed to be active despite cancer and deteriorating health. She never discussed her pain but gave helpful advice to cope up with cancer to many cancer victims. She passed away on the same day as her ideologue Karl Marx i.e. 14th March, 2014. During her last days, she was helped by many friends in the Indian Army and she had rented a flat in Athashree, a society for senior citizens founded by Armymen in Pune. As per her last wish, her body was donated to Army Medical Hospital. This act of hers inspired all those who had gathered to pay their last respect to her after her death to take a pledge to donate their bodies.

-Vibhuti Patel

***Manifesto of Aam Aadmi Party,
Parliamentary Elections 2014***

"Aap Ki Mumbai"

The following objectives, legislative and practical measures, and activities shall be part of the AAP Mumbai program at the national, state and city level aimed to establish equitable and stable governance for the growth and conservation of national and regional assets, that would allow for the full realization of the potential of each Mumbaikar:

Institutions for Citizen Empowerment and Security

- **End Corruption:** Enact and implement Jan Lokpal Bill and related strict measures
- **Realize Swaraj:** Enact and implement the Nagar Raj Bill for decentralization to strengthen Panchayati Raj
- **Strengthen Secularism and Communal Harmony:** Develop social policies which enable stronger engagement between all communities in schools, housing and recreational spaces. Zero tolerance for violence directed at any community or social group
- **Enhance Justice:** Establish and improve policies aimed to reduce gender and caste based inequality; empower minorities; adivasis; people with disabilities; nomadic communities; indigenous urban peoples and other disadvantaged groups. Propose and press for the establishment of a bench of the Supreme Court in Mumbai.
- **Women's Safety:** Sensitize police and citizenry to issues pertaining to women and girls, most importantly in violence directed against them. Introduction of more women

officers at all levels in the police force. Collaboration of citizens to form Neighborhood Watch groups to facilitate effective policing. Revamp and improve street lighting. Introduce greater safety measures in public transport. Important in the longer run to educate through schools and the media on the centrality of women in our country's life and progress. Zero tolerance for violence of any kind against women.

- **Human Rights :** Promote equality of all persons irrespective of caste, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Oppose criminalization of homosexual acts under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, and reaffirm that the state should not infringe on the sexual rights of consenting adults. Work towards ensuring rights of all citizens guaranteed under the Constitution of India and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Social Economy for Citizens

- **Secure Livelihoods:** Relevant capacity building (through skill, guilds, etc) of workforce to participate in advanced manufacturing and service sectors. Provide optimum security to existing contract labour. Vocational training and microfinance programs for low income women. Press for implementation in the public and private domain facilities for the disabled to allow their full participation in the civic and work life of the city. Establish

conditions for growth to attract production of high end products and services, including policies to transform Mumbai into an International Financial Center.

- **Harness Youth:** Improve accessibility to and quality in higher education in a wide range of vocations. Provide targeted and affordable financing options for education and entrepreneurship. Mobilize partnerships between industry and education entities to facilitate incubation and internships. Develop and implement a policy to establish a Centre for Excellence in Sports. Ensure youth participation in self-governance such as social audits, participation in school managing committees, etc. as part of a city wide Youth Leadership Program.
- **Support on an urgent basis provision of public housing:** Building rehabilitation should only be carried out by the government, which has adequate resources for such work. This should be treated as an infrastructure project, in keeping with good international practice for social housing across the world. Land should not be parceled to private builders but leased to the community. This should allow for a livable habitat of mixed use with adequate open spaces for recreation and amenities like shops, schools, health, gymnasium, knowledge and social centers. Mini enterprise enclaves which provide locally relevant products should be an integral part of the community - thus also creating livelihood.

Development of urban spaces for houses and other uses should ensure preservation of heritage and land rights of indigenous peoples such as East Indians, Kolis and others. Active measures are necessary to prevent ghettoization.

- **Health for All:** Universal and comprehensive health services based on prevention and options for authentic local traditions. Prioritize rapid response and access to emergency care in under-serviced neighborhoods. Ensure access to life-saving drugs and treatments. Modernize public health institutions, infrastructure, and services. Disaster response capabilities to natural calamities (heavy rains and storms) and security related incidents should be reviewed on a regular basis. Institute a mechanism of social audit.
- **Education for All:** Right to a Quality Education for all from preschool till age 14. Curriculum should have a strong academic and vocational foundation which enables critical thinking and responsive to the needs of the local community. Human Rights learning should be an integral part of the school curriculum. It should be locally relevant and ensure standard learning outcomes. Empowered school managing committees to assist and oversee schools functioning. Upgrade teaching pedagogy via cutting edge teacher training programs.
- **Refocus Science and Technology:** Promote a scientific and innovative temperament at all learning levels. Review and rejuvenate national research establishments; incentives in the private sector for an active research and development program.

- **Environmental Restoration:** Recognize, respect and restore ecosystems (rivers, water-fronts, wetlands, mangroves, flora/fauna, salt pans..etc). Ensure planned integration of new ecosystems in all future development. Reclaim and rework Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) policy to create win-win solutions for development and the environment keeping intact vital ecological infrastructure which is the common heritage of all Aam Aadmi. Protect the livelihood of fisher folk. Ensure high levels of sanitation by provide public toilets through use of sustainable technologies for waste management.

Business for Citizens

- **Introduce E-Governance:** Targeted use of technology to eliminate corruption, improve efficiency and reduce waste. Provide e-connectivity at all post offices for delivery of e-government services.
- **Eliminate License Raj:** Government has no business to be in business. Simplify laws, improve enforcement, establish transparency, ensure high standards of accountability to encourage a competitive and supportive environment for entrepreneurs and business.
- **Combat rising prices:** Ending corruption and getting rid of red tape are critical steps in addition to other policies to reduce costs of inputs and conducting business.

Urban- Rural Transformation for Citizens

- **Plan Development of Sustainable Urban Spaces and Infrastructure:** Focus on policies that help create and

enhance urban living spaces at nodal locations across the state, thereby improving sustainability of all urban localities. Roads need to be qualitatively improved on an immediate basis, expanded pedestrian zones, adequate multi-level parking (preferably underground). Regular audit by empowered mohalla sabhas established to ensure implementation of public works/programs. Such sabhas shall be drawn from neighborhoods with senior experts in different fields serving as mentors.

- **Upgrade and Modernize Transportation:** Enhance mass transport capacities through schemes such as elevated rail corridors, double decker bogies, etc. Create a unified public transport authority for Mumbai. Introduce clean air technologies such as electric powered auto rickshaws and others to abate pollution; Use technology to enforce traffic laws.
- **Regenerate Rural Economy and Improve Farmers' Livelihood:** Incentivise sustainable agriculture through soil restoration; organic farming; establishment of seed banks; preservation of local knowledge, access to credit and eliminating middlemen. Rural and urban development policies are connected and should not be framed in mutually exclusive terms.
- **Decentralized and Equitable Land Acquisition Policy:** Strong support of local democratic participation in decisions affecting use of land and human ecology.
- **Accountable and Transparent Allocation of National Resources:** Rational

(Continued on Page 10)

Be wary of tall claims ...

Rajni Bakshi

In the final lap, the Lok Sabha election campaign many contenders and political commentators are claiming that voters have to choose between growth and secularism.

This is a false claim. Why then, does the idea of a stark 'choice' between economic growth or secularism appear to be so compelling to a wide range of people?

Firstly, the idea of growth and its mechanics are not closely examined.

Secondly, it is assumed that a more decisive and forceful prime minister will work an economic miracle.

Thirdly, therefore it is worthwhile to compromise on secularism which many view as being a sham in any case.

To further complicate the matter, growth is seen as something tangible while secularism is treated as a fussy idea, or worse a political ploy, cynically deployed by both the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress.

How then might voters resolve their polling day dilemma?

First and foremost, it is vital to be clear that growth versus secularism is a decoy. What is actually at stake is the core principle of a truly democratic polity - namely, the primacy of foundational principles and values over the mechanics of how goods, services and livelihoods are generated.

This is why Mahatma Gandhi repeatedly emphasised that true Swaraj depends on each person, and society as a whole, honouring 'Dharma'. By using the term

Dharma, Gandhi was not referring to a particular religion or sect but to the philosophical and moral markers which show us the path of righteousness -- the basis of a society worth living in.

If that sounds too lofty we can just focus on the key markers of right action as enshrined in the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India. Article 15(1) makes it incumbent on the State to be religion neutral. This article prohibits the State from discriminating against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

Even more importantly, section two of the same Article implies that citizens cannot deny each other access to public spaces on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth.

In its most elementary form, this is what secularism means.

This text book truth needs to be highlighted because over the past three decades secularism has come to be seen as a political ploy. Political parties of various hues have, from time to time, failed to be 'dharmanirpeksha' or religion neutral.

At the level of everyday life citizens have in many cases rejected and violated the value of creative co-existence of different faiths or 'Sarva Dharma Sambhav'.

These inadequacies or failures do not undermine the soundness of the principle and the need to keep striving for a secular polity.

It is being suggested that India is now in such dire straits that as an

emergency measure economic imperatives must be given priority over foundational principles of society.

This argument is profoundly flawed.

Since the late 1980s it has been widely acknowledged that Gross National Product growth by itself is not a valid measure of a nation's material or social well being. Even the promise of 'inclusive growth' can be a chimera since higher incomes do not necessarily lead to higher quality of life in terms of improved housing, education, health care and leisure time.

Even as a means to an end growth is important only if it is defined and measured in terms which include not just monetised goods and services but also sustainability of both nature's eco-systems and the social fabric.

The worthwhile goal is economic democracy, not growth per se. At the very least, economic democracy is about fair and open access to social facilities and productive resources. But above all, it is about the promise of dignity for all -- the promise enshrined in Article 15.

An economy can grow exponentially with vast concentrations of power which may increase jobs but actually dis-empower the overwhelming majority because a handful of people call the shots in both the economic and political sphere.

There are complicated structural flaws that are preventing Indian society and economy from the goal of 'Sarvodaya', well-being for all. Let us be wary of tall claims that a

decisive leader can provide a quick fix.

Like much of life, elections don't offer easy or ideal choices. Voters in many constituencies may find that there is no candidate on their ballot paper whom they can fully trust. But

here is a litmus test for choosing between competing imperfection.

Reject any candidate or party that gives primacy to expediency over foundational principles - such as asking you to put growth above secularism.

Instead, let us go to the polling stations with the conviction that we can only build a sustained prosperity on the sound principle of equal respect for all and dignity for all regardless of caste, religion, language or regional affinity.

(Continued from Page 8)

development of natural resources for growth and infrastructure respectful of local land use and human ecology. Prioritization of research, development and commercialization of renewable energy technologies geared to reduce energy dependence

Implementation for Citizens

- **Political Will:** The best of plans remain unimplemented. Policies and measures noted have been placed before the public after due consideration - the realization of which will not be for want of effort. Elected representatives of AAP will consult with their constituents on the implementation of commitments and provide an annual status update. They will seek public and party support as and when needed to overcome constraints and bottlenecks. They will collaborate transparently with representatives across the political spectrum to

attain the aims of the AAP Platform.

- **Administration:** Citizen engagement is essential to achieve civic goals. AAP parliamentarians will work with local sabhas to identify issues of concern. Persons - retired and active - from all walks of life will be consulted for their expertise to work with and mentor local officials and sabhas. AAP will cooperate with municipal and state

administrations to ensure full and qualitative development of Mumbai. At the national level they will place the priorities of Mumbaikars squarely before the Lok Sabha; and seek proportionate resources to enable the achievement of stated goals. They will ensure to bring best practices from urban spaces across India and the world to move Mumbai into the 21st century.

The growth of the black economy has led to a rapid increase in corruption all around. The top three per cent of the income ladder benefit from this since the underground economy is concentrated in their hands. This worsens the disparity beyond what the official data reveals, leads to price rise, waste of resources and loss of production due to inefficiency....The black economy also leads to expensive and poor quality services. Take the case of water supply in Delhi. The tanker mafia has corrupted the bureaucracy, the police and the politicians (the Triad). Often, the politician and the businessman are the same person. The Triad makes money at the expense of the citizens. They disrupt the water supply and allow wastage to take place. The loss of DJB and the citizens becomes the profit of the water mafia. Thus, checking the black economy will immediately increase water supply, lower the cost of water to the citizens and increase the profits of DJB. The same is the case with electricity or speculation in vegetable prices (traders prefer that vegetables rot so that the prices shoot up).... In other words, checking the growing black economy and corruption is a positive sum game for every citizen except the corrupt. This is what the AAP's agenda is. The black economy is now over 50 per cent of GDP and if brought into the white economy or checked, it would lead to a rise in the tax-GDP ratio by about 20 per cent. This would be adequate to finance the proposed subsidies nationally, lead to lowering of prices for all, result in higher profits for the honest due to increased production in the economy because of the efficiency gains and increased demand. As income generation becomes buoyant, most subsidies can be eliminated.

-Arun Kumar in The Hindu

(Continued from Page 2)

orientations. The supreme court had no doubt upheld the penal provision but it had also suggested that it was up to the government (and by implication the society at large) to abolish the provision and allow freedom of choice to individuals to have their own specific wish in the matter. The incoming government at the Centre needs to pay attention to this issue and undertake the legal steps necessary.

Gandhiji and Indian Socialists -III

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

On re-examination several of Gandhiji's assertions and beliefs seemed to reveal themselves in a different light, freed from political trappings.

Let us begin with his emphasis on simplicity and not affluence. Self-denial and detachment as the key to happiness is an old Indian precept. Today we see something strange yet not so strange, While the development of science and technology has brought untold wealth, it has not brought happiness, Hippyism being one of the symptoms of a mankind troubled by a new hunger which wealth cannot satisfy. Here we see a queer spectacle of young people turning away from the affluence which is theirs. Obviously what we should aim at is not a higher standard of living but a normal one, to meet necessities and wipe out the penury that degrades and the slavery that demoralizes. Perhaps a mean has to be found. As

Dr Lohia put it so concisely and effectively: 'The good and the beautiful must find a meeting place other than the one fashioned by Buddha.' He illustrated it by reproducing a young American student's picturesque phrasing: 'Once we have the materialist bull by the horns, how do we ever let him go - how to live relaxed if one had to keep the wheel turning faster and faster?' Truly did Gandhiji say: 'A man who has no money wants to become a millionaire, a millionaire wants to become a billionaire and so it goes on. ...

The Western man of affluence

seems no longer at peace with himself, he is like an exile from home. 'The long pilgrimage of socialism must end this as also the socialist's self-alienation. It asks of us men of today a new direction,' so said Dr. Lohia addressing the socialists. Perhaps Gandhiji could have helped us to do it had the socialists established earlier the rapport which came on the eve of his death, or had he lived to 125 years as he once wished to.

Gandhiji's concepts of Trusteeship and change of heart are inextricably linked together. In fact his entire philosophy is based on the belief in the essential goodness of man. Where one failed to bring about a change of heart he did not take it as refuting his faith but rather as something wanting in oneself. It would need much more use of this technique and under diverse conditions and with different sets of people to evolve any firm precepts. Nevertheless there is our own

experience when millions of people did undergo a remarkable transformation, showing courage, discipline and generosity, instead of the age-old fear, lethargy and pettiness, that seemed so ingrained in us for centuries. According to one of

the older socialism what does stand out in all this is Gandhiji's assumption that man can be good even though he is almost certain to be bad in certain situations. Against the success of the Indian experiment, there is the failure of the Negro

struggle against colour-bar. But such telling experiments are few and far between. Perhaps if the physical area of operation could be widened by larger numbers of adherents to this faith it could get a better trial. In any event while avoiding getting enmeshed in sentimental social illusions, one need not view sections of humanity as black and white, good and bad. It is the kind of thinking which must ultimately decide that kingship is bad therefore the king's head should be chopped off or that as the proletariat is down-trodden and exploited, it must be right and should be indulged. What Gandhiji wanted done in the end was break the concentration of power by entrusting it to society as a whole. What he pleaded was that the weapons used in all these struggles should be of love and non-violence, not of fear and hate. The outcome of such struggles might be different. Because once again one is handicapped from want of adequate data. Now we start with a negative mental block, never with faith. Maybe, if we accepted, even if it was not a 100 per cent

success, even a shred of faith, like a spark out of dying fire, it would be rewarding- it would urge even if only a few, to forge ahead and see if a new effective weapon could not be evolved.

Individual identity

Gandhiji was unique in that he dealt with matters of the spirit, soul and conscience together with social and political affairs in the most natural

and unconscious manner. Systems such as socialism enjoined on its followers social codes, but most of all collective behaviour. But Gandhiji, like Moses, put out whole tabernacles of commandments for each individual, obligations to himself as to his fellow beings.

Here Gandhiji recognizes that a mass is composed of individuals and, while a system may deal with the mass, the core of it is the individual and the quality of each individual that comprises it is what is precious and the individual which an overbearing mass must corrode, that Gandhiji evolved and bequeathed to mankind the invaluable instrument of satyagraha - civil resistance - that enables any single individual who is aggrieved to stand up to resist tyranny and oppression.

One could pick up Gandhiji's thoughts and precepts and study them each afresh and seek to assess and evaluate each facet with its intrinsic characteristic. For this one has to put away the shibboleths and clichés so dear to those who do

not wish to make the effort to think. Was Gandhiji a revolutionary? Was he a socialist? When we fling these familiar phrases around, we do so as though each had a standard measurement and weight, height and colour. To some confirmed

Maixists Gandhiji's political struggle was not a revolution because military weapons, the familiar of an upheaval was missing. There was even a danda to flourish.

Let us remind ourselves that, while Gandhiji was a consistent non-conformist even when he talked of God and conscience in a startlingly unconventional manner, in one thing he conformed to the sages of yore. He refused to accept the world as he has found it when he was born.

He shook it and tried to reorient it. But he never gave up the quest, it went on, it had to go on. It begun with the first man and is eternal. For if man gave up the quest, he would decay and perish. As one travels round in India, in towns and in villages one comes across stone and cement figures trying desperately to look like him. But one characteristic is common to all, be they fine or ugly, they invariably show him walking, on his

march, the eternal quest. The Dandi March was more than symbolic. It typified the nation swung onto its feet to begin the long march to the far-off goal that we cannot yet see. But the quest is still on. That is what exhilarates one while the feet

move forward - our senses are astir, expectant to catch new sights, new sounds, to breathe new perfumes and let the skin tingle with experience. That is the joy of a quest. Pensively and picturesquely Jawaharlal Nehru has painted this picture in his vivid language, offering his tribute to this unique man when he started his historic salt march:

Today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek, staff in hind he goes along the dusty roads clear eyed and firm of step with his faithful band trudging along behind him. The fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen and love of truth that scorches and love of freedom that inspires.

From Mahatma Gandhi-100 years, edited by India's President Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, 1968,

(Continued from Page 5)

the people to live with it passively or slavishly.

The corporate-run education treats pupils as mere objects. They are prepared, trained and equipped to serve the corporate world and governments that are being degenerated into its captive entities or subservient subsidiaries. Education in the hands of corporates, loses its essence and therefore does not lead to the action and reflection of the masses upon entrenched systems in order to radically transform them.

Private as well as public sectors both have completely failed to address to the needs, conditions and aspirations of the masses. Now the time is ripe for the emergence of 'people's communitarian sector.' Dr. Banwari Lal Sharma initiated and spearheaded the experiment of Swaraj Vidyapeeth, in the 'people' sector. Its sole aim is to propagate the 'Education for Swaraj' amongst the students, youths, social activists, intellectuals and communities. We are yet to realise the goal of Poorna Swaraj as dreamt by our freedom fighting ancestors in the historic pledge that they took on January 26, 1930 on the banks of Ravi near Lahore in the then undivided India. The Swaraj Vidyapeeth is dedicated to Poorna Swaraj as enunciated and envisioned in the above-mentioned pledge.

Experiments similar to the Swaraj Vidyapeeth need to be replicated locally all over the country through people's initiatives, efforts and struggles. It would lay foundation for mass action for emancipation from all fetters of bondage, domination and colonialism. The Swaraj Vidyapeeth is more a spontaneous awareness raising movement than merely an educational institution.

-Dr. Krishna Swaroop Anandi

-The OtherSide

Kranta Darsi Lohia*

C. Upendranadh

In the month of March 2014, I had the opportunity of attending an international seminar on "Democracy, Socialism: Visions for the 21st Century" at Hyderabad which brought together host of progressive intellectuals to explore the future of left socialist movement in the changing globalised world. It was a rare opportunity to listen to those optimistic speeches of left intellectuals like Marta Harnecker, Michael Lebowitz, Amiya Bagchi and several Indian communist and socialist leaders.

What I found surprising amidst the hopeful messages from Latin American left movements, was the absence of, or no reference to, the "Indian variety of socialist and humanist thought" espoused by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, when we explore 21st century options, countervailing forces that challenge globalisation. A strange coincidence that, amidst milling crowds, I was presented with this volume under review "Krantadarsi Lohia" a compilation of essays in Telugu, that portray various facets of socialism of Indian variety, espoused by Dr. Lohia. I felt it was timely that we bring radical humanist alternatives to the centre stage of intellectual debate.

With that purpose in mind, I felt I should write review of this Telugu volume introducing Lohia through the lens of intellectuals of Andhra Pradesh. Authors of this volume are unanimous in their view that he can be bracketed as a thinker of that

genre of freedom struggle, par excellence as that of Gandhi and Ambedkar. For those who lived through the post-independent India as adolescents, Dr Lohia represented a left humanist alternative to the nascent capitalist development as well as the right wing conservatism. And for today's globalised world, Lohia socialism would perhaps be the alternative that is being desperately explored by those who are outraged by the rampage of the financialised capitalist development and its concomitant global crisis.

I chose to introduce these essays to those English readers who may appreciate the rich analytical content from the intellectuals, journalists and political activists of Andhra Pradesh who worked with Dr. Lohia or studied his mission to achieve a socialist society. It is interesting to observe that Dr. Lohia has espoused promotion of mother tongue (and local language) for the emancipation of the millions of the poor, who suffered the hegemony of English speakers and were detached from governance.

In this volume, compiled by Shri Ravela Somayya garu we get to read various facets of the revolutionary and free spirit of Dr. Lohia, who remained as a 'rebel'; and always swam against the mainstream all through his life. If one were to look for the historical origins of anti Congressism in Indian political landscape, they can be traced to Dr. Lohia, who succeeded in building a

counternarrative to the centralized nation development project, which broadly reflected the romantic idealization, a la Pandit Nehru of Soviet experience with his emphasis on capital goods and industrialization policies, with scant regard to addressing structural inequities and injustices that were embedded in the society. Dr. Lohia chose a path of social transformation and economic justice and proposed alternative path, which is more relevant today than any time in the history of capitalist development and its crisis.

Dr. Lohia's Indian version of socialist thought unfortunately has not been widely disseminated or understood. Is it that people felt it to be too idealist! Or is it that there were conflicting experiences at that time and could not decipher his views adequately in the cacophony of ideological debates?

There can be several explanations. One reason could be that several of Dr. Lohia's followers have scattered into different political formations and could not build a party with ideological platform. Compromises that socialists have undertaken since the Janata Party experiment have dented the moral conviction and strength. The other being that by nature Lohia himself was a non conformist and perhaps his true followers too have not been sufficiently 'market' savvy to counter the hegemony of Nehruvian model of 1960 70s and subsequent neo-liberal ideology followed by the post 1980s regimes in India.

We ought to appreciate the rich analysis in the political discourse that Dr. Lohia spearheaded, wherein socialist dreams were 'almost realised' in Independent India. At one point there were nine state governments which had socialist party in power. If one were to reflect and assess the post-Mandal political ascendancy of identity politics, the credit goes to Dr. Lohia who embraced diversity and plurality and struggled against the hegemony and caste domination.

The year 2010 marked the centenary of Rammanohar Lohia and there were year long public functions across India disseminating the principles and ideals of Dr. Lohia. This present compilation brings together writings of socialist scholars on the life and ideology of Dr. Lohia during published that year in various Telugu newspapers, magazines and periodicals. It is interesting to note that Dr. Lohia had a particular affinity to the city of Hyderabad and it remained as a bastion of his ideological followers up until 1980s, though they were not a significant force in Andhra Pradesh. (It is interesting to note that Dr. Lohia commented on the narrow parochial agendas of parties very early, much before the advent of regional parties and identity politics while he was travelling in Andhra Pradesh!)

It is a historical fact that the formation of Janata Party (as a grand alliance by submerging identities) of non Congress political formations as the aftermath of internal Emergency (1975-77) in India, subsumed the distinct identity of 'socialists' in the Indian political space. The decade of 1980s saw saffronisation and mandalisation of Indian political space which jostled with each other through

identity politics in the Hindi heartland and regionalization of political mobilization which resulted in complete marginalization of 'socialist' ideology within political formations. Today, it is a fact that so-called 'Lohia ites' who are in various identity based regional political formations to a larger extent relegated their socialist ideals a go by.

It was in this political quagmire that in the year 2010, the Lohia Centenary Committee toured all over India spreading the message of Lohia socialism (seven principles for revolution) bringing ideological engagement within political society to the centre stage. Their gatherings may not have attracted huge crowds, but I am sure they must have provided ideological basis for re-dedicating towards socialism wiping out the skepticism that there is no alternative (TINA). This centenary volume is a commendable job by Shri Somayya to introduce Lohia to the present generation.

Authors of these essays who are outstanding intellectuals of Telugu, bring out interesting facets of the ideological and transformative project of Dr. Lohia and lament the fate of socialism in the country. However, what is fascinating in these essays is the acknowledgement that whether it is a 'welfare state' posturing or left off centre politics practiced by the mainstream and regional political parties that practice identity politics, all have to concede to the strength, especially in this era of globalization, of radical humanism that Dr. Lohia advocated throughout his life. Dr. Lohia, as several contributors have commented, has been a man with a mission of social transformation, a restless and agitated individual. How much contagion he was able

to create among his followers is a matter open for scrutiny. In this era of marketisation of ideas, I am sure socialists have a great uphill task to match with those neoliberals.

Coming back to "Krantadarsi Lohia, without going into individual essays, I attempt to summarize the collective reflections of all the contributors.

Dr. Lohia identified the inadequacy of the capitalist development as well as the Bolshevik-communist project practiced by the centralized party bureaucracy in USSR during the decades of post-War period, up until 1980s. His disenchantment towards communism stems from the practices of party bureaucracy, however he identified Marxist historical method and dialectic as relevant philosophical approaches that can be combined with humanistic elements from Gandhi. Thus, his unique transformative programme attempts to bring best of the both, Marx and Gandhi. But a critical question here is, how did it span as a transformative project at the implementation level? There appears to be a mixed verdict on this as 'socialists' in India never received such a mandate to implement what Dr. Lohia

dreamt of. Rather several of his formulations have been twisted and the rapid changes in the global order, with dismantling of USSR and its aftermath stunted the practicality of such ideals.

Central to Dr. Lohia's transformative program has been decentralization and respect for humanity and individual freedom. He countered the communist transformative project on these grounds so also loathed the concentration of power and wealth accumulation of the capitalist enterprise through exploitation. He

identified imperialism and capitalism as two sides of the same coin and through such analysis questioned the domination of "English" as an imperial project, which continues to remain as a hegemonic force even after Independence.

Most writers while appreciating the ideals of Dr. Lohia raise an interesting question. That is, who are the torch bearers of ideals of Dr. Lohia now, in this era? Some of them ask this directly, some put it forward in a skeptical way. Are the mainstream political parties in a position to realize the ideals at least partially? 'Welfare' and populist' posturing of mainstream political formations appear to give us an impression that social inclusiveness and political participation have been achieved. Did they really confront structural power imbalances? How can social control over capital be achieved through the current system? How can humanistic principles of liberty and freedom be achieved simultaneously through neo liberal policies where citizenship claims are reduced to consumerist claims? These are

the questions that some authors pose. Will the progressive social movements be in a position to inherit the legacy of Dr. Lohia and work amongst the masses in order to build transformative politics? There are some stray examples, but the future of progressive social movements itself is becoming bleak in the era of globalization. The state's repressive power is so enormous that it chokes the voices of the democratic dissent.

It is in this context, a visionary leadership that imbibes Dr. Lohia's vision and moral strength needs to come to play a critical role. If not individual, a collective leadership is necessary in order to build a just and humane society. The Arab spring and socialist experiments of Latin

America provide a glimmer of hope for a 21st century social transformation project. How these experiences pan out in

Indian soil is a million dollar question, as we are still grappling with identity politics and not able to

embrace the pluralistic ethos. Dr. Lohia's views remain relevant in achieving the transformation that is required by the 21st century.

Alternative politics based on a grand alliance of progressive parties and movements is required.

Footprints of a Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

Rohini Gawankar

The life story of Mrunal Gore, one of the leading socialist activists, is an inspiration to men and women alike, but it is especially a model for activists, social workers and politicians. Coming from a middle class family with no political connections, Mrunal Gore blazed a unique path, beginning as a grassroots organizer of women in suburban Mumbai, a people's representative at the lowest level of self-government and moving ever higher, till she rose to the ranks of a Member of Parliament. Throughout the course of this amazing journey, she stayed true to values and principles, never using her power for personal or narrow gains, but always striving to do the maximum good for the majority of the people. The suffering and deprivations of the common man became the sparks that inspired numerous agitations and fights which Mrunal undertook against injustice and inequity. Told through the eyes of a personal friend, the story recounts all the important events and achievements of her life, while also highlighting the sterling qualities that made Mrunal Gore a role model for the generations that followed in her footsteps.

Published by

Kamalakar Subhedar

Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha

Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,
Sakinaka, Ghatkopar (W), Mumbai 400072.

Mobile: 9820092255

Charity contribution: Rs.300+



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 13

April 27, 2014

Test of democratic values

Kuldip Nayar

Political overreach

Rajindar Sachar

AAP's fatal attraction

Y. V. Reddy

**Development or
majority communalism?**

Thomas Kocherry

Left movement in India

Bharat Dogra

**Dialogue with political parties on
education policy**

**Does Muslim manifestation
make others secularists?**

K. S. Chalam

Sunil
(1960-2014)

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

BJP reverts to type

S. Viswam

If the print and electronic media has been offering us saturation coverage for the last couple of months on Narendra Modi's election campaign, there was obviously good reason. First, the BJP had rushed in to declare him the party's prime ministerial candidate, thus turning the spotlight on him. Second, many of the party's senior leaders were themselves candidates. Third, the leaders-candidates could have been involved in the party's national campaign as they were always in the past but were apparently told this time to confine themselves to their constituencies so that Modi could roam the field at will. And last, the campaign was being master-minded by the RSS leadership and not by the BJP "high command".

It was therefore quite surprising that at the fag end of the campaign, the BJP suddenly and for no explicable reason reverted to type and went back to its hackneyed Hindutva campaign and began re-asserting its Hindu nationalist sectarian majoritarianism. The saffronites usually fall back on Hindutva when the BJP position weakens on any issue and the party

is seen to be taking a beating, specially at the hands of the Congress. There was however no need for the BJP to summon its Hindutva cavalry to the rescue as the campaign was doing well and Narendra Modi had begun to talk as if he had already been sworn in Prime Minister! Why the BJP decided to show itself in its true colours is a mystery. Was it to ensure that the Modi brigade and the local BJP perform beyond expectations in UP and Bihar that the BJP top brass decided to cause a Hindu-Muslim electoral divide? Why have the senior leaders not reacted to the unleashing of the communal divide by the likes of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Praveen Togadia? Why has even Modi chosen to be mildly remonstrating with the Hindutva champs and not used stronger condemnatory language against them? Whatever the reason, the unfortunate fact is that communalism now stands sharply polarized on Hindu-Muslim lines and Modi is shown to be isolated.

One thought that a brake had been successfully applied by their respective parties on Muslim leaders

Between the lines

and candidates like Imran Masood in Saharanpur and Azam Khan in Lucknow. These two had issued highly provocative statements but were contained before more damage could be done. But the Hindutva friends who began spreading the communal word and poison outdid them by threatening to deport to Pakistan all those who were found to be in the anti-Modi camp! The message Hindutva champs like Togadia and Giriraj Singh were sending out was that Muslims better behave and vote for the BJP and Modi if they wanted to be secure in India. Pernicious, wicked and totally divisive. Togadia and company were indirectly appealing to the Hindus to mobilize in favour of the BJP and Modi. Surely, there are less poisonous platforms to appeal from, and the BJP speeches do not necessarily have to be full of covert and overt anti-Muslim rhetoric.

The campaign has slipped into the communal mode unfortunately at a time when Modi himself was deliberately more acceptable and conciliatory language. His reaction to the comments of Togadia and Giriraj Singh could have been sharper, but in the circumstances what he has said is good enough for the Hindutva leaders to draw a lesson and stop talking rubbish. Modi not only dubbed them irresponsible but also said he disapproved them because they deviated from the campaign issues of development and governance.

It is not enough for Modi to disapprove of such anti-Muslim rhetoric. Since he is now sure of becoming this country's PM, there is an added responsibility on him to ensure that the RSS, which controls all saffron units to cease all

(Continued on Page 3)

Test of democratic values

Kuldip Nayar

I get many telephone calls almost every day from Pakistan and a few from Bangladesh to inquire about the polling in the Lok Sabha elections. Their fear is that Narendra Modi might be India's next Prime Minister and destroy the democratic polity which they envy. I hope Modi does not head the next government.

True, most opinion polls give the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the BJP and Modi, a clear majority. But their tally is unreliable because there is not even a ripple, much less a wave, in favour of Modi in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Odisha. Even in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where regional parties sway the voters, the BJP's showing may be poor. As for the other parts of the country, the intemperate language used by certain leaders, blessed by the RSS, is alienating the intelligentsia and those sitting on the fence.

It has become a fashion in election rallies to threaten the Muslims and then saying that the leaders have been misquoted or that their remarks have been picked up out of context. It was good to see the BJP expressing strong disapproval against the party's provincial leader who said that those who did not support Modi would be sent to Pakistan. The party would have earned credibility if it had ousted the leader from its organization. However, the comment by Jammu and Kashmir

chief minister Omar Abdullah that he would rather go to Pakistan than stay quiet against Modi is immature in nature.

Moreover, the BJP and its mentor RSS are misreading the people's response. They do not want to be divided into Hindus and Muslims. The society does not want a person whose politics is divisive and whose thinking may well be authoritarian. I believe that Modi would not be able to disturb pluralism whatever the RSS and the BJP may say. His complicity in the anti-Muslims riots in 2002 cannot be hidden even though a magistrate court in Gujarat has given him a clean chit. As the state's chief minister he is overall responsible and has certain obligations to fulfill. The security of minorities is important. He even refuses to say sorry, much less seek forgiveness. A few days ago when he had an opportunity to express regret, he refused to do so.

Still there is every possibility that a pro-Hindutva person heads India. Modi's speeches, however jingoistic, have not mentioned Pakistan. But he continues to use development as a cover to hide his communal agenda. Some believe that Modi may face the reality of the country's diversities and turn out to be another Atal Behari Vajpayee, the most popular Indian leader in Pakistan.

Whatever is Modi's agenda, he cannot afford to be on bad terms with

the neighbouring Pakistan. He may well initiate the talks that have not moved after the terrorists' attack on Mumbai on November 26, 2008. Modi and the BJP, whatever their rhetoric, realize that a working relationship with Islamabad is in the interest of New Delhi.

Pakistan, where the shadows of fundamentalism are lengthening, is in the midst of attack by extremists on the media, bold and behind the democratic forces. Hamid Mir, an independent journalist, was injured by the bullets fired by the fanatics. However, the people are increasingly feeling that normal relations with India will give a fillip to democracy and liberal thoughts.

A Pakistani student from Oxford met me at my residence a few days ago. He had visited Pakistan and felt no hesitation in suggesting that Islamabad should normalise relations with India. This was the only alternative his country had because of the menace of the Taliban and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. His regret—and mine too—was that even known liberals preferred to remain quiet. I told him that India was also a prey to that. A soft Hindutva was contaminating more and more people, I said in reply. We both agreed that there was no go from good, amicable relations between the two countries.

My disappointment is that a democratic and pluralistic society in India is not playing its role in the region. There is too much of 'tit for tat'. Our foreign ministry has officials who have a particular mindset on Pakistan and take the narrative to the partition days for their chauvinistic stance. The youth is especially bewildered. They want employment or openings in business

that a big country like India can provide. What hampers progress in that direction is the enmity between the two countries. People are not to be blamed, the establishments and intelligence agencies are.

The few callers from Bangladesh did not doubt India's secular credentials but the prospects of Modi's success made them unhappy. Despite the growth of Jamiat-i-Islami in their own country, the Bangladeshis have seen how secularism during the liberation days has got eclipsed. They have never imagined that the fundamentalists, who were against the liberation of Bangladesh, would one day be so brazen faced that they would destroy Hindus' temples as it is happening in Pakistan.

I think that the revival of religion, which is taking place even in the west, is bound to be duplicated in the subcontinent. India is a target of Hindutva forces. They would want the country to be Hindu rashtra. But this is not possible because the people of different faiths have lived together for centuries. Hindus and Muslims have shared the land for more than one thousand years.

Regretfully, there have been communal riots. The recent happenings in Muzzafarnagar in UP remind us that we live on the edge. The victims have returned home and the business is as usual. All realize that they are Indians first and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs later. The feeling of Indianness binds north with south and east with west.

The spirit of accommodation and the sense of tolerance are lessening because of parties like the RSS-BJP and the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. Yet the Constitution has brought

about unity. The current Lok Sabha election testifies the faith of Indians in parliamentary democracy. One has to see how strong this feeling remains if, and when Pakistan and Bangladesh come to be dominated by the fundamentalists. Modi's supporters are aping them. Those believing in a pluralistic society should realize that their fight will begin if the country takes a right turn.

(Continued from Page 2)

campaigns based on religion in order to draw votes. We are venturing to make this suggestion on the basis of the tone of Narendra Modi's remarks to the *Economic Times* in an important interview. Modi specifically said he would be ready to work with the Congress in the national interest and that the hostile overtones and undertones marking the campaign would fade away after the polls just as in the past. Modi has underlined the importance of bilateral cooperation between the BJP-NDA and Congress-UPA in terms that are acceptable as features of a functional democracy. Modi the acerbic campaigner has given hints that he can become an amiable head of government. We look forward to that transformation with hope and high expectations.

Madhu Dandavate
By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Political overreach by Election Commission/ Reserve Bank Governor

Rajindar Sachar

All parties have broadly agreed on various aspects of Model Code worked out by Election Commission for a certain period before the elections – it has worked quite satisfactorily. Fortunately, the Election Commission still remains in command. Recently it denied the central government the move to make certain changes in some economic and subsidy policies (though the denial to the later would adversely affect the poorer sections of society) but its neutrality was not challenged. It has therefore come as a shock to many of us that since bank nationalization in 1969 though only two licenses in private sector have been allowed, the matter has been made controversial by the Reserve Bank of India by deciding to issue two fresh licenses. More astonishing is the comment by the Governor, RBI that giving bank licenses is not in any way a political process. This plea is unacceptable in political circles because it cannot be forgotten that the economic crisis created by private bank fiasco was avoided in 1969 by nationalization of major banks. (Of course there was political angle to it in Indira-Morarji power struggle at that time.) Since then different political parties have formed the governments at the Centre. But sensing the public indignation at allowing corporate sector to set up banks, no central government seriously even remotely broached the idea of change of policy.

It was only in 2011, that UPA Government, known to be under big

corporate sector pressure, announced, though in low key, a policy for new banks in the budget for financial year 2011, but did not dare seriously follow it up. The Reserve Bank Governor, who evidently is a follower of Chicago school of economics of unadulterated private sector economy, was keen to go ahead with privatization, but the Ministry of Finance opposed it, even P. Chidambaram, no doubt also a believer in Chicago School of economic policy (1990) opposed it, realizing the political dynamite of privatization. But the Governor nevertheless referred this matter to the Election Commission. One would have expected a immediate curt negative from the Election Commission for the obvious reason that bank privatisation is one of the most explosive political decision, and which only an elected government is competent to decide upon. By what logic Election Commission has permitted the Reserve Bank the liberty to take decision independent of the government on such a delicate financial, economic and a political policy is beyond comprehension. Governor of the Reserve bank has ventured the unacceptable proposition that granting bank business license is not in any way a political process. This stand is totally unacceptable both in principle and in law. The RBI can only move in after the central government has taken a political decision to allow private banking – and this decision, if at all can only be taken after the

elections and after the new government has taken over. Such a change of policy requires full fledged debate not only in legislatures but in the political circles. It can not be done quietly at a bureaucratic level.

The unexplained hurry by the RBI Governor to issue two private licenses defies logic. It is not as if service by private banks is helping the needy ones. Statistics show that 27 State run banks account for 75 per cent of total deposits and 73 per cent of total credit. If analyzed in depth the private banks service its own private clients and have no public purpose. As a matter of fact in the last couple of years even in the U.S.A. biggest banks like Bank of America were saved from bankruptcy by the U.S. Government lending huge amounts of money to them.

A fallacious argument in favour of privatization of banks that they are less likely to default and therefore are a less burden on the public finance has been authoritatively negated by International Monetary fund which has warned that the world's biggest banks still get a total of about 590 billion Dollars in subsidies from their governments. In that light this action of giving license for private banking by Reserve Bank Governor is mystifying. This decision has already been adversely commented by some Members of Parliament and they have warned the RBI that "they would revisit the issue of new bank licenses".

Bank nationalization is a matter of government policy – the Supreme Court in Bank Nationalization case (1970) specifically refused to consider the argument of private bankers that under the scheme of social control exercised by Reserve Bank of India, the commercial banks had achieved impressive results comparing favorably with the performance of State Banks of India. The Supreme Court said thus: “This Court is not the forum in which these conflicting claims may be debated. Whether there is a genuine need for banking facility in the rural sector...whether administration by the Government of the commercial banking sector will not prove beneficial to the community and will lead to rigidity in the administration, whether the Government administration will eschew the profit-motive, and even if it be eschewed, there will accrue substantial benefits to the public...and whether the policy followed by the Government in office or the policy propounded by its opponents may reasonably attain the national objectives are matters which have little relevance in determining the legality of the measure. It is again not for this Court to consider the relative merits of the different political theories or economic policies...This Court has the power to strike down a law on the ground of want of authority, but the Court will not sit in appeal over the policy of the parliament in enacting a law. The Court cannot find fault with the Act merely on the ground that it is inadvisable to take over the undertaking of banks which, it is said by the petitioner, by thrift and efficient management had set up an impressive and efficient business organization serving large sectors of industry.”

(Continued on Page 9)

AAP's fatal attraction

Y. V. Reddy

Kejriwal's “exciting experiment” seems to have gone “horribly wrong” and the simple reason is that he has focused on protests instead of governance, as Ramachandra Guha, the historian, said the other day. It is the reaction against corruption and poor governance that brought them near power and they could have concentrated on giving clean governance to the people of Delhi during the obviously limited time they would have been in power, until the Congress, on its own, had toppled them. Because, Congress as we know it, sooner than later, chafing under the growing popularity of Aam Aadmi Party would not have allowed the latter a smooth running any way. Then, the credit for good governance as well as the discredit for toppling game, as is its wont, could be apportioned, between the AAP and the Congress respectively and Arvind Kejriwal would have gone on his business as usual - agitating against corruption, which is endemic in our system. Rahul Gandhi's recent swipe in Delhi AICC Session, at the AAP, that it “practiced ad hoc street politics disconnected from due process” is certainly not an obtuse broadside thrown at a political opponent: the pejorative though, needs to be taken seriously and pondered over by the AAP ideologues. Kejriwal had sought to punch above his weight at the fast approaching general elections. It cannot be denied that he did try to replicate the Delhi election result in the rest of the country, and in the process, the gambit proved a pretty costly gamble that lost both the capital and the country. The

unceremonious exit on the somewhat cooked-up controversy over Jan Lok Pal bill earned his party an appellation of “anarchism”.

Those of us, who have given up on politics as a dirty game, were enlivened by an unexpectedly favourable result to the AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls. It appeared like a habitable planet in the countless galaxies of the vast universe. The three wise men that led the party - the fearless Kejriwal, the feisty Prashanti Bhushan, and the steadfast Yogendra Yadav were unlike the politicians that we knew - simple, sagacious and sincere. Their success at the polls redefined politics for us: One, politics is dirty, no doubt. But, that is the reason why we have to enter “this political slush” and clean it. Two, people with commitment but no money can also contest and win elections. Three, politics need not be caste-based and religion-based; they can be issue-based. Four, the country does not need politicians for whom politics is business. It needs “clean administrators”. While these were like eye-opening revelations, what they did not see, and needed some hard knocks to realize was that people in power “should show ability to mediate and make compromises between different political stake holders”, unless they wish to remain in the mode of agitation forever which is an oxymoron in parliamentary politics.

One wonders, what all those who's who that filled the AAP were doing when their leader was rushing

headlong “courting controversies” in battalions when his primary duty, as Chief Minister of the capital city-state, was “to get down to the business of governance rather than dharnas”. Aushutosh - the journalist, Yogendra Yadav - the political scientist, Medha Patkar - the veteran social activist, Rajmohan Gandhi - the living Gandhian luminary, Meera Sanyal, Senju Verma, and a host of others could have stopped Kejriwal in his tracks, and laid down some do’s and don’ts for him as CM. Because, Aam Aadmi Party is not a one-man or a one-woman party, and those in the party - call them a Working Committee, Polit Buro, or General Council or simply an advisory body or what you will - have a duty to fix guidelines within which their leaders should operate in positions of responsibility. A leader, however highly placed, in a responsible party, cannot run haywire and be a law unto himself, running roughshod over his colleagues’ feelings. A party, worth the name, will have to function through representative committees at every level - Mandal, district, state, and national - so that decisions taken and responsibility for their success or failure are collective, not individual. We all know that parties, as we know them, are not functioning that way. But then, Aam Aadmi Party, we are told, is a party with difference, and that is its *sine qua non*.

After Kejriwal gave up power on the pretext of not being allowed to pass the remotely related Jan Lok Pal Bill, he was still not out of touch with reality and announced that his party would contest a few Lok Sabha seats in 2014. That was fair enough. He could have chosen some extremely favourable spots like the surroundings of Delhi, the state of

Haryana, and a few other urban centers in cities like Mumbai and Bangalore and highlighted the tone and tenor of the political lodestar that appeared on the horizon of Delhi. They should have limited their number to forty or fifty Lok Sabha seats, at the most, and concentrated the party’s limited resources in those few places, to start with, to have a striking impact of the novel phenomenon of his new party on the country’s political landscape. What transpired in between, one does not know. The number of LS seats, the nascent party contests went up ten times, to a whopping 400, which even the well-established pan-Indian parties would think twice before throwing down the gauntlet. Now, it seems, as many as four hundred ill-equipped, untrained, inexperienced, and under-resourced warriors are dressed up for the 2014 electoral battle for Lok Sabha, with what result, one shudders to imagine: they may be pauperized; their idealism may be snuffed out; and their likely electoral bruises might make them unfit to take up further protests for people’s causes. Kejriwal and his party might, God forbid, become part of history, sooner than later, even before the real struggle for political change has commenced. Mark Tully, former BBC correspondent and India-lover had put it aptly that it could end up as a “phenomenon which arrived and disappeared” and “it will be a great pity if AAP falls on its face”.

It was hard to bear the prospect of a party that looked a beacon of hope and faith, so soon, showing signs of decline. It held a great hope by rejecting some conventional political norms out of hand. For the first time, identity mattered little: people were mobilized as citizens, and not as Hindus or Muslims, this

caste or that caste, and South Indians or North Indians. For the first time, simplicity gained in importance with resonant image of Gandhian days: Kejriwal and his colleagues made an impression on the people with their simplicity, who believed that they were non-corrupt, that they are not the type to make fast buck, and would fight the mafias and the vested interests, when needed for the people’s cause. In fact, times are such that large sections of people were feeling helpless in face of corruption which is omnipresent, mafias of all kinds - land, liquor, water, mining, education etc, and corporates, both Swadeshi and Videshi. Now, for the first time, as Shalini Gupta put it, “it was for the AAP to undo this sense of helplessness. The very name of the party created a sense of empowerment. It made everyone who donned the topi feel empowered, feel that they were the party”. “Their messages”, she continues, “have heightened their feeling of empowerment: the Aam Aadmi[will go to parliament and clean corruption. Aam Aadmi will be selected as a candidate; he will win from his constituency; and he will not live as a Minister but as an AA, rejecting the trappings of a VIP political culture.” With this new style of politics, innovated by Kejriwal and his colleagues, “the growing irrelevance of the common man had come to a halt,” and India’s trajectory of political development seemed to have begun taking a new turn.

They had started implementing their promises, and giving substance to the hopes and aspirations of the common people, as soon as they were catapulted into power. They promised to give” a citizen-centric, corruption-free, and participative

democracy”, through the AAP. They started off well, as for example, the Urban Development and Education Minister, Manish Sisodaya, visiting government schools on the very first day and commenting that the children are made to stay in the school for seven to eight hours without toilets. The Ministers stopped using red and blue beacons on their cars. Chief Minister, Kejriwal went for the swearing-in on the Metro. Decision was taken not to provide security for any functionary unless there was threat perception. Officials were warned against demanding bribes, and a toll-free number was installed to help people lodge complaints. A novel way was devised by the AAP in that, a pro forma was released “proposal letter for pending/new works” through which people can inform their MLAs and get their work done. Besides, they were having a clear plan of what to do, when in government, in their well-thought out 18-point agenda. “We are concentrating on issues, not support,” said Sisodaya. AAP’s founder-leader. Prashanti Bhushan was quite exhilarated. He said, “The measures generated a big hope in the people for a clean and honest government and that will offer an alternative politics that places the AAP at the centre of politics and governance”. They could have gone on transforming the Delhi administration into a people-friendly and service-oriented state. That alone would have got them wide spread support across the country, besides strengthening their base at Delhi.

The Congress leaders in Delhi, Sheila Dikshit and others, were already smarting from the terrific defeat inflicted by the BJP and the AAP. May be, the blow would have been more severe, if it was a

landslide for the BJP. The Congress, probably, in its own interest, for avoiding the BJP from being invited to form government, gave support to AAP, which found itself in power. Being in power on their sufferance, it does not make sense to be in great hurry to haul them up. They could have followed the normal procedure and allowed law to take its own course. Then, the entire cabinet led by the CM squatting in open street, on dharna, against the Lt. Governor, for getting two or three police cops suspended, as they did not carry out the new Law Minister’s wish to raid a women’s den, at dead of night, was height of irresponsibility on the part of the newly inducted government. Finally, it may be questioned if the Jan Lok Pal Bill was so indispensable for Delhi Administration that it was worth challenging the Union Home Ministry, the Lt. Governor, and the Congress party supporting their government - all at a time, in one

fell swoop, as though telling them point blank “My way or highway.” In fact, it was perceived, at the time, that Kejriwal was in a hurry to get out of government on some pretext or the other, so that he and his men could turn their full attention to national politics during the general election which was fast approaching. Kejriwal basking in the newly acquired glory of unexpected success at Delhi polls felt a strong sense of *déjà vu* in the country as well and that he should not let slip the opportunity to play a role, for good, in national politics. Apart from the excessively rosy picture, he drew, for himself, of the national scenario in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, there is the moral question of whether the Delhi voters’ mandate could be used up to play for high stakes in the national election. In brief, Kejriwal left Delhi to try his luck in the country; and, in the process, he could lose both.

Modi wave: development or majority communalism?

Thomas Kocherry

Modi started his election campaign with Development as the main issue. He wanted Gujarat as the model for development. From any point of view Gujarat is not the best model for development. Let us take one example that Modi was working at a tea stall. Even after 40 years the tea stall remains the same and it remains closed forever. The village where the tea stall is, remains without any development. I do not know what development is he talking about? Is it Mudra of Ambani? There are many states in India with better development that is more inclusive. Development is only a cover for something else.

This is becoming more and more clear.

Now the real colour of Modi is coming out. He has proved that majority communalism works out very well in Gujarat. BJP had tried that during the destruction of Babari Masjid. In Kandamal the majority communalism was tried against minority Christians. Now Modi wants to try that in the entire India. This is coming out from the mouth of Togadia and Giriraj. Giriraj is holding on to his stand. And on the other hand Togadia says it was fabricated. However, once the issue

(Continued on Page 10)

Left Movement in India

Increasing Need, Decreasing Role

Bharat Dogra

One of the most disturbing features of India's democracy today is that at a time when a strong and inspiring presence of the left forces is badly needed, these are probably becoming weaker than ever before, particularly in terms of their ability to improve India's democracy and to resist dangerous trends. This trend of the growing marginalisation of left forces in India's democracy needs to be reversed, so that left forces can become a very significant force in the overall improvement of India's democracy.

But let's first clarify what exactly we mean by 'left forces'. These words have been generally used to include those forces and groups who are firm supporters of equality in society and strong opponents of inequalities at various levels and the various injustices linked to these. These words have also been used for those forces that stand for some form of socialist system in place of capitalist system, although the details may differ. (However particularly in India's context it needs to be pointed out that the word 'socialism' or 'samajwad' has been used too loosely by many a party or group that goes by this name but may not be behaving accordingly at all). Also, left forces are identified by their strong opposition to imperialism in international affairs. Left forces are also known generally, for their opposition to communalism, superstitions and religious fundamentalism, while they are known to be supportive towards secularism and communal

harmony.

At another level we can say that left forces include many political parties (mainly communist and socialist parties) as well as a wide range of other social organisations (including organisations which may not identify themselves openly as either socialist or communist). These also include trade unions, farmers and peasants organisations, various other activists, professionals and their organisations. In addition there are many other citizens' organisations who may not belong to the 'left', but find a relationship with left forces helpful in their various efforts to curb corruption and social evils, as well as to protect national interests in important areas and to carry forward various constructive activities.

Defined loosely in this way, left forces have a huge support base and perhaps an even bigger potential support base. If we ask a simple question, in terms of the most important causes of human distress in India, which force is most capable of reducing distress, then the answer will be that left forces taken together are most capable of this. This is because biggest causes of human distress are rooted in inequalities, discrimination and communalism, and left forces are, by and large, committed to opposing all this.

The left also has serious weaknesses. If distress of other forms of life is considered (other than human beings) then left agenda

has hardly any space for this, whether in terms of protecting various species, or their habitats, or preventing cruelties and risks to them. But we may overlook such glaring weaknesses of the leftist agenda here. In terms of reducing inequalities, discrimination and communalism, the various left formations together constitute perhaps the single most important force for this crucial challenge in India.

Why then are the left forces unable to advance and progress? Why do they face increasing marginalisation despite their growing relevance and need?

One answer given sometimes is that some wider international trends and developments have overwhelmed the left forces and discouraged their growth. This need not be so. If India's society needs left forces, then even in such adverse conditions the left forces can advance.

On the contrary there are some very favourable factors for left forces in India. India's Constitution provides a base for many important aspects of equality, justice and social harmony and left forces can become the main forces for defending the values, of equality, justice and social harmony enshrined in the constitution which are still violated on a large scale in the real conditions of the country and may face bigger threats in the near future.

Sunil (1960-2014)

Sunil, National General Secretary of Samajwadi Jana Parishad and Editor of Samayik Varta, breathed his last at New Delhi's AIIMS hospital on April 21. Sunil will be remembered for long as one of the most inspiring socialist activists, ideologues and writers whose high ideals were fully in harmony with his actual living experiences. His life can be seen as an ever-continuing story of struggles as well as constructive activities, all aimed at the realisation of socialist ideals so dear to his heart.

Most of the struggles in which Sunil (he never used his surname) was involved were rooted in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, although he also contributed in very useful ways to many other wider social movements. He was a founder member and coordinator of Kisan Adivasi Sangathan, an organisation which has been in the thick of many struggles of tribals in Kesla area of Hoshangabad. While fighting relentlessly against exploitation, injustice and displacement, Sunil played a leading role in the progress of Tawa Matasya Sangh, a co-operative of fisherfolk that rapidly emerged as a model co-operative.

Sunil was known to be a brilliant student in his JNU days, when he came under the influence of socialist ideology and the inspiring guidance of Kishan Patnaik. During his student days he took up impossible looking tasks such as organising cycle marches from Delhi to the country's most troubled areas (in those days) like Punjab and Assam. Around 1985 he set up Hoshangabad as the base of lifelong work. He served several prison sentences in the course of his numerous struggles here. His last arrest was as late as early 2014, in the course of mobilisation of women against liquor vends. His last days were spent increasingly in strengthening women's organisations in and around Itarsi.

In the middle of all his struggles and grassroots activities, Sunil found the time to write thought-provoking articles for several newspapers and journals (mostly in Hindi and sometimes in English) as well as edit journals like *Samayik Varta* and (earlier) *Samta Era*. In what was perhaps his last election time article in *Janata* Sunil raised very relevant and uncomfortable questions before the leaders of the BJP, Congress and AAP.

In the course of over three decades of his political work, even his worst opponent could never question the complete honesty and integrity of Sunil. He lived a very simple life with his wife Smita and they worked together for their shared ideals. Their two children have been studying at JNU. Sunil's father Dr. Rampratap Gupta has been writing on socially relevant issues.

Sunil has left us at a time when his invaluable experiences, scholarship and activism were most needed for evolving alternatives to the capitalist path of development. Sunil was absolutely clear and firm about rejection of capitalist path. It will be very difficult to fill the void left by him. One question I'll keep asking is - why this blemishless, highly committed and brilliant leader did not get a larger national presence?

– B. D.

But the left forces have not been able to take forward these commitments in adequately creative, participative and continuing ways. The reasons of this failure should be analysed by various left forces not with the aim of finding faults with each other, but to focus on corrective and remedial action so that the left forces can still recover and mobilise people in time to face the increasing threats ahead.

Towards this end the task of broader left unity for co-ordinating actions, clearing confusions, inspiring people and preparing common programmes is very important. If broad left unity is not achieved, then a lot of the strength of left forces will be wasted in endless criticism of each other instead of facing real threats and challenges. The task of broad-based unity of left forces should be pursued on a continuing basis with deep commitment, overcoming narrow views and prejudices that have obstructed unity efforts in the past.

(Continued from Page 5)

I feel strongly that Governor, RBI should immediately withdraw the permission so as not to create unnecessary lack of confidence and want of rapport between RBI and the new government. Already there is a bias against public sector – this is clear from the fact none of major political parties though at each other's throat in their election offensive has even remotely praised public sector; rather all are promising to encourage private sector – ironically forgetting compulsion for socialism high lighted in the preamble to our Constitution.

India's pro-rapist lobby

"Boys will make mistakes," Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav said of rape, on Thursday. His remarks making light of such a heinous crime illustrate just why the feminist battle in India has barely begun. Mr. Yadav believes new rape laws, introduced after the 2012 rape-and-murder of a Delhi woman, are being misused by women to punish their boyfriends. "When their friendship ends," Mr. Yadav asserted, "the girl complains she has been raped." Mr. Yadav's lieutenant, Abu Asim Azmi, meanwhile invoked shari'a law to call for the death penalty — but, for the victim. "Even the woman is guilty," he told a Mumbai newspaper. Mr. Azmi believes that if "any woman, whether married or unmarried, goes along with a man, with or without her consent, she should be hanged." The sad truth, though, is that these kinds of attitudes aren't exclusive to the Samajwadi Party. From the Rajasthan legislator who thinks

rape happens because schoolgirls wear skirts to the Puducherry Minister who wants them covered up in overcoats; from Shiv Sena leaders who blame migrants to Delhi community leaders who scapegoat Africans; from Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat who thinks "western values" provoke rape to the Haryana khap panchayat leader who says it happens because of hormonal excesses he attributed to chowmein — there is no shortage of Indians willing to blame rape on anything and everyone other than the rapist.

Mr. Yadav's words, we can be reasonably certain, were no mistake. In the midst of a bruising election campaign, he spoke as he did because he knew there is political gain to be had from this stand. The hideous truth is that in India, as in many other countries, there is something that can only be described as a pro-rapist lobby that extends beyond political pulpits into streets and homes. The renewed feminist

activism of the last year has left patriarchy scrambling for new bogeys and new ways to protect itself.

Ill-informed scaremongering about the "draconian" provisions of the new amendment to sexual assault laws has been a handy tool. For India's women, rape is part of a continuum of violence that begins in the womb. Also, contrary to the myth that rural "Bharat" is safer than westernised India, of the 24,923 cases registered in 2012 by police, 3,035 took place in major cities. The data also tell us the typical rapist isn't a feral juvenile, crazed by raging hormones or bad upbringing. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the perpetrator was known to the victim. Mr. Yadav's words have rightly caused outrage. They should also lead to some hard introspection into how many of us believe an only slightly more benign version of those very words to be true.

— editorial in *The Hindu*

(Continued from Page 7)

was raised communal purpose is achieved.

He talks about unearthing black money and stopping corruption. If he is honest he has to publish his expenses and sources of income of all the rallies and his travel by helicopters. RTI should cover all the political parties. Most of the candidates are criminals and corrupt. Modi's main organiser Amit Shah is an accused in two murder cases. Modi is the champion of an exclusive development. Let us listen to what Gopal Menon has to say : "We have to expose his false propaganda about development. We will have to look into issues like female infanticide, education,

toilets, health, education, child malnutrition, manual scavenging and other similar issues. All the public services in Gujarat are privatised. There is no doubt that there is infrastructure development in Gujarat. But it is a completely non-inclusive development model which leaves out all the marginalised sections including the Dalits, Adivasis and religious minorities. Gujarat has the highest number of farmer suicides after Maharashtra. There are no minimum wages for worker even in private companies and in Government service."

Now Modi is saying that the leaders should stop delivering hate speeches - after the leaders have done enough harm. All this has been

planned. An FIR is filed against Togadia. Does this undo the harm he has already done to the society? The latest is the attack from Shiv Sena's Kadam.

Is there a Modi wave in India? Let us go through some of the states. Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh are fully with NDA. There is no Modi effect in Kerala, Tami Nadu, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Tripura, and North Eastern states. Modi effect is debatable in all the other states. It is a very complicated situation in all these states including UP, Karnataka, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi, Utterakhand, Chattisgarh and Maharashtra. Let us wait and see the results on May 16th.

Dialogue with Political Parties on Education Policy

In probably the first initiative of its kind in the country, Shiksha Adhikar Manch, Bhopal (SAMB), member-organisation of All-India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE), organized a dialogue with political parties on education policy and the national crisis of education on 7th April 2014 in Bhopal. Major political parties including Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party (**BJP**), Samajwadi Party (**SP**), Bahujan Samaj Party (**BSP**), Communist Party of India (**CPI**), Communist Party of India–Marxist (**CPM**), Communist Party of India–Marxist–Leninist (**CPI-ML**) Red Star, Aam Aadmi Party (**AAP**), Samajwadi Jan Parishad (**SJP**), Socialist Unity Centre of India (**SUCI**) and Gondawana Gantantra Party (**GGP**) were invited to participate in the dialogue. Representatives of all these parties joined the dialogue except BSP, GGP and BJP. The BSP and GGP representatives could not come because they were out of the town.

However, BJP – the ruling party in the state and the party eyeing for a stint at the Centre – did not care to join the discussion and did not even had the courtesy of informing its inability to join the programme despite the fact that a senior party leader who was handed over the invitation had marked a senior party functionary to attend the programme and had assured his presence. Apparently, the party does not believe in serious debate on a vital issue at all.

It was no typical dialogue where political leaders are free to indulge in rhetoric. The programme was divided into four parts, each part consisting of questions based on a specific issue of present educational crisis, and the party representatives were supposed to answer the questions based on their party's agenda and manifesto. The four broad themes were, firstly, the policy of privatisation and commercialisation of school education; secondly,

the issue of 'Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools'; thirdly, the agenda of global capital to privatize and commercialize higher education; and fourthly, the issue of 'equality' vs. 'inclusion' in higher education. The session was chaired by Comrade GS Asiwal, senior trade union leader and Member, Board of Advisors (AIFRTE) and Prof. Davinder Kaur Uppal, retired Professor of Mass Communication, Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Mass Communication. It was conducted by a committee comprising of **Dr** Anil Sadgopal (Member, Presidium, AIFRTE and Secretary, SAMB), Ms. Shivani Taneja (Muskan, Bhopal) and Shri Shahid-ul-Hussaini (Member, National Executive, AIFRTE and Joint Secretary, SAMB).

A brief report of the discussion and agenda of the political parties as spelled by their respective representatives is presented below;

Policy of Privatization and Commercialization of School Education

Following the economic reforms in 1991, all governments at the centre and states have followed the policy of privatization and commercialization of school education which is direct fallout of the World Bank-IMF imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under which state-funding for education, health and other welfare policies were gradually withdrawn. Although almost all the governments claim that they are committed to improve the government school system, neoliberal policies of downgrading these have been implemented one after the other – policies including appointment of under-qualified,

under-trained teachers on contract at extremely low 'wages', downgrading Pupil-Teacher Ratio, multi-grade teaching, burdening government school teachers with non-teaching tasks and other such retrograde steps. Thus, in last 25 years while the enrolment in government schools has decreased, the same has increased in private schools that have mushroomed in large numbers. 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) and Right to Education Act 2009 have legitimized these regressive policies. To increase the pace of privatization, policies of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) have been systematically initiated in the 11th

Five-Year Plan through which public funds and assets are being siphoned to private corporate houses, NGOs and religious bodies under garb of 'fees reimbursement', by providing cheap land or through direct grants. Profiteering in education has been justified in 12th Five-Year Plan document. Throughout the country government schools are being closed, auctioned or merged into private hands.

Question: This background makes it clear that unless the central and state governments do not halt the policies of privatization and commercialization of school education, government schools cannot be improved at all and any

claim to improve it without reversing these policies is merely an empty rhetoric.

(A) Do you agree with this statement? If yes, what agenda does your party has to reverse these neoliberal policies?

(B) If you disagree with this, in that case what is the alternative offered by your party, apart from the failed and discredited policies, schemes, projects, campaigns and laws of last 25 years, to improve the government school system while continuing with (and increasing the pace of) current policies of privatization and commercialization of school education?

Responses : Comrade Sandhya Shaili of **CPM** expressed her party's agreement to the argument that government school system cannot be improved without halting policies of privatization and commercialisation. She informed that CPM's manifesto includes provision to allocate 6 percent of GDP for education. In addition to it, CPM also emphasised on necessity to address the problems of malnutrition among children and unemployment to resolve the crisis of education.

Shri Bhupendra Gupta of **Congress** expressing party's disagreement with the argument that halting of commercialisation and privatisation is prerequisite to improve government school system. He stated that it is not possible to reverse the policies of commercialisation and privatisation in education any more. According to the party, "the moment you raise

question on privatisation, the issue of resources will be raised...and if dependence on government institutions emphasised, debate on the issue of quality will begin". The party representative also stated that with the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2009, enrolment levels in the country have become world-class. However, he did not explain what he meant by 'world-class' nor did it occur to him that enrolment ratio in terms of 'Gross Enrolment Ratio' has been near the 100 percent mark for a decade before the RTE Act.

Aam Aadmi Party's representative Shri Romesh C Khosla stated that "education should neither be completely under the government nor completely privatized". Instead, he stated, that a 'balanced mix' of the two is required. Brushing aside the whole issue of declining government expenditure on education, AAP's representative said that what is more important is that whatever allocation is made is properly utilized and he added that the problem is that more than 90 percent of funds allocated for education is eaten away by corruption. The solution provided by AAP is to institute "micro-level control systems" and for that "privatization is the only and only answer that is required". In view of AAP, with proper control systems in place, private sector is as good as the government sector.

Shri Sunil, representing **Samajwadi Jan Parishad** stated that SJP believes that there is no

place for any kind of commercialisation in education. He added that government schools declined because the rich and influential classes have gradually withdrawn from these schools. The SJP also stressed that the policy of commercialisation has not been opted by the people but has been enforced by the World Bank and there are also vested interests deriving profits out of it.

Roop Singh of **CPI** stated that the party fully agrees that privatisation and commercialisation of education should be reversed. CPI also informed the house of its stand against PPP and its commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 18.

SUCI, represented by Prof. Ramavatar stated that commercialisation is against the ideal as envisaged in the freedom struggle to provide free education to every child without any discrimination.

Representative of **CPI-ML**, Vijay Kumar stated his party's full agreement with the analysis presented and also said that the party manifesto clearly states that if the party comes into power it will reverse the policies of commercialisation and corporatisation of education. He said that CPI-ML firmly believes that until and unless privatisation and commercialisation of education is halted it is not possible to provide free education to all children without discrimination.

The issue of 'Common School System' based on 'Neighbourhood Schools'

The vision of an egalitarian national education system free of all discriminations was developed during the freedom struggle. In 1938 due to inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi a resolution to provide free and compulsory education to all

children up to class VIII in independent India was adopted in an All-India Conference. Under the visionary leadership of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar the ideal of building a society based on equality and without any discrimination was

incorporated into Articles 14 and 15 (1) of the Constitution. It is in light of these principles that the agenda of social justice incorporated in Article 16 becomes relevant. It was in context of this historical legacy that Kothari Commission Report

(1966) recommended establishment of 'Common School System' based on 'Neighbourhood Schools' throughout the country in which every child regardless of her/his socio-economic background would study in the nearest school of the neighbourhood.

Kothari Commission believed that private schools have no place in a democracy as they lead to discrimination.

The Parliament of our country reiterated its commitment to build such a 'Common School System' in the National Education Policy (1986) and again in the revised policy approved in 1992. Ironically, under pressure of privileged classes and castes of the country efforts to dilute this commitment were made right from 1986 policy itself. With the onset of neoliberal policies in 1991, the policy-led multi-layering of the school education system began with a different layer of schools for different layers of class-castes, both in private as well as government school system. In last 25 years, as this layering continued, several parties and alliances came in power at the centre and strengthened this stratification. This includes the United Front, NDA and UPA (I and II).

It is important to recall two lessons of history about education system of different countries. Firstly, there is no country in the world that has achieved the goal of educating every child without a government-funded 'Common School System' – regardless of the fact whether it is a capitalist or socialist country. Secondly, no country of the world has achieved the goal of universal education through private schools. Any country that has been able to universalize education from pre-primary to class XII has achieved this through a free and state-funded education system. It is worthwhile to note that Finland, now known for one of the best school education

system in the world, could achieve this by nationalising all schools three decades back. This evidence forces us to question that on what basis the neoliberal educational policies in the country are trying to negate this historical reality.

Question: (A) Does your party accept the concept of fully free and state-funded 'Common School System' based on 'Neighbourhood Schools' from pre-primary to class XII? Does your party manifesto declare to establish such an education system? If yes, then is your party ready to nationalize all private schools of the country in the manner the private banks were nationalized in 1971? Can your party declare its commitment to struggle in the Parliament for amending 'Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009' that is encouraging privatization and multi-layered school system in India?

(B) In case your party does not accept the concept of fully free and state-funded 'Common School System' based on 'Neighbourhood Schools' from pre-primary to class XII, then what agenda does your party has to ensure fully free and equitable education to every child without discrimination?

Responses:

CPM representative informed that the party manifesto includes the demand to amend the RTE Act to institutionalize the concept of 'Neighbourhood Schools'. It also provides for free and compulsory early childhood care and pre-primary to higher secondary level education. She said that although the party believes that education system should be run by the government only, the party favours control and regulation of private educational institutions in the beginning and it has demanded a central law for this purpose. It was pointed out by Dr Anil Sadgopal that although the concept of 'Neighbourhood

Schools' is mentioned the concept or and commitment to establish 'Common School System' is not clearly stated in the manifesto. Secondly, although the party states that private schools shall be controlled and regulated, it does not states that this shall only be an interim arrangement because in the long run private cannot exist within the 'Common School System'.

Representative of **Congress** stated that Congress does not accept any policy of closing down all private schools and instead it favours a mix of both. As far as the issue of providing equitable education was concerned, he said that through CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) a common curriculum has already been established and through Central and Navodaya Schools, good quality education is being provided throughout the country. He further stated that the party manifesto promises achieving 100 percent enrolment ration till class XII. Clearly, the party representative did not consider the fact that this does not addresses the issue of providing free and equitable education to all children of the country without discrimination. He also commented that problems of a diverse country like ours cannot be solved by radical posturing and some practical solutions must be devised. If the demand of nationalisation of private schools is the radical posturing he hinted towards, then his party probably does not want to recall that nationalisation of banks was a step taken by none other than the Congress itself!

AAP agreed with the demand that there should be a 'Common School System' in the country. However, the party does not supports nationalisation of private schools. Refusing to make any distinction between private and government schools, the party representative said

that if the private institutions are indulging in profiteering than the government institutions are also indulging in corruption and therefore there is no point in handing over the private schools to government. While accepting that children of a peon and *sahukaar* (moneylender) should go to the same school, he said that it would be unfair to force the *sahukaar* to send his child to government school if it is of inferior quality. It probably does not count for his party that it is unfair even for the peon that he is forced to send his child to a school system downgraded by conscious policies! As a solution to 'profiteering' by private institutions, AAP's representative suggested that the persons who collude with private players to earn profits should be controlled. If this is controlled, it does not matter whether the school is private or government, he stated. It is important to note that the party did not answer how it will establish fully free and state-funded 'Common School System' based on 'Neighbourhood Schools' and ensure fully free and equitable education to every child without discrimination and at the same time without abolishing the multi-layered education system that exists today.

It is interesting to note that Shri Bhupendra Gupta recalled a personal incident and commented that due to withdrawal of the influential sections from the government schools there has been a dilution of the "supervisory attitude of the society in its neighbourhood" which is responsible for decline of government school system. Unfortunately, such voices of sanity have no resonance in the corridors of the party he represents (i.e. Congress).

SJP expressed its support to the view that fully free and state-funded 'Common School System' based on

'Neighbourhood Schools' should be established to ensure fully free and equitable education to every child without discrimination. Party representative even noted that those who do not believe in this idea are not sincere about providing education to every child without any discrimination whatsoever. Agreeing with the remark of Shri Bhupendra, he said that the pressure to improve government school system can be built only when it is made compulsory through law that all children of a particular neighbourhood, whatever their socio-economic background might be, shall go to the same school of the neighbourhood. However, he added that according to his party, private schools will be allowed to operate in the 'Common School System' on the condition that they accept the requirements of the system in full and do not charge any fee from the children nor indulge in profiteering. He noted that number of such schools run on philanthropic grounds will be practically very less. On the question of how funds will be provided by such government-funded system, SJP pointed out that at present huge public expenditure is incurred on irrelevant factors which should be curtailed, for example, a poor country like India is the largest buyer of arms in the world which is a waste and lot of the money involved in arms procurement actually goes into corruption at highest levels. Referring to the bogey of corruption raised by AAP he said that there is a need to view corruption in a larger context of public policy.

CPI-ML accepted that all children of the country cannot be educated without establishing fully free and state-funded 'Common School System'. Party representative said that the party accepts necessity of "community based" neighbourhood schools. He

also accepted that all private schools should be nationalized and also stated that the party is committed to Constitutional reforms for abolishing any security and sanction to private property. On the question of amending the RTE Act, he said that CPI-ML stands for repealing the Act and replacing it by a new Act altogether.

CPI also accepted that 'Common School System' should be established in the country and also that private schools should be nationalized because if there is any private involvement in education there will be profiteering. On the question of resources for such a system, he pointed out that government has the resources to give tax-exemptions and subsidies to the rich but not for education. As far as the RTE Act is concerned party's representative stated that the party has been against the Act since its very inception and will continue to oppose it.

SUCI representative too supported the necessity of establishing 'Common School System' and stated that employees. He said that when in India we say that a system is run by government that implies teachers becoming government employees. "But we are against this employees of the government," he stated. He added that the problem is not with government funding but with government employees and also that when government employs and pays the teachers, this leads to price-rise because government takes tax to pay them. He repeated that private person running an institution is "practically the same" [as government running it]. AAP representative added that private educational institutions are not companies or commercial venture but are run by Societies and Trusts and if they are making profits it is

(Continued on Page 16)

Does Muslim manifestation make others secularists?

K. S. Chalam

The present election scenario seems to be different from the previous polls in terms of the issues alluded for public debate. It is currently seen as personal vendetta and drama of various kinds that deprived likely disquiet during the time of democratic polls. It is curious to note that the presence of a so-called obstinate Hindutva face like that of Modi has not created any verve in the campaigns as if there is some pre-set truce among the parties. The manifesto ritual is gone through and the electronic war of words began to indicate that India, the Bharatvarsha, has come of age to affirm our preeminent place in the world. It is however not clear from the manifestos and the speeches as to where our leaders are leading all of us? Perhaps they themselves are not clear as they are simply doing their karma without anticipating anything in return, simply leaving it to the benevolence of the almighty. Who is this almighty? Don't question, lest your eyes be blustered?

In almost all our general elections, the one single issue that came up for debate was secularism. Every other party is seen accusing the opponent of minority bashing or inducement is not found now. It seems the branded parties have also started cajoling the minority or observed silence so that the possible margins shouldn't disturb their winning chances. This is really a significant change in our democratic polity signifying improvement. It can also be construed as a conspiracy against the common man by the

privileged few in organised political parties. The political parties seem to have not been able to flag the suffering and pain of the poor, the marginalised, the deprived and the exploited with whose votes that they hope to come to power. There are no deviations in the election manifestos or speeches of the contending parties as if all of them are fighting on a single issue indicating a situation of referendum. Interestingly, more glamour with film stars in the campaigns is added to avoid real issues. Therefore, the elections appear to be fought for the money power by the moneyed interests. It is alleged that in a place like Visakhapatnam, outsiders and settlers together are going to spend about Rs 1000 crores for the Lok Sabha seat.

There is however, a risk to the people if the much publicized party does not get majority. There is every possibility of whipping communal hatred by the lackeys and not necessarily their leaders in future. Because, there seem to be trillion dollars' worth of business in the faith market that is fast expanding in the USA, Europe, Middle East and other advanced countries where the local religions are waning and credulous people are searching for alternatives. Consequently, our experts, seers, pundits, babas, prophets, gurus and other religious leaders have developed sufficient strategies to expand the market particularly among the Indian diaspora. But, it all depends upon the situation in India. If the people demonstrate that they are rational and tolerant of

other's faith as a legacy of this country, there will be little chance to play on the emotions to expand the market. The amount of investment made on the publications, institutes (Sindhology, Himalaya), places of worship and related activities would end up causing enormous loss to the assets. The investments are made not only in physical elements but also are extended to metaphysical arenas to lay a strong foundation for the survival of some injudicious and narrow minded opinion makers. They appear in different robes, but their objective is very clear, hegemony. Therefore, it is the duty of every sane Indian to bring forth the legacy of tolerance, fairness and non-interference (wrongly interpreted as otherworldly) in matters of belief systems of individuals. This is the unique identity of this sub-continent in any part of its geography and history.

Most of our leaders suddenly become secularists at the time of elections and appease the minorities, although all through their life they stressed them due to indoctrination or false education. It is ridiculous to note that every politician addresses the Muslims as brethren as if other minorities like Christians, Jains, Buddhists and even non-believers are their enemies. This is a deep malady that needs to be pondered over by concerned citizens who talk about secularism. Interestingly, secularism has been made a funny concept by our leaders and some activist intellectuals with empty talk and rhetoric. None of the political

parties has any programme of action or counter-intelligence strategies to encounter religious bigotry except expressing lot of sympathy for the Muslims when they are attacked. Had any of the parties ever tried to make them strong and non-vulnerable with socio-economic and reform measures or some other concrete work devoid of speechmaking? The speeches are also aimed to get the label of 'secularist' instantaneously through pampering of sections of Muslims. There may be serious internal diversity within the community that makes some of them feel frustrated without any resolution of their difficulties and thus fall prey to tricks. Otherwise, Islam is not the only religion that was thrust on Indians. In fact several sects, cults and faiths including the ones that repose faith in 'meruparvatha' (Pamir) have descended on to this land from time immemorial. The native Indians never bothered about the aliens and happily assimilated them till they had cunningly and with a devious vision made the local, a stranger, may be an untouchable. This is unique to India and not found elsewhere in the world. Therefore, new theories started pouring in to establish that Indians had migrated to other countries and continents civilizing them some 5000 years back. None of the Nordic countries, Iran, Iraq, etc. agree to this story except the agents of the proponents.

The history of mankind seems to have not witnessed bands migrating to hazardous places like the North Pole or to cold countries from the South where life is harsh. The drive

is always southward or to southern tip of the globe that included India, the most bountiful country. This is also true in the case of ancient fair skin descendants, Christians, Muslims and several others. They have settled here and became Indians through fusion of blood and beliefs. There is also a group of dubious scholars in the USA who contend that their ancestors had settled there before the Native Americans and therefore the alleged genocide is not racial. It appears that the neo-fascists in India share similar notion or may be a part of that intellectual construction. Therefore, we need to formulate an academic framework to infuse confidence and brotherhood among all those who became citizens of this republic or their progeny after 1950.

In fact, Indians can boast of the early beginnings of Christianity in Asia from Kodangal, West Coast of India (present Kerala) where St. Thomas landed in 52 AD. Similarly, the first Juma Masjid was built in 629 AD in Cherman, Kerala during

(Continued from Page 14)

because they are forced to do so by the corrupt government system. "This is the problem. If you stop the corruption then there is no difference between the government and the private," he added. He also said that even if 50 percent [of GDP] is allocated to education it won't make difference because the teachers being government employees are not accountable, they do not go to school and are protected by the "labour laws".

the life time of Prophet Mohammed. But, some of our jingoists become intolerant if someone says that Buddhism, Jainism, even Sikhism flourished as independent faiths apart from the imperial Hinduism. Indians should feel proud about the diversity and tolerance displayed by the original inhabitants, some of them have still remained outside the system due to cruelty to our own people. The issue is that the faiths and the followers are from our own people, may be some are original people who had drifted to other faiths including Islam, Christianity, etc. That does not mean they are aliens. However, it is established that most of the saints or their evangelization took place due to our trade with the West. But never, we succumbed to their commands. It is a huge embarrassment now that the trading companies in the name of Mega Corporations and MNCs are now prescribing procedures including the political isometrics to our patriots, who ruefully prostate and comply. Alas where do we go!

SJP's representative also intervened and said that on the issue of nationalisation, the concept approved by SJP is that of 'socialisation'. He explained that nationalisation connotes a certain form of centralisation to which SJP is opposed and it favours socialisation, whereby funds are provided by the government but the control lies in hand of local community (gram sabha, nagar palika or PTA, as the case may be) within framework of a well-defined rules or policy.

(to be concluded)

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 14
May 4, 2014

**Less the government,
more market democracy**
K. S. Chalam

Policy issues
Bharat Dogra

Keep God out of electoral battle
Rajindar Sachar

**Dialogue with Political Parties
on Education Policy - II**

As if he is already in.....
GGP

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Modi lacks knowledge of Kashmir

Kupdip Nayar

I was happy when Kashmir was not the election issue till two-thirds of the country had gone to the polls. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) did say in its election manifesto that it would delete Article 370 which gave a special status to the state. But this was nothing new. The BJP had been articulating the demand for many years. It never got even very little attention.

Bihar BJP leader Giriraj Singh's outburst that those who did not vote for Narendra Modi should go to Pakistan spoilt the atmosphere for a while. But normalcy returned when the BJP distanced itself from the statement.

No doubt, Kashmir leader Farooq Abdullah queered the pitch with the remark that those who voted for Modi should jump into the sea. But the irreprehensible Abdullah did not spoil the atmosphere because he had made such observations in the same vein in the past. He was seldom taken seriously.

The real damage has been done by Narendra Modi who stops at nothing to garner votes. He has polluted the atmosphere so much that it would take some time to repair

the cleavage he has created between Hindus and Muslims. He has attacked popular leader Sheikh Abdullah for the situation prevailing in Kashmir. Modi did not have any information on the process of integration. But for Sheikh Sahib, there was no one else, as tall and popular, who could have integrated the majority Muslim Jammu & Kashmir with the majority Hindu India.

The Sheikh's son, Farooq Abdullah's remark that Kashmir would not be part of communal India smacks of communalism. All secular forces should together fight against communal forces. Farooq will have to be part of that confrontation. We have to bring back the country on the secular and democratic track.

He is relevant to the solution but so are Pakistan and those who have sacrificed their lives for azadi (independence). India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru realized the importance of Pakistan's interest. He sent Sheikh Abdullah to Islamabad to find a common ground. The Sheikh met General Mohammad Ayub, then heading Pakistan.

The last attempt to end the deadlock came when the Sheikh met Ayub in May 1964. Ayub told me in Islamabad in April 1972 that it was his impression that towards the end of his life Nehru had “realized the logic of the situation and had shown anxiety to come to terms with Pakistan.”

But not much came of the Sheikh’s visit, for even as the talks began Nehru was dying. Pakistan was anxious to pick up the threads. But the Lal Bahadur Shastri-Ayub meeting solved no problem. There was disappointment when Shastri did not want to discuss Kashmir, nor mention it in the joint communiqué in which an early meeting between the Home Ministers of India and Pakistan was promised.

As for azadi, the militants do not realize that the Taliban have created such a scare in the world that the Kashmiri insurgents are regarded as fundamentalist. Hardliners like Syed Ali Shah Gillani only confirm the apprehension that the demand for the state’s independence is the other side of the same coin of religious fervor.

Pakistan, which was once strongly opposed to the idea of independence, is quiet now. Some in the establishment even voice their support to the independence demand. They do so because their expectation is that an independent Kashmir would ultimately join Pakistan.

The ones that have raised the demand, however genuine, should appreciate that they—living in the valley—cannot decide the fate of the other two regions, Jammu and Ladakh. The first would like to merge with India if and when the future of the state is decided. The

second wants to be a union territory of India. Therefore, the demand for independence is confined to the valley. I do not want to argue whether the landlocked valley would be economically viable or not. But I do want to know from the supporters of the demand if it is fair on their part to claim the independence of Jammu and Kashmir when they have practically no following either in Jammu or Ladakh.

That is the reason why there are no takers of independence outside the valley. Moderate Mirwaiz Umar Farooq’s appeal to the new Lok Sabha members to rise above domestic politics on Kashmir found no resonance in the country. “Together we will be able to find some way to take a historic step,” he says. But he has no credibility in India. His father was far more realistic and favoured a solution within the Indian union but outside its constitution. He was killed by the militants.

I can appreciate the concern over the victory of Modi or his BJP. But New Delhi has had a BJP government earlier. Modi may be the stern face of Hindutva. But the Constitution is supreme and it assures all equality before the law. Even otherwise, India has been a multi-religious society for thousands of years.

Modi himself has said in his speeches that he, if elected, would take all the communities along with him for development, his agenda. Were he to disturb the diversity, the democratic and liberal forces in the country are strong enough to fight for pluralism, the ethos of freedom struggle.

Article 370 of India’s constitution guarantees a special status to Jammu

and Kashmir. Modi or his party cannot undo it because the state joined the Union of India on that condition. It is for the state to change the condition if it wants to do so. Yet it is essential that Kashmir problem is out of the way of all the three parties—India, Pakistan and Kashmir. This is difficult because the BJP has even demanded the deletion of Article 370. Deleting it will amount to betrayal of the understanding which Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah had reached.

There is a point in the warning by Farooq Abdullah that the deletion of Article 370 can reopen the question of Kashmir’s integration with India. The Article originally gave New Delhi Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication. Many Indian laws, relating to other subjects, have been extended to the state, some of them without the approval of the state legislature. Those would have to go. If the status which the state enjoyed soon after the integration is restored probably a solution to Kashmir is possible.

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by
Rohini Gawankar

Published by
Kamalakar Subhedar,
Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha,
Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,
Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W),
Mumbai 400072.
Mobile: 9820092255

Contribution: Rs.300+

Less the government, more advantage for market democracy

K. S. Chalam

There seem to be lot of discussion in the media about the effectiveness of a constricted government. Economists of the neo-liberal era in the West have produced volumes of scholarly works on the subject and were rewarded with the Nobel. Their Indian counterparts, both within the country and abroad, mostly through their assignments in IMF, World Bank, etc. have popularised their theories and are still vocal. The popular allegory that the invisible foot of state is unproductive is accepted here through the mission mode of the motivated experts. Already media reports are abuzz with indications that such and such an academic from USA is going to be the adviser to the next PM and he would make it sure that the state withers away as early as possible. It is also implicit in their contention that democracy is ultimately made to serve the market to reap benefits. After all, democratically elected governments are supposed to provide employment to people and that is possible only through growth. How could anyone achieve growth without investment and is the investment possible without accumulation? State is incapable and unproductive to perform these functions. Therefore, we have to rely on the market as it is a perfect and unbiased institution for realizing growth.

The experts, who advocate minimum role to government, do not have any political or ethical barriers and therefore, we can find them unnoticeable in any form of government either at the centre or in states. It is however, interesting

that their ideas are being voiced now through political leaders, foretelling that the future government would be more neo-liberal than the present ostracized one. This seems to be the plank on which the current elections are contested by most of the parties. Therefore, the topic is of great importance for policy makers and for ordinary citizens too.

Government is understood by economists as an agent commissioned by citizens to exercise power for the supply of public goods. Public goods are those that are non-rivalrous and non-excludable like fresh air, street lighting, public roads, etc. (There may be a different meaning and definition specified by other social scientists.) Good governance has also become a topic of political issue in the current elections. Here we need to look at the World Bank concept since it is taken as gospel truth and acknowledged so in India. Good governance is defined as, 'the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development'. Note the word management and not governance in the definition around which the executives are trained to implement the best practices generally certified by the Bank or its associates. The parameters of good governance are judged by accountability, transparency, rule of law and participation (not the unfair policies and practices). All of them have been translated into practice through various Acts or Government orders like RTI; Results Frame Work, Lok Pal, etc. One can see them in broad

print on glossy paper sent to funding agencies and some published by reputed publishers with subsidy available all over. What else do we need to witness the spirit of good governance in India?

Ever since the neo-liberal policies introduced by the government in 1991, there has been a discourse on new public management (NPM). There are persuasive studies and works by retired bureaucrats and serving scholars on the need to follow this American innovation to save the Indian economy. There were also attempts by the ruling classes to infuse new ideas of administration replacing the old concept of governance. The subtle differences between administration and governance and management are being erased. It is almost accepted both by the executive and academics that governance in the Indian state is nothing but 'the art of getting things done' or management. Treatises are published by former bureaucrats on this important issue advising young officers to cultivate the art of managing things. The government has designed and sponsored training programmes for civil servants through the management institutes or World Bank supported programmes mostly in the USA to learn about the nuances of making the state as a 'facilitator' of privatisation or economic reforms. The process was almost complete by 2000. We have also witnessed rapid economic growth and much faster depletion of our resources for more than a decade. The publicity and media honchos worked day and

night to tell us that the rate of growth and the model followed to accomplish the targets were incredible in some states in the recent history of the country. It is a success story.

Thanks to the UN MDGs, government took the issues of poverty seriously and made adjustments in data to show that India is about to be free from the scourge of poverty. Yet, no bureaucrat worth his salt advocated a role for the state in delivering welfare to the people. All of them (may be with some exceptions) have advocated that the young officers be motivated to work for the economic advancement of the nation through privatisation. Naturally, they understood the real meaning of it and became billionaires themselves and some joined private sector. However, it is common sense that the job of the state is not to train its officers for private sector, if at all, let there be lateral entry of officers.

The message that we got from the current election season is that there is nothing wrong with the model, but only with the men who managed it. It means that the regulatory mechanisms, the rules of the game, the RTI, Lok Pal, etc. are to be replaced by leaders who are more pliable to corporate houses that do business with government. In the process, some of the experts are citing instances from states that have shown outstanding results. They however, fail to explain or intentionally avoid the consequences of the model and the specificity of the state, vis -a -vis other states. Interestingly, they appear to have accepted the comments of the West

that India is a nation of snake charmers, but that did not bar doing business with it. Perhaps, intuitively the advisers and PR firms knew that the model can promote both capitalism and feudal administration without limitation of our doctrines. The engagement of clerics and babas as business gurus seem to have resolved the differences with an agreement to expand their business in India and our faith in the West. It seems the hypothesis of a contradiction between clergy and capital is either resolved or misconceived in the Indian context. Therefore, tradition and traders go hand in hand to do business irrespective of the type of government in power. The differentiation among social groups like castes including the dalits, OBCs, etc. is addressed by the experts and seems to have created models to resolve the likely discontentment during elections. It is alleged that only entrepreneurs or officers with business links are selected from these communities as the candidates in such a way that they are socially capable of dealing with discontents and suppress small irritants. In other words, a business-cum-political class has emerged and seen contesting the elections in 2014. They just do not bother about the larger issues or social concerns like poverty alleviation, dalit empowerment, women emancipation, etc. Is this a phenomenon of market democracy?

The essence of market democracy according to Noam Chomsky is engineering of consent through democratic process. Here some of the institutions look like democratic, such as political parties, elections,

universal franchise, etc. but, their ultimate goal is to make the market effective. In other words, the democratically elected government would be given a mandate to ensure that necessary support be given to the instruments of market to decide economic and social policies including tax rates, welfare budget, etc. The experts claim that they have worked well in the USA, Europe and elsewhere and hence should work in India too. The problem in India, they refuse to accept, is that being a federal nation-state we have not yet reached the stage where the model can be uniformly employed in all the states. For instance, Gujarat has a higher man-land ratio compared to Seemadhra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, etc. As per the 59th NSS Report, the per capita availability of land among 21.6 percent of SCs is 0.34 hectares, 41.6 percent of OBCs 0.76, 10.5 percent of STs 0.76 and others at 1.03. - the most iniquitous distribution. The arable land is not uniform across states: North India has 0.27, Central India 0.13, East 0.1, South 0.18, West 0.23 and India 0.18 lakh hectares per capita. How can we implement a land policy of giving thousands of hectares to business houses as in Gujarat, in Haryana, Andhra Pradesh or some other state? In fact the noted economist Sheila Bhalla has pointed out that the unequal power relationships led to land grabbing by foreign Investors under FDI and FII investments leading to pressure on land. This is a serious question that can be engaged in by a market democracy if it is left free. Why should the state get involved in this contentious issue? In an election season, the advisers must have suggested for initiating a veiled debate on this to convince the voters on the merits of outsourcing governance.

Policy issues that were ignored in election campaign

Bharat Dogra

In the heated election campaign while some frivolous issues generated quite a few headlines, some crucial policy change issues were by and large ignored. They are:

Economic inequalities should be reduced significantly as a matter of policy with emphasis on improving the prospects of people in the lowest layers of economy. In several critical areas of the economy the public sector should continue to play an important role. Multinational and foreign companies should be regulated very carefully. Cooperative sector should be reformed and strengthened to accept increasing responsibilities. Certain products and areas can be reserved for small-scale and cottage-scale entrepreneurs, cooperatives and self-help groups with emphasis on meeting basic needs of villages and small towns as well as generation of more diverse livelihoods there.

In foreign trade the drift towards heavy imports of several non-essentials including gold should be avoided. Steps which reduce excessive dependence on imports should be emphasised, while the sovereign government's capacity to reduce imports should be reclaimed. Similarly patent laws should be in line with national interest. Free trade agreements, existing and proposed, should be clearly examined to protect national interests. Steps should be taken in time to avoid heavy indebtedness, balance of payments problems and heavy dependence on uncertain 'hot money' inflows. The type of

linkages due to which any wider economic crisis is absorbed quickly unsettling our national economy should be avoided.

Budget making should emphasise raising of adequate resources to meet the basic needs of all people. Luxury consumption and high profit areas should be taxed adequately, while the tendency to give heavy concessions to corporate sector has to be given up.

Well-coordinated efforts should be made with other countries to reform the existing international finance and trade institutions, or for starting new justice based international institutions.

Fertile agricultural land should as far as possible be saved for agriculture and chances of displacement of farmers should be minimised. Special care should be taken to protect the land rights of tribals and to ensure the proper protection of laws enacted for this purpose. High priority should be given to make available cultivation land to as many landless farm workers as possible, using either provisions like land ceiling laws, or reclamation of new land using water conservation and other steps.

Ecologically protective, low-cost, location-specific technology which seeks to make best use of local resources and conditions should be emphasised, an approach which includes organic farming, protection of traditional seeds and biodiversity, soil and water conservation,

increasing green cover and forests. Farmers' seed rights should be well-protected and seed-banks of traditional diverse seeds should be set up with the close involvement of farmers including elderly farmers and women. Increasing control of big companies including multinational companies or their subsidiaries over seeds and other critical areas should be checked. G.M. crops and the related technology should be strictly banned keeping in view their many-sided, serious and irreversible adverse impacts and hazards. Use of chemical pesticides and weedicides should be minimised as much as possible. Protection of various forms of life who play a helpful role in farming should be emphasised.

Water conservation as well as protection/regeneration of greenery provide the base for survival in the form of meeting basic needs of life and supporting basic rural livelihoods. Some existing provisions like rural employment guarantee can be strengthened for this. In terms of resource use, concentrating attention on smaller watershed programmes as well as proper maintenance of existing canals will yield much better results instead of various new big and medium projects of dams and canals. Of course this will also be ecologically much safer and will help to avoid a lot of displacement. Safety of existing dams should be a significant area of concern. Indigenous mixed tree plantation work which resembles natural forests should be emphasised and

cutting of existing green trees should be minimised as much as possible. Indigenous trees which provide fodder and fruits should be emphasised in addition to trees with better soil and water conservation properties.

Protection and regeneration of natural mixed forests should get very high priority. The practice of raising monoculture plantations of commercial species of trees in place of natural forests should be given up forever. Forest based livelihoods of tribals and other communities living in and around forests should be protected and promoted. Their co-operatives or groups should be the main beneficiaries of minor forest produce based sustainable livelihoods, which emphasise also the protection of trees. These communities should never be displaced or evicted in the name of protection of wild life and forest; instead they should get livelihoods in this protection.

Animal husbandry should be encouraged with special emphasis on regeneration of pastures and fodder trees as well as protection of indigenous species of farm animals.

Availability of essential food items in public distribution network should be linked to strengthening of small and medium farmers in all rural areas. All raw food items needed for public distribution system as well as various nutrition programmes should be procured from local farmers at a fair price. As far as possible self-reliance in essential diverse food items at the local, district level should be ensured with internal trade filling in unavoidable gaps. Rules of WTO or

(Continued on Page 7)

Keep God out of electoral battle *low-level exchanges at the highest level are sickening*

Rajindar Sachar

BJP prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi is rushing through the country, projecting the Gujarat development model which, he claims, will be applied at the all-India level so as to make India as one of the envious countries in the world. It is a different matter that a credible critic like the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties, a human rights organisation founded by Jayaprakash Narayan during the Emergency in 1975, has published a book "Truth on Gujarat Development", which shows all these claims to be false.

I can understand the exaggerated claims made by Modi and the disreputable attempt by the Congress to cover up the corruption scandals and inefficiencies of the UPA government as part of a normal election strategy. But when Modi invokes God to his support in the elections, as he did recently by saying "that he has been chosen by God to rescue the country.... that God chooses certain people to do the difficult work" and he believes, "God has chosen me for this work", this is a statement that violates every teaching and tradition of Hinduism. Of course, I know very little of Hindu Shastras. But I know reasonably well to assert that under Hinduism God has never enlisted a mortal to save the country or lead the nation. Rather it is sacrilegious for any Hindu mortal to claim that in worldly matters he is the chosen one by

The Hindus' most sacred scripture, the four Vedas, which they believe were God's spoken words, are said to have been instilled into Brahama Rishis, whose names are not even known. Hindus believe in the "Trimurti" of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva). They further believe that when there is injustice, anarchy on earth, Vishnu comes in the garb of man (Avtar) to save the world. So is the story of Lord Rama, and Lord Krishna whom God gave mortal shape and then sent them to earth to carry out His work. But nowhere under Hinduism has a mortal man (I hope Modi loyalists would not contradict the mundane claim that Modi is a mortal person, like the rest of the earthly people) ever been entrusted direct by God to save the nation.

More forcefully the same message and pattern runs through all the other religions. To Christians Christ was the son of God - no other Christian claims a direct contact with God. The holy Quran rejects the notion of attributing divine qualities to anyone other than God. The Quran contains narratives of previous prophets such as Adam, Abraham and Moses.

Prophet Muhammad (the last Messenger of God) never claimed that God revealed to him the Quran direct. The Prophet's submissiveness to God is so complete as is shown by his open declaration that it was through Angel Gabriel that God

revealed the Quran to him. So Modi's claim that he has been chosen by God is sacrilegious. It is against the teachings of not just Hinduism and Islam, but of all religions. To claim such proximity to God is the most serious sacrilege.

Another declaration by Modi when he went to file his nomination papers from Varanasi attributed to him says that he has not come on his own, but that he has come at the command of Mata (mother) Ganga. It is well known that to Hindus the Ganga is not just a river but all divinity is attributed to it. I am not going into the question whether these words amount to invoking religious appeal during the elections and a corrupt practice, thus entailing disqualification. I concede that Modi is more conversant with the Hindu religion than me who could be called an ignoramus in this context. So surely he would remember that when Bhisham Pitamah, one of the great heroes in epic Mahabharat, goes to Mother Ganga (it should be remembered that Ganga was the real mother of Bhisham, according to the epic), Ganga gets angry and tells Bhisham: 'Why do you come running to me whenever you have any problem — use your own thinking and act accordingly'. Bhisham Pitamaha, the real son of the Ganga, accepts this remonstrance in all humility. So if Ganga, the real mother, does not want to get embroiled in worldly problems of her real son Bhisham, why would Ganga especially call Modi, who is engaged in petty worldly matters of elections? Shriman Modi, why are you cheapening the divinity and the worship of Mother Ganga for whom millions of Hindus have

the highest devotion and reverence?

Not to be outdone, Sonia Gandhi has also invoked God to save the country from the Gujarat model. Who should God listen to because He is for all religions? Can one not expect politicians to leave God alone to look after us small mortals who have only Him to save us?

The low-level exchanges between the Congress and the BJP at the highest level are sickening and show what degrading lows the fight for political plums can drag the parties to. This was not always so. Let me give an example of the dignity with which Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Pt. Nehru, known to be great political rivals, acted in the thick of the 1962 general election when Dr. Lohia decided to stand for Parliament against Pt. Nehru. He wrote to him thus: In these elections, your victory is certain. But if the certainty is turned into uncertainty and ultimately to your defeat then I would be extremely happy and it would also be beneficial for the country. Then you would get the opportunity to improve yourself and become a better person. In the end, I pray for your long life so that I may get the opportunity to reform you.

Pt. Nehru replied : I am happy that a sober person like you is opposing me in the elections. I think in this election the discussion would be centred on the political programmes. Be cautious and ensure that the personal discussion should be curtailed."

Later on in 1963 when Dr. Lohia was elected to the Lok Sabha and

went on the first day to attend the Lok Sabha session Pt. Nehru made it a point to be present there and to personally welcome him. The moral is - good manners should not become victim of political rivalry. Is it too much to expect that at least for the rest of the election period, let the debate be at the political level and not on personal vilification?

(Continued from Page 6)

any other international rules which stand in the way of strengthening local food or farming systems should be resisted.

Steps should be taken to free various kinds of produce from the grip of a few big traders and speculators so that farmers get justice and sudden escalations in price for consumers are also avoided. Direct contacts between farmers and city-based consumers for healthy, organic food can be encouraged by allocating space in specific city markets to clusters of villages, subject to certain conditions so that the weaker, smaller farmers can also benefit.

Any interference by international agencies, WTO or others, in a well-organised system of food security and food self-reliance based on farmers' secure livelihoods should be resisted strongly.

The country should aim for self-reliance in all essential consumer and capital goods. Only when this is not possible given our resource constraints, imports should be used.

All industrial units need to abide by properly framed regulations related to pollution, environment, displacement, health, safety, workers' welfare, standards and consumers' concerns.

Notebook

As if he is already in.....

He is already in. The Media behaves so, believes so. On the strength of this belief, a new “industry” has sprung up. Of scribes advising him on what he should do, speculating his options and what he is likely to choose, in fact bending over themselves to create sympathy for him. The failed economy, empty treasury, runaway price rise... that he has inherited. The media focuses solely on him, not on the NDA or BJP for he is seen to be larger than his party.

In all this the one thing that stands out, nay shouts, is the managing of the media, and the realisation that the media can be “used” as an effective tool to create whatever persona one wants to adopt. One had heard about it happening in the past, read about such manipulations, but actually witnessing these machinations, increases their fascination. He is the product of the media and he is also in a sense, creator of the media. Since the media belongs to the corporate sector, it will be easy to conclude that his victory is the victory of the corporate sector.

One lesson that some, perhaps many, will learn is that the corporate sector has now become so powerful that it can do, or get done whatever it wants to. And, this, paradoxically, will result in radicalisation of politics in the country. For not all the people have accepted the corporate sector as the arbiter of their fate. (The media obviously has, as it is owned by them.) And so, politics after Narendra Modi will be

qualitatively different from what it is today.

Interestingly, the media does not mention the RSS much while talking about him; it, perhaps, there are pockets of resistance within it to the RSS and they may not want the designs of the right wing organisation to succeed. All through the freedom movement, the RSS was kept at bay and the surge that was expected by the RSS-like forces after Gandhiji’s daylight murder, actually became the very cause of their failure. While Gujarat, or rather its citizens, may have turned their back on Gandhiji and replaced him by an icon, borrowed from the freedom movement, calling him Loh Purush, they have forgotten that he was what he was, because of Gandhiji. But the country will not forget Gandhiji. It will also not be lost on many that even the leaders of BJP avoid mentioning the founders of the RSS namely Shri Hedgewar or Shri Golwalkar.

What is on the cards is that the myriad on-going protest movements in the country will only intensify, and the expectation of the corporate sector that more land and natural resources will be available easily or for the asking may turn out to be no more than wishful thinking. A frail man, nearing his century, has given Narendra Modi sleepless nights because the latter could not go ahead with some of his development projects and a BJP MLA, Shri Kalsaria defeated him in the sense that a project of an industrialist favoured by Narendra Modi as Chief

Minister was not allowed to come up, though it should be admitted that he, Shri Kalsaria, paid the price by losing his seat. And villagers in Gujarat have not allowed many so-called development projects to come up. When there are so many such stalled projects in Gujarat itself, his failure in delivering land and natural resources to industries in the country will only multiply. The country will find, perhaps soon, that he is not the Loh Purush they made him out to be, the real Loh Purush are the people, the people sensitised by Tilak, Gandhiji and Babasaheb, by the freedom movement, by the Constitution, by socialists and communists, by the JP movement, by the anti-Emergency movement....

Speculation on how different actors in Indian politics will react to his rise, reveal some interesting possibilities. The RSS needs to be considered first, because it has staked its everything on his success. It will watch him hawk eyed: He is their product and has been anointed by it. The RSS will expect him to deliver what it dreamt of at its formation. And going by what he has done as Chief Minister, he will do his best not to renege on their hopes. But this will create a problem. The corporate sector will not expect him follow the RSS script and that will cause, perhaps the first friction. He will have to choose between the sector, which made his image, which ensured what he has become today, and what the RSS wants. This conflict will play out over the next few months, or maybe next couple

of years, and the disenchantment will start in some section or the other of our society. And then there are Ramdevs, Girirajs and Togadias. They will do what they are best at and Modi will be reminded of Rajdharma and they will lament the fact that he ignored the sage advice when it was given to him. There will be no fall-back position. Those who were witness to the Janata government will remember how the RSS had started a rumour campaign against Atal Behari Vajpayee when he started writing his own script. This will be Narendra Modi's fate too, if goes against the RSS.

And now to take a look at the Congress – defeated and demoralised. But any effort to revive the party by those of its leaders who try to, will find that the space on the right is overcrowded. Prithviraj Chauhan who allowed himself to say that the party could have taken decisions on environment faster, will find that there is no future anymore on that side. It is quite possible that the Congress will turn to Indira Gandhi, Pandit Nehru or even Gandhiji for ideas and it may lurch leftwards. In 1930, the Congress announced Purna Swaraj, and in 1954, it talked of Awadi socialism (the hated word even among Congressmen now), and for all we know these major events of the past may guide its future. The word inclusive which the Congress uses often may take a new meaning and the definition of PPP which means private profit at public cost may get reversed and the corporate sector, which has already abandoned the Congress, may provide it some rational reasons for its leftward lurch by making it a scapegoat for all that it views as the failure of the economy. Attacked, the Congress may find a new soul.

The regional parties will find that their support to the NDA means they have to capitulate to the dictats of this larger than life leader and their ability to bargain for seats and power is stymied, so they may perceive the NDA, as an enemy.

Socialists, who played a pivotal role in the freedom movement, and also, in all progressive movements, post-Independence, will undergo an interesting metamorphosis. There will be efforts to bring them together on a common platform and they will take to a people's movement readily. Socialists had set up Rashtra Seva Dal to combat the RSS. It still exists and may become more active. The trade union movement, faced with what they call third generation reforms, will take to streets under socialists and communists. And socialists will go green with global warming and the increasing inequality becoming important motivations. Hopefully they will learn a lesson or two. When a tactic or strategy to achieve a given objective is made into an end, unintended results follow. This is precisely what has happened when the strategy that was accepted by some socialists to defeat Congress became their sole aim. And one more lesson needs to be learnt. A split in an ideological party results in negating the very possibility of achieving its ideological outcome.

The IAC/AAP- sensitised middle class is unlikely to go back to its sheltered existence. They took to the streets with the depths that crony capitalism and corruption had plunged the country, many have appreciated Arvind Kejriwal's taking on Narendra Modi and hence they will not become the latter's admirers.

And the people's movements, there are so many of them, will become more focused, more sharp, more aggressive, because they will not miss the fact that Narendra Modi is the creation of that sector which was and is their target. Greens – there is no green party - will get a new traction and those who wish to protect the livelihoods of common people will find in the environmental movement and its ideological formulations, a new source of inspiration and the cause for their existence. Gandhiji's ideas, which are practiced by many activists, though not specifically mentioned, will now get openly mentioned.

There are no ifs....it is clear. Radicalisation of politics is on the cards and there are exciting days ahead. India will, like South America, blaze a new trajectory for a new world. There will be people who will reject this thinking as wishful thinking. If it is so, so be it.

– G GP

Acharya Javadekar

A Satyagrahi Socialist

by

G. P. Pradhan



Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Dialogue with Political Parties on Education Policy - II

Global Capital's Agenda to Privatisise and Commercialise Higher Education

The pattern of neoliberal policies introduced in the school education system is now being replicated in the higher education of the country and privatisation and commercialisation is being promoted at rapid pace in this sector. During NDA's regime in year 2000, the Ambani-Birla Committee constituted by the government presented its report which recommended that secondary and higher education should be handed over to the private sector. NDA also initiated the process of putting the 'offer' of higher education in WTO-GATS, which was subsequently taken ahead by UPA-I. The UPA-II presented six Bill on higher education to establish the legislative framework required for facilitating trade in higher education. Although these Bills are pending in the parliament, many political parties are in favour of them.

In the 11th Plan, policies of siphoning of public funds and assets to private hands through PPP were implemented and laws for establishing private universities were passed by several states. The market of these private higher education shops is expanding by support of central and state governments. However, there are serious questions on the quality of education provided by most of these private institutions and even today they are far behind the public sector institutions in almost all areas (like humanities, law, science, medicine,

engineering, management etc.). Yet, the governments do not hesitate in praising the private institutions and establishing 'education hubs' where private institutions can flourish by charging huge fees from students. Even the education loans that have grown in last decade are nothing but a backdoor method of providing subsidy to private institutions which are otherwise too costly for ordinary students and would turn bankrupt without this backdoor subsidy.

In recent years, several state governments have reduced the funding of higher education institutions. Permanent faculties are being replaced by 'contract' teachers and 'guest faculty'. Fund-starved public universities are forced to start 'self-financing courses' which are framed according to the dictates of global market instead of our social needs or the requirements of the particular subject. The private institutions are already functioning according to the recommendations of 'Ambani-Birla Report' and now even the public universities are being pushed in that direction. Due to this, the country is now returning to colonial slavery when all knowledge production will be centred in developed capitalist countries and India will be forced to buy costly knowledge by paying for hefty patents for the low grade degrees awarded by low quality institutions here. This was one of the major reasons of India's impoverishment in the colonial times. Thus, India will increasingly

fall into the trap of imperialist global capital and its sovereignty would be eroded.

Question: (A) Is your party ready to struggle in the parliament to save higher education from assault of privatisation and commercialisation and to re-establish the constitutional agenda of establishing a higher education capable of building a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened society in India? If yes, is there any evidence of this in party's manifesto? What is the agenda of your party to change the ongoing policies?

(B) If your party is not in favour of handing over education to global markets, then is there a resolve in party's manifesto to withdraw the 'offer' of higher education made by the government in WTO-GATS or to create public awareness against it and also to pressurize the government in parliament?

(C) If your party is in favour of privatisation and commercialisation of higher education then what alternative policy does the party has to establish the constitutional agenda of establishing a higher education capable of building a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened society?

(D) If your party is in favour of handing over higher education to global markets through WTO-GATS, how it will protect and strengthen the sovereignty of the nation?

Responses:

CPM representative stated that the party is against giving higher education in private hands as well as against FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in this sector. She informed that CPM manifesto clearly states that sectors like education, health and water should not be included in WTO-GATS negotiations. She told that the party manifesto demands withdrawal of the higher education Bills pending in the parliament ("Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010", "The Higher Education and Research Bill (THER) 2011, and "Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, 2012"). It also demands restoring democratic rights of students, teachers and non-teaching staff in higher education institutions. CPM is also against the 'Four-Year Undergraduate Programmes' and will repeal them when it comes in power. Later in the discussion, she also added that the party is in favour of necessary changes in the educational curriculum to incorporate the rich cultural diversity of the country.

Congress representative said that he will put the issue raised here before his party for consideration. Subsequently, he said that the Congress-led government has expanded higher education considerably by establishing new IITs, IIITs, IIMs and AIIMs. He informed that the party manifesto promises establishment of 'Educational Regulatory Commission', an umbrella body to

act as grievance redressal mechanism and also as an advisory body on higher education. Besides, the party promises to establish a 'National Youth Commission'. He further stated that the party has promised to establish 70 new universities.

When he was reminded that UPA has already accepted the goal of establishing 1500 universities (recommended by the Knowledge Commission), so if Congress is promising to establish 70 new universities, what about the rest 1430 universities? And how they will be established, i.e. whether they will be under PPP or through FDI or foreign universities will be invited? He declined to comment on this.

Responding to the question, **AAP** representative stated that his party is not in favour of globalisation in education at the present moment and it will follow the national consensus in this regards. He stated that the party is yet to fully analyse the issue and take an appropriate stand on it. However, as far as the issue of privatisation and nationalisation of higher education is considered, AAP "does not distinguishes between operator A and operator B, whereas, A can be private and B can be government". To solve the problem of higher education he suggested that AAP stands for instituting accountability and especially the accountability of teachers. Besides, AAP favours extensive use of information technology and e-learning and also to establish "industry-academia interface". Interestingly, the AAP representative

praised Sam Pitroda saying that his proposals have been a boon to the nation.

The **SP** also stated that it is opposed to privatisation in higher education. Party representative stated that the party manifesto clearly speaks against privatisation of higher education, however, he did not mention what alternatives does the party suggested to reverse privatisation that has already happened or to revert the 'offer' of higher education made by the government in WTO.

SJP's Shri Sunil stated that the party is committed to free higher education and it is against FDI in the sector as well as the WTO-GATS agenda in higher education. However, it is not against intellectual exchange, provided it is based on equality.

CPI-ML representative informed that although the agenda of establishing democratic, secular, enlightened and humane education is not expressly stated in party manifesto, it has been in party's agenda and is integral programme of party's student organisation. The party is also committed to reverting privatisation, commercialisation and also the WTO-GATS agenda in education as well as all other sectors.

SUCI also expressed its commitment to free higher education and against privatisation and WTO agenda in higher education. The party also opposes bureaucratization of universities that is subverting democracy in educational institutions.

The Issue of Equality vs. Inclusion in Education

Out of the total children admitted in class I (from all class-caste

groups), only 17-18 percent are able to pass class XII, the remaining more

than 80 percent of the children are 'pushed out' of the education system

due to many reasons. Only about 6 percent of tribal children, 8 percent of the Dalit children, 9 percent of the Muslims, and 10 percent of the OBCs are able to cross class XII. This means that 90 percent of the children from dalit and backward castes are not only deprived of higher education but they are also denied the benefits of social justice agenda i.e. reservations. In other words, the much talked about agenda of 'inclusion' in 11th Plan is merely for a selected handful of the 10 percent or even less of the youth from dalit and backward castes. Is there any party to raise voice against an education system that deprives more than 90 percent of education and 'includes' a small number within the remaining 10 percent?

Questions: (A) Does your party accepts the neoliberal principle of 'inclusion' instead of the constitutional ideal of 'equality' for the children and youth of dalit and backward communities?

(B) If not, then what agenda does your party manifesto spells to reverse current policies of 'inclusion'?

(C) If yes, then what agenda does your party manifesto has to build a democratic, secular, egalitarian and just India through the so-called policies of 'inclusion'?

Responses:

CPM's Sandhya Shaili stated that her party will support 'equality' over 'inclusion'. On the question of "drop-outs", she stated that the party manifesto includes provisions to initiate necessary economic changes, increased financial allocation and setting up bodies and mechanism to curb it. Besides, she

stated that the manifesto is merely a short-term document for a particular election, and the party programme which is committed to 'people's democratic revolution' binds the party to the principle of equality.

The **Congress** representative, who had left the discussion earlier, had told that his previous reply stands for this question as well. Clearly, the party not only favours 'inclusion' over and above 'equality', but its government is actively implementing policies of inclusion in education system, especially higher education.

AAP representative stated that he sees the issue in terms of 'drop-outs', i.e. 90 percent students drop-out till class XII. [At this point he was asked, if would prefer the term 'drop-out' instead of 'push-out'. He replied that he preferred using 'drop-out' and spelled the reasons for this as well]. "I will give an example, you can take the horse to a pond but cannot make it drink water", he said. He explained that those who do not understand what is being taught from the beginning drop-out subsequently and no matter what policy is brought nothing can happen of such students. The solution offered by AAP is to import the concept of 'effortless learning' from US and other developed countries **SP** representative tried to evade the question altogether by stating vaguely that his party is committed to uplifting of backward sections etc. He also gave examples of efforts made by SP government in UP like distribution of laptops, cycles and also opening of schools in backward areas. It is clear that not only the party manifesto does not contains any such reference but also that the party government is actually implementing policies of 'inclusion'

instead of 'equality' in the state where it rules at present.

SJP's Shri Sunil had added in the reply given to the last question that the party is against the policies as well as the idea of 'inclusion' and that it supports 'equality'.

CPI-ML stated that it supports 'equality' and the demand of establishing 'Common School System' is related to implementation of the principle of 'equality' only. If such a system is implemented the problem of more than 80 percent children getting excluded will be solved. However, the party representative also candidly accepted that the party manifesto does not expressly contain any statement against policies of 'inclusion'.

CPI also stated its stand in favour of equality and its representative stated that no form of inequality is acceptable to the party. He said that from the very time of independence, the party has demanded that free and egalitarian education system should be implemented which is the only solution to the present crisis.

SUCI also supported equality and stated that the party is in favour of increasing budgetary allocation to education and bring it to 10 percent of GDP to solve the problem of the 'push-outs'. He stated that a cultural movement is required for democratization of the society which is also a reason for children getting excluded. He also said that reservation in its present form is merely polarising the society and its benefits are being taken away by the 'creamy-layer' within backward castes.

Concluding Remarks

The question, finally, is what lessons should we draw from the above discussion about the educational agenda of the political parties invited to the discussion? Some brief observations in this regards are,

· The **Congress** has no alternative **to offer** other than what it has done in not only the last decade of its rule, but from the very beginning of the economic reforms that it started. If returned to power, the party will continue with unabated privatisation and commercialisation of education at all levels. It has already subverted the Constitutional agenda of 'equality' and implemented policies of 'inclusion' hands in gloves with its largest opponent, i.e. BJP. Although the party representative stated that Congress is ready for dialogue on the policies it has initiated, AIFRTE's experience proves the contrary.

AAP, riding on a populist tide of anti-corruption refuses to even acknowledge the Constitutional vision of equality and justice as far as education policy is concerned. If for Congress privatisation is something that 'cannot be reversed now', for AAP privatisation is the

only solution! The party does not even acknowledge the structural inequalities of education system and it wants us to believe that the dogma of technology and anti-corruption is the ultimate panacea of all ills. In case the party comes to power, it will not curb privatisation and commercialisation, and instead of pursuing the constitutional vision of equality and social justice it replace it with some quick fix of technology imported from the developed capitalist countries.

· **Samajwadi Party** has no vision beyond a vulgar populist slogan that it has given in its manifesto, i.e. to provide free education from primary to higher levels. Although the party is high in terms of such sloganeering, it has nothing to offer in terms of concrete policies and agenda except pursuing the neoliberal policies of privatisation and inclusion.

· As far as the various sections of the **Left** are concerned, it is true that their position on education system is broadly in agreement with our demand of ending privatisation and commercialisation and establishing 'Common School System' based on equality and social justice. However, it is desirable that more clarity on

certain important points like the real nature of RTE Act, policies of 'inclusion' and establishment of 'Common School System' is developed.

· Among the parties whose representatives did not appear, as already mentioned, BJP did not even bother to inform the reason of not sending its representative! This was definitely not by any 'mistake' because the party's state leadership at the highest level was contacted and several reminders were also sent. Clearly, BJP decided not to participate in the discussion and there can be two reasons for this, firstly, it is afraid of any discussion and questioning as to its policies for fear of getting exposed; or secondly, the party does not believe in democratic discussion altogether.

So, as the General Elections progress, the country needs to know and explore what real alternatives it has. Should we opt the same "*Rulers, who neither see, nor feel, nor know, / But leech-like to their fainting country cling*" or seek those with commitment to the ideals that moved our great freedom struggle!

—Lokesh Malti Prakash for Shiksha Adhikar Manch

A short history of May Day

The history of the world holiday on the 1st May - May Day, or International Workers Day, held in commemoration of four anarchists executed for struggling for an 8-hour day.

Originally a pagan holiday, the roots of the modern May Day bank holiday are in the fight for the eight-

hour working day in Chicago in 1886, and the subsequent execution of innocent anarchist workers.

In 1887, four Chicago anarchists were executed; a fifth cheated the hangman by killing himself in prison. Three more were to spend six years in prison until pardoned by Governor Altgeld who said the trial

that convicted them was characterised by "hysteria, packed juries and a biased judge". The state had, in the words of the prosecution put "Anarchy is on trial" and hoped their deaths would also be the death of the anarchist idea.

The anarchists were trade union organisers and May Day became an

international workers day to remember their sacrifice. They were framed on false charges of throwing a bomb at police breaking up a demonstration in Chicago. This was part of a strike demanding an 8 hour day involving 400,000 workers in Chicago that started May 1st 1886.

It began over a century ago when the American Federation of Labour adopted an historic resolution which asserted that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labour from and after May 1st, 1886".

In the months prior to this date workers in their thousands were drawn into the struggle for the shorter day. Skilled and unskilled, black and white, men and women, native and immigrant were all becoming involved.

In Chicago alone 400,000 were out on strike. A newspaper of that city reported that "no smoke curled up from the tall chimneys of the factories and mills, and things had assumed a Sabbath-like appearance". This was the main centre of the agitation, and here the anarchists were in the forefront of the labour movement. It was to no small extent due to their activities that Chicago became an outstanding trade union centre and made the biggest contribution to the eight-hour movement.

The Chicago anarchist movement was also strong. In 1884, they produced the world's first Anarchist daily newspaper, the *Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung*, plus a weekly, *Fackel*, and a Sunday edition, *Vorbote*. By 1886, these newspapers had a circulation of over 26,000 - read by the large German immigrant working class community of the city. There were also newspapers for English, Bohemian and Scandinavian speakers. As well as this, Chicago anarchists were active in the unions and organised picnics, lectures, dances, libraries and other events for workers. These helped

forge strong bonds of class solidarity, which was worrying to the bosses who were keen to break the workers' organisations.

When on May 1st 1886, the eight hour strikes convulsed that city, one half of the workforce at the McCormick Harvester Co. came out. Two days later a mass meeting was held by 6,000 members of the 'lumber shovers' union who had also come out. The meeting was held only a block from the McCormick plant and was joined by some 500 of the strikers from there.

The workers listened to a speech by the anarchist August Spies, who has been asked to address the meeting by the Central Labour Union. While Spies was speaking, urging the workers to stand together and not give in to the bosses, the strikebreakers were beginning to leave the nearby McCormick plant.

The strikers, aided by the 'lumber shovers' marched down the street and forced the scabs back into the factory. Suddenly a force of 200 police arrived and, without any warning, attacked the crowd with clubs and revolvers. They killed at least one striker, seriously wounded five or six others and injured an indeterminate number.

Outraged by the brutal assaults he had witnessed, Spies went to the office of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and composed a circular calling on the workers of Chicago to attend a protest meeting the following night.

The protest meeting took place in the Haymarket Square and was addressed by Spies and two other anarchists active in the trade union movement, Albert Parsons and Samuel Fielden.

Throughout the speeches the crowd was orderly. Mayor Carter Harrison, who was present from the beginning of the meeting, concluded that "nothing looked likely to happen to require police interference". He advised police

captain John Bonfield of this and suggested that the large force of police reservists waiting at the station house be sent home.

It was close to ten in the evening when Fielden was closing the meeting. It was raining heavily and only about 200 people remained in the square. Suddenly a police column of 180 men, headed by Bonfield, moved in and ordered the people to disperse immediately. Fielden protested "we are peaceable".

At this moment a bomb was thrown into the ranks of the police. It killed one, fatally wounded six more and injured about seventy others. The police opened fire on the spectators. How many were wounded or killed by the police bullets was never exactly ascertained.

A reign of terror swept over Chicago. The press and the pulpit called for revenge, insisting the bomb was the work of socialists and anarchists. Meeting halls, union offices, printing works and private homes were raided. All known socialists and anarchists were rounded up. Even many individuals ignorant of the meaning of socialism and anarchism were arrested and tortured. "Make the raids first and look up the law afterwards" was the public statement of Julius Grinnell, the state's attorney.

Eventually eight men stood trial for being "accessories to murder". They were Spies, Fielden, Parsons, and five other anarchists who were influential in the labour movement, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Michael Schwab, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe.

The trial opened on June 21st 1886 in the criminal court of Cook County. The candidates for the jury were not chosen in the usual manner of drawing names from a box. In this case a special bailiff, nominated by state's attorney Grinnell, was

appointed by the court to select the candidates. The defence was not allowed to present evidence that the special bailiff had publicly claimed "I am managing this case and I know what I am about. These fellows are going to be hanged as certain as death".

The eventual composition of the jury was farcical; being made up of businessmen, their clerks and a relative of one of the dead policemen. No proof was offered by the state that any of the eight men before the court had thrown the bomb, had been connected with its throwing, or had even approved of such acts. In fact, only three of the eight had been in Haymarket Square that evening.

No evidence was offered that any of the speakers had incited violence, indeed in his evidence at the trial Mayor Harrison described the speeches as "tame". No proof was offered that any violence had been contemplated. In fact, Parsons had brought his two small children to the meeting.

That the eight were on trial for their anarchist beliefs and trade union activities was made clear from the outset. The trial closed as it had opened, as was witnessed by the final words of Attorney Grinnell's summation speech to the jury. "Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the Grand Jury, and indicted because they were leaders. There are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury; convict these men, make examples of them, hang them and you save our institutions, our society."

On August 19th seven of the defendants were sentenced to death, and Neebe to 15 years in prison. After a massive international campaign for their release, the state 'compromised' and commuted the sentences of

Schwab and Fielden to life imprisonment. Lingg cheated the hangman by committing suicide in his cell the day before the executions. On November 11th 1887 Parsons, Engel, Spies and Fischer were hanged.

600,000 working people turned out for their funeral. The campaign to free Neebe, Schwab and Fielden continued. On June 26th 1893 Governor Altgeld set them free. He made it clear he was not granting the pardon because he thought the men had suffered enough, but because they were innocent of the crime for which they had been tried. They and the hanged men had been the victims of "hysteria, packed juries and a biased judge".

The authorities believed at the time of the trial that such persecution would break the back of the eight-hour movement. Indeed, evidence later came to light that the bomb may have been thrown by a police agent working for Captain Bonfield, as part of a conspiracy involving certain steel bosses to discredit the labour movement.

When Spies addressed the court after he had been sentenced to die, he was confident that this conspiracy would not succeed:

"If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement... the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in misery and want, expect salvation - if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread on a spark, but there and there, behind you - and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out".

In 1889, the first congress of the Second International, meeting in Paris for the centennial of the French Revolution and the Exposition Universelle, following a proposal by Raymond Lavigne, called for international demonstrations on the

1890 anniversary of the Chicago protests. May Day was formally recognized as an annual event at the International's second congress in 1891.

Subsequently, the May Day Riots of 1894 occurred. In 1904, the International Socialist Conference meeting in Amsterdam called on "all Social Democratic Party organizations and trade unions of all countries to demonstrate energetically on May First for the legal establishment of the 8-hour day, for the class demands of the proletariat, and for universal peace." The congress made it "mandatory upon the proletarian organizations of all countries to stop work on May 1, wherever it is possible without injury to the workers."

In many countries, the working classes sought to make May Day an official holiday, and their efforts largely succeeded. May Day has long been a focal point for demonstrations by various socialist, communist and anarchist groups.

In the United States and Canada, however, the official holiday for workers is Labor Day in September. After the Haymarket Square riot in May, 1886, US President Grover Cleveland feared that commemorating Labor Day on May 1 could become an opportunity to commemorate the riots. Thus he moved in 1887 to support the Labor Day that the anti-anarchist union the Knights Of Labor supported.

Right-wing governments have traditionally sought to repress the message behind International Workers' Day, with fascist governments in Portugal, Italy, Germany and Spain abolishing the workers' holiday, and the Conservative party in the UK currently [2011] attempting to abolish the UK's annual May Day Bank Holiday.

This article was pieced together from an article on anarkismo.net, edited and added to by libcom



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 15
May 11, 2014

Relevance of the third front
Prem Singh

**Indian judiciary and
the end of Dalit bonhomie**
K. S. Chalam

**manifestoes of political parties
and the minorities?**
Irfan Engineer

Electing a representative
Jyoti Punwani

To save the planet
GGP

Massacre in Assam

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Keenly awaited verdict

S. Viswam

Don't get us wrong, we are as much for democracy and democratic institutions and processes as the average Indian is, but, frankly, we are a bit fatigued by the highly repetitive and monotonous character of the election campaign and the duration of the 2014 Lok Sabha electioneering. It was one of the most protracted among the elections in India, of which there is no dearth these days. This is not the proper time to raise the issue but as a nation we do need to consider why we cannot mandatorily have general elections only in the winter months and why we cannot limit polling to a brief period. For the candidates, for the parties, for the administration, for the security forces, the last couple of months have been a grinding exercise in endurance in oppressive weather and inhospitable conditions. We need to make our elections more acceptable and welcome.

It is a flattering comment, though, on the commitment of the people of India to the concept of democracy and what it means to a developing country of poor people. Despite heavy odds, the people sustained their interest in the democratic

process of campaigning and polling, and the long queues in front of booths testified to this commitment. We have successfully brought the electoral process to a happy conclusion and it is no exaggeration to say that seldom in India's electoral history has the verdict been awaited so keenly, anxiously and with such informed anticipation. Let us await the verdict, but if you ask the man on the street he is most probably going to tell you that the BJP will emerge number one, the Congress number two and the regional parties number three. On whether Narendra Modi will be prime minister there are many opinions. On whether Rahul Gandhi can become prime minister, there are no bets. The answer is a loud and clear no.

One of the reasons to be happy over electioneering entering its final phase is that we will cease to hear vituperative, no-holds-barred abusive and undignified language filled with personal attacks as part of the daily discourse. Clearly, India has forgotten how to conduct an interesting, lively and issues-filled campaign. We touched the nadir where dignified language and informed debate was concerned. It

was personal and abusive, start to finish. No national issue of crucial importance figured, and no issue was debated seriously or even peripherally. Second, what a pity that the campaign was restricted (on the national level) to Narendra Modi on the BJP side and the Gandhi family on the Congress side. Where were the BJP stalwarts? And what happened to all those old and aged and infirm "veteran" Congressmen? Does the BJP have only one member nowadays, a certain Johnny-come-lately known as Narendra Modi? Where is the redoubtable Sushma Swaraj? What happened to the rabble rousers in the Grand Old Party, the old seniors, those whose names always figured in the list of working committee and election committee members?

At the end of the campaign one of the interesting conclusion an observer can arrive at is that belying all hopes and expectations, the Aam Aadmi Party has turned out to be a Paper Tiger. Here is wishing good luck to Arvind Kejriwal in Varanasi but apart from his, one did not hear the name of any other serious AAP campaigner. Seldom in India's political history has so much been expected of a single political party as was hoped for from the AAP, and seldom has there been such a disappointment. The AAP broke news as a Delhi party and its fate has also been sealed as a Delhi party. The people will be cautious in future in investing new parties with larger than life images.

Having said this, it would only remains to wonder why the BJP reverted to type during the last stages of the campaign and deliberately turned it both communal and religious? And at a time when the

(Continued on Page 15)

Notebook

To save the planet

It is sad to realize that even if the election fever were not there, the March IPCC Report would not have roused much interest. There was a time in the early 90's in the last century when the world was agog with the talk of climate change and global warming and there was justified and serious concern as well as honest and sincere commitment to do something to mitigate the evil effects, to reduce the green house gas emissions and to move forward towards a low carbon economy. Nations were ready to make binding commitments, and the rich nations were even ready to accept their responsibility for what had gone wrong and make amends. But all that has gone. A prolonged exercise to renege on what was promised at Rio and thereafter for a few years, perhaps in a rare moment of decency, is on. Year after year, this exercise becomes more perceptible and palpable, and the objective to save the planet earth is all but given up and buck passing started. This is where we are at present and there does not seem to be any reversal. But the scientists have not relented. Their warnings have become more and more strident and emphatic. But more emphatic they are, less effective they seem to be vis-a-vis the national governments. With the latter, the business as usual is the mantra. If to reduce the green house gas emissions, there is a suggestion that you reduce some consumption, the capitalist logic takes over. More and more consumption is the condition for capitalist growth and this prevails.

Governments, of whichever hue they maybe, have buckled in, and capitalism has defeated the scientists' rational concerns. This is a tragedy and it has to be avoided at all costs. But those who wish to avert will have to look for signs that favour them, look for those sections of society that are willing to listen to them. This is a battle that the civil society will have to fight, whether the state is its ally or not, and has to win.

But one mantra that they will have to give to themselves is that the state is likely to be an obstacle, even an adversity, and hence they will have to plan all their moves accordingly. Read what advise Pangairya and Bhagwati are giving to the new Prime Ministerial hopeful of our country: have a pragmatic, read pliable, environment minister. But that's what UPA did. Each recalcitrant minister was eased out and replaced by an amenable one, and, for all we know, these free market enthusiasts may even advise the new government to have a committed judiciary. One of them has already hinted that the Planning Commission, even though headed by a WB man, has outlived its purpose and be wound up. The advice is possibly to ensure that the new Prime Minister will have one hurdle less to pursue his neo-liberal dream. These growth enthusiasts do not realize that it is not the ministers or bureaucrats that are preventing prompt environmental clearance of the so-called growth projects, it is the public, the citizens who will

lose out because of the given project and the well meaning environmentalists, who often call the shots. And that will not change.

It should as well be noted that Jairam Ramesh only occasionally listened to the environmentalists and almost always gave in to those for whom growth is the be all and end all of their efforts. Those who wish to save the planet, for them the hope lies with those movements which are fighting against nuclear power plants, which are fighting to save the livelihoods of common persons, which advocate alternate development models, which advocate simple living and decry consumerism, which make villagers unwilling to part with their fertile lands at any price, which talk of '*Hamare gaon me hamara raj*', and the country fortunately has several such movements.

While peoples' movements can support and even provide a platform to spread the message, there are so many individuals who and groups which do something that could be heartening to those who wish to address the issue of climate change. Press reports such things off and on. Sample a few: A group switched off lights for an hour on a particular day, another group garaged their cars for a day, a government office equipped itself with a device which automatically dimmed the lights when no one was around in the room or hall, some concerned citizens demanded safe cycle tracks along the roads and took to cycling to go to office, or decided to use public transport, another group took to promoting roof-water harvesting, city farming, composting of kitchen waste in the compound of the building or in the tenement itself. All such news

which indicate that citizens are doing something at their level should not only hearten but indicate the direction which the save planet movement should take.

There are two scourges which have to be addressed. One is poverty and the other is inequality. The poverty is a scourge not because the poor contribute much to green house gas emissions, but because their poverty makes them available to the rich as cheap labour and this helps the rich to indulge in more, actually obscene, consumption. And the growing inequality, apart from the negative social effects, harms the climate because the rich set an example for the not very rich. This is what is happening everywhere. Our rich often beat the very rich of the rich countries in their luxurious living. Banishing poverty and reducing inequality can and should become the twin additional but important causes for the activists and environmentalists to save the planet. It is quite possible that they will be called environmental terrorists, once popular but not in use lately. That is what they, the save the planet tribe, should aim to become.

If they are serious, if we as citizens are serious, we will need an organization devoted exclusively to save the planet. It should welcome, document and disseminate all practices of citizens that are undertaken with the view to reducing green house gases. While the organization may interact with authorities with a view converting them to the cause, its focus should be on citizens and their small organizations and it should make them aware of what future the earth is facing and train them to think differently and to live differently.

This country has thrived on 'tyag' (*ten tyakten bhunjithah*) and our people still believe in this and more often than not practice it, and it is this which will help the new organization achieve its objective. Similarly, the generation which grew up during the freedom movement imbibed the value of Swadeshi as preached by Gandhiji, and that too can become a powerful weapon to reduce green house gases. But not just promoting Tyag or Swadeshi among citizens, the organization will have to shame those who live in obscenely luxurious style, have gala weddings, import Italian marble for their mansions, or exotic flowers on ceremonial occasions. Younger generation will understand what carbon footprint means and it can be sensitized to the futility of carbon trade. Go back to villages, live frugally and with nature, use solar energy maximally – it is free, all you have to do is to learn how to harvest it, harvest roof-water, compost your kitchen waste yourself, change your idea of the city – Indian cities are most unequal and least inclusive is the finding of a recent survey and the slum population is anywhere between 65.5 million and 90 million, should be some of the slogans. The ideas are galore and practitioners plenty, what is required is the determination to save the planet with or without the help of the state. The town planners or architects whatever they learn in their schools, should work to make the ghetto like Bandra-Kurla complex where people go to work during the day, and at night there is the stillness of death, a thing of the past. In Mumbai, workers used to live next to the mill and it is this that should guide the green town planners, even if it is not taught in their schools.

–GGP

Relevance of the third front

Prem Singh

Despite their efforts before and during the initial rounds of the Lok Sabha elections, the Third Front based upon the third force politics has not been able to emerge in a definite shape; neither on the basis of the parties, nor on the basis of a common minimum program (CMP). Although senior leaders like A. B. Bardhan, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Prakash Karat, Jayalalithaa, Naveen Patnaik, Nitish Kumar and Sharad Yadav were playing a major role in it. The leaders, who were engaged in the making of the third front, got busy in election campaign saying that after the election results were out, the Third Front would take shape and form a government at the centre. However, this statement has not convinced the general public. The obvious reason for this is the opportunistic and unstable behavior of some of the leaders who talk about the Third Front. The civil society during discussions with the media or otherwise, often ridicule the very idea of a third front. The actual reason for this derision is the fear that the hold of the corporate capitalism can be somewhat challenged only by the Third Front. And this is not acceptable to the members of the elite civil society and its media.

Most regional parties, who claim to be the champions of social justice, are not direct agents of neo-liberalism like the Congress and the BJP. Their social base comes in the way of their open support to neo-liberalism. That is why it is generally observed that leaders of these parties do not support capitalism openly.

Rather, they often oppose it in their statements and resolutions. The capitalist-communalist nexus which has a hold over the country's politics can be checked up to a limit by only the Third Front that includes left parties and an outside support by the Congress.

The struggle for alternative politics started with the implementation of the new economic policies at the beginning of the 1990s, has been destroyed by the Narendra Modi "tsunami", facilitated, to a large extent, by the combined effect of the anti-corruption movement launched by India Against Corruption (IAC) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). It is true that the deprived masses can find relief only by establishing an alternative political system, based on the principles of the Constitution, replacing the neo-liberal one. Kishan Patnaik, the socialist thinker of repute, delineated concrete outline for an alternative political ideology and political culture as well, one in which capitalism and the recklessly expensive spectacle of circus politics is fundamentally opposed. He called for the establishment of an independent, self-reliant, socialist, economic nationalism. But it will take a long time to re-establish that struggle starting from scratch. It will be easier if the Third Front government comes and stays in power at least for five years. If the corporate lackeys form a government again at the centre, then it is possible that the capitalist-communalist nexus will completely wipe out the slightest possibility of

an alternative. For this the Congress has to act sensibly, and see that it sincerely supports the Third Front government for five years and get rid of the neo-liberal policies it has so far implemented, to come back in the game.

By declaring and promulgating their prime ministerial candidate in advance, the BJP has actually made a move against the Third Front and not the Congress. The BJP knows that the Congress will not come to power for the third time. Lest the public lends its support to the Third Front because of the similar economic policies of both the parties, the BJP has declared their prime ministerial candidate before hand and spent money on an unprecedented scale. The BJP knows that the most contentious issue in the Third Front is the question: who will become the prime minister? The leaders trying to form the Third Front generally talk about the number-strength in this case. Learning from the Janata Party government of 1977, one can see that a candidate from a party with a very few seats too can also be made prime minister. One such name could be the senior most leader of CPI, A. B. Bardhan who has a clear understanding and standpoint as far as neo-liberalism and communalism are concerned. Alongside there can be two deputy prime ministers on the basis of number-strength.

The Third Front should also include those smaller parties that are constantly struggling against the neo-liberal and communal nexus and

are truly socialist and secular, although they have no presence in the Parliament or the legislative assemblies. There has been a constant dialogue and correspondence between Shri Bardhan and the Socialist Party president Bhai Vaidya (former secretary general of the Janata Party and Home Minister of Maharashtra) and Justice Rajindar Sachar on this subject for the past more than one year. Some months before the elections, I had written to A. B. Bardhan suggesting the names of some parties and leaders to be included in the Third Front. I along with Justice Sachar have discussed this matter with Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar and K. C. Tyagi, secretary general of the JD (U) and a member of the Third Front's coordination committee.

It should not be a matter of anxiety that the smaller parties will ask for their share in the power. These parties can function as the nearest critics of the Third Front government. Such an arrangement will help in building a national image and impact of the Third Front. If the corporate brunt is lessened in the next five years, the public will naturally increase its support for the Third Front, and later it can emerge as a significant political force all over the country.

Even if a third front government does not take shape and place in the current situation, the efforts in that direction should go on. Public revolt against the Congress and the BJP governments will be sharpened in the coming days. The combination of corporate houses, media and civil society cannot sustain this "manufactured consent" in favor of neo-liberal regime for a long time.

(Continued on Page 15)

Indian judiciary and the end of Dalit bonhomie

K. S. Chalam

On 16th April, 2012, the Patna High Court acquitted all the accused in the most notorious case of burning 23 untouchables alive at Bathinatola by Bhumihars of Bihar in the year 1996. It was reported that out of 21 victims, 11 were women, 6 children and 4 infants. The Patna High Court has said that, "the evidence at hand was more than sufficient to uphold the judgment passed by Ara sessions court". There was lot of hue and cry and wide media coverage of the issue at that time and the Bihar government was made to appeal against the judgment in the Apex court. About five years before the incident in Bihar, nearer home, eight untouchables were butchered in daylight by Kapu-Reddy accused on 6th August, 1991 in Tsundur(Chundur) in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. A division bench of the A. P. High Court made a slight change in the now popular alleged method of cut and paste judicial pronouncement on 23rd April. It is reported that, "almost every witness examined by the prosecution, hailing from the village pleaded that he is a Hindu - Mala or Madiga. The defence cross examined the witnesses at length to prove that they have been converted to Christianity. Since we are taking the view that the very criminal acts attributed to the accused are not proved, the issue relating to the social status of the accused pales into insignificance". Interestingly, it did not attract the attention of the national media who are otherwise busy with Namo. Sadly, it has also not attracted the attention of NGOs, some of them alleged to have influenced the untouchables to be

converted as Christians. Are the above cases, the rarest of the rare? There seem to be no word in the legal lexicon to describe the crimes of this kind or like Khairlanji that are routine. The patriots of this great Bharat are so impervious to take them seriously and pass them as matters of fact and do not react emotionally. If the learned judges seem to have disposed of them as procedural, what is it that the ordinary mortals can do?

It is not out of place to look at the institution of judiciary and the impact of the class (caste also) background of some of our law lords on their verdicts. Sanjay Ghosh an advocate of Supreme Court in one of his articles said that, "While "democracy" is now hailed as part of "basic structure" of the Indian Constitution, the Judiciary is the only non-democratic wing of government." We may extend the argument further to understand the academic value of such an exercise as the judiciary in India has retained to itself certain functions and developed some concepts exclusively for their use. It is almost difficult for common man to access these resources and privileges as the hegemony is legalised through Contempt proceedings. In a way it has harmed the judiciary for its inability to elicit public opinion and capacity to incorporate the wisdom of the contemporary thinkers and traditions. Thus, the institution, as Sanjay Ghosh remarked, has remained as an extra-constitutional may be exceptional? It is now increasingly believed that the officers are heavily relying on the interns may

be due to heavy workload. Unfortunately, the recent events show that some of the fair sex got abused in this process. The young professionals summarise some literature and download some from the net while the officer takes shelter under the concept of precedent in his exposition. There seem to be very few who have crossed the narrow confines of caste, race, religion, sex and place of birth and their childhood biases in the process of coming to a conclusion on social issues. That is why in both the cases, the supporters of the victims have attributed biases due to the tittles that they sport at the end of their names. However, a judge according to A. M. Ahmadi, ex-Chief Justice of India while delivering a lecture on judicial process quoted Justice Cardozo as saying that, "he is to draw his inspiration from consecrated principles. He is not to yield to spasmodic sentiment, to vague and unregulated benevolence. He is to exercise a discretion informed by tradition, methodized by analogy, disciplined by system, and subordinated to 'the primordial necessity of order in the social life'. Wide enough in all conscience is the field of discretion that remains." How many of the functionaries in the judiciary qualify under these criteria?

The Tsundur case has a very interesting dimension that got exposed, though some of those who deal with such cases knew about it, the religious background of the untouchable victims. There seems to be a double jeopardy here as the victims are untouchables and Christians. Both categories are despicable as they seem to have not attracted IPC 301 and 302. Our learned judges have disposed of the case on the so-called technical grounds generally cited in such incidents and pushed the case to (Supreme Court) Kanchi, the place

where our Telugu stories are supposed to reach ultimately. But, it has brought out the fact that in coastal Andhra the dominant caste among the scheduled castes, Mala is almost finished and may disappear in due course like Mastin sub-caste. The way the leaders and their petty quarrels manifest even at a time like this indicate the malaise so deep rooted that needs a Babasaheb to reform. That is why no political party, as per P. S. Krishnanan, is interested in talking about the social issues in their manifestos except benefitting few individuals to show-case. The leaders are not anxious about the society, but individual agendas and self-aggrandisement. The situation is not so bad with other socially backward castes like OBCs, adivasis and others. Muslims of late have shown some unity of purpose despite their internal differentiation and upper castes dominating their articulation. It seems they have learnt lessons from their past experience and some of them are happy about the emergence of Modi as BC PM, while Dalits keep Mayavathi or late Kanshiram or someone else at bay. Perhaps, these social manifestations do have their bearings on other sectors including the judiciary in considering their issues as trivial and brush them aside. Would the institutions treat small communities that are well organised with the same contempt as the so-called untouchables or Dalit Christians as in this case. Doubtful!

The judiciary as an institution not only in India but in all class societies (read caste here) is a superstructure that protects the iniquitous socio-economic base. But, our Indian Marxists have interpreted it differently like that of Vedic hymn and undermined caste. Now they seem to have lost ground without any constituency or they wanted it that

way is to be analysed by scholars for the benefit of posterity. However, we cannot blame the founders. It is said that "If somebody twists this into saying that the economics factor is only determining one, he is transforming that proposition in to meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various components of the superstructure - political form of the class struggle and its consequences, such as constitutions drawn up by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc. juridical forms, and even the reflections of all these actual struggles in the minds of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development in to systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their form in particular." (Frederick Engels letter to Joseph Bloch, 21 September 1890). Therefore, the reform agenda of previous regimes in which Dalits have enjoyed bonhomie is being melted down. Are the real class contradictions emerging? Does Tsundur demonstrate once again the wicked outcome of superstructure or something else in India?

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque
on

Mumbai Bank
in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Massacre in Assam BTADA

We, the undersigned, express our profound sense of grief and alarm over the gruesome massacre of Bengali-speaking Muslims on 2nd May. This most recent round of killings -- in which 32 people, mostly women and children have lost their lives -- is another link in the long and... bloody sequence of ethnic cleansing being carried out by tribal Bodo militant groups with impunity.

For years, Hindutva politics has successfully created the bogey of the 'Bangladeshi', rendering Muslims as suspects and targets, locked in a perpetual battle with the tribal Bodos. In his rally at Silchar, the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate reiterated precisely this. He said: "There are two kinds of people who came from Bangladesh to Assam: those brought as part of a political conspiracy for vote bank politics of a particular party (Muslims) and others who were harassed in the neighbouring country (Hindus). Those brought for vote bank politics and smugglers must be pushed back, while the second category must be accommodated." (Silchar, 22nd February).

More recently, poll violence at Harbhanga polling booth of Gossaigaon under 5-Kokrajhar LS(ST) Constituency was followed by a brutal police crackdown on on the villagers of Harbhanga, Jamunatari, Balabara. Many victims and conscious citizens in BTAD think that the incident of Harbhanga Polling Booth was meticulously planned to teach non-Bodo inhabitants a lesson for voting against the atrocious ruling administration.

The immediate provocation for the 2nd May killings seem to have

come from the communal statement made by Pramila Rani Brahma, BPF (formerly BLT, a terrorist militant organisation) legislator and former Agricultural Minister of Assam who accused the Muslims of not voting for the BPF candidate Chandan Brahma. She demanded that BPF (a Congress Alliance partner in Assam State Government and ruling party in local BTAD administration) should therefore support BJP.

Immediately after her statement, separate incidents of violence broke out: a prominent non-Bodo journalist of BTAD Dhananjay Nath was attacked; three people were killed on the spot at Narshingpara, and another girl child injured; at around 12:00am mid night, a heavily armed militant group killed eight people and injured at least four including women and children at Balapara. These were to be a prelude to the mass killings that were to follow the next day, ie., 2nd of May, 2014, when a group of forty heavily armed militant set ablaze nearly 70 houses and killed about 21 people and severely injured many more in Gampara near Gobardhana of Baksa district of BTAD area. Dead bodies are still being recovered and the death toll will rise up considerably.

Siddique Ahmed, a minister in Assam government who has visited the violence affected area of BTAD, has concluded that the members of BPF were involved in the massacre, and has also demanded the arrest of Pramila Rani Brahma. It has also come to light that guns provided to forest officials have been used in the massacre, thus directing suspicion towards Khampa Borgoyari, Deputy Chief of BTC and Executive member of Forest Dept of BTC

We therefore demand the following:

1. An SIT headed by a serving IPS officer or Supreme Court judge should be instituted. The state police and other security forces deployed in BTAD which have miserably failed to provide security to non-Bodos and Muslims cannot be relied upon to fairly investigate this.
2. Pramila Rani Brahma should be arrested and prosecuted at the earliest to instil confidence for the due course of law in the minds of aggrieved families.
3. Investigate the role of Khampa Borgoyari whose close aid Amiya Brahma and others were arrested for carrying out the targeted killing.
4. Deploy more Paramilitary Forces to ensure security of the non-Bodo peoples and particularly Muslims.
5. Provide adequate compensation to the families of deceased and to the injured persons and rehabilitate victims displaced by indiscriminate violence.
6. Investigate and take strict action against police personnel responsible for the post-poll assault at Harbhanga village.
7. Seize all illegal arms and ammunitions from the BTAD area without fail.
8. Rework and revise the BTC accord so that the democratic aspirations of all sections of population residing in that area are met.
9. The Election Commission should take notice of the public statements by Pramila Rani Brahma -- which apart from being provocative also amount to a flagrant violation of model code of conduct.

–Jamia Teachers Solidarity Association, Aman Ekta Manch, Praja Rajakiya Vedike, Karnataka, ANHAD, Aman Biradari, Gujarat, Jamia Student Solidarity Forum, Delhi, LABIA, queer feminist LBT Collective; Activists.

What is there in manifestoes of political parties for the minorities?

Irfan Engineer

Election time is season for manifestoes of major political parties participating in the poll. Manifestoes are seen by some members of the public with cynicism and disinterest as they are observed more in breach by the party voted to power and major promises forgotten. When BSP was voted to power in UP, they did not have a manifesto and in any case given the levels of literacy, how many members of the electorates bother to read manifestoes of the parties is a good question. Large sections of voters in India go more by oral promises of the candidates contesting elections, some vote on consideration of caste, ethnicity, language and religious community, others vote on the basis of local constituency level issues and popularity of the candidate contesting.

Manifestoes are nevertheless important as they are declaration of the political parties as to the governance measures they intend to undertake and their political and economic priorities, even if they go a bit overboard on their promises. In this article, we examine the perspectives of some major political parties on minorities and the programmes for minorities they include. We have examined the manifestoes that were in English and Hindi language.

The vulnerability of minorities is due to their non-dominance and numerical inferiority as these entail absence of political influence in decision making bodies at legislative and executive level. Most countries had earlier

policy to assimilate the minorities into the mainstream. This meant that while minorities would be guaranteed protection and security, they were expected to gradually affirm the culture, traditions, language or religion of the majority. If the minority concerned resisted assimilation, they would be vulnerable to the accusation of having subversive tendencies and their case for protection and security would weaken.

UN Sub-Commission acknowledged at a rather early stage that the minority issue demands a double approach, namely the prohibition of discrimination and special measures to enable the members of minorities to preserve and develop their own, separate characteristics. Prohibition of discrimination and minority protection are not identical but are twin concepts. However, we know due to Sachar Committee Report that the minorities are discriminated in opportunities for education, jobs and livelihood schemes, bank loans, government contracts, housing, health services and in extending benefits of welfare schemes and infrastructure like roads and drinking water to areas populated by minorities.

On the issue of security, Sikhs, Christians as well as Muslims have been targeted during communal riots with members of security force either shirking their duties or worst, colluding with the rioters and the guilty having no fear of being brought to justice. Nimesh Commission appointed by the UP

Government finds that several innocent Muslim youth were arrested under draconian anti-terror laws and incarcerated for years. Innocent Muslim youth were incarcerated for over 6 years accused of bomb blasts in Malegaon in the year 2006 – an offence for which Swami Aseemanand has confessed his guilt. Disproportionate number of innocent youth killed in the name of encounter by police accused of being terrorists are Muslims, be it Ishrat Jehan, Javed Shaikh, Sohrabuddin, Kauserbi, Sadiq Jamal, etc.

Therefore, what the minorities need is non-discrimination, security and right to their culture and religion. However, most manifestoes promise separate welfare schemes for allowances and scholarships for education, and loans for livelihood and Higher education, with a ridiculously small budgetary allocation. Bureaucrats read the existence of special schemes for minorities to mean exclusion from general welfare schemes for livelihood, education, housing, infrastructure development and provision of utilities, subsidized foodgrains to the poor, etc.. The discourse in manifestoes on national (or regional culture in case of regional parties) does not take into account the diversity in general and different culture of minority in particular. Being insensitive to the cultural diversities smacks of assimilative expectations and therefore notionally ghettoising the minorities into a pigeon hole. Some manifestoes promise reservations for minorities on the basis of their religion.

The BJP manifesto

Cultural nationalism or Hindutva is the core running theme of the manifesto. India's ancient civilization is described from a supremacist perspective as one going back to several thousand years before the Christian era and unproblematic – with flourishing economy, trade, commerce and culture. The manifesto describes India as having a much bigger role and presence in industry and manufacturing than any nation in Europe or Asia with “a well-developed banking system and equally renowned businessmen, along with its financiers, who were contributing to create a flourishing and progressive economy.” The preface of the Manifesto further states that “India was a land of abundance, prosperity, affluence, a land of sharing and caring living in perfect harmony and peace with the nature”, and then talks of returning to the roots – the “civilizational consciousness of India”, without specifying what are the contours of this civilizational consciousness – is it cry for equality by Sant Kabirdas, Ravidas, Tukaram and other Bhakti and Sufi saints or the rigidity of caste system.

When the manifesto lists the names of leaders who inspired Indian freedom struggle, there is not a single non-Hindu name mentioned, not even Bhagat Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru. The manifesto calls for India as one country and one people without referring to the rich diversity which is its strength. The post-Independence leadership of the country (read Nehru) could not comprehend India's inner vitality, which was the main force responsible for India's survival despite several attacks and prolonged foreign rule (read the Sultanate, Mughal and the British) and thus, failed to rekindle the spirit

of India. The BJP's “*Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat*” thus would assimilate technological advancements (of the west) but discard the British institutional framework of administration (read Democracy) which, according to the manifesto is quite alien to the civilizational consciousness of India. What more clarity is needed for one to understand that even in their election manifesto, the BJP pits *Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat* against the Constitutional framework? Of course in their election manifesto they are promising everything to every section of society. How will they reconcile the conflicting demands under the rubric of “*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*” with the limited means? They would offer the corporate sector development allocating precious budgetary resources and help all the marginalized sections with subsidies.

The manifesto uses a lot of platitudes as far as minorities are concerned but has nothing concrete to offer in terms of economic benefits or institutional framework to ensure that minorities enjoy security and the Constitutional right to equality. While in the past BJP would oppose any half hearted special measures to enable the members of minorities to preserve and develop their own separate characteristics and dub it as separatist tendencies within minorities, in their manifesto the BJP promises that they will “curate their rich heritage and culture;” (by claiming Babri Masjid and 3000 other mosques?), “maintenance and restoration of heritage sites;” (claiming Taj Mahal to be a Shiv Mandir, ABVP members vandalized the Taj Mahal and since when heritage sites were divided into minority and majority?) “digitization of archives;” (which one? Even archives conceived to be majority and

minority?) “preservation and promotion of Urdu”(Hindutva cadres were involved in anti-Urdu agitation in Bihar in 1967 leading to riots in Ranchi-Hatia and riots in Bangalore over broadcast of news bulletin by AIR in Urdu). It is ironical that while the section on minority talks of “curating” rich culture, the section on “Cultural Heritage” promises “Uniform Civil Code”! The section on “Cultural Heritage”, unlike the one on minorities promises to provide *appropriate resources* for the maintenance and restoration of all *national heritage sites*, and to prevent their vandalisation in any form. Note that minority heritage is just described as that while other heritage sites are described as *national*! That is Hindu nationalism. What is Hindu is national and what is non-Hindu belongs to minorities and in its election magnanimity, the manifesto promises “curating” of such sites without promising appropriate resources or to prevent vandalization.

The manifesto sheds crocodile tears on the backwardness of the Muslim community and borrows from the Congress programmes which are often violently opposed by the BJP – National Madrasa modernization and enable Waqf Boards to remove encroachments.

Congress manifesto

Congress manifesto promises implementation and continuation of the same old programmes that were poorly implemented or remained unimplemented paying lip services to the minorities. It promises to “focus on accelerating concrete, sustainable and long term plans for the welfare of the Nation's minorities” which include scholarships for children belonging to the minority community, higher

education support through Maulana Azad Education Foundation and effective management of Waqf properties and a law providing clear guidelines to prevent the usurpation and mismanagement of Waqf properties. The Congress would continue to focus on 'Priority Sector Lending' disbursement for minorities and "to ensure that members of the minority communities have easy access to credit and other incentives like tax rebates etc., to encourage entrepreneurship." The manifesto once again promises that "The Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2013, which was drafted and introduced by the Indian National Congress will be passed as a matter of priority" without explaining why the legislation was not enacted in the previous two terms.

The manifesto also promises that the party would pursue with the courts matter regarding reservation for backward minorities in educational institutions and in government employment and ensure that the policy is implemented through proper legislation.

Samajwadi Party

Samajwadi Party manifesto proposes to address industrial backwardness, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, which it mainly attributes to the policies of the Central Government. We here look at the 2012 UP Assembly manifesto as well as 2014 manifesto for Lok Sabha elections as practically the same promises continue. The SP manifesto does not use the term minority but names the community it wants to benefit from its governance and programmes. SP admits that status of Muslims is worse than dalits and they need special protection and opportunities.

SP manifesto promises implementation of Sachar Committee and Ranganath Mishra Commission reports and implement those recommendations. It demands that the entire Muslim community should be declared as extremely backward and should be extended benefits of reservations on the basis of their population on the lines of SCs. The party promises to establish educational institutions in districts which are dominated by the Muslims.

The manifesto promises to release, compensate and ensure justice to the innocent Muslim youth who have been jailed under the pretext of anti-terror action. It also promises to take action against the guilty officials.

It promises to establish Urdu medium primary, middle and high schools in the districts dominated by Muslims and ensure jobs. It is unfortunate that Urdu language is being linked to Muslims. There will be special budget for technical education in Madrasas. There will be special provision to recruit Muslims in state security forces and camps will be organised to ensure their recruitment. A special budget will be provided for construction of boundaries of "kabristans" (Muslim cemeteries) to pre-empt illegal occupation of the land. There will be a special package for development and security of all *dargahs* in the state through legislation. Why the development of the *dargah* is mentioned in the section on minorities is an enigma as more non-Muslims frequent *dargahs* than Muslims. On all Government commissions, boards and committees, at least one member of minority community will be nominated. Illegal possession of waqf property would be removed and a Waqf Board would be

established through legislation and property restored to the Waqf Board. Waqf properties would be outside the pale of Land Acquisition Act. The industrial areas where minorities dominate, e.g. handlooms, handicraft, carpet, bangles, lock, scissors, jari, jadosi, bidi, will be given Government subsidies and encouraged. For weavers of handloom sector, there would be waiver on interests and penal interests on arrears of electric bills. ITIs would be established to supply skilled workers for small scale and household industries. Grant of Rs. 30,000 would be given to the girls who pass SSC exams for higher studies or for their marriages. Those Muslim educational institutions which qualify to be recognized as universities, would be given the status of university. Poor weavers would be provided free electricity like peasants. All legal obstacles for Mohammed Ali Jauhar University would be removed and a deemed university. A medical college would be established with adequate funds. It also promises to eliminate communal riots from the UP state.

The Muslim community could be either included in various measures of governance and ensure their fair share and non-discrimination or special measures targeted only to Muslims could be promised. The Constitution does not permit the latter approach unless special conditions are met to overcome certain inherent disadvantages. Implementation of such provisions, even if sincere, would meet the Constitutional and legal roadblocks. The latter approach also invokes ire of non-Muslims and strengthens communal forces in the majority community. The SP manifesto embraces the latter approach and their measures remain on paper unimplemented and unimplementable.

Electing a representative

Jyoti Punwani

If one person has shown what people's politics means, it is Medha Patkar. Her campaign in Mumbai, where she stood as an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate, was a people's campaign in every sense of the word. It was a two-way relationship – those who campaigned for her in the hope that she would become their Member of Parliament (MP), identified with her as passionately as she identified with those she sought to represent – specially the poorest of them.

It was not as if the cynicism that marks elections had entirely been replaced by hope. You saw it in women's eyes especially, when Patkar walked through the narrow lanes of the slums and chawls of her sprawling constituency, asking for votes (funnily enough, never for herself). The difference lay in the lack of cynicism among the hundreds who not only joined her campaign, but themselves organised it – without having being paid to do so.

History of Struggles

In December 2004-January 2005, Vilasrao Deshmukh, then chief minister of the Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government of Maharashtra which had just taken over, began his second term with a massive slum demolition drive in a bid to turn Mumbai into Shanghai. This was after having specifically promised voters that slums that had come up till 2000 would be regularised – until then, the cut-off date had been 1995. The demolition of 90,000 homes was on a scale matched only by another Congress

chief minister, A R Antulay's similar drive, in the monsoon of 1981. At that time, a public interest litigation had been filed by journalist Olga Tellis and argued by advocate Indira Jaising, resulting in a landmark Supreme Court judgment that included the right to shelter in the right to life.

This time, it appeared as if nothing would stop the bulldozers, even though newspapers reported that newborns left roofless were dying in the cold. Opposition members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) remained silent and ruling party MLAs disappeared as voters tried to question them on the betrayal of their poll promise. In such a scenario, Medha Patkar arrived and started mobilising slum-dwellers to resist the demolitions. It would be no exaggeration to say that her arrival turned the tide and ultimately halted the bulldozers.

It is these slum-dwellers, rendered homeless and then emboldened by Patkar to rebuild their homes on the same land that they themselves had reclaimed, who became Patkar's campaigners for the Lok Sabha election. They had long urged her to contest elections. Now that she had finally agreed, they were euphoric.

Their resistance in 2004-05, led by Patkar, had ultimately grown into the formation of the Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan. The struggle had empowered them, especially the women. They had sat on dharnas and fasted with her in Mumbai and

Delhi; been lathi-charged and seen her being dragged by the hair by the police; gone to jail and negotiated with the state with her. "Many a time, policemen have told her to leave, saying they didn't want to arrest her. But she chose to stay on in the lock-up with us," said one. Added another,

Leaders always tell us to wait out, and go in to talk to ministers with a few of their own men. We don't know what deals are made inside. But Tai [as Patkar is known] always insisted that either we come inside with her, or she won't meet the minister. We saw how she spoke to ministers. Even the CM didn't know what the Rajiv Awas Yojana was, he asked Tai to explain it to him.

But after all this confidence, when it came to getting their rights on the ground, these slum-dwellers-turned-activists had to petition the local MLA and MP. The latter's indifference would render them helpless again. For instance, while it was their struggle under Patkar's leadership that had led to the decision to implement the Rajiv Awas Yojana in their area, the survey of slums that was necessary for it to be put into practice had not been done by the state government. Repeated petitions to the authorities had gone unheard. If Patkar were to be their MP, they knew the days of waiting in vain outside offices would end. "*Agar Tai jeetke aayi, to woh officer kya, uska baap bhi saarey rules nibhayega*" (If Tai wins the elections then the officers will definitely follow rules) said one.

“Tai ki jeet matlab garibon ki awaaz Parliament mein suni jaayegi” (Tai’s victory means the voice of the poor will be heard in Parliament) said another.

A New Politics

It was not just that these slum-dwellers who wanted her in Parliament because they saw her as their representative. Many felt they owed it to Patkar to work for her success – she had stood by them over the last decade. For this reason, when she asked them to donate for her campaign, they did so willingly. “She has never asked us for money. This time, we were thrilled when she told us: *ek vote, ek note*. We feel we have a stake in her campaign”, said the women. “If only she gave us the go-ahead, we would empty our pockets for her”. Some lent out their rickshaws, others got friends’ cars modified into open jeeps. Yet others lent out little cubicles for use as campaign offices. Some had been inspired by Arvind Kejriwal to join AAP, but they threw themselves into the election campaign because their candidate was Medha Patkar. “I first read about her in school. We’re lucky to get a candidate like her; it’s our loss if we don’t elect her”, said one AAP member.

These are not the kind of feelings campaign workers have for their candidates. Election time is boom time for the unemployed; rates can range from Rs 200 to Rs 500 a day, with meals thrown in; and the highest bidder gets the maximum workers. Most workers never get to meet the candidate; everything is handled by a few coordinators. Even in cadre-based parties such as the Shiv Sena, leaders complain that workers need more than a *vada-pav* to come out on the streets for a two-hour agitation. Election campaigning is a 24-hour

job – at least that is how Patkar herself saw it.

If the enthusiasm of workers was a remarkable phenomenon, so was the level of Patkar’s own involvement in her first election campaign. Throughout, she remained the quintessential activist, exemplifying her brand of politics: *galli se Dilli tak* (from this lane to the corridors of power in Delhi), as she put it. Too embarrassed to ask for votes for herself, she asked people to “think and vote this time, to bring in change”. Her slogan was *vote dya, hakk ghya* (give your vote, take your rights), and *chunaav nahin, chunauti hai, yeh rajneeti badalni hai* (not an election, it’s a challenge; we have to change politics). She urged women to come out to vote, even if it was to press the none of the above (NOTA) button. Decrying that this election had turned into a “Modi vs Gandhi” battle, she spoke instead of issues she stood for: democracy, an end to inequality and corruption. She spoke constantly about Article 243 of the Constitution that gave people the right to decide how resources are used; Ambani’s building versus the hovels of the poor; Adani’s super profits versus contract labour; 400 litres of water per person in Walkeshwar and not even 40 litres for her voters. “Think about why there’s inequality,” she told voters in her last speech.

Patkar was the only candidate allowed to campaign inside the Godrej residential colony at Vikhroli. There, she spoke of the vast tracts of land controlled by companies such as Godrej and Tata, while the state said it had no land to house the poor. The many land-grab scams she and her team had exposed, and the builders and politicians

involved in them, formed a recurring theme: Lavasa near Pune; Hiranandani Gardens and Adarsh in Mumbai. In an interview to this author, she regretted not being able to speak in depth on issues in a door to door campaign. “There should be a platform where all candidates could come together and debate”, she said.

Wide Support

Activists from all over India had come to campaign for Patkar, mainly from the National Alliance of People’s Movements. At every public meeting, she introduced them to the audience, so much so that her rivals started spreading the rumour that Patkar was relying on people from her village to campaign for her, in the absence of local support! Her socialist mentors were there in strength on the day she filed her nomination, from the 89-year-old G G Parikh to publishing patriarch Ramdas Bhatkal to theatre personality Ratnakar Matkari. Before she went into the Collector’s office, she ensured that each of them spoke.

Many of them had witnessed if not participated in the freedom struggle; the time had come, they said, to launch a second one to turn independence into “real swarajya”. Throughout that rally, patriotic songs were sung, with old Sarvodaya activists in khadi breaking into impromptu jigs. Equally inspiring was her final rally through the streets of Mandala where she had first landed amid the ruins of slums in 2004. Against the backdrop of Deonar’s infamous garbage dump, she stood in an open tempo, strewn with flowers showered on her, and recalled the beginnings of the struggle she and those around her had waged. That

last rally was entirely a people's show; from the flowers showered on her to the simple meal of *roti-bhaji* distributed to all, with Patkar insisting that she be served the same.

"She has sat on the floor and eaten vada-pav with us", one slum-dweller recalled as he waited for Patkar to file her nomination. The scene when she came out of the Collector's office was typically Medha Patkar: addressing her voters who sat on the road, she explained why filing the nomination had taken so long; expressed regret at having kept them waiting hungry; and then proceeded to explain the details of the affidavit she had filed, the cases against her and her assets. The cases were mostly to do with her dharnas; her supporters nodded in remembrance of old struggles as she enumerated them. When it came to her assets, she seemed almost apologetic, even as the slum-dwellers laughed when she mentioned she had Rs 25,000 in her account, 500 shares worth Rs 50,000, bought years ago for her by her brother; and Rs 1,32,000 in National Savings Certificates, which included a 50th birthday gift from friends. The rally ended with her shouting slogans and then turning the mike towards her supporters to complete the slogans.

Rarely has any politician made this gesture. Few politicians shout slogans themselves, but for Patkar, it was normal. On a blazing hot afternoon, walking through the sprawling Godrej colony, after having spent the entire morning on the streets, it was Patkar who started the slogans, seeing her companions droop wearily. Used to dharnas and gheraos but not election campaigns which meant approaching strangers, her supporters would sometimes forget to carry leaflets; if they did,

they would forget to distribute them. Sometimes, the mike, or some crucial press note, would be left behind somewhere. Even the *jhadu*, the party symbol, was often forgotten. Every time, it was the veteran activist who reminded them. After campaigning drew to a close, she instructed a supporter how to store the leaflets that had not been used. Once, upset at a three-hour lunch break included in her schedule by her aides, she converted it into a planning meet and also gave interviews to waiting journalists.

Back to the People

Offered a drink or a snack, Patkar would insist on sharing it with those around her. But despite the 33°C heat, there were things she simply would not accept: Bisleri from an admirer on the road (he got a lecture from her on how Coca Cola had depleted water reserves; and why we must learn from Africa. V Venugopal, leader of the Plachimada struggle against Coke, was present, barefoot and lungi rolled up, in her nomination rally); tea in plastic cups ("this causes cancer") or water in sealed plastic containers. Packaged and branded eats were politely refused; but a banana, lime juice and coconut water were welcome.

Many things unavoidable in an MP's election campaign embarrassed her, self-praise for one. She would speak about legislation she and others like her had struggled to bring about – the vendors bill, the unorganised workers bill, the Rajiv Awas Yojana – but never of her own role in it. Having a car especially waiting for her was another thing that made her squirm. She would regret not being able to accommodate everyone in it. Rather than waving out to people from an open car, she

would get off in the afternoon sun and walk, stopping to greet people, making impromptu speeches on the way. Her supporters would insist on her meeting small groups of acquaintances whom they had promised a one-on-one with the MP candidate; this seemed a waste of time given the vastness of the constituency, but she never said no.

On the last day, after the deadline for campaigning was over, she instructed her aides to drop all those who had come from out of town, in the few cars especially brought by her supporters for the final rally. Then she herself took an auto to her next destination. As is their wont, the auto-driver refused. "Do you know whom you're saying no to?", asked her aide. Had Patkar heard the question, she would have reprimanded the aide. At any rate, the auto driver was least bothered. So the MP candidate from Mumbai's north-east constituency got off without a word and stood around till a willing cab was found to take her to her office.

–*Economic & Political Weekly*

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by
Rohini Gawankar

Published by
Kamalakar Subhedar,
Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha,
Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,
Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W),
Mumbai 400072.
Mobile: 9820092255

Contribution: Rs.300+

Uphold Democratic Values

Violence, hooliganism, and disruption of the democratic process is common to all fundamentalist elements in the political sphere. Last evening some goons (a.k.a party workers) from the Muslim fundamentalist Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party attacked noted activist S.Q. Masood, who was working as an observer for the Aam Aadmi Party at Golconda in the Karwan Assembly Constituency,

Hyderabad.

Similarly, three days ago well known activist Shabnam Hashmi and Pratap Singh Negi were attacked by BJP workers in Rae Bareilly, UP while distributing leaflets exposing the Gujarat development claims. The workers threatened to rape Ms. Hashmi if she did not relent. In both cases the police refused to register FIRs. These brazen acts of violence by

both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalist parties, within the protective umbrella of the police, are horrifying and must be strongly condemned. These parties are breeding an inhumane culture of intolerance in the name of religion and corrupting the law and order system. These incidents provide a glimpse of the hatred, disorder and deteriorated law & order situation that will be the order of the day when these parties come into power.

—Achin Vanaik, Ali Asghar, Amalendu Upadhyaya, Amar Kanwar, Asad Ashraf, Asad Zaidi, Ashish Awasthi and others

Defeat BJP syndrome

The main problem with intellectuals is that they deviate from the crux of the discussion. When I appeal to Muslims to come out of the “Defeat BJP syndrome”, it never implies that “vote for BJP”. Personally I hate Narendra Modi and B.J.P., but now have more intense hate for these fictitious secular parties. I agree with the statement of Maulana Kalbe Sadiq, issued some time back that for Muslims, no party is untouchable. I also agree with the statement of Maulana Arshad Madni of Jamaitul-Ulmae Hind that how long the Congress will frighten Muslims in the name of BJP or Modi. It is only the result of this Muslim mindset that Saifai of Mulayam Singh is dancing and in the same state the horrors of Muzaffar-nagar riot victims is no secret from anybody. On our dead bodies the calculations of political advantages and disadvantages are made.

In the context of the emergence of AAP on national horizon, let me say that I am its great admirer only in the sense that it has introduced some figment of morality and honesty in an otherwise deeply corrupt system. But I appreciate the political shrewdness of Arvind Kejriwal that he has touched this nerve of the Muslim community by projecting his party as the greatest enemy of BJP. Anyhow, on the eve of election, outfits and people like Jamate-Islami who are appealing for the community’s en masse support to AAP will be betraying it by issuing appeals in the name of strategic voting to vote for the candidates of different political parties who are in a position to defeat BJP.

I ask the following questions to those who are obsessed only with “Defeat BJP” and think of nothing else:

1. Can they ever have the power to

compel all these hypocritical secular parties who elicit Muslim vote on the drama of defeating BJP from their respective platforms, to field one joint candidate against the BJP? If they do so, the BJP will be eliminated.

2. What they have done so far and what they will do in future if those parties or individuals whom Muslims voted or will vote in the name of defeating BJP, aligned with it (BJP)?
3. Can anybody set time limit as how long this buffoonery of sacrificing everything in the name of “Defeating BJP” will continue?

I want a healthy discussion on these points because now enough is enough, but please stick to the logic as I hate the illogical and foolish arguments, be it from Muslims or Hindus, be it from my supporters or critics..

—Mustafa Kamal Sherwani,
Chairman , All India Muslim Forum

Thomas Kocherry

The shocking news for all of us is the sad and sudden demise of Fr Thomas Kocherry. A bad news at a wrong time because he had been writing his secular and nationalist views recently concernig the ongoing election and policies and directions the political parties were taking. Exactly four years ago we were together taking a 'March for

Peace and Justice to Dantewada' from Raipur to Dantewada via Jagdalpur in Chhatisgarh on 4-8 May 2010. I must put on record that he took this trip just within a month of his open heart surgery. An incident in Jagdalpur made it clear to us: how he risked his life for the cause of peace and justice. This indicates how serious he was

towards the cause of working class especially the fishermen, people's movements like Anti-nuclear protests, etc. and human rights movements. He will always be remembered with honour and respect. May his soul rest in peace and strength to his dear ones to bear the loss.

–V. N. Sharma

(Continued from Page 2)

voting seemed so much in its favour? Modi and the BJP invoked Lord Rama and Ram Rajya, resorted to the use of religious symbols on the dias of a rally at Faizabad, and Modi

went out of his way to defy and challenge the Election Commission of India and charged it, of all things, with helping politicians to rig the elections in some northern states.

If there is a hidden strategy and tactics in this resort to divisive politics, we confess to being too dim-witted to comprehend its meaning or purpose.

(Continued from Page 5)

The making of a much publicized neo-liberal India could be the dream of a selected few youth of the country. The larger community, comprising of the dalit, tribal, backward, minority, poor forward

castes youth, can finally realize their dream of a socialist, secular and democratic India. If the politics of the Third Front assumes center stage, those ideas, ideologies, discourses and streams

of literary-cultural creativity which have been forcibly suppressed within the boundary of neo-liberalism can get new meaning and space.

And yet, Modi's rise and rise has less to do with his Hindutva credentials and appeal than his secular critics would like to believe. Modi is where he is today – on the cusp of power – not because the country is becoming more communal but because the Indian corporate sector is becoming more impatient. Every opinion poll that shows him inching towards power sets off a bull run on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

How and why the country's top businessmen switched allegiance from the 'indecisive' Congress to Narendra Modi is a story that reflects the inner rhythms of life at the base of Indian politics. But it is also a cautionary tale about the deep crisis that rent-seeking and cronyism have engendered in the Indian economy, now that the immediate gains made possible from liberalization have reached their natural limit. For all the changes that neo-liberal policies

and the end of the 'license-permit raj' were meant to usher in, the level of rent that can be earned by companies that are close to the government has reached astronomical levels. As N.S. Siddharthan of the Madras School of Economics argues, 'Under the existing business environment, the path to amass wealth is not through manufacturing but through exploitation of resources under government ownership.'³

–Siddharth Varadarajan



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 16
May 18, 2014

The idea of India
Kuldip Nayar

Gender issues in manifestos
Vibhuti Patel

Urgency of electoral reforms
Pannalal Surana

Remembering
Sunil

Anil Sadgopal
Prem Singh

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

The Modi juggernaut

S. Viswam

Crushing all that stood in its way, the Narendra Modi juggernaut has secured a historic and massive mandate to the Sangh Parivar, a commendable performance that ushers in a sea-change in national politics. The 2014 Lok Sabha verdict represents a well-deserved electoral triumph for the NDA-BJP, even as it denotes a well-deserved defeat for the UPA-Congress. The triumph is truly path-breaking, and is almost the product of a single man's campaign waged single-mindedly by an individual leader who set his sights seemingly at an impossible target. That he has not only hit that target bang-on but has carried on his pursuit even beyond is what is historic about his work. He ran a veritable tsunami (more aptly termed tsunami!) and brought all his rivals to their knees. History will recognize his achievement as an unique one. The uniqueness lies in the fact that Modi's campaign and the verdict that the electorate has rendered marks the decimation of the Congress and the United Progressive Alliance that it hosted. It is not unusual for political parties to get decimated at the hustings,

indeed, that is what democracy is all about. But the decimation just delivered to the Congress is not only near-total (the party is left with just under-50 number of seats in a house 543 members strong), but it is also pathetically humiliating. Just imagine, a party that in cahoots with a handful of other smaller groupings governed this country for two long and full decades has been reduced to a position of counting the numerical strength of the party that has been "cribbed, cabinned, confined and contained", and firmly lassoed at under 50. The Congress has not faced such humiliation in the recent past at any time. Other political parties subject themselves to strident introspection to ascertain what could have caused such a debacle. It is typical of the Congress culture, however, that the party's spineless cadres who have been brought up on strong doses of sycophancy and adulation are trying to evade fixing responsibility for the debacle and divert it away from those who have caused the humiliation and passing it on to the collective whole of the cadre. The second rank leaders are spreading the word that since Sonia Gandhi

and Rahul Gandhi were not in the government and the Lok Sabha poll verdict reflects disappointment with the administration, the blame for the defeat cannot be held at their doors. This is patently wrong and evasive. The party is managed and run by the mother and the campaign was spearheaded by the son, even though the son was not formally nominated as the Congress party's "prime ministerial candidate". The mother-son duo were perceived by the public and the electorate as the two leaders who were masterminding the campaign. For the sycophantic cadres to now try and shift the blame for the defeat from their doors and transfer it to the shoulders of poor Dr. Manmohan Singh is dishonest and unethical. Had the party won, the success would have been attributed to the leadership of the mother-son duo and celebrations ordered. Rahul Gandhi, as the leader of the campaign, cannot evade and escape being accountable for the debacle. He must accept responsibility and make some amends even if token. To pretend that he had nothing to do with the elections and that the result had nothing to do with his leadership will be hypocritical and totally malafide of the reality. One does not know if Modi himself anticipated that the poll verdict would be so satisfactory for himself personally and for his party. But as he gets into stride as the country's democratically elected prime minister, he must bear in mind that he campaigned solely on the platform of "development" and held forth the Gujarat model as one that would suit the genius of the people of other states also. He will not have failed to notice that his patron-

(Continued on Page 3)

Between the lines

The idea of India

Kuldip Nayar

I did not want Narendra Modi to be India's prime minister for ideological reason. His effort to polarize the country is not in the nation's interest. But the voters' choice is different. Modi has won the right to rule having won through fair and open election. And he is entitled to pursue his agenda which offers, to use his words, the 'politics of development and not revenge'. Modi should, however, keep in mind the larger picture, the idea of India.

The idea of India is neither territorial, nor ideological. It also has little to do with economics or politics. The idea, the ethos of this country and what we stood for during the freedom struggle, is democracy, pluralism and egalitarianism.

Beginning with India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who stood for a socialistic pattern of society, to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, believing in free market priorities, the idea has been mutilated by every party which has come to head government. The ethos has been pushed aside. The idealism has taken a back seat and even the youth is more interested in jobs than in harking back to a past based on a value system.

New rulers have, no doubt, come through a democratic process, but they have used the Lok Sabha election campaigns without bothering about the means or methods. One rough estimate is that Rs 5 lakh crores was spent on

publicity by the different candidates, financed by people from the corporate sector.

Consequently, there is little that the new Prime Minister or his colleagues can do because they are beholden to the money bags for the positions they occupy. Even otherwise, they are far from the ethos of the national struggle. I am not surprised that the new generation is blank about the sacrifices which the nation made to wrest itself free from an unwilling and barbaric Great Britain.

How many remember that the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre represents sheer brutality of the British rulers and the defiance of the ordinary innocent Indians, our ancestors, and who had focused all their attention on independence? One friend of mine, an Indian settled in London, has rightly suggested that there should be a holiday to commemorate the memory of those who jumped into a well to save themselves, as well as others who refused to move even after the British-led soldiers had exhausted their last bullet.

How does the new government clear the debt of their forefathers' sacrifices? We cannot recover from the British authorities in London the money which they took from India through exploitation. But we can at least get the symbols of our heritage which are accumulating dust in the basement of the Victoria and Albert museums. I recall that when the

Nehru Centre was opened (the money was spent by New Delhi), I asked the curator how long would it take for the Indians to have access to the relics of the Raj. She said that only five per cent of what they have had been put on exhibition after 35 years. The rest would have to wait.

As India's High Commissioner in London I took up the issue of returning the Kohinoor diamond to India. This priceless relic was once a part and parcel of the treasury of Mahraja Ranjit Singh and is thought to have originated from the Golconda mines in Hyderabad. The reply of top British officials from the foreign office was that the Kohinoor was now studded in their monarch's crown. I pursued this issue in the Rajya Sabha when I was its member. I was shocked when the then foreign minister of the BJP government, Jaswant Singh, requested me not to press the matter because it would tell upon the relations between India and Great Britain. I am hoping against hope that the new government would rectify the mistake which I committed by keeping quiet.

For the new rulers this is a golden opportunity to revive those prized values of innocence and decency with which India was associated long before the advent of colonial rule. How many remember the notorious Robert Clive, first Governor General of Bengal, and his successor, Warren Hastings, who exploited the country and used their ill-gotten wealth to invest in the UK? The 300,000 pounds that Clive exacted from the rich Bengalis was used to buy his membership of the House of Lords, as well as huge property. The famous Somerset House in London was built with Clive's assets. When impeachment proceedings were launched against

him, he was quoted as saying how astounded he was by his own "moderation." Nevertheless, Clive was unable to live with his guilty conscience and committed suicide. Impeachment proceedings were also launched against his successor in India, Hastings.

The most effective weapon the British had to conquer India was to divide communities so that they could act as arbitrators and justify their rule on the ground that they were trying to bring peace among people of different religions. In the Lok Sabha elections some political parties have encouraged cleavage between Hindus and Muslims. These political parties should remember that although democracy has taken roots in the West, there is more than one foreign government that would love to get its foothold in our country. We represent the rich pickings for one and all. Traditionally, we were known as the *sonay ki chidiya* (golden sparrow).

To maintain unity of the country and strengthen the faith of the common man in our political process, we will have to go back to the ethos of our national movement: that is, all communities belonging to different religions and castes are equal in the eyes of the law and as laid down by the Indian constitution.

I hope the Lokpal Bill, which is pending before parliament, will be passed soon by both the houses of parliament so that even those at the top have to show their accountability. There should be no vindictiveness or harassment of those who have lost.

The top priority of the new government should be how to uplift the 30-crore people who are still

wallowing in poverty and hunger. One estimate is that the 30-crore people, equal to the entire population of Europe, go to bed hungry. This defeats the ideal of egalitarianism which was promised after independence. It's up to the new rulers how they deliver it, but their steps should be seen as moving towards that direction. This process cannot tolerate corruption which I find at every tier of the government and political parties.

(Continued from Page 2)

organisation, the RSS, and other saffron parivar stalwarts are now trying to propagate that the mandate won by Modi is for the basic core programmes of the Saffron Parivar, namely, the Article 370 of the Constitution and its abrogation, building a Ram temple at Ayodhya and the introduction of a uniform civil code. This is typical of the RSS-BJP strategy of enforcing its will on an unwilling people. It was precisely because these issues were unacceptable to the people at large that they are in cold storage. Modi must remember that any attempt to get them on the table through the backdoor will boomerang on him and the party.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque
on

Mumbai Bank
in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Gender issues in manifestos

Vibhuti Patel

A manifesto by women groups released in English and Hindi on March 8, 2014, was translated by women's rights groups into Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, and Kannada. It has been endorsed by thousands of women's groups across India and has provided a rallying point for 'Know Thy Candidate' programmes across country, in terms of making women conscious of how different parties deal with women's issues. Aam Admi Party (AAP) was the first political party to endorse it. All the national and majority of regional political parties have included six points of the manifesto; educate for equality, make laws count, put women in power, police for the people, swift, certain justice and support to survivors of violence in their declaration for the Lok Sabha Election and election speeches.

In the 16th Lok Sabha Election Manifesto Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has promised to launch a national campaign to save the girl child and promote education of girls. Indian National Congress (INC) and AAP manifestos have demanded strict implementation of PCPNDT Act to stop sex selective abortions of female foetuses. Trinamool Congress manifesto declares: "A special thrust will be given on empowering the 'girl child'."

The Election Manifesto of Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (CPIML) has promised secure, dignified, remunerative employment for women and has given great emphasis on

regularisation of contract labour and increase in minimum wages. CPIML has also stressed upon the long-standing demand of the women's workers employed in work of perennial nature to be regularised, the principle of equal pay for equal work to be upheld in every field, ASHA, Anganwadi, mid-day meal workers are to be treated as regular employees with proper pay scales and minimum wages are to be raised to Rs 15000 per month, as per its manifesto. Social Security for women has been promised by a veteran feminist and founder of Women's Voice (WV), National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW) and president of National Alliance of Women (NAWO) Ruth Manorama who is contesting Lok Sabha election on Janata Dal (Secular) seat of Bangalore.

INC, BJP, AAP and Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPIM) have proclaimed to implement women related laws to stop sex selective abortions by strict implementation of PCPNDT Act, 2002, Prevention of Domestic Violence Act-2005, Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of April, 2013, Rape laws- the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 that makes stalking and cyber stalking (Section 354 D), voyeurism (Section 354 C) and sexual harassment a crime and also provides for the death penalty for repeat offenders or for rape attacks that lead to the victim's death and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012,

that covers offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. INC has promised strict implementation of the Prohibition of Child Labour Act. The election manifesto of Socialist Party (India) for the 16th Lok Sabha Election promises to strive "to eliminate gender discrimination and will support affirmative action in favour of women in all legislative and other institutions."

CPIML has highlighted access to clean toilets for all women, in homes as well as in public spaces, and access to regular, safe public transport to be ensured. Janata Dal (Secular) has also promised to stop manual scavenging in which women are predominantly employed. INC had made a declaration for eradication of open defecation, though not a gender specific issue, it robs women of their basic dignity given the cultural milieu.

INC has declared women's reservation as a top priority. While BJP, CPI (M), CPI (ML) have demanded 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and assemblies, Trinamool Congress has given a generalised statement of empowering women in every walk of society, economy and polity. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) have asked for reservation within reservation for ST, SC and OBC women. In its agenda for immediate action, the Socialist Party has demanded passing of Women's Reservation Bill.

The INC has promised to pass Citizens' Charter for safety of women, special protection for Dalit women and fast track courts to deal with crimes against women. Both, INC and CPIML have supported 24-Hour-One-stop Crisis centres to be established in the government hospitals. CPI (ML) has stated in its manifesto that safe shelters must be instituted in each police district for women survivors of violence, speedy justice, compensation and rehabilitation be ensured for survivors of rape and acid attacks and gender-sensitive police and prosecutorial procedures must be strictly followed, and the number of judges and courts should be expanded to ensure speedy justice in every case related to sexual violence.

BJP has promised strict implementation of laws related to violence against women. CPI (M) has emphasised enactment of laws against honour crimes and trafficking of girls and women, laws for joint matrimonial property rights and strengthening of maintenance Act to ensure safe survival of women and children. Janata Dal (Secular) candidate Ruth Manorama has focused in her election campaign on stringent implementation of laws for a safe and secure city for women - violence free homes and a violence free community. INC manifesto asks for all police stations to have at least 25 per cent women staffers. Socialist Party has promised Special Tribunals to be set up to ensure justice in long-pending cases of custodial rapes.

BJP is the only mainstream political party that has demanded Uniform Civil Code that has a history of bitter identity politics. Women's organisations support

gender-just family laws governing marriage, divorce, property rights, maintenance, alimony, right to equal share in matrimonial or parental homes, guardianship of children etc. At the same time they believe that demand of UCC does not ensure gender justice, it only creates polarisation on religious grounds and divides women of different religious beliefs.

While talking about gender concerns in election manifestos of the national and regional political parties, we must remember that none of them has implemented a code of conduct to disqualify electoral candidates who have committed crimes of gender-violence, made misogynistic comments or shown such behaviour, nor have they ensured zero tolerance for moral policing

by candidates associated with their party. Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) based in Delhi has revealed hundreds of men accused of sexual violence towards women have been allowed to contest elections, including more than 32 candidates charged of rape.

It is a matter of deep regret that in the manifesto, none of the political parties has demanded 'code of conduct' of decent behaviour from their candidates and activists in their personal lives, while dealing with their women colleagues and in the rallies and political gatherings. Even while allocating seats to contest election, they have not promoted veteran women political activists of their own party. Most of the political parties have used their women workers only as foot soldiers.

Mukul Sinha

On May 12, Mukul Sinha, a tireless crusader for justice and just causes, breathed his last in Ahmedabad. Mukul was a scientist and a scientist-activist who in mid-life took up a new role as public interest lawyer and labour activist to fight long legal battles for many just causes, particularly for victims of communal violence, encounter killings and unjust labour practices in Gujarat.

After obtaining a Master's degree from IIT Kanpur, Mukul Sinha joined the prestigious Physical Research Laboratory where he was soon involved in a struggle to save the livelihoods of arbitrarily sacked employees. This struggle led to the formation of a federation of the employees of scientific and technical institutes.

Mukul Sinha was instinctively drawn towards taking up the most just causes, including the most difficult and challenging cases. Many such causes were helped and salvaged by his fearless and dedicated commitment.

His work, helped greatly by the many-sided and invaluable support of his wife Nirjhari, will be remembered for long because of its great democratic role in helping those causes which most needed such support. This work helped to expose very powerful persons and was carried out in very difficult conditions.

Mukul Sinha played a leading role in forming the Jan Sangarsh Manch and held out the vision of a new socialist movement.

–Bharat Dogra

Lok Sabha Elections 2014

Analysis of criminal background and financial details of candidates

National Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 8163 candidates out of 8230 candidates who have contested in the Lok Sabha 2014 Elections. The rest of the candidates were not analysed due to unclear/incomplete affidavits uploaded on the ECI website at the time of making of this report.

Criminal Background

- *Candidates with Criminal Cases:* Out of the 8163 candidates analysed, 1398 (17%) candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves. Out of 7810 candidates analysed during Lok Sabha 2009 elections, 1158 (15%) candidates had declared criminal cases against themselves.
- *Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:* 889 (11%) candidates have declared serious criminal cases including cases related to murder, attempt to murder, communal disharmony, kidnapping, crimes against women etc. Out of 7810 candidates analysed during Lok Sabha 2009 elections, 608 (8%) candidates had declared serious criminal cases against themselves.
- *Candidates with cases related to murder:* 57 candidates have declared cases related to murder. Out of these 12 candidates have been fielded by BSP, 4 candidates have been fielded by BJP, CPI(ML)L and SP each, 3 candidates by RJD and JD(U) each, 1 candidate by INC, AAP, AITC, and each and 12 candidates are independents.

CPI(M)

- *Candidates with cases related to Attempt to Murder:* 173 candidates have declared cases of attempt to murder. Out of these, 19 candidates have been fielded by BJP and CPI(ML)L each, 18 candidates by BSP, 14 candidates by SP, 7 candidates by AAP and JD(U) each, 6 candidates by AITC and INC, 5 candidates by RJD, 4 candidates by JVM(P), 2 candidates by CPI(M) and DMK each and 28 candidates are independents.
- *Candidates with cases related to Crimes against Women:* 58 candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women. 6 candidates have declared cases of rape. Out of 58 candidates with cases related to crimes against women, 6 candidates have been fielded by BSP, 3 candidates by AITC, BJP, INC and SP each, 2 candidates by JD(U), 1 candidate by AAP, CPI, CPI(ML)L, MNS, RJD, Shiv Sena and YSRCP each and 18 candidates are independents.
- *Candidates with cases related to causing Communal Disharmony:* 54 candidates with cases related to causing communal disharmony. Out of these, 18 candidates were fielded by BJP, 3 candidates by CPI(ML)L and BSP each, 2 candidates by AAP, SP and INC each, 1 candidate by RLD, YSRCP and TRS each and 6 candidates are independents.
- *Candidates with cases related to Robbery and Dacoity:* 57 candidates have declared cases related to robbery and dacoity. Out of these, 10 candidates have

been fielded by BJP, BSP and SP each, 3 candidates by AAP, 2 candidates by INC, JD(U) and RJD each, 1 candidate by AITC, CPI(M), DMK and MNS each and 9 candidates are independents.

- *Candidates with cases related to Kidnapping:* 40 candidates have declared cases related to kidnapping. Out of these, 6 candidates have been fielded by BSP and SP, 4 candidates by INC, 3 candidates by BJP and DMK each, 2 candidates by AITC and CPI(ML)L each, 1 candidate by AAP, JD(U), LJP, MNS and RJD each and 5 candidates are independents.
- *Party wise Candidates with Criminal Cases:* 128 (28%) out of 462 candidates from INC, 140 (33%) out of 426 candidates from BJP, 65 (15%) out of 427 candidates from AAP, 114 (23%) out of 501 candidates fielded by BSP and 307 (10%) out of 3182 independent candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.
- *Party wise Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:* 61 (13%) out of 462 candidates from INC, 89 (21%) out of 426 candidates from BJP, 42 (10%) out of 427 candidates from AAP, 75 (15%) out of 501 candidates fielded by BSP and 188 (6%) out of 3182 independent candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.
- *Red Alert Constituencies:* 245 constituencies have at least 3 candidates with declared criminal cases. Vaishali constituency,

Bihar and Raver Constituency, Maharashtra have the highest number of contesting candidates i.e. 10 with criminal cases against them. 196 constituencies during Lok Sabha 2009 elections had atleast 3 candidates with declared criminal cases.

Financial Background

- *Crorepati Candidates*: Out of the 8163 candidates analysed, 2208 (27%) are crorepatis. Out of 7810 candidates analysed during Lok Sabha 2009 elections, 1249 (16%) candidates were crorepatis.
- *Party-wise Crorepati Candidates*: 365 (79%) out of 462 candidates in INC, 309 (73%) out of 426 candidates in BJP, 192 (45%) out of 427 candidates in AAP, 161 (32%) out of 501 candidates in BSP and 342 (11%) out of 3182 Independent candidates have declared assets worth more than Rs. 1 crore.
- *Average Assets**: The average assets per candidate contesting in the Lok Sabha 2014 elections is Rs.3.16 crores.
- *Party-wise Average Assets**: Among major parties, the average assets per candidate for 461 INC candidates is Rs 13.27 crores, 426 BJP candidates have average assets of Rs.10.32 crores, 427 AAP candidates have average assets worth of Rs.2.77 crores and 501 BSP candidates have average assets of Rs. 3.53 crores.

*The following outliers were removed from the average assets analysis to give a true representation of the party-wise average assets distribution; Nandan Nilekani of INC from Bangalore South Constituency, Karnataka with Rs. 7710.29 crores of total assets, Shamali Das an Independent candidate from Jadavpur Constituency and Kolkata Dakshin constituency,

West Bengal with Rs. 2000 crores of total assets, Anil Kumar Sharma of JD(U) from Jahanabad constituency, Bihar with Rs. 849.98 crores of total assets, Jayadev Galla of TDP from Guntur constituency, Andhra Pradesh, Rs. 683.05 crores of total assets, Ayodhya Rama Reddy Alla of YSRCP from Narasaraopet constituency, Andhra Pradesh with Rs. 654.33 crores of total assets and Konda Vishweshwar Reddy of TRS from

Chevella constituency with Rs. 528.62 crores of total assets.

- *Party-wise Asset Rank*: 348 (75%) out of 462 INC candidates occupy the top three highest assets positions amongst all the contesting candidates in their respective constituencies. Similarly, 283 (66%) out of 426 BJP candidates, 109 (22%) out of 501 BSP candidates and 115 (27%) out of 427 AAP candidates occupy the top three highest assets positions in their constituency.

How committed are Indian political parties on science and research? Not much, if one is to go by their manifestoes.

Even as the curtains come down on the election campaign, a report in 'Nature' magazine has noted that two of the three main political parties make "scant mention of science in their manifestoes".

And on that evidence, it concludes that Indian science will not get the boost it needs to become internationally competitive."

Unfortunately, in the value system of both the government and our society at large, science is not at the top - in fact, it may be at the bottom," C.N.R. Rao, chairman of the Indian Scientific Advisory Council to the prime minister, has been quoted as saying in the report.

While the Congress party manifesto promises a spend of at least two percent of the gross domestic product on science and technology if elected to power, scientists say this is not sufficient keeping the rapid pace of research and development in countries like China and South Korea."

We have still not crossed 1 percent for over two decades now, whereas others, such as (South) Korea, China are rapidly moving towards, or have already moved to, 3 percent and beyond in the same period," R.A. Mashelkar, former director general of the Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, was quoted as saying.

The BJP, according to the report, has devoted the most space to science and technology, health, energy and environment in its manifesto."

It promises to set up world-class centres for nanotechnology, brain research and thorium-reactor technology for India's nuclear-power programme," the Nature report said.

The new entrant Aam Aadmi Party's manifesto is largely silent on science and technology. However, it does focus on management of natural resources such as coal and minerals, the report said.

India currently contributes no more than 1 percent of the top 1 percent of global research, Rao noted."

If India can make careful investments in particular areas of scientific research, it will be able to compete with countries such as China and South Korea in terms of patents acquired and high-quality publications produced," he maintained.

—SiliconIndia

Urgency of electoral reforms

Pannalal Surana

It seems the campaigning of main political parties during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections were very expensive. Use of air-borne vehicles must have cost crores and crores of rupees while the cost of advertisements on electronic and print media must have been in multiples of that. And not a single paisa of that will be entered into the accounts of the candidates. That is because all those expenses would be shown as incurred by the respective parties. And there is no legal ceiling on that.

I think some legal provision must be made so that Election Commission and also citizens be entitled to ask for the details of expenses incurred by the parties on election campaigning. They should also be entitled to know the sources of donations to various parties. In fact, the Right to Information Act must be made applicable to all registered political parties.

Political activists feel that amount of security deposit at the time of filing nomination is also beyond reach of many of them. While enhancing that amount an argument was advanced by some individuals that the number of independent candidates was increasing at a high rate. Preponderance of independent candidates entails great cost to the Election Commission. It also causes unnecessary confusion in the minds of the voters. It was felt that if the amount of security deposit is enhanced, it will serve as a restraining factor. Experience of the last ten-fifteen years belies that hope. For dedicated but poor activists, however, it has become a big stumbling block. Some via media will have to be devised. It may be suggested that amount of deposit be reduced to five thousand rupees

while number of proposers be increased to fifty or hundred so that an independent candidate will find it hard to rope in so many supporters.

In the interest of equity, some sort of State funding be made available to the candidates, sponsored by a registered political party of meager means, (say those whose annual income is less than one lakh rupees or so) in the form of providing a facility, in the form of dispatching of one appeal for the candidate of, say, 500 words to all the voters in his/her constituency by the State. There will be no room for pilferage in this kind of arrangement. It may be recalled that, in the eighties of the last century, Indrajit Gupta committee had made recommendation for providing State funding to political parties,

Recently, it has been observed that parties ruling at the Centre or a State, incur huge expenditure on advertisements which include pictures of ministers and/ or their leaders. This is unfair and unjustified from the wider public interest perspective. Objective of government advertisement can be to invite tenders, etc. or supplying information about specific scheme of the government to the targeted groups or general public. For that, mentioning the name of the concerned officer would be enough. Putting in names of ministers or leaders and their pictures is totally uncalled for. It is prudent to save that much public money.

No voter be allowed to contest from more than one constituency. Expenses to be incurred on election to the vacated seat can thus be saved.

Most important point of electoral form is to amend the present first-past-the-post system and embrace some variant of proportional

representation. Today, many parties are denied any representation in spite of getting significant percentage of vote polled in a State or a number of States in Lok Sabha elections. Democracy can be strengthened by strengthening political parties who stand for some ideology or set of policies and also can enforce some discipline in the legislatures as well as public life in general.

Tarkunde Committee, in 1976, had made one suggestion which can serve as basis for discussion and further improvement. The suggestion was like this: There are 70 constituencies of Delhi State Assembly. Voting may be held as per the current system. At the time of counting, however, only those candidates who have polled more than fifty per cent of valid votes be declared as elected. Rest of the constituencies be taken as available for distribution between the parties in proportion to the votes secured by each party. Parties may be called to submit a list of their candidates, to be nominated to the seats that would be allocated to that party for proportional representation. Such lists must be deposited with the Election Office before the election process starts and cannot be amended afterwards. This will encourage parties to include such names in those lists which would help them get more votes.

It may be noted that even small nations like Switzerland, Germany and Nepal have adopted Proportional Representation and their experience is good. India should take some innovative steps in this direction.

It may be stated that electoral reforms are not to be looked down upon as intellectual luxury of a few.

(Continued on Page 15)

A Socialist Intellectual among the Oppressed

Anil Sadgopal

“The three months that we spent together in the prison last year brought us closer even further. . . . Throughout our prison term, we ate together in the same pots. In the name of pots, all what we had been given was one thali each. We would, therefore, jointly take daal in one thali for both of us and similarly vegetables in another and thus eat together. The beard, spectacles, overall attire, similar looking chappals made out of tyre, the lean frame and other such features had given us quite similar looks. People would often confuse me with Rajnarayan and Rajnarayan with Sunil.” (Sunil in ‘Ladat Ja Re’, 1991; translated from Hindi). This statement was recorded almost 24 years ago by Sunil after his then 30-year old comrade-in-arms Rajnarayan of Kisan Adivasi Sangathan met his most untimely death due to a road accident in April 1990. Kisan Adivasi Sangathan (KAS), jointly organized by Rajnarayan and Sunil in mid-1980 in Kesla Block, Distt. Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh, was allied with Samata Sangathan led by Kishen Patnaik, the formidable socialist thinker.

No less untimely and tragic was the demise of Sunil (born on 4th November 1959) himself on 21st April 2014 in the neuro-sciences ICU of AIIMS, New Delhi following massive brain hemorrhage five days earlier at his home at Village Bhumkapura, near Kesla. On 16th April afternoon, Sunil was brought to Bhopal by his wife Smita and local Samajwadi Jan Parishad and KAS activists from Kesla and Itarsi after a two-hour road journey in a state of unconsciousness and admitted in a private hospital where he underwent brain surgery. Two days later, he was airlifted to AIIMS. He remained unconscious with full life-support system until his demise, while his hundreds of friends, co-workers and admirers kept their fingers crossed from all over the country – from places as far away as Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Delhi, Guntur, Kannur, Jalpaiguri, Kolhapur, Ranchi, Sambalpur and Shillong, apart from the villages of Betul, Harda, Hoshangabad, Khandwa, Rewa and other Districts of Madhya Pradesh.

The much-expected ‘miracle’ did not happen and the country lost a truly committed and visionary ‘socialist intellectual working among the oppressed’. As a footnote, it must be recorded here that Sunil had no place for ‘miracles’ of any kind in his karma-filled life. His strategy and vision of social transformation was rooted firmly in a scientific understanding of the objective political, socio-economic and cultural conditions prevailing in the society.

An intellectual-cum-activist

Let us return to early 1980s and the formative years of Sunil’s relationship with Rajnarayan. Sunil completed his education until B.A. in government schools and college of Rampura, a small remote *kasba* of District Mandsaur, M.P, on the border of Rajasthan. His father, Dr. Ram Prasad Gupta taught economics in the Rampura college. Undoubtedly, Sunil’s later abiding interest in economics for the wider social good must have been influenced by his father who himself continues to date to be a widely acknowledged writer on the economic and developmental issues impacting the masses, his advanced age notwithstanding. Interestingly, some contend that Sunil had no less reverse influence on his father’s thinking.

In late 1970s, Sunil joined M.A. programme in economics at Jawaharlal University (JNU), New Delhi. During this period, Sunil won the respect from his fellow-

students and faculty alike for his profound analytical understanding of the subject and its relationship with socio-political issues. In early 1980s, like Rajnarayan, Sunil, too, joined Samata Yuvjan Sabha, the student-cum-youth wing of Samata Sangathan and started visiting Kesla from time to time. He showed his early leadership qualities by leading a Cycle Yatra from Delhi to Guwahati in 1982-83 in support of the Assam student movement and a Delhi-Amritsar Yatra in 1984 against the anti-Sikh wave of violence in the wake of Indira Gandhi’s assassination.

From Delhi to Kesla

In April 1985, while pursuing his Ph.D. work at JNU under the guidance of the indomitable economist Late Prof. Krishna Bhardwaj, Sunil received the news of the Rajnarayan-led movement of tribals in Kesla on the issue of scarcity of water during which the people broke *matkas* (earthen pots) as a mark of protest. This was the

signal Sunil needed to take the decisive turn in his life. On 1st May 1985, he quit his JNU research work and shifted his social base to Kesla for the rest of his life. The Kesla region suffered from a severe draught in 1986, leading to a major loss of the kharif crop. Repeated appeals to the government for relief brought no response. In November 1986, KAS organized a historic six-day foot march (*pad yatra*) from Bhauran Village of the neighbouring Betul District to Bhopal under the joint leadership of Rajnarayan and Sunil. The central theme of the foot march was 'freedom from drought and poverty'. When the Chief Minister refused to meet the *padyatris*, a *chakka jam* (causing traffic jam) followed by forced entry into his official residence was used to compel him to discuss the demands. The Chief Minister yielded to six demands promising small-scale irrigation schemes, undertaking relief works, lifting ban on fuel wood collection from the forest and non-collection of dues and loans for the time being. Yet, the state government continued to dilly-dally on its promises. The agitation, too, continued, addressing new forms of oppression relating to forest, water, electricity and local corruption. Exactly a year after the meeting in Bhopal with the Chief Minister, KAS gave a call for observing a 'Betrayal Day' (*Dhokha Diwas*) on 25th November 1987 at Kesla but to no avail.

By this time, the local situation had become desperate due to three independent successive government schemes, each having caused major displacement in the Kesla Block in 1970s. First, the Tawa Dam had submerged 44 villages and 21,000 hectares of thick forest. Second, the army proof range for testing weaponry and ammunition displaced 25 villages. Third, the Ordinance Factory near Itarsi occupied nine more villages and the surrounding forest. The whole region suffered from extreme deprivation and impoverishment. The primary cause was displacement followed by non-settlement of the democratic rights of the tribals with respect to their *jal-jangal-zameen* (water, forest and land) and *jeevika* (livelihood). After the death of Rajnarayan in 1990 due to road accident, the responsibility of engaging with this dire situation fell upon Sunil's shoulders.

Struggle and Reconstruction

Shaheed Shankar Guha Niyogi, the radical leader of the mine workers' trade union movement in Chhattisgarh during the period from 1977 to 1991 had established the concept of '*Sangharsh aur Nirman*' (Struggle and Reconstruction) as a new political philosophy in India.

The visionary creation of a workers' hospital, elementary schools and semi-mechanised technology of iron ore extraction as organic part of the trade union struggle inspired people's movements nation-wide and defined an alternative model of development controlled by the workers, rather than the ruling capitalist class. Taking cue from this experience, Sunil in early 1990s organized Kesla's displaced tribals to fight for retrieving their eroded rights to *jal-jangal-zameen* and *jeevika*. Following a sustained struggle, the then Congress government of Madhya Pradesh was finally persuaded to concede a five-year rehabilitation package on 24th October, 1996 with regard to the Tawa Reservoir. The package included, among other things, right to draw-down cultivation (i.e. cultivating the reservoir banks when the water recedes) and right to fishing on a cooperative basis for the displaced persons. For this purpose, KAS constituted Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS) – a duly registered federation of 37 primary co-operative societies of displaced tribals residing in the villages surrounding the reservoir. Fish was sold locally as well as packed and transported to markets as far away as Howrah. TMS not only protected the reservoir from illegal fishing and poaching, but even undertook rearing of fish-seed fingerlings to replenish stocks in the reservoir. During the next five years, the management by displaced tribals led to a significant increase in fish production and fisherpersons' income, even as various imaginative and scientific ways and means were adopted to ensure conservation of fish resources and the reservoir itself. It created an alternative model of ecologically sustainable fisheries in big reservoirs with community participation and control. This alternative model attracted nation-wide attention.

Yet, the KAS had to launch a struggle again when the five-year contract came up for renewal in December 2001. The public pressure, including testimonies from economists and environmentalists, forced the government to renew the contract in early January 2002. However, by the time this contract came up for renewal in 2006, the Congress government stood replaced by BJP. The democratic space for negotiations was further shrunk. The state government, using the false pretext of inclusion of Tawa Reservoir in the proposed Satpura Tiger Reserve, refused to renew the contract for the second time. The official stand, towing the conventional 'conservationist' line, held that that the very presence of human beings in the Tiger Reserve would endanger wildlife. KAS had no option but to launch an intense agitation once again to protect the hard-won democratic rights of the tribals. Showing unusual imagination, Sunil

took recourse to yet another strategy of recovering the democratic space. He approached some of us in Bhopal to organise a public study of the TMS experiment. In November 2006, we constituted a high profile six-member committee, called ‘Tawa Bio-Diversity and Human Relationship Expert Committee’, under the chairpersonship of the reputed environmental scientist Prof. Madhav Gadgil of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Other members of the expert committee included well-known scientists and experts in aquaculture and fisheries from Barkatullah University, Bhopal and other government institutions.

Capitalist Development Model

While confirming the afore-mentioned TMS claims of increased fish production and income levels of the tribals along with improved conservation of the fish stocks, the Madhav Gadgil Expert Committee Report, submitted to the state government in April 2007 observed, “Thus, it is clear that reservoir fisheries is a crucial resource for the people displaced from the dam, especially if harvested under a democratic, participative and transparent framework, which TMS has been able to provide.”

More importantly, citing from various national and international studies of the experience of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, the Expert Committee questioned the official conventional stand, based on untested presumptions, as follows, “The new paradigm of conservation views local communities as partners or as conservers in their own right, rather than as ‘enemies’ or ‘problems’. Without diminishing focus on conservation, including strict protection where needed, it also gives attention to the livelihood security, cultural sustenance, and other needs of the local people. Finally, it also makes explicit links between conservation and elimination of poverty as well as achievement of sustainable development across the land (and sea) scape.”

Finally, the Expert Committee concluded that “there seems to be no scientific evidence whatsoever regarding the [adverse] impact of fishing and draw-down cultivation on the tiger or other threatened species in the Satpura Tiger Reserve” and recommended “extension of the fishing lease of the Tawa Matsya Sangh in the Tawa Reservoir on a long-term sustainable basis” under certain additional provisions for undertaking of systematic dialogue with the tribals and long-term scientific impact assessment studies of impact on wildlife jointly by the

government and TMS. The Expert Committee further advised the state government that, “Only such a rational, ecologically viable and systematic approach would resolve the current conflicts around the Tawa Reservoir and Satpura Tiger Reserve and ensure both conservation of wildlife and the security of livelihoods of the villagers, apart from being in consonance with the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in the Constitution.”

As could be anticipated, the Madhav Gadgil Expert Committee Report did not fit within the capitalist model of development pursued by the state government. Since the initial contract between TMS and the M.P. Matsya Mahasangha in 1996, the neo-liberal policies of post-globalisation India were pushing the various governments to exclude people from its development paradigm. The false presumptions of the capitalist model juxtaposing ‘conservation against the people and their democratic rights of livelihood’ dominated the official discourse. The state government did not only refuse to take cognizance of the Expert Committee Report but also denied any space for negotiations with KAS or TMS. Thus the displaced tribals of Kesla Block stood displaced once again and, this time, for ever!

Alternative Politics for Political Alternative

Following the TMS experience, Sunil engaged himself with building a movement for ‘alternative politics for a political alternative’ across the country. At a seminar in held in Indore in February 2008, he observed, “No movement can make much headway as long as there is a lack of readiness to undertake analysis all the way, from the modern development policy, modern governance to capitalism and build alternative of each of them along with ideological preparedness...The most crucial issue in this context is whether you have a sense of urgency to transform this world or not. Inter-linked with the same is the question whether you can see any alternative or not. Or whether you have concluded that there is no alternative to capitalism and globalization...If this is your well-considered view, you can then neither build alternative politics nor a political alternative. [Ref. 3, p. 5]”

Sunil takes an unambiguous stand, “This ideological vacuum is indeed very dangerous. There are many who pooh-pooh the very mention of ideology. . . . such mindset renders us directionless. . . . But we can’t escape the criticality of building a framework for first comprehending and then transforming the world around

us. This framework may be viewed as an ideology. It may be a socialist ideology or Sarvodaya ideology or a Marxist one or, for that matter, any other ideology. What is dangerous is the vacuum of ideology since it ultimately ends up reinforcing the *status quo*. [ibid, p. 5]” He further elaborates, “The most fundamental question is whether it is possible to transform the world and build instead a new egalitarian and just society. If you grant this possibility, an alternative politics shall emerge. However if you are not even willing to grant such a possibility, there shall not be any alternative politics. . . the so-called alternative shall then remain confined within only the prevailing political domain – BJP shall continue to replace Congress or Congress shall continue to replace BJP or if a third party does emerge, this, too, shall only be a new version of the same. [ibid, p. 5]”

Sunil concluded at the Indore seminar (2008) with a futuristic vision, “The dream of socialism has still not collapsed nor will it ever....There is no alternative to socialism if one is interested in resolving the present global crisis and saving the world. People have the common sense to know that this capitalism and modern industrial development is taking the world to its destruction....The alternative may be unconventional... It is not necessary that we may have to wipe out the idea of private property altogether nor will it be necessary to build a huge state-centred dictatorship. Such experiments have collapsed in China and Soviet Union but the failure of old experiments do become the source of new lessons. Let us, therefore, conceive a new form of socialism, wherein, while seeking an alternative to the capitalist system, we shall concomitantly conceive a new model of development as well as a new civilization. . . This issue of alternative politics is not just of a political alternative but it is inextricably linked to the conception of socialism and its ideology. [ibid, p. 5-6]”

‘Political Alternatives’ lacking Ideology

Four years later, Sunil dared to tread on a path where the vast majority of university-based academics would dither. In September 2012, Sunil’s conception of ‘alternative politics for political alternative’ had matured enough for him to make sense out of the confusing signals coming out of the anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal and their rushed pursuit of a political alternative. Sunil cautions, “It is relatively easy to build yet another version of contemporary politics. However, there are four essential elements of alternative politics aimed at radical systemic transformation : **first**,

ideological understanding, holistic perspective and a vision of new India; **second**, reliable organizational base amongst the masses at the grassroots level; **third**, wide-ranging experience and capacity to undertake both ‘Struggle and Reconstruction’ (‘*Sangharsh aur Nirman*’), just to use Shankar Guha Niyogi’s idiomatic expression; and **fourth**, patience and commitment for a protracted struggle. [Ref. 4, p. 14]” Without mincing words, Sunil hammers his critique of the anti-corruption movement, “The roots of the demonic problem of corruption in India are hidden deep in the capitalist system’s extreme inequality, cut throat competition, greed, consumerist culture, policies of globalization-liberalisation, expanding corporate regime and centralized governance. In this sense, corruption is but a superficial symptom of a deeply embedded malaise...Hence, they [i.e. leaders of the anti-corruption movement] will end up treating the symptoms while the malaise will continue as ever. [ibid, p. 15]”

On 29th July 2012, while releasing Kejriwal’s book entitled ‘Swaraj’ at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar, Anna Hazare heralded it as ‘the effective model for bringing the real *swaraj* in the country’. This, however, did not prevent Sunil from raising issues, “But Kejriwal’s Swaraj stops here [i.e. at decentralization to *Gram Sabhas* and *Mohalla Sabhas*] and does not go beyond this. He overlooks the fact that administrative decentralization shall not succeed as long as it is not accompanied by economic decentralization; economic and social inequality is not diminished; and the country’s economic system and development model is not transformed. All such elements were inherent in Gandhi’s *swaraj*. . . . Everything will be set right by devolving power to the local people – hunger and unemployment shall be eliminated; education and health services shall improve; naxalism shall end; prohibition shall succeed – this book makes several such claims. This is not only over-simplification but also one-sided and misleading. [ibid, p. 15]”

Sunil goes on to ask whether the neo-liberal capitalism’s assault on India deserves consideration or not in building the much-hyped political alternative, “During the past few decades, the world has entered a new phase of capitalism-imperialism along with financial globalization which itself is undergoing a crisis...The dominance of domestic and foreign corporate bodies has been established on India’s economy, politics, society and culture. Education and health have undergone unbridled privatization, commercialization and distortion. Modern development has led to a series of economic, social and

environmental crises...It won't suffice anymore to claim that inflation, poverty and all other problems are but a consequence of corruption. We will have to make up our mind regarding the economic policies. You can't even conceive of a political alternative without taking a clear stand on the question of livelihood of peasantry, workers, fisherpersons, *dalits*, tribals, women and youth and without engaging with their respective struggles. [*ibid*, p. 15-16]" Sunil concludes by issuing a polite but stern reminder from history, "No revolution can take place without ideology. No major transformative movement would move forward without an ideological understanding. This principle holds true for all—from Gandhi, Jayaprakash, Lohia and Ambedkar to Lenin, Mao, Nelson Mandela, Che Guvera and Chavez. [*ibid*, p. 17]"

Organic Intellectual Among the Oppressed

Undoubtedly, Sunil, to use Mao's words, went to the oppressed people, worked with them, learnt from them and returned what he learnt back to them. However, he did not spend his life merely romanticizing this experience which he could very well have done – just like the majority of NGOs tend to do by forming *math*-like life-long institutions. He was primarily a political person, uncompromisingly dedicated to socialism. When the experience of building an alternative model of development through Tawa Matsya Sangh would not be allowed to move forward due to the politics of capitalist model of development, Sunil realized the limits of this process. From then onwards, he focused on theorizing his experience and knowledge and built upon his ideological training in Lohia's socialism as elaborated and enriched by Kishen Patnaik.

Sunil would also be remembered for his numerous essays and booklets, mostly in Hindi. He wrote on an amazing range of contemporary issues of socio-political or developmental concern, even while most of us would be engaged in decoding the issue itself. His writings revealed an unusual grasp of data, facts and narratives and his insistence on using simple language and expressions to articulate the most complex ideas was exemplary. Two recent examples will testify to this distinction. In September 2013, he delivered a one-hour lecture in Hindi at Bargarh, Odisha which presented a profound analysis of India's economic policy, explaining the neo-liberal trap India is in and what kind of alternative action is required to liberate ourselves from it (available on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/-sagcT1rveE>). On 7th April this year, Sunil, along with various political party

representatives, participated in a dialogue on education policy organized by Shiksha Adhikar Manch, Bhopal. Representing Samajwadi Jan Parishad, his articulation was the ideologically sound and made immense sense (available on YouTube: http://youtu.be/MfD_-2Jlgyg). Incidentally, he was also a founder-member of the All India Forum for Right to Education and guided the movement closely as its Member, Presidium.

Sunil's writings and speeches on 'alternative politics for political alternative' are indeed path-breaking and provide us with a tool to assess the contemporary politics. Sunil's analysis of the anti-corruption movement's move in recent years to build a political alternative without defining its ideology is insightful. This also explains why, unlike many of his dear and senior colleagues in the socialist movement, he chose to remain in Samajwadi Jan Parishad, even though this choice significantly limited his political options. He would rather pursue a lonely path, rather than do what he is not ideologically comfortable with.

Finally, even at the risk of inviting a debate, I would dare to pay my tribute to Sunil as an organic intellectual among the oppressed in the Gramscian sense. He was one of the leaders in the country in building a sustained counter-hegemonic discourse on neo-liberal capitalism and its assaults on India and her people by advocating a socialist model of development as an alternative.

References

1. '*Ladat Ja Re*', Samata Sangathan, Distt. Hoshangabad, M.P., April 1991, p. 13.
2. 'Livelihood and Conservation: The Case Of Tawa Reservoir', Report of the six-member 'Tawa Bio-Diversity and Human Relationship Expert Committee' submitted to the Government of Madhya Pradesh, Chairperson: Prof. Madhav Gaqdgil, Constituted by Satpura Anchal Sangharsh Samarthak Samooh, Gandhi Bhawan, Bhopal, April 2007.
3. Sunil, in '*Rajneeti Ka Vikalp aur Vikalp Ki Rajneeti*' (Ed.: Chinmay Mishra), Sw. Omprakash Rawal Smruti Nidhi Evam Sarvodaya Press Service, Indore, 2008, pp. 5-6 [English rendering of extracts by this article's author].
4. Sunil, '*Rajnaitik Vikalp Ya Vaikalpik Rajneeti*', Samayik Varta, Itarsi, M.P., September 2012, pp., 14-17 [English rendering of extracts by this article's author].

Defeat of Neo-liberalism will be the true tribute to Sunil

Prem Singh

Sathi Sunil is no more. He had a sudden brain hemorrhage and lost consciousness. After four days of struggling with death in that condition, he eventually passed away on the 21st of April 2014. For years Sunil had been planning to travel throughout the country to raise awareness among people about socialism. This wish of his could not be realized, and Time claimed him as his own co-traveler!

Sunil's last rites were conducted the next day in Delhi. Condolence meetings were held at the AIIMS on the 23rd and at the Gandhi Peace Foundation on the 24th April. Dr. Lohia, whose ideas influenced Sunil deeply, believed that if a leader were to pass away abroad, his last rites should be concluded there only. Within the country this ought to be taken care of as a matter of course. Sunil's kin and colleagues did not insist on having the last rites in his birthplace or at the place where he stayed and worked for three decades. It seemed appropriate that he bid farewell in Delhi since he had died there.

However, I was struck by the irony that Delhi, which had been scoffed at by a poet like Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and a thinker like Rammanohar Lohia; and which Sunil had abandoned for good after his brief stint as a student of M.A. Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University almost three decades ago; was the city where he breathed his last and was returned to the elements. When Sunil was brought to Delhi following his brain hemorrhage in a state of unconsciousness, I was reminded of the poet, Muktibodh. He too had been brought to the AIIMS from Madhya Pradesh. He too had never regained consciousness. He too was cremated in Delhi. Muktibodh's times were different. '*kahan jaaun/dilli ya ujjain?*' (Where to go? Delhi or Ujjain?) - his predicament involved an ambivalence - conflict of choice. In Sunil's time, five decades later, Delhi has been reduced to a full-fledged *mandi* (market) of corporate brokers, unashamedly parading its brazenness!

I kept feeling that even though Sunil had breathed his last in Delhi, his last rites should have been performed in his chosen village, Bhumkapura in Kesla tehsil in the midst of his own people, in the presence of Guliyabai and Phagram.

There have been many people in India as well as elsewhere, who have never aspired to have their own families or have subsisted on very little along with their families in their commitment to a life of thought and struggle. But it is not necessary that they choose such a path in order to oppose the core of the capitalist system. Knowingly or unknowingly, their very austerity can even strengthen capitalism. Capitalism has opened its coffers of wealth and consumerism for all its votaries. People in high offices like us also get our wages-allowances from the same coffers now. In the third phase of globalization (following the Washington Agreement between British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan in the eighties), if one looks behind the curtains of all the people/organizations committed to 'service', one will find that they are all indeed serving capitalism. As an integral part of the pervasive neo-liberal order in the third world this is the age of NGOs. Sunil was very much aware and cautious of this phenomenon. He could not be appropriated: certainly not in his entirety; in fact, not even in bits and parts. This, of course, had to do with his ideological commitment, but, perhaps, his *fakeer*-instinct also helped the cause. Well before he became a fulltime activist in the socialist movement, he had been named 'JNU's Gandhi'.

It is wrong to say that Sunil was an idealist. If one could manage to descend from the ground of neo-liberalism to the utterly devastated ground of the deprived masses, one would realize that Sunil was a committed realist. It is also wrong to suggest that he believed politics and idealism can co-exist and remained engaged in attempting this reconciliation. In Sunil's perception politics and ideal(ism) were not two separate categories. Such misconceptions are often generated to hide one's deviation from the socialist ideals while aspiring for power.

Without ideals, no efforts are ever possible in life. The 'ideal' for a majority of Indian and world politics today is neo-liberalism. That is why it is prospering in the whole world. The ideal of the pre-independence politics was freedom. People were prepared to suffer and even lay down their lives for that ideal. The ideal for post-independence politics was socialism, towards which certain provisions were made in the Constitution. Sunil

was someone who treaded the path towards the socialist ideal in politics.

I worked in the Samajwadi Jan Parishad (SJP) for fifteen years. I left the SJP in 2009 and till the formation of the Socialist Party in May of 2011, I continued to work for it as a like-minded comrade. I never had any ideological differences with Sunil. Even though Sunil never directly criticized the World Social Forum (WSF), he was in agreement with my criticism of it. Both of us disagreed with NAPM's anti-political stance. We were both opposed to the organization of the Commonwealth Games and the corruption therein. When Chandra Shekhar passed away, I wrote a piece of tribute for him which appeared in *Mainstream*. Sunil wrote to me stating his disagreement with my tribute. He sent the same comment to other colleagues as well. Kumkumji suggested that I should respond to it, since she is the one who finalizes my writings in English and also looks out for any ideological lapses in any article or proposal. I of course believed, and so did she that there was no praise for Chandra Shekhar's 'socialism' in the tribute; rather it was a homage to Chandra Shekhar's bid to oppose globalization in the Parliament and outside. I told Kumkumji that if Sunilji had made a comment, he was likely to say something again on the issue. Soon enough he wrote again to say that he had had a lot of things on his mind lately and that he had written his initial comment in a hurry. He wrote that after a re-reading of the piece he realized that he agreed with whatever had been said in the tribute.

However, on India Against Corruption and the anti-corruption movement including Anna Hazare, Ramdev and the likes, we disagreed. A few months before the beginning of the anti-corruption movement, I had a discussion with him about this issue, on our way to Kanjhawala camp in Delhi. I submitted to him clearly that it would not be proper for either him or the SJP to get into this muddle. He had listened to me carefully. Whatever followed is known to everybody.

For the past two years he had been editing *Samayik Varta* from Kesla-Itarasi on his own. He had a very positive gesture towards the routine memorial lectures, political, cultural, literary seminars/conventions/workshops/study circles we hold in Delhi and always asked us to send reports of them for *Samayik Varta*. That *Varta* must continue regularly and retain its edge, was something that even Kishanji wished for. Sunilji took its entire responsibility upon himself. He, in fact, was

writing the editorial of *Varta* when he felt the paralytic stroke. Not only must all the comrades bring out a very good issue in Sunilji's memory; they must also ensure regular publication of *Varta*.

A major part of Sunil's writing has happened in Hindi through *Varta*. He competed with that English which emerges from the high echelons of corporate capitalism and openly robs away nation's resources along with all possibilities of independence, self-reliance and original talent. From his first booklet titled *Dunkel prastavon ko kaise samjhein* (1991) to the recent one titled *Bhrashtachar ko kaise samjhein* (2013), his work is immensely important from this perspective. A few years back I had delivered a lecture in a seminar at Hindi Akademi, Delhi, on the merit of the Hindi prose written by Sunil, Sachidanand Sinha and Kishan Patnayak.

Sunil was a scholar of economics and we used to call him a '*zameeni arthshastri*' (grass-root economist). He always wrote about the complex discipline like economics in Hindi, thereby challenging the assumptions of globalization. Challenging globalization was the gist of his personality, thoughts and work. There is absolutely no contradiction to be seen in it.

He worked extensively on the question of education too. Prof. Madhu Prasad of All India Forum for Right to Education while offering her tribute to Sunil, submitted that she learnt a lot from him and Prof. Anil Sadgopal on education related issues in the era of globalization. We must keep the spirit of Sunilbhai alive in order to meet the challenges confronting us. Remembering Sunil's contribution in this field, Swami Agnivesh said in a tribute to Sunilji, should not remain a ritual. He suggested that first and foremost a common school system must be enforced all over the country. These are right suggestions. We can all rally together under the aegis of All India Forum for Right to Education, of which Sunil was an active member, and fight for equal, free and quality education, to be provided by the state, for all. If we can thwart the neo-liberal assault on education, it will not take long to oust it from economy and polity. That shall be the true tribute to Sunilji.

(Continued from Page 8)

Those reforms are necessary if genuine opinions and votes of the majority of the people are to be reflected in the composition of legislative bodies which are expected to address problems of the multitude and find out equitable solutions.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 18
June 1, 2014

Importance of being Nawaz Sharif
Kuldip Nayar

Risky nod to hazardous crops
Bharat Dogra

Contours of Secularism
Irfan Engineer

**Victory for political
marketing in India**
K. S. Chalam

**Human security
is true 'development'**
M. G. Devasahayam

**Climate change
death-wish of capitalism**
Renfrey Clarke

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Challenges facing Modi government

Rajindar Sachar

The public disgust with the Congress(UPA) government of the last decade has seen to it that it is defeated – no, it is decimated. But the Bharatiya Janata Party must not over-exult by assuming that the majority has endorsed its policies. It should be politically honest enough to admit that it is the corporate created TV, SMS, Publicity image of Modi that has scored.

A delusional image of development being unleashed by Narendra Modi has somehow temporarily sanitized the young into Modi club. BJP electoral expense of Rs. 20,000 to 40,000 crores is considered a modest estimate. This strengthens the demand for prohibition of corporate funding in elections.

As far Modi developmental model, which is similar to the Congress model, is concerned there is obviously going to be deep conflict – between the neo-liberal strategy of development and that of decentralized development as envisaged by 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of our

Constitution. On this matter the people's immediate resistance would be on the UPA-sponsored Japanese-financed Amritsar–Calcutta and Delhi–Bombay corridors development plan (which Modi is likely to follow up because this plan fits in with his developmental pattern) which is going to displace millions of small landholders and poor citizens.

But the biggest challenge facing Modi is as to how to act in a manner so as to avoid divisive conflicts in the society – this is dependent on how he acts towards the minorities, especially the Muslims. This is because under our Constitution no religion can claim superiority of status against any other religion. All religions under our Constitution have equal acceptance and status.

It is a truism that in any country the faith and the confidence of the minorities in the impartial and even functioning of the State is the acid test of its being a civilized State. This is accepted wisdom, and was expressed succinctly by Lord Acton: "A state which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns

Between the lines

Importance of being Nawaz Sharif

Kuldip Nayar

itself; a state which labours to neutralize, to absorb or to expel them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government". We need only substitute 'minorities' for 'races' in the above quotation to apply the test in India. Thus inclusive development in India and for that matter in any country alone is the path to prosperity. It is an undeniable truth and needs to be irrevocably accepted by all in India, namely that minorities, Muslims and Christians, are not outsiders. They are an integral part of India. This was emphasized by Swami Vivekananda, (whom Modi will certainly accept as one of the greatest Indians we have produced) thus; "He also told Hindus not to talk of the superiority of one religion over another. Even toleration of other faiths was not right; it smacked of blasphemy".

Modi often purports to show his neutrality by proclaiming that he does not recognize any special rights for minorities – he treats all people as Gujaratis or Indians. This apparently impartial approach for all is similar to the taunt by French author, Anatole France, who ironically commented at the neglect of the poor by the French State thus: "Law in its majesty gives equal rights to the rich and poor to sleep under the bridges". Thus to say that minorities who are admittedly far behind in the race of development as against the others should not be given special treatment is not only sheer injustice but violative of the mandate of report of U. N. Human Right council, Forum on Minority issued on December 14th, 15th, 2010 which has said; "Consequently, the right of minorities to participate effectively in economic life must be fully taken into account by

I followed the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to India from his arrival to the departure. I did not find any false note either in his observations or meetings. He did not mention Kashmir. Nor did he meet the separatists who are always keen to have talks with the Pakistani leaders, not the Indians. From all angles, it was a positive and constructive visit.

That Nawaz Sharif's advisor Sartaj Aziz reignited the embers of bitter hostility by briefing in Pakistan on Kashmir and several other counts is not understandable. He had to indulge in rhetoric for domestic consumption. Lobbies of the armed forces and maulvis were assured that Nawaz Sharif vented his annoyance in private while talking to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Still I wish Sartaj Aziz had not done so because the meeting had changed the climate of opposition in India. Even the rightists in the country had conceded that a new chapter of equation had begun in the history of India and Pakistan relations. Sartaj Aziz, whatever his compulsions, did not have to be a hawk to take us all back to square one. Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh's statement may have queered the pitch, but Sartaj Aziz is not a bureaucrat and he should have kept India-Pakistan relations at a higher level.

Therefore, do not see a breakthrough in the stand that the

two sides had taken from the time the two countries had parted company in August 1947. In fact, I have sensed more optimism on earlier meetings between the Prime Ministers on both sides. Nothing concrete has come out because the establishments in India and Pakistan are basically hostile to each other. No passage of time has lessened their influence or attitude.

Yet the relationship of love and hate smoulders all the time. People in the two countries yearn for friendship or at least normalcy. The meeting between Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif has once again has evoked hope for better days. Once again, foreign secretaries of the two governments are to pinpoint what keeps the countries apart. If the past is any guide, the goodwill will not fructify into normal relations. The reason why I say so is the enmity which has been fostered in the minds of people.

It was to be seen and believed the enthusiasm with which the visit of Nawaz Sharif was awaited in India. The nation should have been engaged in Narendra Modi's resounding victory or the decimation of the Congress party which has ruled India for several decades. Instead the attention was focused on Islamabad.

Four or five days between Modi's unexpected invitation and acceptance by Sharif dominated the Indian media and the drawing

(Continued on Page 3)

rooms with discussions on whether the Pakistan Prime Minister would come to Delhi at all. And it was all positive. People wanted him to come and literally prayed that he would. That he had to bring round the armed forces and the extremist elements in his own country was conceded. But it was argued that his arrival would be an apt step to strengthen democratic ideas in Pakistan. Therefore, when he telephoned to say yes, a wave of relief swept through the country. Most newspapers made his acceptance as the first lead.

I recall how at the time of partition there was so much bloodshed—nearly 10 lakh people were massacred on both sides. Yet a few weeks later when I bought a few tapes of Noorjehan at Lahore, the shopkeeper refused to take money since I was from India. A similar treatment was meted out to the Pakistanis. The days of killing were only a few, an aberration of sort.

It is beyond me to make out why Pakistan has unilaterally ended the agreement to post two journalists from either country to cover the situation. Pakistan did not have its journalists in position for more than a year. I could have understood the reason if the two Indian journalists had violated any law or sent a dispatch which had hurt Pakistan's sentiments. There was nothing like that. Regretfully, news agencies and correspondents from the West are free to report.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to India took a similar zigzag path. Prime Minister Modi, considered a hawk, surprised even hardliners in both the countries when he invited all heads of

SAARC nations. Nawaz Sharif was inclined to accept it. Yet the India-Pakistan animosity came in the way. The army and the extremists exerted so much pressure that the visit seemed abandoned. Ultimately, Sharif asserted himself to attend swearing-in ceremony. His was not only a gesture because after meeting Modi, Sharif said that a new chapter had begun in the history of the two countries.

The fear that Modi is anti-Muslim was allayed when the two met. Modi realizes that he has to take the Muslims along to traverse the path of development, the slogan which has given him and his Bhartiya Janata Party a majority, 282 seats in a 543-member Lok Sabha. It is churlish on the part of Pakistan to question the credentials of a person whom the people of India have elected in fair and free polls. There are enough voices in India to force Modi not to go away from secularism, part of the basic structure of the Constitution that even parliament cannot change.

True, Modi's party and its mentor, the RSS, are known for their Hindutva approach. Yet they would put the country in a big turmoil if they exerted pressure on Modi to build a temple where the Babri masjid stood or to tinker with Article 370 which constitutionally gives a special status to Jammu and Kashmir when it acceded to India.

What kind of country Modi wants to build is the question. The cabinet he has constituted gives a message that he wants the different elements to feel that he will not discriminate against any segment of the society, religious or

linguistic. The first heartening step of his government to appoint a Special Investigation Team to unearth black money is a good omen. We should give him time to fulfill the aspirations of people he has aroused.

(Continued from Page 2)

governments seeking to promote equality at every level. Governments should gather and regularly publicize disaggregated data to measure and monitor the effective participation of minorities in economic life."

Modi rightly reveres Gandhiji. Surely he would remember what Gandhiji said in 1921 and again in March 1947, namely: "I would say that Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of mother India - just as the trouble in one eye affects the other too, similarly the whole of India suffers when either Hindu or Muslim suffer." Will Modi like to be remembered as a statesman or as a partisan leader—he alone can decide, because this victory has given him an unparalleled position amongst his colleagues.

Madhu Dandavate
By
B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Risky nod to hazardous crops

Bharat Dogra

It should be amply clear by now that the multinational companies which are determined to spread GM (genetically modified) crops in India have very powerful friends in high places in India. This is why despite increasing worldwide evidence of high hazards of GM crops as well as the availability of safe alternatives, GM crops continue to get one approval nod after another. In February the Union Ministry of Environment allowed 'confined field trials' of many GM varieties. Then on March 21, in a move which was hailed by GM crop industry sources as 'a progressive push to the march of GM technology', the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) decided to 'revalidate' ten transgenic varieties, clearing the way for their field trial after their earlier validity period had lapsed. However the further approval of state governments will still be required.

In this context it is important to point out that the threat of genetic contamination exists not only in the case of commercial spread of GM crops, but also in the case of field-trials. As prominent environmentalist Sailendra Nath Ghosh wrote about earlier trials, - "In view of the virtual impossibility of preventing contamination, even the open-field trials ought not to have been permitted. According to independent geneticists, the isolation distance needed to be both in time and space. The land on which the GM crop is to be grown should not sow a crop in the previous or the succeeding year. Cross-pollinating

crops, unlike the self-pollinating ones, require isolation distance of three to four kms. The implementation of these requirements is impossible under Indian conditions. Farmers would not keep their lands fallow. Crops in adjoining fields are almost always planted up to the boundaries. The trials needed to be in greenhouses controlled by independent institutions."

At the time of the Bt brinjal debate Dr. Pushpa M. Bhargava, former Vice-Chairman of the National Knowledge Commission, had explained how Indian farmers will suffer if GM crops like Bt brinjal are allowed to spread in India, "Eighty four percent of our farmer community consists of small or marginal farmers with a holding of less than four hectares land. According to Monsanto data, Bt. brinjal pollen can travel for 30 metres and could thus easily contaminate the neighbouring non-Bt brinjal field. In course of time, we would be left with no non-Bt yield even if the farmers do not want the transgenic crop. Unlike in Europe, Britain and many other countries, India has no labeling laws. In these countries, any food product which has more than 0.9 per cent of GM material must be labelled as genetically modified item. Therefore, we would neither be able to export our vegetables stock nor exercise choice with regard to GM brinjal or a non-GM brinjal. There is an ever-increasing demand everywhere, including our country, for organically grown

food which fetches the farmer better price. This market will also be lost with the introduction of GM foods."

As worldwide concern for food safety grows, it is likely that there will be increasing demand for organically grown crops and crops which are not contaminated by GM crops. Therefore we will be surrendering premium world markets if we allow our crops to be contaminated. This is why organisations like those of rice exporters have also got involved in the campaigns against GM crops. Star Link (corn engineered to contain a Bt toxin pesticide) was planted on less than 0.5 per cent of US corn acreage, but its recall cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and even then the recall was not entirely successful.

An eminent group of scientists who constitute the Independent Science Panel have said, "Transgenic contamination is now widely acknowledged to be unavoidable, and hence there can be no co-existence of GM and non-GM agriculture. Most important of all, GM crops have not been proven safe. On the contrary, sufficient evidence has emerged to raise serious safety concerns, that if ignored could result in irreversible damage to health and the environment.

This panel of scientists further stated, "New research shows that transgenic pollen, wind-blown and

(Continued on Page 8)

Contours of Secularism

Irfan Engineer

Triumphant and victorious in the 16th general elections for the Lok Sabha, the Hindu nationalists are attributing their victory to rejection of secularism by the Indian electorate. Modi in one of his election campaign speeches came up with a new definition of secularism – “India First”. BJP in its election manifesto explains that “India First simply means nurturing and protecting all the elements, which India is made of... It also means that whatever is in the interest of India will be in the interest of all the elements that India is made up of, including its citizens”. “India First” visualizes India being made up of some (unspecified) elements in which citizens are also included! And, some vague interest of India will *have* to be in the interest of all elements! What are the non-citizen abstract sounding elements? The manifesto is quiet.

The election results have unwittingly started sort of questioning on the desirability of using the term secularism. It is true that secularism has become a much abused term in India. Regional parties like the Samajwadi Party in UP and the RJD in Bihar and Indian National Congress misused the slogan of secularism to cover up their mis-governance and corruption. The slogan of secularism was used opportunistically to garner votes of the minority communities. They would not have any policies or programmes to ensure equal opportunities or ensuring fair stake of the minorities in the development. Secularism then meant ensuring

security of minorities, and in this too they failed miserably. There were more than hundred riots in UP during the Samajwadi Party regime and likewise under the Congress in other states. Security and intelligence forces victimized and even staged murders and incarcerated scores of innocent Muslim youth in the name of counter-terrorism operations in what has come to be called the cow belt of India and Hyderabad. They failed to check the growth of communal forces and did not counter the stigmatization of the minorities.

Opportunistic secularism of the so-called secular parties meant joining hands with fundamentalist forces within the minority community in the hope that they would be able to deliver at the polling booths. The fundamentalist tendencies within the minority communities are as marginal as the cultural nationalists are within the majority community, and, well organized and vocal as in the majority. They deftly use media coverage to create their larger than life image on issues like preventing Salman Rushdie from visiting India or problematizing Taslima Nasreen’s visa extension or getting various books, films, websites and artistic expressions banned just like the Hindu nationalists do so (use media coverage) demolishing Babri Masjid and opposing freedom of expression on the ground that it offends their faith.

The Hindu nationalist organizations (HNOs) used this

opportunist secularism to their advantage and sought to blame and stigmatize the minorities as a whole as if they were responsible and blameworthy for the opportunist secularism of these national and regional parties. The HNOs well organized as they are, mobilized and instilled dislike not only against the political parties subscribing to opportunist secularism, but also against the members of the minority communities. The HNOs laid the primary blame for opportunistic secularism not on the “secular” political parties but on the existence of the minorities within the nation, particularly those having their holy lands outside. They primarily problematize Islam and Christianity and their presumed separatist mindset rather than opportunistic secularism. So long as Muslims and Christians exist, there will be secular parties to propound and benefit politically from opportunistic secularism. The solution desired by the HN ideologues therefore is either expel the minorities if possible from the nation, or subdue them to second class citizenship without any rights. It is the opportunistic secularism that needs to be problematized rather than locating the problem within any community as all communities have diverse traditions, customs and cultures and are being made and unmade through social, economic and political changes and each individual responds dynamically to the changes occurring.

Religious ethos in India

The HNOs have problematized

secularism itself as a western notion to be discarded. The first step towards discrediting secularism as a value is to give it confusing definitions like “India first”, “pseudo secularism v/s. positive secularism” etc. However, one must accept that there is no universally accepted understanding of secularism. While in France, USSR and Turkey, secularism has meant uneasy tension between church and the state. In India the dominant discourse of secularism was more inclusive in its formulation of “*sarva dharma samabhav*”, where state indulges all religions equally and citizens are at liberty to practice, profess and propagate their religion. State is often called upon to mediate during conflicts between different religious communities without favouring any religion.

HNOs are also Hindu supremacists though they pay lip service to the Hindu ethos of tolerance. They want privileged status for Hinduism (or rather re-invented and selective traditions of upper caste elite). Golwalkar, the revered ideologue of HNOs, wanted that minorities should dream of nothing but the glory of *Hindu rashtra* and Hindu traditions and symbols. Even in the manifesto of the BJP for the 2014 elections, it calls for return to “civilizational consciousness” that was lost during the colonial rule. The BJP manifesto further states, that after the independence, the new state was constructed on western notions. The democratic notion of liberty, equality, human dignity and citizenship sound western ideas, alien to Hindu culture.

Usage of the term Hinduism in the sense of religion was popularized during the colonial rule. Hindu

community signified people living on the southern and eastern banks of river Sindhu and was inclusive of followers of diverse religious practices. Religious consciousness at popular level evolved from the resistance to the dominant upper castes, particularly the Brahmins, and their monopoly over notions of purity and pollution and structuring society into rigid hierarchies. The popular resistance was led by many bhakti saints, including Tulsidas, Kabir, Ravidas, Mirabai, Gyaneshwar, Namdeo, Tukaram, Chokha Mela, Bahinabai, the Warkari Sampradaya, Guru Nanak, Basveshwara, Narayan Guru, Shankar Dev (Assam), the Bauls of Bengal and so on.

The popular religious consciousness of the subalterns developed due to popular compositions of the bhakti saints who opposed the notions of purity and pollution and believed in equality of all before one God. God was not a power who punished the deviants with lower status during cycles of re-births or to be feared. God was benign compassionate power to whom one should devote to and derive ecstasy from devotion. Devotion to God meant loving all God’s creation – all humans practicing diverse traditions of worship, from any ethnic community, belonging to any culture. Loving and being non-violent towards even animals and nature. Muslim bhakti poet Salbeg was credited with numerous compositions in praise of Lord Jagannath and as tradition has it, Lord Jagannath’s rath could not be moved on its annual *yatra* till Salbeg could join the *yatra*. Raskhan similarly composed on Lord Krishna. Sufi Islam was as inclusive and contributed to the religious

consciousness of Muslims as well as Hindu devotees who were attracted to their shrines. Sufi Islam like the bhakti saints emphasizes on love of compassionate and merciful God believing in inclusive traditions of worship. Sufis like Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan believed that Vedas too were revealed book of Allah and Nizamuddin Auliya would render recitation of *bhajans* in praise of Rama and Krishna every morning.

The priestly class of Brahmins and Ulemas aligned with the state seeking state patronage and blessing coronation ceremonies of the rulers advising them on “right path” of *shari’at* (Muslim law) and rules of worship, purity and pollution. The popular religious consciousness of the subalterns on the other hand was inclusive, respecting all paths to reach God and respecting all religions as true. Religion was more of a path that taught them to be humble, humane, and to live harmoniously in society and with nature. The priestly class catered to the elite and were supremacist in their notions of religion and blessed violence and wars. Subalterns constituted roughly about 90 per cent of the people and therefore the dominant ethos in India were not defining religious boundaries and recruiting followers exclusively and then governing on the basis of religion of majority or minority but having ambivalent attitude towards religion. Drawing from this ambivalent attitude, the formulation of *sarva dharma samabhava* aptly described the nature of secularism desirable to Indian people. Indian experience of secularism did not come from struggle between the church and the state where one or the other had to be a victor and other vanquished.

The HNOs mislead the people of India when they claim that secularism is a Nehruvian concept borrowed from the west and in the same breath claim Hinduism to be a tolerant religion. The religion of subaltern Hindus is more than tolerant – it respects all faiths and for them truth is multi-dimensional. However, HNOs stoke intolerance. Diverse as it is, the HNOs realize that Hindus can be united only if they can be made disapprove of something in other religious communities and therefore are involved in the project of stigmatizing the minorities.

Reclaiming secularism

Opportunistic secularism of Congress and certain regional parties vies for Muslim votes and in the process gives in to the demands of fundamentalists and communalists within the minority community. That strengthens and empowers the tiny but well organized fundamentalists and enables them to impose their hegemony over the community and define the community on their terms. The fundamentalist sections appear to be much larger than their actual strength and often the only voice within the minority community. It enables them to victimize weaker and marginalized sections, particularly women within the community, and weed out dissenting/alternative opinions. Strengthening of hegemony of the fundamentalists within the minority community strengthens HNOs. The neutral political and cultural space is greatly reduced.

The HNOs also reduce the liberal space within the society; pose a threat to the religio-cultural diversity and pluralism and polarize attitudes and behaviour of people on issues of

identities, forcing people to behave in conformity with their identity. Without constructing a totalitarian state, the HNOs cannot eliminate the liberal space where citizens are not reduced to their religio-cultural identities but are dynamic beings, agents of change, re-ordering their cultural spaces and their lives. The HNOs are constructing their cultural-totalitarian state on the pretext of defending non-negotiable symbols of patriarchal upper-caste hierarchical social order.

Secularism and state

We must then reject opportunistic secularism as well as “India First” notion as not being secularism in any sense. Secularism is the outcome of process of secularisation wherein institutions are liberated from the hold of the Church or institutionalized clergy. For example, knowledge and education was liberated from the Brahmins, Madrasas and Church. For secularism, we have to have a secular state and a secular society. A secular state is one which is not based on religious scriptures, theological dogmas or doctrines nor sponsored by church or any religious institution. Though the state does not profess any religion, it gives freedom to its citizen to profess practice and propagate any religion of their choice or even atheism. HNOs want the state to privilege Hindu religion and Hindu religious symbols.

The secular state is not concerned with the religion which its citizens profess and practice. In framing public policies and laws, in executive actions, public employment, education, and in dispensing justice religion of the citizen becomes irrelevant. They are based only on welfare of the citizens.

Secular state treats all its citizens even-handedly and equally irrespective of the religion they profess. The HNOs and the fundamentalist/communalists within minorities on the other hand seek to negotiate with the state space for their group/community. The fundamentalists derive their power from state recognition as representatives of their respective communities which they are not. A secular state is not even supposed to recognize the community and base its policies on such recognition. Any such recognition triggers off competitive communalism/fundamentalism and competition for more group/communal rights and greater share in power and state resources. Citizens are then pushed into tighter hold of the group as their rights and entitlements are essentially based on membership of group/community and they are not free to choose, their memberships being more or less birth-based. The state is reduced to protecting and promoting the hegemony of the fundamentalist/communal elite or the cultural entrepreneurs.

A secular state should rather protect the rights and liberties of the dissenters, however weak or minority within the group they may be. However, a secular state may frame a policy for a group to address any adversity arising merely from group membership. Right to dissent, disagreement and dialogue is sine qua non of progress in knowledge and our understanding of truth. Similarly, dialogue of cultures, faith and religion is essential for cultural advancement.

Secularism and society

Secular state does not emerge from a vacuum. Though Indian

Constitution is secular, state in India ends up strengthening cultural entrepreneurs and as the majority in the scenario are more influential and powerful, those belonging to the majority end up with larger share in social space and national resources. For example, Supreme Court judgment stating Hindutva as being the way of life, or anti-cow slaughter and anti-conversion legislations euphemistically named as Freedom of Religion Acts or non-protection of minorities by security forces during riots and targeting minorities in police encounters.

Whereas the real demand should be requiring state action not based on group identity, the response from cultural entrepreneurs of the minority community is to demand more protected and secure space for the group and tighter hold over the community resistance to any change in their Personal Laws, tighter control over women from the community and banishment of individuals like Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen and restriction over their freedom of expression.

Secular state is on firmer footing with secularisation within society. One of the most important outcomes of secularisation process was not atheism, but de-sacralization of religion and religious symbol. Nothing is so sacred that it should be put beyond the rational scrutiny. But that does not mean disrespecting the sentiments of the believers. One has to be not only rational, but also reasonable person when we share political space with members belonging to different communities. Religion is often conceived as a threat to secularisation. It is not religion but cultural entrepreneurs misusing religion and religious institutions that oppose

secularisation and liberties. Religion and egalitarian values associated with religion can be a resource in

secularisation of the society as the bhakti and sufi understandings of religion are.

(Continued from Page 4)

deposited elsewhere, or fallen directly to the ground, is a major source of transgenic contamination.”

What this statement says very clearly is that GM crops are not safe and these can contaminate all other normal crops as well. In other words all farmers will be affected by these hazardous crops. Even those farmers who totally reject GM crops will have to face their hazards.

This threat becomes very serious and of a permanent nature when we remember that it is almost impossible to fully recall GM crops which have been released once. As Professor Susan Bardocz has noted, “GM is the first irreversible technology in human history. When a GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) is released it is out of our control; we have no means to call it back.”

Apart from inherent problems of GM crops, we should also look at the problems and limitations of the present-day research and trials.

A group of 17 distinguished scientists from the USA, Canada, Europe and New Zealand wrote to India’s Prime Minister in 2009, “India’s regulators do not require independent bio-safety tests, but uncritically accept as evidence of safety, research conducted by the company who is applying for commercial clearance of the product. This raises serious questions regarding impartiality and

conflicts of interest, which are clearly justified, based on published evidence of bias in the research conducted by industry that is contrary to accepted normal scientific conduct.

“The biological testing required is not adequate to detect either acute or chronic toxic effects of GM foods. At best, only 90-day feeding studies are required by the government’s SOPs without an obligatory requirement for toxicological and histological evaluation. In order to assess medium and long-term (life-long) health impacts it is necessary to conduct lifetime and multigenerational feeding studies. Only these will reliably determine fertility and chronic health impacts, which is essential because it is the intension that people will be eating GM foods for their whole lifetime.

“Experimental data is invariably not made publicly available for independent scientific scrutiny under the pretext of commercial confidentiality. This has required court action (both in Europe and India) in order to obtain the information needed to assess the quality of the research submitted by industry to be scrutinised by authoritative bio-safety experts. Such independent re-evaluation of submitted industry data has repeatedly found that this research and its interpretation thereof to be flawed, inadequate, biased and thus misleading.”

Victory for political marketing in India

K. S. Chalam

Political marketing as a sub-discipline of political management course in some Western universities became an academic success after globalisation and the expansion of market democracy. It looks like that the subject has not yet attracted the mainstream academic disciplines like political science, political economy and public policy in India. The recent amazing landslide of BJP particularly through its PM designee is a marker to be noted by every social scientist. Though there is a small study on political marketing of BJP in Delhi elections, it has not attracted the attention of many. The roles of media, internet, technology, consultants, etc. are very important in understanding the concept of political marketing. The subject of commercial marketing is relevant here. This is how scholars Kotler and Levy, MacGinnis and others, in the 1960s and 1970s, produced studies on the subject. It is now a thriving business for consulting firms in the USA. It is noted that the services of famous political marketing consultants like James Carville, who was the strategist for Bill Clinton in 1992, Karl Rove for George W Bush in 2000, Philip Gould for Tony Blair in the UK, Mark Penn for Hillary Clinton in 2007 have been accessed to win elections mostly in the market democracies. We are told that our PM designee Narendrabhai Modi has employed some famous consulting firms some time after 2012 elections in Gujarat with an aim to seize power in Delhi while the Congress party has relied on some bureaucrats who had degrees in business management, and AAP has psephologists, etc.

‘Business Today’ gave the names of the firms of McCann World and Ogilvy & Mather. The left, which is averse to the idea of market, is devastated. In other words, it is now a full scale service activity that can be hired by political parties.

Market is understood as a place where buyers and sellers meet not necessarily in a physical set up to transact business. It is now possible to interact on the net, E-marketing. Political marketing is about political organisations (such as political parties) adapting techniques (such as market research and product design) and concepts (such as the desire to satisfy voter demands), originally used in the business world, to help them achieve their goals (such as win in elections). Ever since Anthony Downs published his famous book on ‘Economic Theory of Democracy’ that stimulated Buchanan, Gordon Tullock, Stigler, Jagdish Bhagwati and others who attacked the institution of state and made it vulnerable, market has entered all human activities. India is credited as one of the developing countries to have followed the model of growth prescribed by funding agencies. Though some of our commentators acclaim our leaders and policy makers for this, it is not their ingenuity that facilitated the turnaround of the economy, but meekly following the model set by the agencies. However, it has almost reached the status of a western economy ending some of the traditional institutions that shaped our identity except caste, religion and diversity. Now, it is anticipated that with the involvement of market

in political game, we may also attain that status soon. At the same time, it is possible to make them imitate some of our institutions so that we can proudly say later that we are parallel in our structures and tastes. This is a win win situation that pleases most of our leaders in Delhi, Hyderabad, etc. It is in this context that political marketing is relevant here.

Political marketing requires some basic things like the product, brand image, political consumer, communication, delivery, etc. Among the above fundamentals, product design is very important. In order to get to the brass-tacks, the analysts are supposed to get the feel of market demands by talking to party members, focused group discussions, opinion polls, segmentation of voters/consumers, views of public, etc. to design the product. The product design and development based on market intelligence is crucial here. It is said that Reagan made his product on ‘peace and economy’, Bush on ‘no tax rises’, Clinton on ‘change and economy’, and Obama on ‘yes, we can’. We have seen Narendra Bhai using the similar language in several campaigns, including the one in the L.B. stadium. After the product is designed like ‘development and change’ ‘Congress mukta Bharat,’ etc, branding is very vital. Branding is about how the political organisation or Individual is perceived overall. If the organisation is found to be redundant, it is better to rely on individual and focus all resources for making him/her the brand equity. Brands are essential in

the electronic age to create a feeling of identity, help consumers/voters about the party and its policies, and distinguish the brand from another brand of a competing party. Above all it is possible to examine the life cycle of the product and make changes when better products dominate the market. In the recent elections, Narendra Modi is found to be a robust brand that captured the market, compared to others. We have seen the media honchos using the above terms in their election coverage.

It is said that there are two categories of parties, the sales oriented party (SOP) and the market oriented party (MOP). The former relies on the method of persuasion to change the mind-set of voters while the latter, responds to the views and demands of the voters. However, both depend on the market strategies of communicating with the voter through brand image. The 4Ps of product (campaign platform), push marketing (grass roots efforts), pull marketing (mass media) and polling (research) are used to communicate with the voter by using all means of communication. We have seen the use of not only internet and electronic screens, but also massive live in programmes using TV channels and print media. The glamour of film stars as in the case of consumer products has been extensively used to improve the brand image of parties in recent elections. The technique is of course very expensive involving expert teams from abroad. However, parties with corporate support alone can afford this as in the USA. In a way, it is good that elections and political parties are slowly moving into a regime that makes all this process

(Continued on Page 15)

Human security is true ‘development’

M. G. Devasahayam

Sriperumbudur Parliamentary constituency in Tamil Nadu adjoining Chennai is a ‘developed’ one if the neo-liberal ‘development’ criteria are adopted. This is the home of some of the state-of-the-art ‘infrastructure’ projects, Special Economic Zones and giant MNCs—Motorola, Samsung, Dell, Ford, Hyundai, BMW, Nokia, Saint Gobain, Nissan, Caterpillar to mention a few. But as pre-election surveys show, the locals are left wondering as to what the ‘development’ is all about! For them the roads are bad, bus services are poor, power cuts are frequent, environment has sharply degraded, water sources are drying up and pollution is on the increase. What is worse, there are hardly any job or income opportunities for the poor. Bereft of ‘human security’ they fall back on the freebies and charity handed down by the state government.

To propitiate such ‘development’ central and state governments extend massive concessions and facilities to the MNCs who in turn pay fabulous salaries to their expatriate managers and are earning profits in billions, most of which is repatriated to their home countries. This is ‘neo-liberal’ development at work! This is true, perhaps in a larger measure to Gurgaon, adjoining Delhi that has morphed in to a ‘monstrous city’.

At the height of globalisation rampage, late Caroline Thomas, Professor of Global Politics at the University of Southampton wrote a Book ‘Global Governance,

Development and Human Security’ (Pluto Press-2000). It was well before the warped concepts, ideologies and methodologies that dominated Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) made an unrelenting onslaught on the Indian economy due to the predatory policies and practices unleashed by UPA II supposedly under an ‘economist’ Prime Minister. These policies, perceived mostly in a macro and material context related to structural reforms, allocation of natural resources, big-ticket projects, foreign investment, GDP growth and world trade. Poverty alleviation was expected to take place as a ‘trickle down’ and spin-off.

The book dealt with the “growing inequality and widespread poverty that characterises the era of ‘neo-liberal’ development” and ‘uneven distribution of the benefits of the globalisation process, and the general failure of that process to attend to the human security of the majority of humanity.’ The UPA triumvirate of Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Palaniappan Chidambaram had no use for this book or what is written in it. In the event, by their LPG policies they have created an India of ‘growing inequality, widespread poverty, galloping prices and increasing unemployment.’ For the overwhelming majority prosperity never came, only poverty accelerated. At the hustings they paid for it very dearly.

At the global level UNDP Report, 1997 describes the ‘uneven

distribution of the benefits of the globalisation process'. It depicts a global society bereft of conscience or concern for human suffering and deprivation. While one third of the human race was reeling in poverty and penury, microscopic minority of global population wallowed in opulent wealth and splendour. Subsequently things got worse as 'global governance' tightened its grip on the hapless third world nations. In an inhuman system where over one third of world's population does not have a secure life, harping merely on 'GDP growth' and 'unrestricted world trade' as the central theme of LPG is indeed perverse and blinkered. This is precisely what happened in India during the last ten years resulting in nearly two-third of the population living in near poverty and penury.

With a new government coming in there is need for a realistic and holistic approach to evaluate the LPG regime of 'development' and the system of Governance that went with it and provide a talisman that could measure its effectiveness. 'Human security' could be the talisman with individual dignity and poverty reductions as the core theme.

The 'human security' talisman makes a fine distinction between 'income poverty' and 'human poverty'. The neo-liberal reforms under LPG regime seek to address only the 'income poverty' while virtually ignoring 'human poverty'. This is what has led to the skewed, unsustainable 'development' that has taken place in India. 'human security' is much more than 'material growth and sufficiency' [income security] and is described as "a condition of existence in which basic material needs are met and in

which human dignity, including meaningful participation in the life of the community, can be met.

While material sufficiency lies at the core of human security, in addition the concept encompasses non-material dimension to form a qualitative whole. Human security is oriented towards an active and substantive notion of democracy, and is directly engaged with discussions of democracy at all levels, from the local to the global. This is fresh and positive thinking, harnessing four vital elements-material sufficiency, human dignity, democracy and participatory governance - that constitute the core of a civilised human society. One without the other is incomplete and unsustainable.

It is time 'human security' replaced 'threat' centered 'security', which is the obsession of all countries, big and small. This makes sense because for most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of war or any cataclysmic event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime, safety for women-these are the emerging concerns of human security.

LPG/neo-liberal model of development will never be able to achieve such security because by nature it is exploitative with its very roots in crony capitalism - an economy that is nominally free market, but works on preferential regulation and other favorable government intervention based on money-power and personal relationships. This is what has been in practice in India ever since the LPG era of early nineties.

The blatant manifestation of this crony capitalism was described the other day by former West Bengal Governor Gopalakrishna Gandhi while delivering the 15th D.P. Kohli Memorial Lecture at the conclusion of the CBI's year-long Golden Jubilee celebrations: "Corporate greed has crossed all bounds.... We used to talk of black money as a parallel economy and so it continues to be. But Reliance is a parallel State. I do not know of any country where one single firm exercises such power so brazenly, over the natural resources, financial resources, professional resources and, ultimately, over human resources as the company of the Ambanis. From Ambedkar who spoke of economic democracy, to Ambani who represents a techno-commercial monopoly of unprecedented scale, is a far cry indeed."

This is the kind of 'parallel state' that has facilitated one person living in a Rs. 5000 crore mind-boggling mansion in Mumbai with all security money can buy while millions sleep on pavements and in abandoned pipes deprived of even basic safety and dignity.

Substituting Ambani with Adani is not the solution. India needs to go back to the basics - the economic idea of India envisaged by the Founding Fathers of our Republic. In this 'idea', 'development' of Independent India would be *sui generis*, a society unlike any other, in a class of its own that would not follow the Western pattern of mega industrialisation, urbanisation and individuation. India's would be a people's economy that would chart out a distinct course in economic development. India would pursue

(Continued on Page 15)

Climate change is evidence of the death-wish of capitalism

Renfrey Clarke

If modern industrial capitalism were a person, he or she would be on suicide watch. The system that has brought us quantum physics and reality television, modern medicine and the columns of Andrew Bolt is set on a course which, by all the best reckoning, points directly to its doing itself in.

If capitalism goes on — everything goes. Climate, coastlines, most living species, food supplies, the great bulk of humanity. And certainly, the preconditions for advanced civilisation, perhaps forever.

Moreover, we're not just talking risk, in the sense of an off-chance. These are the most likely outcomes for capitalism's current policies and performance in the area of climate change.

As far back as 2010 the famed US paleoclimatologist Lonnie Thompson told a gathering of scientists in Phoenix, Arizona: "Climatologists, like other scientists, tend to be a stolid group ... Why then are climatologists speaking out about the dangers of global warming? The answer is that virtually all of us are now convinced that global warming poses a clear and present danger to civilization."

Rulers in the capitalist world are not remotely contemplating action on the scale needed to contain the crisis. In recent years, the Climate Action Tracker, a scientific partnership that includes Germany's high-powered Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, has issued an annual report detailing the climate

commitments of governments around the world, and spelling out the implications for global warming. The most recent report, from last November, concludes: "Weak government action on climate change will lead to a projected 3.7°C of warming by 2100." Almost certainly, though, the warming that will result if action is limited to current promises will be much greater than this. Like the reports issued in recent months by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Climate Action Tracker figures do not take account of so-called "slow feedbacks". These are factors, such as the melting of polar ice and releases of greenhouse gases from melting permafrost, that cut in only on a time-frame of decades to centuries.

The world at 4°C

Supposing, however, that the temperature rise late in the century was a mere 4°C, what would the resulting world be like? In 2010, climatologist Rachel Warren, of Britain's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, made this prediction: "In such a 4°C world, the limits for human adaptation are likely to be exceeded in many parts of the world, while the limits for adaptation for natural systems would largely be exceeded throughout the world. Hence, the ecosystem services upon which human livelihoods depend would not be preserved."

If the limits for adaptation of natural systems are crossed, the

ecosystems must soon collapse. Without the services provided by these ecosystems, human beings will not survive in large numbers.

Largely responsible for this "population crash" would be a collapse of food supplies. In a four-degree world, weather would be far more erratic, veering between mega-floods and severe, extended droughts. Key food-bowl regions would on average be markedly drier, while fertile coastal lowlands would be affected by sea-level rise. Following the extinction of countless species, the remnant ecosystems would be chaotically unstable, further restricting agriculture.

One of the recent IPCC summaries predicts declining crop yields from about 2030. An analysis of 1700 datasets for wheat, rice and maize, performed by researchers at the University of Leeds, points to widespread reductions in yields of 25% later in the century. These reductions, however, would be multiplied by the effects of extreme social crisis.

Food insecurity, as it became acute, could be expected to set off wars over water supplies and remaining patches of viable farmland. These conflicts would take a horrific toll not just on populations, but also on technology and infrastructure, further reducing agricultural output.

The "5% by 2020" emissions reduction target shared by the Labor Party and the Coalition in Australia is laughable. The Climate Action

Tracker says this target is consistent with a global pathway leading to temperature rises of 3.5-4°C.

Both major parties in Australia plan to fail on climate change, overseeing a climate disaster. But it is the Coalition's death-wish that is perhaps the more fervent. Analysing Australian climate policies, the Climate Action Tracker observes: "The Abbott Government's proposed Direct Action programme lacks the resources to meet the 5 per cent from 2000 reduction goal and instead could lead to emissions of about 12 per cent above 2000 levels by 2020."

These calculations leave out the greenhouse impacts of Australia's coal exports on the basis that the emissions will be released overseas. But Australia's recoverable reserves of black coal alone contain more carbon than is ever likely to be extracted from the Canadian tar sands.

The compulsions of capitalism

What is it about capitalism that the system wilfully pursues strategies that look certain to bring about its own demise?

The answer lies in the fact that while an unaddressed climate crisis will be lethal to capitalism, the solutions to the crisis also promise to bring the system down — and sooner. The capitalists' dilemma becomes clearer if we list some of the key measures required:

- At least two-thirds of proven fossil fuel reserves need to be left in the ground. That is billions of dollars effectively written off.
- Material and financial resources need to be reoriented, in a concerted way, from the pursuit of maximum profit toward achieving rapid declines in

greenhouse gas emissions.

- This reorientation of the economy will need to include a large element of direct state spending, structured around long-term planning and backed by tightening regulation. Schemes such as carbon pricing cannot play more than a limited, subsidiary role.
- To keep mass living standards at the highest levels consistent with these measures, and ensure popular support, the main costs of the reorientation need to be levied on the wealthy.

Can anyone imagine the world's capitalist elites agreeing to such measures, except perhaps under the most extreme popular pressure?

To address just the first point, the underground reserves of fossil fuels owned by energy companies make up a large slice of the capitalisation of stock markets around the world. If the bulk of these assets were written off, the shock to global capitalism would be cataclysmic. The capitalists as a class would resist such a move furiously, and indeed violently.

Ironically, saving the climate would not be particularly expensive compared with outlays the capitalist system regularly makes — particularly on its armed forces. The IPCC calculates that the "cost" of keeping global temperature rises to 2°C would be to reduce the median annual growth of consumption over this century by a mere 0.06 per cent.

The problem is not the overall cost, but the priorities and compulsions of capitalism. At the core of humanity's climate quandary is the fact that it is hard to imagine a system less suited to halting climate

change than the one that now rules us.

Capitalist firms have no choice but to try to maximise profits and growth rather than address social needs. If they fail to concentrate on these private priorities, they are soon outcompeted and ruined. In strictly private terms, carbon polluting can make for a killer bottom line. But this privately rational choice will, in time, be collectively catastrophic.

Something of the same logic applies on the international scale. National capitalist classes are compelled to compete against one another. Defending the collective profitability of their backers, each capitalist government seeks to be the last to sign on to emissions abatement agreements, while making the weakest undertakings.

Under fire from environmentalists, capitalist governments promote measures designed to make "green" investing more profitable than the alternatives. But these schemes are not remotely adequate. Climate scientist Kevin Anderson argues convincingly that the marginal changes in investment that result from ploys such as carbon markets are completely insufficient for bringing about the cuts in emissions — as much as 10 per cent a year in the case of advanced countries — that are needed.

A further reason why capitalism is so poorly suited to dealing with climate change is the system's inherent short-termism. Typically, companies aim to invest capital and secure returns over a cycle lasting five years or less. If firms spend big sums on long-term goals, their overall capital turnover tends to be slower than that of their rivals, and

their profitability falls. Before long they are out of business.

Dealing with climate change, however, requires investing now to halt processes whose effects may only become lethal in another half-century. Capitalism has great difficulty looking that far ahead.

Of course, the system has a collective instrument — the state — designed to referee conflicts between capitalists and ensure that the overriding interests of their class are defended. But what if most capitalists decide that long-term action to combat climate change would threaten their near-term profits? And what if the state itself is captured by a few huge corporations that are also big polluters?

What if a decision of the US Supreme Court allows big fossil fuel corporations to buy the Congress? What if Clive Palmer takes his coal billions and sets out to win the balance of power in the Australian Senate?

The timelines of climate catastrophe are long, and in capitalism's systemic suicide it is not, on the whole, today's corporate chiefs who are fated to perish. Theirs is strictly a proxy death-wish. The brief, unhappy lives and early graves are to be the lot, mostly, of future generations.

As the renowned American philosopher and linguist Noam Chomsky put it recently, "In the moral calculus of capitalism, greater profits in the next quarter outweigh the fate of your grandchildren." All the more reason for working people, who have no stake in the survival of capitalism, to consign the system to the historical dumpster.

- greenleft.org

It is 50 years since the passing of Jawaharlal Nehru on May 27, 1964. Can one ever imagine him instigating or conniving in a pogrom? Or becoming a plaything in the hands of corporate capital? Or spending on a general election amounts bearing comparison with American Presidential elections?

I hope there will be remembrances everywhere this time of Nehru and the quality of decency that he represented.

I concluded an article I wrote a decade ago thus:

There was a creative tension in the Gandhi-Nehru relationship. They had differences. Gandhi's religiosity was not shared by Nehru. Both often gave expression to differences publicly, in private letters to one another; and, in the case of an incarcerated Nehru, in his diary. Some writers have magnified these or focussed primarily on these. But they had strong mutual synergies on vital issues when the two would spring to each other's side. Gandhi's positions on the secular state are Nehruvian in character. Likewise, Nehru's positions on the definition of the Indian nation are the same as Gandhi's. Both stand for territorial nationalism, thus clearly demarcating themselves from those in the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the pre-independence CPI of the 1940s which would define nation or nationality on the basis of religion. It is difficult to work together even for a while if differences overshadow commonalities. Gandhi and Nehru pulled together for decades. Gandhi as Congress president in 1924 retained Nehru as general secretary. He suggested Nehru's name for Congress presidentship on at least four occasions—1929, 1935 (for 1936), 1938-39 (on this occasion along with the Marxist Socialist Narendra Deva's name) and finally in 1946.

Nevertheless, a Gandhi-Nehru divide was projected from various ideological platforms, some of them seeking to widen it into a chasm. The Hindutva forces, already stained with Gandhi's blood, projected the divide because, separated from Gandhi, Nehru made for them an isolated and therefore easier ideological target. The dichotomy was further emphasised within the post-1969 Congress because of a perceived need to assert specific loyalties. This perhaps enabled even leaders like, for instance, Vasant Sathe, who had been in the RSS in 1939-41, to present themselves as Nehruvian. Those tied to the pre-Independence CPI tradition of the 1940s, (not necessarily or always identical with the contemporary Left), also 'theoremised' the Gandhi-Nehru divide. Some of them styled themselves as Nehruvians in relation to Gandhi; but not all of them held to the Nehruvian position where the choice was between the Gandhi-Nehru view of the nation and the Muslim League notions of nation or nationality. Some of the Gandhians too promoted the separation of Gandhi from Nehru. They picked on specific differences between Gandhi and Nehru and converted them into their own defining characteristic. For several years this enabled many of them to wash their hands of contemporary developments. But the hour of reckoning now approaches.
- The Hindu, October 22, 2003

—Anil Nauriya

(Continued from Page 10)

standardised so that it can be monitored or regulated from any part of the world.

Branding of political leader and the product image of the party involve investment to be made to attract the young smart phone wielders, web surfers, TV addicts. But, what is missing in the whole exercise is that the message that the leader wanted to convey and

the response of the voter and his needs seem to be lost forever. It is considered like a use-and-throw consumerism that influences the whole political process that may not be suitable for a country like India. At home, we have seen TRS in Telangana using the traditional method of reaching out the voters to empathise with them through its manifesto, is a grand success. Political marketing may be

suitable in countries where party membership and voting are dwindling, traditional segmentation like class, family eroded, TV and internet are prime sources of information and where voters are critical about parties. Do the recent elections convey any symptom of the coming of age where we can outsource our polls including Election Commission to an MNC?

(Continued from Page 11)

need-based, human-scale, balanced development while conserving nature and livelihoods. In a self-respecting nation every citizen should get the strength, resource and

opportunity to stand on their feet and earn his/her livelihood with honour and dignity instead of endlessly depending on corporate trickle-downs and government freebies and

charity. God-given resources - land, water, jungle and minerals—belong to the people and these must be managed as such. Only then there would be human security.

No salvation

Jashodaben says, ‘I am grateful to Modi that he has accepted me as his wife’. SC’s dictate to EC before the election only forced Modi to accept her as his wife. Her gratitude legitimately should go to the Apex Court. A young Rohit Shekar claimed Narain Dutt Tiwari as his biological father and accused Tiwari of cheating his mother Ujjwala

Sharma. He was proved right by the judiciary after a painful and protracted legal battle. Recently Ujjwala married Tiwari. In the glorious Tamil epic Silappathigaram, Kovalan deserted his wife Kannagi and ran away with a dancer Madhavi. When he returned after years losing all his wealth, Kannagi gracefully accepted him.

She also burnt Madurai city for this turncoat’s death. A mythological character Nalayini carried her leprosy affected husband in a basket to a prostitute. Sita underwent an Agni Pariksha to prove her chastity. Jashodaben, Ujjwala, Kannagi, Nalayini and Sita belong to a herd. Won’t they ever change?

—Sankara Narayanan

Saving planet

The recent May11 2014 issue of *Janata* carries suggestions about saving the planet. All media and experts always seem to have solutions to save the planet. But never anyone has the guts to suggest trimming the population. For according to me every human birth is just another burden for earth. If earth has to be a better place it can do with fewer humans.

Mankind has God and law to pray and for protection on their side. Unfortunately nature has no such privileges. It is unfortunate that even religions couldn’t educate mankind about relevance of nature in our lives. Maybe religion is the earliest of mankind’s manipulative innovations.

Our modern lifestyle always puts us in conflict with nature. So mankind

cannot really do anything to save the planet except limit its numbers.

But the people who sell magazines or newspapers or anything can’t afford to advise people to produce fewer kids. And the reasons are obvious.

I hope my point is well taken and I would be the happiest to see the world having fewer and happier humans.

—Abhijeet Warriar



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 19

June 8, 2014

**Future of Congress
Corporatization of media**

Kuldip Nayar

Bhagana Atrocities

Neha Dixit

**Is rejection of UPA the
rejection of secularism,
welfarism?**

Harsh Mander

Two Ordinances

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

**D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.**

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Lawless Uttar Pradesh

Viswam S

The gang rape and murder by hanging of two minor girls in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh has shocked the conscience of India. The abominable crime has also attracted the attention of United Nations which has reacted by saying that women and girls from lower caste communities are targeted and raped in "rural India". Even if we ignore the generalization, the fact remains that UP has brought disrepute to India which is forced to hang its head in shame by the administration under the leadership of a young, educated and promising leader, Akhilesh Yadav, son of former chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav. These hopes began fading when lawlessness returned to the state after initial promise of a change.

The Akhilesh government drew a lot of flak for its insensitive and incompetent handling of the incidence of communal riots in Muzaffarnagar. Some 40,000 Muslims were uprooted and forced into refugee camps. It was not so much the failure of the administration to inspire confidence in the citizenry, particularly the minorities, but the overall attitude of the leadership to the sensitive issue of law and order that was found so galling.

While the people were shocked by the callousness of the administration in dealing with the post-Muzaffarnagar situation, Mulayam Singh chose to fuel the public's anger even more. He justified rape and made the facetious but thoughtless remark that "boys will be boys". The UP government's handling of the post-Badaun situation is no less flattering. There was good cause for public concern as two more horrifying cases of rape surfaced, one in Bareilly involving a 22-year-old woman who was criminally assaulted, forced to drink acid, and the second in Meerut where a ten year old minor was allegedly abducted from her house and was gangraped.

The administration of Akhilesh appears to be far too casual. Reports suggest that the local police aided and abetted the Badaun crime. A witness who saw one of the minor girls being dragged by the hair complained to the police chowki which refused to register the complaint. Instead, the police there threatened the families of the two girls with further violence and police action. The girls had gone to the field at night to answer calls of nature when the hoodlums pounced on them, raped the two, and strung them

from the branch of a tree after strangulating them. It is only in a state where the police administration is itself an abettor of crimes that such incidents are allowed to happen. The state's size itself is a handicap. The administration gets away with the excuse that UP is too big to administer and that the police force is too inadequate to oversee law and order.

The Centre is not happy with the handling of the post-Badaun situation by the Akhilesh Yadav regime and has raised some queries which seem pertinent on the face of it. It was irked by the inordinate delay on Lucknow's part to seek a CBI probe. The state had almost to be bullied. The Centre also wondered why no case was registered by UP under the SC/ST Act. The Centre has said that it observed federal principles while dealing with Lucknow and did not want to give the impression that it was interfering in the state's affairs. However, the initial reluctance of the chief minister to involve the CBI is truly intriguing, given the consistently bad performance of the state police where law and order issues were involved. It is this bad performance that brought UP and the Samajwadi Party an unflattering reputation as a lawless state.

The state government will do well to revamp its entire police structure, intensify supervision in rural areas and change its casual attitude towards rape and violence against women. That the lackadaisical approach of the leadership has stirred even United Nations into an adverse comment that does no good to India's overall image is a black mark against UP and Akhilesh Yadav. The time is now for changing UP's image as a first step towards changing India's image.

Between the lines

Corporatization of media

Kuldip Nayar

I was not surprised when television channels did not cover the taking over of a large television news network by Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited. Most channels—roughly around 300—are owned by property dealers who can afford to spend Rs. one crore, an average monthly expenditure, through money laundering. Every one of them wants to be the Reliance one day.

What has taken me aback is that the press has reported the deal but has preferred to keep quiet. Even though journalism has ceased to be a profession and has become an industry, I was expecting some reactions, at least from the Editors' Guild of India.

But then it is understandable when it has rejected my proposal that editors should also declare their assets to public, the demand which they voice for politicians. Double standards make a mockery of the high pedestal on which the media sit.

I am not against corporations investing in the media. Rising costs and shrinking advertisements have famished the media. Still, ideally, the media should be self-sufficient. But, since it is not possible for most in the print and electronic media, there has to be a limit on how far the corporations should go.

Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had put a ceiling on foreign equity, 26 percent, in newspapers. For some reasons, this limit was not extended to television. Maybe, the

air is difficult to control. The principle of curtailing the ownership of outsiders is understandable.

If foreign equity—a Trojan horse—cannot go beyond a limit the Indian corporations too should have a Lakshman rekha which they should not cross. But then they are too powerful because politicians depend on them for their luxurious living and for fighting elections. Needless to say that there is quid pro qua. Some politicians are also said to own or having some shares in television channels.

For some reasons, successive governments at the centre have rejected the demand for a press or media commission. Since independence there have been only two. One was soon after the independence and the other after the Emergency in 1977. The recommendations of the latter were not even considered because Indira Gandhi refused to look at any step suggested during the post-Emergency period. (The commendable Police Reforms report also became a casualty).

The government headed by Narendra Modi is a complete departure from the past and should appoint a commission to assess the position of media since Smt. Gandhi's rule. There has been no appraisal of the role of television because India, not even Doordarshan, was not familiar with the electronic media at that time.

The most important aspect is the

ownership of newspapers, television and radio by the same houses or individuals. Even America has some kind of control over cross ownership. But there is no such bar in India where it is like putting up yet another factory.

I am all for the freedom of the press. In fact, I have been disturbed by the statement of the new Information and Broadcasting Minister, Prakash Javadekar. He has, no doubt, assured the continuance of the press freedom but has put a caveat that it demands responsibility.

Why this reminder, is beyond me. Indian press has been inferior to none in upholding the value system which politicians have destroyed. There is no example of irresponsible behavior of the press since independence. This cannot be said about the government which had imposed censorship during the Emergency in 1975.

Even now, newspapers in several states have to withstand the pressure and punishment of chief ministers. Advertisements, the main source of income for small newspapers, are distributed to reward supporters and denied to the critics. And whatever is spent by the government, it is tax payers' money.

The carrot of advertisements works in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well. Governments dangle it without hesitation. Thus crores of rupees are at the disposal of rulers to exert influence. The story of corporations and individuals controlling the media is no different from that of India.

In the last few weeks, I have had an opportunity to visit Bangladesh and Pakistan in that order. Their messy politics and the sway of military in governance deserve a full article. I am limiting my column to

the media which, without doubt, influence politics as well. Bangladesh has more TV channels, almost all in Bengali, than daily newspapers. But for a few exceptions more in the print medium than the electronic one, the opinion is in favour of the government in power.

Pakistan, still a feudal state in many ways, has more assertive media in the subcontinent. Hamid Mir of a television channel was physically assaulted. But there are numerous journalists who brave every day threats. A few are also a target of extremists and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The media men and women still cover events boldly and by and large truly.

What the media can say with authenticity is that the owners of the press and TV channels are no more foreigners in the entire subcontinent. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sought the help of big industrial houses to oust the British ownership of leading newspapers. Bennett Coleman publishing the Times of India, foreign owners of The Mail in Madras and The Pioneer at Lucknow changed hands. The Statesman was taken over by a consortium of industrialists blessed by Nehru.

True, the media has come a long way. Still current annual report of the Press Council of India is helplessly demanding the television channels to come under its purview. The rulers continue to turn a deaf ear to what is asked.

The Council says: "For quite some time an issue has arisen about the need for qualification for entry into the profession of journalism. Since the media is a fully developed field and has an important influence on the lives of the people, the time has

now come when some qualification should be prescribed by law."

Regretfully, the attention of the media is focused more on marketing and packing. Indeed, they are important, but the contents should have the priority. Alas, that is receding farther and farther.

Footprints of A Crusader

(The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

Rohini Gawankar

The life story of Mrunal Gore, one of the leading socialist activists, is an inspiration to men and women alike, but it is especially a model for activists, social workers and politicians. Coming from a middle class family with no political connections, Mrunal Gore blazed a unique path, beginning as a grassroots organizer of women in suburban Mumbai, a people's representative at the lowest level of self-government and moving ever higher, till she rose to the ranks of a Member of Parliament. Throughout the course of this amazing journey, she stayed true to values and principles, never using her power for personal or narrow gains, but always striving to do the maximum good for the majority of the people. The suffering and deprivations of the common man became the sparks that inspired numerous agitations and fights which Mrunal undertook against injustice and inequity. Told through the eyes of a personal friend, the story recounts all the important events and achievements of her life, while also highlighting the sterling qualities that made Mrunal Gore a role model for the generations that followed in her footsteps.

Published by

Kamalakar Subhedar, Secretary,

Samata Shikshan Sanstha,

Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,

Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W),

Mumbai 400072.

Mobile: 9820092255

Charity contribution: Rs.300+

Two Ordinances

Within 72 hours of assuming power and even before any of its elected representatives were sworn in formally as Members of Parliament, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government advised the President of India to promulgate two Ordinances. The first notified in the Official Gazette, on 28th February, removes the bar on ex-Chairpersons and Members of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) from being appointed to any other position under the Government. The second Ordinance seeks to amend the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act passed by Parliament earlier this year to carve out India's 29th State – Telangana from the erstwhile undivided State of Andhra Pradesh. This Ordinance makes certain amendments to the territories covered by the Khammam district under this State bifurcation law. Both Gazette notifications do not contain a Statement of Objects and Reasons as to why it has become necessary to promulgate these Ordinances. There is only a cursory mention in the notifications that the Hon'ble President of India is satisfied that circumstances exist which necessitate the promulgation of these Ordinances. What these circumstances are we do not know except for some reporting in the mass media. A brief summary of the discussion of some landmark judgements delivered by the Supreme Court on the subject is given below.

The jurisprudence that has developed on the subject of the power of the President and the Governors to Promulgate Ordinances under Articles 123 and 213 of the Constitution of India

respectively, makes it clear that that power is meant to be exercised in order to deal with emergent situations irrespective of the distance in time that the next session of the concerned legislature may be from the date of such promulgation. However, an eleven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in *R C Cooper* has held that the exercise of the Ordinance-making power is justiciable on grounds of mala fide intention or corrupt motive. This Bench and the five-judge Constitution Bench in *A K Roy* have unequivocally kept the door open for justiciability on the ground that circumstances did not necessitate the promulgation of the Ordinance. The burden of proof however is on the challenger to such action. After "*S P Gupta*", the Courts are no longer hampered by Article 74(2) of the Constitution which prevents a Court from inquiring into advice tendered by Ministers to the President or Sections 123-124 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 which prohibit the government from submitting evidence from its unpublished official papers to a court. It is well established that the materials that formed the basis of the ministerial advice can be disclosed to both Courts and Petitioners if the Court determines that no injury to the public interest would be caused by such disclosure. So a Petitioner may demand production of documents relating to the determination of the concerned Government/President/Governor, as the case may be that circumstances exist for the promulgation of an Ordinance. After October 2005, the position in law has radically changed. The Government has a duty to voluntarily publish all facts

while announcing important decisions to the public under Section 4(1) of the Right to Information Act, 2005. These twin Ordinances very well qualify as important decisions of the Central Government, but all facts necessitating their promulgation have not been placed in the public domain. Further, Cabinet papers including Cabinet notes may be sought for by any citizen under the RTI Act and they will have to be disclosed after a decision has been taken and if the matter is complete or over and no other exemption listed in Section 8(1) of the Act is applicable. I have successfully obtained copies of Cabinet Notes under the RTI Act and also argued for Appellants successfully to obtain materials that formed the basis of the advice of Ministers tendered to the President on the manner of disposal of mercy petitions

So it is possible to obtain copies of the Cabinet Notes pertaining to the twin Ordinances under the RTI Act. One could reasonably expect them to reveal the justification for the promulgation of these Ordinances as in their absence, the exercise of this power would become arbitrary. The justification recorded in these Cabinet Notes may indicate some details of the circumstances that existed for the promulgation of the Ordinances. This information could then be assessed to make a decision whether nor not to challenge in Court the 'circumstances' claim made by the Government. However, the delay likely to be caused by the Government in disclosing Cabinet Notes under the RTI Act (after two very likely rounds of rejections

Socialist Party to launch a public awareness campaign about Education, Water, Electoral Reforms and Betterment of Minorities

internally – one by the public information officer and the other by the first appellate authority) and then the long wait at the concerned Information Commission for a resolution of the second appeal, may simply put a dampener on any effort to make the action of the President under Article 123 and that of the Governor under Article 213 justiciable in court. Nevertheless if Courts were to act swiftly and invoke their powers to summon the materials on the basis of which the decision to promulgate an Ordinance was taken, the arbitrary use of Articles 123 and 213 may be checked. It is respectfully submitted that when the Supreme Court and the High Courts are the appointed guardians of the Constitution and fundamental rights of citizens, they cannot and must not leave such matters to the legislatures to decide where there is strong public perception that the Ordinance-making power has been exercised without sufficient and just cause. If the Governments themselves re-establish the practice of mentioning details of the circumstances that necessitate the promulgation of an Ordinance, in the form of Statement of Objects and Reasons, prefixed to the text of the Ordinance, and also disclose the relevant Cabinet Note in toto, soon after the decision is taken and the matter is complete or over, citizens will have an opportunity to make an assessment for themselves about the motives of the Government. Where necessary they may elect to challenge the Ordinance in court. Transparency of this kind will lead to greater accountability even before the matter reaches Parliament or the State Legislatures, as the case may be. Opacity in the decision-making

(Continued on Page 6)

The two-day national executive committee meeting of the Socialist Party was held in Delhi under the chairmanship of the party's president Bhai Vaidya. In the meeting, the results of the Lok Sabha 2014 elections were analyzed, political and economic resolutions were passed and party's agenda for the next five years was set. The meeting was attended by the members of the national executive committee as well as by presidents of the state units. Also present were Dr. G. G. Parikh (Editor, Janata Weekly), Ravikiran Jain (senior advocate and office bearer of PUCL), Dr. Sunilam (senior socialist leader from Madhya Pradesh), Shyam Gambhir (senior socialist leader from Delhi) and Anil Nauriya (senior advocate and scholar of modern Indian history) as special invitees.

Bhai Vaidya in his presidential address said that the RSS has won this election on the basis of communal polarization achieved with the help of corporate and media. If a stable third front could have been constituted against the neo-liberal policies and corruption of the UPA government then the BJP would not have got absolute majority. Despite having spent money in torrents, only 31 percent of the voters have supported the BJP. Bhai Vaidya also cautioned that the BJP-led NDA government will further accelerate the neo-liberal policies of the Congress. At the same time, the RSS will try its best to push its anti-

constitutional and anti-social communal agenda. One can see that the government has already started implementing its neo-liberal and communal agenda openly from the very first day. This will further increase the predicament of the deprived masses. In order to challenge this neo-liberal-communal nexus, he has called for a socialist-communist unity.

Justice Rajindar Sachar, speaking on the occasion, said that it is a matter of grave concern that the faction which opposed the freedom movement and was responsible for the murder of Gandhiji has come to power with absolute majority. The members of the Socialist Party need to work at the grass roots level to strengthen the democratic institutions as well as for the values of the freedom movement and the Constitution. He categorically asked the young activists of the party to go amidst the public, whose lives have been destroyed because of the neo-liberal policies, and explain to them that their basic needs like education, health, water, electricity etc. can never be met as long as privatization is there.

Through the resolution passed in the meeting, the Socialist Party again demanded the introduction of a 'Full Employment Guarantee Law' making employment a Fundamental Right. Reiterating its commitment to the Public Sector, the party learnt with alarm the announcements by the newly formed central

government to dismantle and discourage Public Sector by allowing even 100 percent of FDI in a sensitive sector like Defense, directly responsible for the country's sovereignty and independence. The Socialist Party expressed complete opposition to this decision. The party also opposed the privatization of the departments/undertakings associated with the basic needs of the public like Power and Railways as also the disinvestment of companies like BALCO and BHEL. The Socialist Party has also warned the nation that the proposal of the government to bring the Public Sector Undertakings under single 'holding company' might be a ploy to sell them to the private sector.

In the resolution, the party has severely criticized and opposed the anti-Constitutional statement of Najma Heptullah, Minister for Minority Affairs, in the current government, that the Muslims are not a minority. The statement shows total ignorance of the constitutional principles and settled position of the Supreme Court that religious minorities, including Muslims, are recognized features of the Constitution. The party further condemned the statement of the minister that the 15 point program for the minorities, which has been in operation for the last three decades, should be discontinued. The party rather is of the strong opinion that this program needs to be strengthened and properly outlined with the active consultation and participation of the concerned organizations and members of the community concerned. The government's intention to abolish Article 370 has also been severely opposed in the resolution. Reiterating the support

for Irom Sharmila's satyagrah, the demand to remove the AFSPA was repeated.

In the resolution regarding the electoral reforms, it was demanded that the practice of the donations from corporate houses to political parties for election expenses should be stopped; not only the candidates but the party should also submit accounts of election expenses; the security deposit for candidates should be rupees two thousand in the legislative assembly elections and rupees five thousand in the Lok Sabha elections; and the government should bear the election expenses so that poor citizens can also contest elections. According to the current voting system, the party which gets 33 percent vote share gets about 60 percent of the seats whereas the party which gets about 8-10 percent of the vote share does not get even a single seat. The Socialist Party in its resolution has demanded that a new system should be adopted according to which the political parties should get seats in proportion to their vote share. Especially the electronic media has played a key role in these elections. It is commonly believed that its role has been partisan and misleading instead of being neutral and factual. In order to prevent this from happening in future, an institution akin to the Press Council of India should be formed to regulate the electronic media.

It was decided in the meeting that the Socialist Party should run a nation-wide public awareness campaign in the next five years against the marketization of education and water; in favor of electoral reforms and for the

protection and betterment of the minority communities.

The Socialist Party believes that the model of alternate development can be based on the ideas of Gandhi and Lohia. With the view to develop the Socialist Party as the 'green party' of India, a special session on 'Development and Climate Change' was organized. Professor Sanat Mohanty, Bharat Dogra, Sandeep Pandey and Monish Babbar addressed the session.

A special session was organized under the aegis of Lok Rajneeti Manch (Peoples Political Front) which was formed before the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. This session was addressed by many peoples' movement activists and public intellectuals including Ravikiran Jain, Shamsheer Singh Bisht, Kamla, Manjoo Mohan, Sandeep Pandey and Dr. Prem Singh. After the discussion it was decided that considering the existing political challenges, the Lok Rajneeti Manch should be made active and influential.

—Renu Gambhir

(Continued from Page 6)

process only leaves Ordinances as fait accompli because Courts have refused to look into matters that are of academic import only. This is not how a transparent and accountable Government must function. The NDA Government has a real opportunity to move away from the practices of secrecy that were the hallmark of previous governments and set new standards by voluntarily disclosing the circumstances that necessitated the twin Ordinances and follow the same method for promulgating any other Ordinance in future.

Bhagana Atrocities

Neha Dixit

On April 17, the day India was polling at 121 constituencies in the fifth phase of the ongoing General Elections, four girls and 100 families from their community parked themselves in protest in central Delhi.

These four girls were gang raped on March 24, this year and belong to the Dalit community of Bhagana village, in Hisaar, 150 km from Delhi. Dalits are regarded as untouchables and occupy the lowest rung in the Hindu hierarchical order. They have been identified under the Scheduled Caste category in the Indian Constitution.

Huddled in an unhindered mass under three tents behind Jantar Mantar, there is an unfamiliar spring in their demeanor. Far less demure than the stereotypes of rape survivors, they are brimming with hope and the glow of a persistent, collective struggle.

“I was revising my lessons while going for a dump that evening. I had to sit for the English exam the next day,” recalls Manju, 13, a student of sixth standard, one of the four girls, with the characteristic assertion of a teenage girl. Close to 60 percent of the households in Bhagana village still don’t have a toilet. Daily, early in the morning or late in the evening, women collect in groups to go to the agricultural fields to defecate. It is then, she along with three other girls were abducted and forced to sniff something that made them unconscious. Out of the five who abducted them, four were relatives

of the leaders of the dominant Jat community in Bhagana. Sunita, then in her half unconscious state was stripped, beaten and raped by the boys one after the other. They did the same to the other three girls. “I could barely open my eyes, forget resisting the boys,” she says.

Their next memory is of the Bhatinda railway station, a city 150 km away from Hisaar. Their clothes were torn, had injury marks on their bodies and walked in pain. “I asked people on the platform if they knew who left us there but since they spoke in Punjabi, a language I am unfamiliar with, I didn’t get them,” recalls Ranjana, 18, with a newly acquired maturity. Sunita, 16 and Kamini, 17 sit behind them and listen intently. The four are surrounded by their mothers and women who look at me disapprovingly. “What is the point of you coming here? We have been sitting in this heat for a month but still to no avail. I thought protests in Delhi lead to result like the Damini case,” asked Laajo Rani in a Haryanvi dialect. She is 80 years old. I tell her, “It is because of the ongoing elections.” She answers, “So, don’t we vote and make winning candidates?” Guilt overtakes and I turn to Manju. Manju is dressed in a white salwar kameez with pink dots and a crimson scarf. The scarf is comfortably settled on her head out of habit, like many girls her age in rural Haryana yet she constantly struggles to tuck it behind her ear to cover her face from the photojournalists outside the tent. “We had to drop out two years

back, she was the only one still managed to go to school,” joins Ranjana.

Bhagana village is 300 years old. The houses of the four girls are diametrically opposite to each other on the outskirts of the village. Bhagana is dominated by the feudal, land owning Jat community that makes up for 59 percent of the village population. Dalits, which include several sub categories like Dhanuks, Chamars, Kumhaars and others, make up for the 24 percent population. They are landless and mostly work as agricultural labourers in the farms of Jat community. They are also considered untouchables. People from the upper castes, including the Jat community, neither eat or drink at their place nor are they allowed to sit next to an upper caste person.

In March 2012, the Jat community under the leadership of Panghal Khap - the one of the many clans of the community to which all the Jats of the village belong, announced a ‘bandi’ on the Dalits of the village. ‘Bandi’ is a social and economic boycott. This was a response to the Dalit protest against the decision of the constitutionally elected panchayat headed by Rakesh Panghal, also a Jat, to allocate the common land of the village to members of Jat community. This included the playground on the outskirts, close to the Dalit inhabitation and the Dalit meeting square in the centre of the village. “In addition, the common ground that was divided into plots to be

given away to villagers was given for free to the members of the Jat community but not to the Dalits even when they were forced to pay Rs 1,000 each for allocation,” says Balraj Sindhu, a Dalit member of Centre for Trade Union from the village. There was a massive protest by the Dalits within the village against this injustice which did not sync with the Jat-Dalit traditional power equations in the village. “They dissented against those who gave them employment and means for survival. Such people must leave the village,” says Kundan Panghal, a Jat farm owner and activist of the Panghal Khap.

The boycott included a ban on the use of all common resources in the village including water resources like wells, barbers, local transport, grocery shops, schools, access to cattle feed, access to roads passing through the Jat areas and employment in the agricultural fields.

Like several parts in Haryana, there is an existing labour practice in Bhagana village which is called Seeri. Under the Seeri system, an agricultural labourer is hired by a land owning farmer on an annual contract for close to Rs 40,000 per year, which comes to about Rs. 110 a day, way below the minimum wage of Rs. 230 a day in Haryana. They are paid the money in advance and are bonded for a year. Apart from the agricultural work, the labourers are often made to do other household related work with no fixed hours. In 1953, the Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act was implemented in Haryana which provides complete security of tenure for tenants in continuous possession of land over 15 acres for 12 years and grants tenants optional right of purchase of

It was a day when the 16th Lok Sabha started its session with a condolence meeting to adjourn the house in the memory of one of its members and minister.

On the other side, incidents of atrocities on homeless Dalit families from Bhagana and other protesters marked the day with eviction, batons and insulting women at the Parliament street in New Delhi. It was only 6 am when thousand policemen barged into the tents at the Jantar Mantar, a permanent protest site for years since the protesters and whistle blowers were banned to gather on Parliament Street. The huge barricading forces people to organise their sit-in protest or hold a rally at the Jantar Mantar, a site officially granted by the Delhi police and administration. The policemen came, dismantled the tents, picked the belongings of the protesters including the Bhagana rape survivors and their families and warned them to vacate the whole area by noon. Almost more than 600 protesters, rallying for their demands since long time, were put on the roadside without anything at hand. No water, not even a mat to sit or a shed to face the scorching sun.

By 8.30 am, news came from Hisar where 200 Bhagana families were living outside Hisar’s mini secretariat since the last two years were evicted in the same manner by the local police, their belongings were taken by the police, they were thrown on the street with no shelter.

By 11 am people, in solidarity, started gathering at the Jantar Mantar in Delhi. The protesters were in great distress. It was decided to hold a demonstration in front of Parliament Street police station at 2 pm. A memorandum was sent to the Home Minister and another to the Police Commissioner of Delhi requesting them not to vacate Jantar Mantar as this was the only physical space to raise voice against atrocity and repression in the capital. At 2 pm, hundreds of men, women and children gathered at Parliament Street to protest the eviction drive.

– Kiran Shaheen

ownership of non-resumable land. The Seeri system negates the possibility of the proof of continuous occupation of the land as a tiller since the contracts are renewed every year. “Of late, the labourers had started rejecting the exploitative practices under Seeri like no fixed hours of work and the extra work apart from agriculture that the employers forced them to do,” says Sindhu. This was not just a threat to the age-old social hierarchy in the village but was also disturbed the economic privileges the farm owning Jat employers enjoyed.

“The next two months, we tried very hard to stay. Even NREGA programs which could have given us employment in spite of the boycott have not been functional in the village,” recalls Dharamveer, a 40 year old Dalit mason. NREGA is the Central government sponsored scheme that guarantees 100 days of employment to all. “On May 21st, when the Jat community announced another ‘bandi’ with even stricter norms, 137 families decided to move to the mini secretariat in Hisar district to demand action from the authorities,” he adds.

Two years have passed and to this day, close to 90 families still occupy the protest spot in Hisaar but no action has been taken. During this period, the police failed to register even a single complaint under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. To add to it, in September 2012, the police had booked a few people protesting at the mini secretariat for sedition and 'exciting disaffection towards the government established by law' and imprisoned them for a week. This included five children, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 14 years old along with three adults.

Meanwhile, the hostility towards 200 Dalit families still left in the village had increased manifold. The worst affected were the women because all the things boycotted were directly related to the household. "Apart from fetching water from far off and managing groceries with limited access, the biggest loss was lack of employment for us. Because of the ban imposed on our community as agricultural workers, the men could go to the city and neighbouring villages to work but women were confined to their homes," says Rattal Sindhu, 55, grandmother of three who has been an agricultural labourer for thirty years in this village. "In most of the houses, the household income has been halved," she adds.

The schools did not remain untouched. There are two schools in the village, a private one which the children of the Jat community, who could afford to pay high fees attended and the government one, attended mostly by the children of the Dalit community. "After the boycott in 2012, many girls had to drop out because of the eve teasing they had to face while coming to the

school. It has increased in the last two years. Some Jat boys enrolled in the school would kick our boys and humiliate them," tells Satya Narayan, the headmaster of the government school. "I even threatened to shut the school but not allow this kind of discrimination but it did not help. As the protest at Hisaar kept catching headlines in the media, the aggression and enmity towards the Dalit kept increasing in the village," he adds. Manju was still a student of this school, the other three had dropped out in 2012. The news of their gang rape was the last nail in the coffin. After another set of 100 families moved to Delhi to protest, the school is lying vacant. The only Dalits left here are still bonded under Seeri, who under pressure of the Jat community have stopped sending their children to school.

On 24th March, while the girls were figuring out how to go back home from the Bhatinda railway station, they saw the village head Rakesh Panghal walking towards them with three influential Jat leaders. "The night the girls went missing, we went to Rakesh to inform him and ask for help. He told me that our girls will be back tomorrow morning. He knew where the girls were which was shocking," says Bheem Singh, father of Ranjana. Next morning, the fathers of the four girls and Rakesh Panghal and some others got into two jeeps and reached Bhatinda railway station. Panghal reached the exact platform where the girls were waiting. When the girls saw him, they first tried to hide. "It is only when we saw our fathers on the other platform with the aides of Panghal is when we came out," says Kamini. The four girls were rushed into a car with Panghal and their fathers. On

the Mirzapur road, the car was stopped at a roadside café. The girls were seated on the first floor as the others had tea on the ground floor. Rakesh Panghal walked to the first floor with his uncle and slapped Sunita. "Your community people think that they can contest the Jats? What was done to you is a lesson for raising a voice against us. If you dare complain against anyone or identify any of the boys, your families will be killed," says Manju. Soon after, they left for the village. The next day, the four girls, their fathers and some members of the Dalit community reached the police station. On March 25, after a lot of struggle and protest, the police registered a report for rape and medical tests that confirmed rape were conducted. The five accused Sumit, Lalit, Sandeep, Dharamvir and Kuldeep—all of them Jats—were arrested on March 29.

the accusations of the Dalit community replies, "These girls are known to have multiple love affairs. How can they be trusted?" When asked about the illegal allocation of the land and the social boycott, he says, "They are all lying. They have left their houses on their own to extract unjustified compensation from the government." The same justification was given by influential Jat leaders when the houses of several Dalits were burnt and two were killed in the Mirchpur village of Hisaar district in 2010.

Kaviraj, the Superintendent of Police, Hisaar district says, "The police has taken every care to follow legal proceedings. I cannot comment anymore since the case is now subjudice." ML Kaushik, the District Collector of Hisaar also remains non-committal. "The people sitting in protest have been politically

motivated. We have requested them to return to their houses but to no avail,” he says.

According to the National Crime Record Bureau, the number of rapes of Dalit women across the country has increased by 15.4 percent in one year. Only one in eight cases of atrocities on Dalits, a person gets convicted in Haryana.

In 1931, when Mahatma Gandhi asked BR Ambedkar, the champion of Dalit rights and the father of the Indian Constitution why is he so critical of the Congress, the leading party in the freedom movement, demanding an independent homeland, he replied, “Gandhiji, I have no homeland. No untouchable worth the name will be proud of this land.”

That Dalits - who represent 16 percent and women - who represent 48 percent of the Indian population still need to struggle at Jantar Mantar, explains what Ambedkar meant.

Names of the Rape Survivors have been changed.

—PMARC

Union Council of Ministers

National Election Watch (NEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) had sent a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on the 20th of May, 2014 bringing to his notice the disturbing fact that the newly formed 16th Lok Sabha has a sizeable number of MPs (112 i.e. 21%) facing serious criminal charges and requesting him to include only clean representatives in his Cabinet. Shri Narendra Modi committed to critically examine MPs with self-declared criminal cases and fast tracking cases against them during the recent Lok Sabha campaign said, “the next Parliament would be cleaned by punishing the guilty”.

National Election Watch (NEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 44 Ministers out of 46 Ministers (including Prime the Minister) from Lok Sabha 2014 and current Rajya Sabha. The details of Prakash Javadekar and Nirmala Sitharaman were not analysed as they are not currently members of either house.

• **Ministers with Criminal Cases:** Out of the 44 Ministers analysed, 13 (30%) Ministers have declared criminal cases against

themselves.

• **Ministers with Serious Criminal Cases:** 8 (18%) Ministers have declared serious criminal cases including cases related to attempt to murder, communal disharmony, kidnapping, electoral violations, etc.

• **Ministers with cases related to causing Communal Disharmony:** Uma Bharti from Jhansi constituency, Uttar Pradesh of BJP has declared a case Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony (IPC Section-153A)

• **Ministers with cases related to Electoral Violations:** Uma Bharti of BJP from Jhansi constituency, Uttar Pradesh, has declared a case related to Illegal payments in connection with an election (IPC Section-171H). Upendra Kushwaha of Rashtriya Lok Samta Party from Karakat constituency, Bihar and Ram Vilas Paswan of LJP from Hajipur constituency, Bihar have each declared a case related to Bribery (IPC Section – 171E)

• **Crorepati Ministers:** Out of the 44 Ministers analysed, 40

(91%) are crorepatis.

• **Average Assets:** The average assets per minister is Rs.13.47 crores.

• **High Asset Ministers:** 5 Ministers have declared more than Rs.30 crores worth of assets: ranging from Rs. 30 crore+ to Rs.113 crore+

• **Low Asset Ministers:** A total of 4 Ministers have declared assets less than Rs. 1 crore: from Rs. 65 lacs+ to Rs. 96 lacs+

• **Education Details of Ministers:** 8(18%) Ministers have declared that have an education qualification of 12th pass or below while 35(80%) Ministers have declared having an educational qualification of graduate or above.

• **Age Details of Ministers :** 9(20%) Ministers have declared their age to be between 31 to 50 years while 33 (75%) Ministers have declared their age to be between 51 to 70 years and 2 Ministers have declared their age to be above 70 years.

• **Gender Details of Ministers:** There are 7 (15%) women ministers out of a total of 46 ministers.

For more details visit www.myneta.info

—Association for Democratic Reforms

Confused, or dangerous priorities?

Prakash Javadekar, the new Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change while taking over the charge promised to ensure “Fast Environment Clearances”. This is just beginning of the implementation of “Money-Festo – Modi-Festo” for the ministry of environment. A new system for online submission of applications for environmental clearances has been launched. But, what about online submission of complaints against pollution? Javadekar also said that there shall be a maximum time limit for the entire approval process, with stage-wise timelines and promised continuous efforts to bring down the timelines for each stage. But what about the time limit to resolve complaints against polluting industries?

Now we are in the era where all the three ministries the

Environment, Labour and Industry individually and collectively are more and more concerned about better environment for industries and its profitability, industrial-friendly labour laws and the prosperity of industry so that industrialists can concentrate only on their production and profits in the “interest of GDP”. There are other ministries also equally concerned about the industries and their profitability but now Environment, Labour and Industry Ministries have exclusively dedicated themselves to these concerns.

Modi government’s main priority is speedy environment clearance for the industries and not the environment protection. Its manifesto clearly states “Frame the environment laws in a manner that provides no scope for confusion and will lead to speedy clearance of the

proposals without delay.” This spells out assurance of Modi Government to the industrialist that they should not worry about environment laws.

This capitalist development has never tried to arrive at even a realistic estimate of loss of livelihood, land acquisition, displacement, irreversible damage to environment and permanent loss of natural resources figures but the magnitude of the loss can be guessed from some of the facts emerging from various important research works on status of environment in Gujarat.

We should understand this new challenge and it is the time for the all the environment and trade union movements to launch collective struggle against this move of the present government.

- Rohit Prajapati

Gujarat Textbooks

The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, was assassinated on October 30, 1948. And it was Japan that nuked US during World War II! These are just two of the ‘nuggets of wisdom’ out of an inexhaustible mine of factual errors in Social Science English medium textbook for Standard 8 published by the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT).

In this information age, when the answer to any question is just a mouse click away, such errors are unacceptable.

The textbook, which is being studied by more than 50,000 children in the English medium

schools of Gujarat board, even suggests that leaders like Dadabhai Navroji, Surendranath Bannerjee and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were among leaders considered ‘extremists’ within the Congress during the Indian freedom movement. (They were, in fact, the moderate faces of the party.)

The textbook also teaches impressionable minds that after Partition in 1947, a new nation was born called, ‘Islamic Islamabad’, and that its capital was Khyber Ghat in the Hindukush mountains.

Two chapters of the textbook are dedicated to Gandhiji. In these sections, the authors and reviewers

of the social science textbook ratify that the Mahatma set up his first Satyagraha Ashram at Kochrab in Ahmedabad in May 1925 (instead of 1915).— *The Times of India*

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Black Day

We call for all people's movements and organizations, political parties, activists, intellectuals and people at large to commemorate the "Black Day" on June 22, 2014. As you may know this is the 9th anniversary of the day when the MOU was signed between Government of Odisha and POSCO.

For the last nine years, the POSCO and the state government has employed a number of tactics to sabotage our peaceful democratic movement. It started influencing our people through declaring packages as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), continuous atrocities on our peaceful protesters, uncalled for and illegal arrests, false police cases, unleashing of a reign of terror by using private goons and so on. They want our people and solidarity groups to get tired and leave up the struggle. We are determined to continue our fight till POSCO withdraw the project. To make this struggle a success, we earnestly request you to support our cause despite continuous and misleading propaganda made by POSCO.

As per the last update, the water resource department has given an unwarranted permission to POSCO to draw water from Hansua River for

construction of steel plant. Villagers of Hansua Bachao Sanghrash Samiti are organising a mass demonstration before district collectorate office at Jagatsinghpur office on 21 June 2014 against this unjust and illegal declaration. We also came to know from the media that the officials are planning to convene the meeting with few villagers for discussion on compensation package. PPSS is strongly determined to oppose such illegal and arbitrary moves and to fight tooth and nail for any such attempt of the administration of the Government.

On 5th June, at village Budhabhui, Lahunipara block, thousands of tribal communities including the Paudi Bhuiyan and Munda, PVTGs coming from far-flung villages, gathered under the aegis of Khandadhar Suraksha Sangram Samiti (KSSS) during the baking heat, with their traditional weapons. They pledged to save the bio-rich Khandadhar from mining and vowed to lay down their lives to save their ancestral land from POSCO. The head of Paudi Bhuiyan Adima Janajati, Bilua Naik administered the oath in this regard and the World Environment Day was observed as Save Khandadhar Day. A protest march was taken to the venue and

all the members gathered determined to end the struggle by protecting their motherland, natural resources and the ancestral territory and habitat of the *Paudi Bhuiyan Adima Janajati* and other forest dwelling populations.

The leaders of various anti-displacement movements in Odisha were also joined in solidarity like Abhay Sahoo, Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti, Parfulla Samantara President, Lok Shakti Abhiyan and Lingaraj, Convener, Western Odisha Farmers Organisations' Coordination Committee besides, Talsara Congress MLA Prafulla Majhi and Banamali Dhupal, Secretary, CPM Sundargarh attended on behalf of its Bonai legislator Laxman Munda. In the meeting, members appealed to the Central and State Governments to ensure that mining operation is not allowed in 25 km radius of the waterfall and accord national natural heritage status to the site. Besides, it also demanded strict implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the region to recognise the forest dwellers' community ownership and habitat rights of Paudi Bhuiyan and Munda (PVTGs).

—Prashant Paikary,
POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti

Dangers Country

Surprise but true, India has turned out to be the 'third most dangerous country in the world' in terms of bomb blast only after Iraq and Pakistan, said a latest data from National Bomb Data Centre. According to the data, even war-torn countries like Afghanistan and

violence afflicted Syria fare far 'better' than India. In India, around 212 bombs rocked the country in the year 2013 itself, which is twice of what Afghanistan (with 108 blasts) witnessed.

Examining the frequency of

major blasts in the country between 2004 and 2013, the data revealed, "There has been an average of 298 blasts and 1,337 casualties in India," reports Rediff. This turns out to be much more than what Afghanistan witnessed in the last five years that

(Continued on Page 15)

Is rejection of UPA the rejection of secularism, welfarism?

Harsh Mander

The dust has settled on India's most massive, noisy, expensive and bitterly fought election. This was no ordinary election. What was waged was no less than a battle for India's soul.

No election in the country's history has left the moral, social and political landscape of India so profoundly divided. Never has the triumphalism and euphoria of the supporters of the winning side contrasted so starkly with such despair and desolation of the people, who feel that it is they — and not merely the parties they support — who have been vanquished.

In the puzzling arithmetic of India's first-past-the-post election system, only one in three voters backed the winning side, whereas two voted against it. Who are the winners of the 2014 elections, who voted for the ascendant political formation and who celebrate its conquest as their own? They include not just large numbers of India's urban middle and upper classes — its influential cheerleaders — but also people Narendra Modi describes as the 'neo-middle class' or the aspirational class: Those who have not yet entered the middle class, but are hopeful, impatient and ambitious to benefit from India's growth story, dreaming of well-paid jobs, plastic cards, bulging shopping-bags and mounting EMIs. Many among these are first-time voters, between 18 and 22 years. The third and most decisive support has been of a unified Hindu vote bank, with a blurring of most caste-lines

and significant recruitment even from the subaltern castes.

Who then are the losers of this election, the two in three voters who opposed the victorious political formation? There is first the secular Indian; an anguished friend wrote to me that she hoped history would forgive us for what we have become. I do not mean just the numerically small upper-class liberal elite, but millions of ordinary Indians in the small towns and villages of the country who — in the ways they live their lives — oppose ideologies of difference and divisiveness and uphold an unequal but intensely pluralist civilisation.

The second set of losers are India's minorities, especially Muslims but also Christians, who are stunned and frightened by the scale of majoritarian consolidation, unmatched even by the aftermath of Partition and the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the two lowest points in communal relations in independent India. Muslim friends confessed to have wept when they heard the results. In a low-income Muslim settlement in Delhi, there was an unusual air of uneasy quietude the evening of the results. '*Mussalman khauf kha gaya hai*' (Muslims are in fear), a resident explained. Also in dread of a renewed homophobic backlash are India's sexual minorities.

The third set of losers are India's very poor people — footloose migrant workers, landless farm labourers, forest dwellers displaced

from their depleting forests, farmers driven to despair and suicide, weavers and artisans threatened to extinction, and women in unpaid or under-paid work, over 200 million people who still sleep hungry, over 100 million people condemned to the squalor of slums, young people who never had the chance to go to school, and people for whom each health emergency is a catastrophe which pushes them further into penury. These forgotten exiles from hope are also exiles from the triumphs and promises of this election.

The emphatic rejection by significant sections of the voters of the out-going Congress-led government is interpreted by the winners as the decisive rejection of — maybe even the deathblow to — ideas of both secularism and the welfare State. I believe that this is a grave misreading of the message of the voters. It is the performance of the government on these two yardsticks of secularism and welfare which have been rightly rejected by the electorate. But the ideas themselves remain critical for the survival and well-being of a country of such immense diversity of belief-systems and ways of life, and of so many million residents who still live in abject and hopeless poverty and want.

I grieve not at the blow to the opportunistic secularism of all the political parties which lay claim to this ideology, but to the secularism of Gandhi and the freedom movement, and the pluralism in the

lived reality of the majority of ordinary Indians, their instinctive respect for all cultures and religions (including even the rejection of religion). It was an article of faith for many of us that the BJP could never secure a majority on its own because the majority of Indians — Hindu, Muslim and of other faiths — are opposed to divisive ideologies. But in this election, not still a majority but sufficient numbers voted for the aggressive majoritarianism of the BJP to give it a mandate to rule on its own.

Many also interpret the election mandate as the death-knell of the idea of welfare and social protection. In the development model on offer, the State will encourage private investment and pull back on direct State interventions for good-quality universal government schools and health centres, direct job creation and nutrition. But India's high-growth years threw up few jobs. The experience of no country in the world demonstrates that the health and educational needs of poor households can be met adequately by private profit-led enterprises instead of the State.

Many people who regard themselves as the losers of this election are bracing for a long and dark winter, of majoritarian State and social domination, of active State discrimination against religious, sexual and other minorities, and of the rigours caused by the dismantling of the architecture of welfare and social protection. I believe instead that this is a time for critical reflection and regrouping, for reclaiming and re-energising the ideas and practice of pluralism and social democracy, and for new social and political movements for social solidarities

between people of diverse faiths, cultures, castes, classes and social mores.

Ideologies centered on majoritarian domination and the individualist material progress may have won this round of battle. But the larger battle for the hearts and

minds of our young people must and will be won in the end by the ideas of justice, solidarity, public compassion and reason. I am convinced that today's masses of losers are ultimately — in the battle for the soul of India — on the right side of history.

— Aman Biradari

It's widely known that income inequality varies a great deal among advanced countries. In particular, disposable income in the United States and Britain is much more unequally distributed than it is in France, Germany or Scandinavia. It's less well known that this difference is primarily the result of government policies. Data assembled by the Luxembourg Income Study (with which I will be associated starting this summer) show that primary income — income from wages, salaries, assets, and so on — is very unequally distributed in almost all countries. But taxes and transfers (aid in cash or kind) reduce this underlying inequality to varying degrees: some but not a lot in America, much more in many other countries.

So does reducing inequality through redistribution hurt economic growth? Not according to two landmark studies by economists at the International Monetary Fund, which is hardly a leftist organization. The first study looked at the historical relationship between inequality and growth, and found that nations with relatively low income inequality do better at achieving a sustained economic growth as opposed to occasional "spurts." The second, released last month, looked directly at the effect of income redistribution, and found that "redistribution appears generally benign in terms of its impact on growth."

At this point someone is sure to say, "But doesn't the crisis in Europe show the destructive effects of the welfare state?" No, it doesn't. Europe is paying a heavy price for creating monetary union without political union. But within the euro area, countries doing a lot of redistribution have, if anything, weathered the crisis better than those that do less.

But how can the effects of redistribution on growth be benign? Doesn't generous aid to the poor reduce their incentive to work? Don't taxes on the rich reduce their incentive to get even richer? Yes and yes — but incentives aren't the only things that matter. Resources matter too — and in a highly unequal society, many people don't have them.

Think, in particular, about the ever-popular slogan that we should seek equality of opportunity, not equality of outcomes. That may sound good to people with no idea what life is like for tens of millions of Americans; but for those with any reality sense, it's a cruel joke. Almost 40 percent of American children live in poverty or near-poverty. Do you really think they have the same access to education and jobs as the children of the affluent?

In fact, low-income children are much less likely to complete college than their affluent counterparts, with the gap widening rapidly. And this isn't just bad for those unlucky enough to be born to the wrong parents; it represents a huge and growing waste of human potential — a waste that surely acts as a powerful if invisible drag on economic growth.

—Paul Krugman

More with Less

Doing more with less: Reducing total cost of ownership With the ever growing IT infrastructure, it is estimated that approximately 80% of the expenses in the IT firms is targeted towards maintenance and support for the existing infrastructure. It has become apparent with the decades of experience in setting up permanent and temporary locations, resources and fixed assets that most of the funds are going towards maintaining and supporting these installations rather than reallocating them to more essential projects.

Many IT pros are always battling to maintain balance between productivity and budget pressures. Even as the better infrastructure and facility management increases the productivity it is becoming increasingly important to throw big fund for enhancing them regularly and on a frequent basis. Thus, it creates pressure on allocating heavy budget to start-ups and high end projects increasing the total cost of ownership (TCO).

It has now become an art of how to keep budget low to do more.

Doing more with less becomes a focal point of IT manager who had hitherto been looking for more projects with more cost. Lowering the TCO lowers the costs in staffing, infrastructures and regains the lost productivity. Keeping it below 35% is a challenging task but it is a hundred percent assurance on success of any project.

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of mass production reflects the similar management technique of reducing total cost of ownership (TCO) but with slightly different variants.

Machinery based mass production concentrates only on large scale production without considering the requirement of the consumer and regulating the distribution channels. It increases the cost of setting up of infrastructure, spending on resources. It reduces the human labour giving room only for their leisure and psychological disorders. Gandhiji believed that such kind of mechanization is meant either to enrich the few at the expense of the many, or cause to displace the useful labour of many.

He wanted individual production by spinning wheel at homes to be multiplied in many folds across the country which would give both mass production of a tremendous scale and even distribution of the produced. In his own words, "... if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation."

Huge costs on power-driven machinery, even if state-owned, will be of no avail. Today's business conditions and infrastructure are resulting out of hunger for profits and racing for a competitive edge. Mass production, mass utilization of man hours and mass accumulation of profits drives today's business houses destructive and dependent.

A paradigm shift is required in the business environment to promote production by the masses, optimal work hours and evenly distributed profits so as to develop more constructive and conducive atmosphere for the common good.

– Techni-Gandhi-Center

(Continued from Page 12)

is a maximum of 209 such attacks in 2010.

The three most dangerous countries - Pakistan, Iraq and India - account for almost 75 percent of bomb blasts suffered in the world. But, when it comes to attacks targeted at common public, India is much better. In terms of state-wise analysis in India, North

Eastern states (Assam and Manipur are worst affected) and Maoist-infested states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand) contributing to over 80 percent of IED attacks emerges as the most affected states by bomb blasts. Another disturbed state like Jammu and Kashmir suffered 50 percent increase in bomb blasts in 2013 when compared with 2012.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-
Three Years : 750/-
Demand Draft / Cheque
on

Mumbai Bank
in favour of

JANATA TRUST
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 20

June 15, 2014

Modi back to his agenda

Kuldip Nayar

**Does NaMo Need
a Social Agenda?**

K. S. Chalam

**Kerala deviates
from national politics**

P. Viswambharan

**Resisting Modi
through mass struggles**

Praful Bidwai

Election reforms

S. V. Nadkarni

**The Corporate is
the only winner**

Javed Jamil

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

So far, so good

Viswam S

No other government in the post-independence decades has aroused such high hopes and expectations as the Modi dispensation has. Apart from the assurances of “minimum government, maximum governance” which Modi himself offered during his vigorous and lively campaign, the fact that the BJP commands a Lok Sabha seat tally of 282 on its own and 335 as part of the NDA helped push popular expectations sky high. It was only to be expected therefore that the actions and utterances of the new government would be subjected to intense and critical public scrutiny. The outcome of the scrutiny between Modi’s assumption of office and now has entirely been in Modi’s favour. But these are early days. Whether the current momentum is sustained or whether it falls by the wayside depends on how far Modi is able to maintain the pressure on his team to “perform or perish.”

Like a village school headmaster Modi has been trying to discipline not only his staff and students but the villagers themselves while trying to impart the three R’s to them. He tried to put the fear of the Lord into the officialdom by hinting at

disciplinary action if the babus were found guilty of nepotism, absenteeism, unpunctuality and if he found the Secretariat walls splashed with paan stains and if the North Block-South Block toilets stank. One of his dictats was particularly welcome. He asked babus, and through them the public, to stop touching his feet. Veteran journalist M. C. Chalapati Rau famously described the “Congress culture” as “lick-booting and touch-feeting”, and nothing is more deplorable in the present-day national politics than the sycophancy and hero-worshipping in the Congress which has made a cult out of personality-cum-dynastic styles. Modi’s implied rejection of the cult and touch-feeting culture is a refreshing change.

Modi captured public imagination with his (first) decision to invite the leaders of neighbouring countries to his swearing-in ceremony. This was a highly innovative move and indicated that India’s new prime minister was capable of launching new initiatives in promoting its foreign policy. The visits of Saarc leaders has laid a good foundation of mutual cordiality and understanding on which Modi can

Between the lines

Modi back to his agenda

Kuldip Nayar

build. With Pakistan the ball is rolling, with the two prime ministers having established personal rapport and directing their foreign secretaries to initiate the bilateral interaction process which aims at expanding the level of understanding and cooperation. Promoting good neighbourliness and cooperation as a state policy is obviously the Prime Minister's thrust in foreign policy. Shri Modi is concentrating on the region first, before getting ready to turn his sights to the west. With the western world, Modi's interaction is set for September when he will meet President Obama on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Perhaps other bilateral visits may follow, but his choice of Bhutan for his first foreign visit is a good pointer to his interest in firming up India's regional interests. It is not without significance that he will go to Japan in July, for strong ties with the two major Asian powers, China and Japan, are very important for India's long-term foreign policy goals.

Every prime minister brings to his administration his own style of operations. Modi is no different. His first few actions show that he prefers to deal directly with the bureaucrats and that he is temperamentally inclined to centralize powers in his own hands or in his own office. A strong PMO is nothing new for India, Indira ran one all her prime ministerial tenure, but poor Dr. Manmohan Singh had to suffer external domination in the person of the super-prime minister Sonia Gandhi. The danger of promoting a super-strong PMO is that Cabinet ministers are reduced to mere ornaments while all decisions vest in the PMO bureaucracy. It remains

When Narendra Modi broke down during the election campaign while hailing the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), a pro-Hindu outfit, as his mother I thought it was an emotional outburst. And I felt assured when he said after becoming India's Prime Minister that he would take along with him all the 125 crore Indians on the path to development.

But as the party unfolds its programme, I find that it is only a cover up of the divisive strategy that the RSS has formulated. Modi projects an image of unbiased person while the BJP-cum-RSS takes steps to dilute pluralism. The RSS is already posting its trusted men as members of different commissions or at key positions. The youth from the cadres are being recruited for lower assignments. Since bureaucracy tilts in the direction to which the wind blows the BJP and RSS are finding no resistance in implementing their agenda.

Sharad Pawar, former Agriculture Minister, who was also the chief minister of Maharashtra, is justified in his remark that after the BJP's victory communalism is beginning to be visible all over. And this is only in the first fortnight of Modi's government. It is yet to run the full course of five-year term. What happened in Pune, the most liberal city in Maharashtra, indicates the forces which have run amuck. An extremist Hindu group killed Mohsin Sheikh, a 28-year-old IT

manager, following the posting of derogatory photographs of Shivaji and Bal Thackeray, the founder of extremist Shiv Sena. Mohsin was a suspect, with no evidence and proof.

True, the BJP condemned the murder. But this was an ideal opportunity for Prime Minister Modi to assure the Muslims, feeling insecure, that his government would see to it that the perpetrators were brought to book quickly. Even when specifically requested for a word of sympathy for the victim's families Modi kept quiet.

This attitude should not come as a surprise. As Gujarat chief minister in 2002 when more than 200 Muslims were killed with the complicity of the administration, including the police, he never expressed regret. In fact, Modi threw at the face of criticism a clean chit he got from a magistrate court at home. Till today he has not said sorry. His regret at the murder in Pune would have gone a long way to assuage the feelings of Muslims and strengthen the idea of India based on the concept of pluralism.

People like me want to assure the Muslim community, roughly 15 to 16 crore, that it has nothing to fear because India follows the Constitution which guarantees to every citizen equality before the law. There are courts, the media and liberal voices which are on the side of the Muslims if the community

(Continued on Page 4)

becomes a target. This was seen when the Babri masjid was demolished and the Gujarat anti-Muslim riots took place.

Those who have asked for Article 370 giving a special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir are the same elements which are anti-Muslim. Article 370 is as old as the Constitution, more than 65 years. But since Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim majority state, they have found the atmosphere during the Modi regime conducive to challenge the state's status. They do not know the history; nor are they interested in finding out the facts.

When the British paramountcy lapsed in August 1947, the choice before roughly 560 princely states was either to integrate with India or go with the newly constituted Pakistan, taking into consideration the religion of the majority of subjects. The ruler could stay independent if he so desired.

Jammu and Kashmir's ruler Maharaja Hari Singh belatedly joined the Indian union even though the state's majority population was Muslims. My reading is that Kashmir would have gone to Pakistan if it had been patient. But it first sent tribal and then the regular forces to annex the state. The maharaja signed the instrument of accession in favour of India to get its forces to stop the murders. He transferred only three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications—to India.

The state retained other subjects. Article 370 is the codification of that understanding. If the Union of India wants more subjects, it is for Jammu

Does NaMo Need a Social Agenda for Peace?

K. S. Chalam

Now PM NaMo has taken the reins of power in Delhi in his hands, it is time to reflect on the issues that are significant to be prioritised for good governance. It seems the consultants made him to send strong signals that he is not different from the previous governments in allowing FDIs and other economic policies. He has gone a step forward in telling the world that the propaganda against his party and his coalition as being divergent is not true and that in fact they are alike in colour and taste except the language. The protagonists are expert linguists who have been controlling the nation with gift of their gab and are not fundamentalist either in economic or in belief systems. They can hoodwink any critic with their compatriots in the media and therefore, it is not a problem to continue the agenda of reform. Modi has also got the nod of approval of his agenda from the headquarters. Therefore, the decks are cleared to embark upon an old agenda initiated and implemented by the previous regime, to carry it further.

The road to easy flow of reforms has already been laid by the experts while the previous regime was in power. Some of them have first left for the Mecca of reforms by critiquing the slow pace of governance sensing regime change after relishing the benefits and perks. They are going to re-join the present dispensation soon and Modi must be prepared to face

similar jolt. There could be different creations of boards or cells to provide unsolicited advice and also paid guidance to the current dispensation as the content of reforms has remained the same. What is significant here is that the so-called ideology or principles that are considered as distinct seem to be disappearing.

On the second day of assuming charge as Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has given a list of 10 points to indicate his priorities. This reminds one of what P V Narasimha Rao had mandated in 1991. This is a very interesting and robust system of continuity of economic policy without the prime movers or political leadership. This has been done in some countries through the so-called permanent government or bureaucracy, but in India we have seen diverse opinions expressed by them through their writings. Interestingly none of them has opted out while in service (few exceptions) and boasts of so many things later. But, our concern here is about the common man and how these reforms are going to benefit them?

Out of the ten points, only one - prioritise education, health, water, energy and roads - is directly concerned with people or Aam Admi. In fact these are the sectors that are totally in shambles due to the priority given to policies that are based on market recipes. There was utter confusion both in the

(Continued on Page 14)

bureaucracy and in the Planning Commission about the outcomes and strategies to achieve the identified results. There seemed to be no sage advice offered to the government on these issues though there were competent persons to contribute to the efficient functioning of the sectors, may be due to parallel structures working with no accountability. The arrogance and self-indulgence of some of the ex-bureaucrats turned NGOs who guided the previous regime received the ugliest retort from the common man who never had an access to power centre. Of course, it has not affected the rich and the privileged that could get education abroad, world class health care, sparkling urban roads and unlimited supply of most hygienic water. At present, we expect that Modi government would learn from the past experience of his predecessors and change the direction particularly in withdrawing Education and other pending draconian Bills.

Most of the social tensions either in advanced countries or in India are related to the factors that are economic in nature. Academics, who are critical about Amartya Sen and his theories, do also know the intensity of the problems and instinctively discern that in reality their own theoretical frameworks do not work. The animal spirits about which the economists are so fond of do land us in the animal kingdom in our mad run for a share in limited resources. It is not efficiency or merits that guide the distribution or sharing of resources or accumulation of capital. Those who are in jails and those who are behind politicians sponsoring candidates on policy making

bodies, know very well what matters in action. It is very simplistic to dismiss that it is all due to the inefficient functioning of the state or the rent seekers. In fact one could attribute the same motives to the academics, who are blind to the situation on the ground, and are pleased with the manufactured empirical results. In the recent past there have been very few studies as to how corporations like Reliance, Adani, Tata, etc. have manipulated records, technology and even government machinery to remain profitable. There is a possibility that some of the experts might say that this is due to the inefficient functioning of CAG, a bureaucrat. The best or efficient governance, as per experts is one where government dissolves, leaving the way for wolves.

We are all aware that most of the problems in our society are interrelated. Inequality of opportunity, economic deprivation and structural rigidities are encroaching on our social institutions perpetuating some of our inapt traditions. Modi, more than anyone in the past who had occupied the chair, knows the pain of discrimination, deprivation, divide and despair that lay deserved persons excluded. It is collusion of crooks that go with the so-called success in market and it would create more agony if corrective measures are not initiated by a competent person. Further, most of the Western advisers know very little about our social tensions that are intertwined with economic policies. For instance, social security they think is same as giving doles, means tested allowances and the corresponding laws. But, we have

several factors for reckoning to provide relief in considering that of a region, language, religion, caste, gender, age, distance and so on. Therefore, Modi government should concentrate on social policy that takes care of the consequences of Western models of growth and bring peace.

It seems that Modi has realised the enormity of burden of the job within three days of taking charge in Delhi as his experience with Gujarat was limited to only seven per cent of GDP and restricted to a small geographical area. India is so vast, diversified and the forces are so well entrenched that can blow off anyone or policy with their total control of 3Ms - money, mafia and media. The humble personal and physical gestures that Modi displayed to the public would make him a successful PM provided he limits himself to social policy leaving economic issues to the real regulators. Otherwise how could he or his NDA be different from the previous regime?

(Continued from Page 2)

to be seen how far Modi wants to carry the centralization process.

On current showing it would seem that India is entering an era of a strong prime minister who will expect results from the bureaucracy, a cabinet whose performance will be monitored, a strong PMO which will oversee programme-policy implementation and an officialdom geared to a new harsher regimen of longer working hours and prompt deliveries. Not a bad scenario at all. We only hope that the system, which has turned sluggish in the last one decade can endure the new demands and new pressures. Best of luck!

Kerala deviates from national politics

P. Viswambharan

Very often Kerala State deviates from the rest of the nation's politics. This time also it happened like that. In the 2014 Election while the BJP has made history by winning absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, Kerala is the only major state in the country which has not returned even a single BJP member. Kerala remains the only state from where BJP is yet to open its account both in Parliament and in the State Legislature.

This feature of Kerala - deviating from mainstream national politics – was evident from the very formation of the state. It may be noted that Kerala state was formed in 1956 by integration of former Travancore-Cochin state and the Malabar district of former Madras state. The first election to the Kerala Legislative Assembly was held in 1957 as part of the second general election in India. Then, Kerala was the only state in the country which defeated the mighty Indian National Congress, enabling a non-Congress party to secure a majority in the State Legislature and to form its ministry. More important is the fact that the winning party was the Communist Party of India and it was the first instance in the world of a communist party taking over power through ballot. Since then the history of Kerala has been that of the Congress and Communist Party-Marxist (CPIM) taking over power alternately, not single handed, but by leading coalitions.

Kerala has also the distinction of establishing the practice of coalition

governments, setting example to other states and the Centre. The first coalition government in India was formed in 1960 in Kerala with the Congress and Praja Socialist Party (PSP) as partners. This coalition lasted for 2^{1/2} years and then the PSP quit the coalition. For the next two years there was a single-party Congress Government, the only instance of Congress running its own party government in Kerala. Then for 2^{1/2} years there was President's Rule. This is also a record. In no other state there has been President's Rule for such a long period. The next election took place in 1967 which resulted in a seven-party coalition led by the CPI(M) forming the ministry. Since then there have been only coalition governments of Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF). These two fronts seize alternate chances.

In elections to the Parliament also the above pattern has been followed. In 2004 out of the 20 seats Kerala had the LDF sent 18 members to the Lok Sabha while UDF could return only one (and that too a Muslim League member). The 20th seat went to an independent supported by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Thus there was not a single Congress member from Kerala in the 14th Lok Sabha. But in 2009 there was a U-turn, the UDF winning 16 seats leaving only 4 to the LDF. Of the 16 UDF members 13 belonged to the Congress, two to the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and one to the Kerala Congress(M), a regional party dominated by

Christians. All the four LDF members belonged to CPI(M). Now, a peculiar position has emerged in the 2014 election in which both the UDF and LDF claim credit of victory and at the same time allege defeat against each other. This time UDF has won 12 seats, the break up being Congress 8, Muslim League 2, Kerala Congress(M) 1 and Revolutionary Socialist Party(RSP) 1. RSP is a new entrant to UDF. This party broke away from the LDF just before the poll and joined UDF because the CPI(M) refused any constituency to it. Among the eight LDF winners five are CPI(M), two CPI(M) supported independents and one CPI. The ruling UDF claims that winning 12 seats out of the total of 20 in the state is a grand victory in the background of the most humiliating defeat of UPA and the Congress at all India level and a vote of confidence on the state government. At the same time the LDF also claims credit for doubling its strength from four to eight, even though it expected more seats. The CPI(M) regrets very much the defeat of its Polit Bureau member M.A Baby at the hands of the RSP candidate. Baby, a sitting MLA, a former state minister and former Rajya Sabha member was the only Polit Bureau member to contest in this election and it was reported that he was set up by the party with the idea of elevating him as the leader of the CPI(M) in Lok Sabha.

The 2014 election exhibits some other interesting features for the small state of Kerala, having just three percent of the population of

India. State-wise it has sent the largest contingent of 12 to UPA (if that formation is still there) and the second largest team (8) to the Congress party in Parliament, the first position going to Karnataka (9). In the same vein CPI(M) in Kerala can claim the credit of sending majority members (5+2 Independents) to its Lok Sabha team. Similarly Kerala has saved CPI from total extinction in Lok Sabha by sending one member. Same is the case with RSP. It has to be noted that Kerala is the only state that has returned Muslim League members to the 16th Lok Sabha (2).

But, the most outstanding feature of Kerala politics is that it is the only major state in the country where BJP has failed to open its account in both Houses of Parliament as well as in the State Legislature in spite of the fact that the party is quite active in all the 14 districts and has acquired nearly 11 per cent votes in the latest poll. BJP's seniormost Kerala leader and a former minister in Vajpayee Government, O. Rajagopal came a very close number two in Thiruvananthapuram constituency, to be defeated by the sitting member and Union Minister Shashi Tharoor by a narrow margin of 15000 votes. During the previous NDA regime Rajagopal was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh and was elevated to the position of Minister of State in the Railways and Urban Development Ministries. It is a well accepted fact that as a Union Minister he was of great service to Kerala. Why even such a senior and popular leader with unblemished character and image as Rajagopal could not win the election?

Despite the high level politicization of Kerala citizens, religion and caste play a major role

in elections. Religion-wise composition of the state's population is as follows: Hindus 55%, Muslims 25% and Christians 20%. Hindus are divided into a quite a large number of castes and never stand 'united'. During the elections, and in matters relating to government service, reservations, etc. Hindu backward castes make alliances cutting across religious barriers. On the other hand Muslims and Christians generally stand united. In the elections Muslims almost unitedly vote for either the Muslim League candidates or those supported by that party. Muslim League is the number two party in the UDF. The Christian votes generally go either to the Congress or the Kerala Congress which is actually a breakaway group of Indian National Congress and controlled by the Church. Kerala Congress also is in the UDF. Regarding Hindu votes, they go dividedly to all big and small parties belonging to both the fronts (UDF and LDF) and also to the BJP. In other words BJP gets only a fraction of Hindu votes. Muslims and Christians take a firm anti-BJP stand and in constituencies where BJP has a fair chance of victory, they cross even their front loyalty and vote for the strongest candidate opposing the BJP, with a view to ensure the defeat of the BJP. Rajagopal has been a victim of this strategy more than once. In short, a combination of the religious minorities who account 45 per cent of the population and a large section of Hindus loyal to various secular parties ensure BJP's defeat. Yet, the BJP is consistently increasing its strength in the local bodies.

Lastly, a word about Socialists. The Socialists were a considerably strong political force in Kerala during the PSP, SSP and Socialist

Party days. When the Janata Party was formed, in the Kerala unit of that party the socialists were the leading group and continued to be so in the Janata Dal. When the Janata Dal at the all India level broke into several parties the Kerala unit remained in Janata Dal(S). Five years ago this JD(S) unit split into two and one group under the leadership of M. P. Veerendrakumar formed a new state party called Socialist Party (Democratic) and the other group continues in JD(S) with Mathew T. Thomas as state chief. Veerendrakumar's party defected from LDF and joined the Congress-led UDF. In the last Lok Sabha poll both the above mentioned leaders contested, Veerendrakumar as UDF candidate from Palakkad constituency and Mathew T. Thomas as LDF candidate from Kottayam. Both got defeated with margins of over one lakh votes. Thus, while generally Kerala state deviates from mainstream national politics, the Socialists here still follows the traditional all-India trend of their folk viz. splitting and abusing each other and getting ridiculed by the people at large.

Madhu Dandavate
By
B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Resisting Modi through mass struggles

Praful Bidwai

As Narendra Modi chooses his team of advisers and top bureaucrats, some commentators are appealing to him to follow proper appointment procedures, adopt the dharma of inclusion, and “reach out” to the 69 percent of the electorate who didn’t vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party – and especially assure Muslims that they should feel safe under him despite the 2002 Gujarat pogrom.

These commentators are unpardonably naïve in asking Modi to do the opposite of what he stands for. If Modi wanted to send a message of conciliation to Muslims, he would have long ago mourned and expressed sincere regret for the 2002 killings. He hasn’t done so, and defiantly says there’s nothing to apologise for: “If I’m guilty, I should be punished, but I won’t say sorry.”

While canvassing, he wore every type of headgear, including a Sikh turban and an Arunachali hat with horns and petals, but pointedly, and repeatedly, refused to don a skullcap!

The Modi government’s moral apathy towards Muslims was even more eloquently conveyed by the sole Muslim in the cabinet, minority affairs minister Najma Heptullah, through her first public speech declaring that India’s Muslims are too numerous to be a minority; that term best applies to Parsis – India’s wealthiest and most educated community.

This makes nonsense of the idea of protecting the rights of

underprivileged religious-minority groups against majoritarianism, the ministry’s liberal-democratic rationale.

Modi has shown no respect for settled democratic conventions in making appointments. Thus, instead of choosing someone with scholarly gravitas, interest in academic pursuits, or a deep understanding of the challenges education faces in India, he allotted the weighty cabinet-rank human resource development portfolio to former actress Smriti Irani who has shown no interest in or aptitude for education, and who filed contradictory affidavits about her educational qualifications, which may be a criminal offence.

Worse, Modi used the ordinance route to override the Telecom Regulatory Authority Act, which bars the TRAI chairman from ever holding government office. This public-interest bar – enacted, ironically, by a BJP-led government in 2000 – is meant to prevent favouritism and promote impartiality, and should have been respected.

Modi was in a rush to appoint former TRAI chairman Nripendra Misra as his principal secretary. He refused to wait for parliament to convene and amend the act. The ordinance violates the Supreme Court judgement in a 1987 case, which says the ordinance power “is to be used to meet an extraordinary situation and cannot be allowed to be perverted to serve political ends”.

Misra’s is clearly a political appointment. He is no ordinary bureaucrat. He was until recently on the executive council of the Vivekananda International Foundation, a well-funded Right-wing think-tank located in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi’s diplomatic enclave.

VIF (www.vifindia.org) is an offshoot of the Vivekananda Kendra, started in 1972 by Eknath Ranade, former RSS general secretary. VIF played a crucial, if silent, role in Baba Ramdev and Anna Hazare’s anti-corruption protests beginning 2011. It runs several security-and foreign policy-related and “historical and civilisational studies” programmes.

VIF’s website carries hysterical pro-Hindutva and ultra-nationalist articles. One article describes US scholar Wendy Doniger as someone who delights in “denigrating Hinduism. Most of her own and her students’ dissertations/books ... have often been described as pure pornography...” Doniger’s book on Hinduism was recently pulped – setting a nasty precedent of successful intimidation by the RSS-sponsored Shiksha Bachao Andolan, since carried over.

VIF’s director is former Intelligence Bureau chief Ajit Doval, now appointed the National Security Adviser. As I discovered during a television debate a few years ago, Doval belongs to a school of policing that believes “in shooting first and asking questions later –

that's the only way to deal with terrorists", real or imagined.

Doval rationalises fake 'encounter killings' and advocates a militarist approach towards Maoists – regardless of legality and human rights consequences. He calls for a hard line against India's neighbours, including friendly Bangladesh, who he believes, are bent on subverting India's security.

Many VIF leading lights discount the potential for peaceful coexistence between India and Pakistan. India, they demand, should stop being overly "generous" towards its neighbours in economic cooperation, trade, visas, even water-sharing.

VIF, with other pro-Sangh Parivar outfits such as Deendayal Research Institute, Niti Central, Public Policy Research Centre, Friends of the BJP, Centre for Policy Studies and Rashtriya Seva Bharati, will provide policy inputs to Modi.

Under their influence, we are likely to witness a well-orchestrated campaign to shift India's foreign, security, economic, social and cultural policies rightwards, in keeping with Modi's own orientation, but with disastrous consequences.

It's hard to see how the feeble and demoralised parliamentary opposition can resist this onslaught. Many regional outfits like the Samajwadi Party buy into the BJP's paranoid ultra-nationalist premises and hard line approaches.

Where does that leave the recent elections' greatest losers – the Congress, the Left, the BSP and the Aam Aadmi Party? The first two

have suffered their worst-ever defeats, winning respectively 44 and 12 Lok Sabha seats (including two Left-backed independents from Kerala). The AAP, which showed great promise in December, has come a cropper, winning only four seats, all in Punjab.

These parties face an existential crisis. The Congress still deludes itself that the Gandhi family will somehow rescue it. The family refuses to own up to its leadership failure. Yet, no one demands that the party frees itself from this millstone and start afresh.

Unless the Congress rebuilds its base among the Dalits, Adivasis, lower OBCs and the urban poor, by agitating for their livelihood rights, it's likely to go into steep, possibly terminal, decline – especially if it loses the coming assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana, as seems likely.

The Left's base has been eroding everywhere, especially in its former bastion West Bengal, where it won the same number of seats (two) as the BJP. Its leadership should have responded to this with alacrity; several heads should have rolled, and the Left should have returned to vigorous mass activity instead of doing "politics from the top" based on unstable, sterile electoral alliances.

Unless the Left urgently corrects course, updates its programmatic perspectives, and develops a mass-based mobilisation strategy by taking up issues like healthcare, food security, employment, education and defence of people's livelihoods threatened by predatory industrial, mining and water and power projects, it too will be doomed.

The solution lies in radical, painfully critical introspection, abandoning the democratic centralism, organisational doctrine, which prevents healthy debate, and joining grassroots struggles. This is a tall order, but the Left has no soft options.

As for the AAP, it must reinvent itself not as a political party, but as a political movement which offers new forms of participatory activity not narrowly focused on corruption or "crony capitalism". The AAP must practise what it preaches – transparency, political honesty and inner-party consultation. It's the lack of these that aggravated the AAP's crisis, leading to Shazia Ilmi's and Yogendra Yadav's resignations, and to Arvind Kejriwal's discrediting as an egoistic, unreliable leader.

The AAP must not shy away from ideology. It must link 'crony capitalism' to communal-neoliberal authoritarianism. The BJP embodies all these and is the main enemy. Rather than concentrate excessively on the coming Delhi Assembly elections, the AAP must join a broad-based national campaign against neoliberal Hindutva-capitalism. That's the way forward.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque
on

Mumbai Bank
in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai 400 007

Election reforms

S. V. Nadkarni

General elections are over and BJP, as an individual party and NDA, as an allied group, got an absolute majority in the 543-seated Parliament of the country. There are no two opinions that elections are held impartially in India and the Election Commission deserves all credit for that, considering that more than 800 million voters take part in such an election. But it does not mean that there is no scope for improvement. In fact, there is tremendous scope for improvement in our democratic system to make it more effective and efficient.

The Code of Conduct, usually enforced three months before the actual date of voting leaves much to be desired. As it is, we have a bureaucracy which is most lethargic and needs to be whipped - literally - to get any work done. The present code of conduct nearly paralyses all government activities for the period of three months as soon as election is announced in the region. And there are elections after elections; the Maharashtra state assembly elections will be held in just four months hence. Then there will be elections for Municipalities, Zilla Parishads and Gram Panchayats. How can government functioning be virtually stopped each time for a period of three months? The bureaucrats are waiting for an excuse to stop doing even what is not really prohibited by the Election Commission. We need to find an alternate method to prevent the government of the day from giving "gifts" - without stopping the day-to-day functioning. Is it possible? It can be done if it is stipulated that the state body - be it

central/ state government or any municipal body or zilla-parishad/ gram panchayat - cannot propose any pay rise or additional allowances nor any schemes involving additional expenses **which will create a deficit** in the last budget of the state body *e.g.* the 5th year of the state assembly. However, all activities specifically provided in the said budget could continue without the need of taking permission of the Election Commission - as is required to-day. These are "government activities" and therefore no minister or political person will be involved in inaugurating such activities during the entire year. All relevant information will be given by the government officers - strictly as a "state activity" without reference to any political party. Similarly, no top post will be filled without the specific permission of the Election Commission during this year. Even if the elections become inevitable suddenly, before the stipulated time, the same rules will apply forthwith and all new projects, new increments, or new (additional) grants announced in the previous three months will get automatically cancelled, unless specifically approved by the Election Commission. Such an amendment to the "Code of Conduct" will allow all budgeted routine activities to be conducted unabated while all attempts to "bribe" or "please" will be curbed effectively. The decision of the Maharashtra state government, announced on 6th June, of filling 1, 32, 000 vacant posts in the state government is a classic example of such attempts to "please" - in the face of establishment costs already

soaring near 80 thousand crores and the government debts rising to nearly 3 lakh crores already. This would not have been possible if the code of conduct had been modified as stated above.

Also, the rule of taking permission for every meeting and restrictions on the very contents of what is permissible to be uttered, appear highly exaggerated. Corner meetings are the back bone of real propaganda and should be condoned from the rule. While all utterances that can cause hatred or animosity among various sections of society must be strictly prohibited, it was ridiculous that personal comments or sly comments were also scrutinized by the Commission. A certain benefit of doubt must be allowed during the debates of electioneering. After all, we must have faith in the intelligence of the common man - he/she cannot be led away by clumsy speeches and sly comments. On the other hand, the Election Commission will be fully justified in banning all "Road Shows". Road shows are very expensive exercises to show off the strength of the candidate in the constituency with hired persons from outside and hired vehicles. They serve no democratic function; yet increase the expenses phenomenally.

Politics is the art and science of governance, of making laws and implementing them. In USA, the senate members are called "Law-makers". Can any Tom, Dick and Harry become a "law-maker"? Should not there be some eligibility criteria for becoming a legislator or a parliamentarian? Rabridevi is the

most glaring example- a woman who could not even sign becoming the chief minister of a state. She openly confessed that she did not know anything beyond cooking and rearing cows. Criteria do not mean educational qualifications alone. There can be many other criteria. For instance: a) any one can contest elections in local self- government bodies but for contesting for state legislation, the aspirant must get at least 20 per cent votes in the former elections; b) The aspirant should have held an executive post (like secretary, treasurer, president at the taluka level party structure for at least two years; or c) the aspirant should have managed any post which controls a minimum of hundred personnel or financially controls a turn-over of five lakhs of rupees. Such criteria will prove that he/she is popular enough or capable enough to play the role of a law maker. The criteria for a parliamentarian can similarly be decided – minimum 20 per cent votes in state level contest or district level positions or managing 1000 persons or Rs. 50 lakhs turn-over. (The figures are mentioned arbitrarily and are alterable in the hands of experts). Once eligibility criteria are laid down, all desirous of contesting the elections will have to register their names in the “eligibility register” and only those who are registered - after due scrutiny - will be able to contest. This will eliminate all “bogus” contestants who make the bulk in the voting box as also prevent the absurd practice of political parties nominating the spouse or some such close relative when a popular leader dies. An added rule that “all government employees and all political defectors cannot stand for elections till after one year of their relinquishing office or defecting” will purify the process even further.

Unfortunately, instead of humanizing the bureaucracy, it is found almost invariably that politicians get bureaucratized. It becomes difficult to meet them and they start talking the language of the secretaries within months of assuming power. The link between the rulers and the people at large gets snapped and even important decisions of the government are not properly explained to the common man. This is one major reason why democracy fails; the people soon feel that they are under dictators. The main link between the government and the people ought to be the party workers but they are the ones most neglected; nor are they trained. It is necessary to support these grass root workers and train them and **the easiest way to do that is to pay them around Rs. 10,000 per month through the government.** If party workers were paid an honorarium of Rs. 10,000 per month per every 25000 population by the government, for a population of 12 crores in Maharashtra state, **around 5000 workers will benefit and the burden on the ex-checker will be around Rs. 60 crores annually. Political parties could nominate their candidates as per the percentage of votes they have secured in the state election. Rs.60 crores is a pittance for the government considering that it spends around Rs.100 crores for every 1 per cent rise in D. A. of the government employees.** The total expenses on the employees amount to about Rs.80,000 crores annually. Why should not the same government spend just 60 crores for political workers when that can make our democracy stronger and more meaningful? Another 15 crores could be spent for their training programs wherein they will learn about the various laws and regulations made

for the benefit of the common man. Politics may not remain the “last resort of the scoundrels”, more educated workers may join this profession and some of them may eventually become better legislators.

Similar support at the central government will provide for another 50000 political workers, at a cost of Rs. 600 crores. Together, a whopping army of a lakh of political workers will be created in the country to provide an important link between the people and the legislators. They will belong to different political parties proportionate to the voting percentage each party secures.

Addition of “experts” in various fields would enliven the debates in the parliament. It is suggested that 10 per cent of the seats may be added to Rajya Sabha and these be filled by nomination from among the experts in various social fields. The allotment of seats to each party will be as per the percentage of votes obtained by the party. Experts can never get elected, but they are vital. They will give valuable advice before any legislation is enacted -not comment afterwards.

Lastly, one wonders if politics can be professionalized. It is the science of governance and the need of the entire population. Why should not the entire population **contribute compulsorily** for the working of political parties? A half percent turn-over tax on all enterprises and one percent on all employed, salaried persons will collect more than enough revenue to fund all recognized political parties. The distribution will be again proportionate to the percentage of votes obtained by each party. (Some details need to be worked out). Both

(Continued on Page 12)

Until Dalit women are free, no woman is free

Thenmozhi Soundararajan

This past week, the world mourned with a town called Baduan in Uttar Pradesh, India. There the raped bodies of two young girls were found hanging in a mango tree while behind them their grim families refused to leave until justice was done. And as the news cycle ran statements from International NGOs, UN Officials, and pundits, there was no denying that the rotting smell of India's strange fruit had come front and center to the world stage.

I am a Dalit woman, I'm here to tell you that this Strange Fruit has a name and its name is caste. Just as there is no way to understand sexual violence in the history of the United States without understanding racism, there is no way to understand the frequency and lack of punishment of violence against women in India right now without understanding caste.

This system ranks human beings at birth, with your family's caste determining the whole of your life—your job, your level of spiritual purity, and your social standing. Those at the bottom are branded “Untouchables”, untouchable because we are spiritually defiling to others and thus condemned to a life of exploitation.

We are 200 million people struggling against this unjust system. We are not a small fringe group, we are a critical mass. We reject this heinous system and call ourselves “Dalits.” Dalit meaning broken by oppression, but defined by struggle.

Since independence there has been an affirmative action policy in

India that has led to a first generation of Dalit doctors, scientists, lawyers, and public officials. Yet the great majority of Dalits are still condemned to the margins of life. We live in a caste apartheid with separate villages, places of worship, and even schools. It is a lethal system where, according to India's National Crime Records Bureau, four Dalit women are raped, two Dalits are murdered, and two Dalit homes are torched every day.

Baduan has woken up the world to this reality. India's culture of caste is a culture of rape. Both for oppression and opportunism, caste-based sexual violence is meant to silence our communities. Each attempt to achieve equality—going to school, getting a job, or voting—brings greater risk of reprisal. Because at its heart, caste-based sexual violence is about creating a climate of terror so that Dalits will fear challenging this system. This reprisal violence though has now reached record numbers with a recent study by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights reporting that over 67 per cent of Dalit women have faced some form of sexual violence.

This culture of rape is also a culture of impunity where upper-caste Hindu perpetrators of these crimes are protected within India's rape culture at all levels of the justice system. UN Special Rapporteur, Rashida Manjoo relays in her recent report on the status of women in India that there is a “deeply entrenched patriarchal attitude of police officers, prosecutors, judicial officers.” This coupled with the

unsavory reality that members of the police, judiciary, and public officials often collude with perpetrators to keep Dalit women from filing claims and receiving justice.

That is why we must all break the silence about caste-based sexual violence. We must stop talking about this rape culture in terms of individual incidents. It is more than Baduan, Delhi, Bagahana, or Mumbai. It is in fact the India of today. We must look at this as a systemic, structural problem. We must look at the culpability of the Indian state, from the police to the courts. The shame intended for Dalits by these acts is actually the shame of a country that refuses to protect all its citizens. From the corrupt, rural police outpost to the politicians in Delhi, the culture of impunity protects perpetrators and denies justice for our women.

With such a failure of the rule of law, the only legitimate response we have now is to fight. Dalit women in all spheres—activists, thinkers, artists—are leading historic movements all over South Asia to end caste and caste-based sexual violence. Because the world stood with the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, these movements succeeded. So too, we ask for the world to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dalit women and our families to end this violence. We do not fight only for ourselves, we fight for all who have suffered from this rape culture.

So we ask you. Stand with us. For this is our final truth: Until Dalit women are free, no woman is free.

The Corporate is the only winner

Javed Jamil

On the surface Narendra Modi has emerged the victor in the 2014 elections. The name Modi has vanquished every other name – that of individual, organization or political party. People may tend to think that Hindutva, RSS or BJP have won. But the analysts have been quick to point out that Modi hardly bothers about any of them. He wants all of them to be nothing more than his obedient slaves. What is however being missed altogether is that even Modi is not the real victor. If anyone has won the 2014 WAR, it is the Corporate India with the backing of the Corporate International.

It was long back in 1997 that my book, “The Devil of Economic Fundamentalism” had shown how the forces of economics have subjugated every field of human existence, politics being its main source of monopolization. In the chapter entitled, “State or Estate” I had written: “Democracy literally means ‘a government by the people, of the people and for the people’. In truth it is a corporatocracy, the government of the corporate, by the corporate and for the corporate. The result is that in most of the cases it is not the best among the people that ascend the ladder of politics but the ones chosen by the corporate, who often prove to be the worst for the people. The irony is that it is the people who appear to be voting them to power; they have no option but to elect from among those chosen by their rich masters.”

This election was unique in the sense that never in the past, the corporate has been as determined as

it was this time to bring one single leader to the helm of affairs. Congress and BJP used to be favourites with the corporate India but the other parties also had some support. This time, the two other leaders at the national level, Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kehriwal were perceived as the enemies of the interests of the corporate. The former showed increasing fondness for Welfare Economics, which the corporate loves to loath, and the latter challenged the biggest faces in the corporate India. Modi of course was seen as a true friend, and the corporate does not disappoint its friends. The money flowed, the media systematically destroyed the image of all his adversaries, Rahul and Kejriwal being the favourite targets, and a kind of hype was created which brought every other factor to naught.

How Modi will address the corporate challenge is the moot question. He cannot ignore the hopes of the people which have reached unprecedented heights. The problem is that as soon as he tries to do something that disfavours the interests of the market forces, the media will start questioning his intentions and methods. He would like to control inflation but any long term curb on inflation is not possible without an intervention in the tendency of the market to make unjustifiable profits. If he tries to put the whole onus on the people involved in the production and supply of the agricultural products, not only this will yield only a short term reprieve, it will also make him an unpopular figure in the villages

and smaller towns. If he fails to curb inflation effectively, the masses will of course become disenchanted sooner than later. Once he starts failing on the economic front, he may again look towards the forces of Hindutva. But the problem with him is that the hardcore loyalists of BJP are no more than 18 percent in the country. It means that more than 13 percent of the people who voted for him this time in the hope of better governance may easily shift their allegiance as soon as the Hindutva agenda starts coming to the fore.

Modi’s friends argue that Modi aims for a long innings, and would therefore keep Hindutva at bay. But the bigger challenge for him is to keep the corporate at bay. If he ignores them, the media and other market driven institutions will dump him. If he ignores the aspirations of the people, the other parties will jump back into reckoning.

(Continued from Page 10)

individuals and enterprises could be allowed to contribute another 1 per cent or ½ per cent resp. to any party of their choice. As this is “expense”, all the amount will be totally Income-tax free. This will rid the parties of the need to depend on the “black money” from one quarter or the other. Their dependence on black money is one of the major causes why politicians are hesitant to take action against it - it appears to me.

If democracy must flourish, we must improve its working pattern. Here are some suggestions which can make it more efficient to deliver the goods.

Dams and human safety flash flood in the river Beas

The unfortunate death of 25 students in the flash flood in the river Beas caused by sudden release of water from the 120 MW Laarji Hydropower project has once again brought in focus the question of dam safety in the country. However, it is not yet clear on what prompted the sudden opening of the dam gates, but one can assume it must be rains in the higher altitude. However, this is not new. Incidents like this keep happening and our systems to manage dam gates, water release, warning systems, upkeep of dam and so on continue to be neglected and unplanned in the absence of monitoring from Central Water Commission or Ministry of Environment and Forests. This incident reminds us of the flash floods in Uttarakhand in 2012 and 2013, which claimed countless lives. While, whenever incidents like this happen there is an attempt made at portraying them as natural disasters, as with last years' Uttarakhand floods, the role of unbridled constructions, dams, deforestation and other measures creating such situations is not discussed. Monsoons are approaching and one can only pray that nothing like last year will be repeated, given that we refuse to learn and implement lessons thrown up by these disasters.

Till date, more than 4,500 dams have been constructed in India, out of which approximately 4,000 are operational, and, roughly 400 new dams are coming up. A fair number of India's dams are over 100 years old. A list compiled by the Central

Water Commission (CWC) shows at least 114 dams in this category. There are roughly 400 dams which are 50-100 years old. According to Madhya Pradesh government, the state has 168 dams which can be called "distressed dams", out of which 63 are less than 50 years old. Since 1917, 29 dams have reportedly been damaged. Such breaches of dams have affected the lives and property of hundreds of people, and, the number of those killed and injured in such accidents has reached thousands.

In 1979 about 2000 persons lost their lives when the Machhu II (in Gujarat) dam gave way. Other dam failures in the country include Ashti Dam in Maharashtra (this dam gave way twice, first in 1883 and then in 1933), Tigra Dam in Madhya Pradesh (1970), Panchait Dam on Damodar River in Jharkhand in 1961, Khadakwasala Dam in Pune (Maharashtra) in 1961, Nanak Sagar Dam (Uttarakhand) in 1967 and Chikkahole Dam (Karnataka) in 1972.

The incident has once again thrown up an opportunity for the Central and State governments to seriously address the issue of dam safety and ongoing construction of various dams in the country. The serious crisis at the door step of the Narmada Valley must be an opportunity for holistic review, not just from the angle of dam safety but from the wider perspective of costs and benefits of mega projects like the Sardar Sarovar. With a population of 2.5 lakh in 245

thickly populated village communities in the submergence of a single dam (SSP), the valley with a cascade of mega and medium dams, is a disaster-in-waiting. With flawed back water level surveys, imminent seismic risks, unregulated release of water from upstream dams; the valley is facing a virtual death noose - the Union and state governments have a critical role to play – if human life, nature and the exchequer matter.

There is a draft Dam Safety Bill brought by the UPA government in 2010, on which Parliamentary Standing Committee gave its report in June 2011 but it was never taken up after that. The Bill needs to be taken up again, however, it needs to be changed to include these kinds of operational failures and also bring in independent monitoring and reporting at each stage. Today there is none. We also need operational rules for each project in monitoring of which the downstream community representatives must have a role. It is then only that existing dams will be safe and not act as a death threat for downstream communities. Meanwhile, we urge the government that the concerned dam authorities must be made to face criminal and civil charges for deliberate murder and levied exemplary fines to be paid to the families of the deceased students. NAPM mourns the loss of precious human lives and offers its condolences to the families and shares their grief.

Tragedy of drowning of 24 students

Coordination Committee of Associations of Teachers in Delhi (CCATD) expresses deep anguish at the washing away of 24 young students of Vignan Jyothi Engineering College, Hyderabad in a tragic mishap downstream of the Larji dam in Himachal Pradesh.

CCATD offers its heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families and wishes them strength to bear this tragedy. This irreparable loss is not just of the families of the students or the College but of the entire nation. We would like all those in authority to learn a lesson from this tragedy so that such events do not occur in the future.

Reports suggest that this incident is a result of the utterly callous attitude of the authorities in charge of the matters in Himachal. The dam authorities who released massive amounts of water suddenly, without warning, rather than slowly over a period of time deserve to be condemned and punished for their callousness. If, as reports suggest, this was done to benefit the mining mafia, then the authorities and those of the mining mafia need to be charged with murder. Reports also suggest inordinate delay in mounting rescue operations and for this the local administration needs to be held responsible. Last but not the least, the attitude of the CM while briefing the media about the tragedy must also be condemned.

CCATD feels that in India, educational institutions have not paid enough attention to safety of young lives which is resulting in tragedies taking place from time to

time. Fires in schools, like, the death of 93 students in a fire in a school in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu in 2004, school bus accidents like, when a school bus fell into a canal killing 16 students in Andhra Pradesh in 2012, death of 5 girls in a stampede in a Delhi school in 2009 and so on. Collectively, we seem to lack a memory of these tragedies and that leads to their occurrence in different forms from time to time.

CCATD suggests that as a nation

—Arun Kumar, President, JNU Teachers Association and others

(Continued from Page 3)

and Kashmir to decide because it joined the union on that condition. The Union cannot have more subjects without the state's consent. Therefore, the RSS which has propelled the demand for the abolition of Article 370 is acting illegally.

In fact, things have now come to such a pass that the settlement has to have consent of three parties—India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. If a referendum were to be held today, the valley of Kashmir would vote for an independent state. Jammu with the majority of Hindus would like to integrate with India and the Ladakh, with the Buddhists' majority, would want to have the status of a union territory directly under New Delhi. All these considerations have made the problem intractable.

In any case, the RSS should not play politics when it claims to be a cultural organization. I am reminded of the ban imposed on it on January 30, 1948, after Nathuram Godse, an

we need to be more caring so that precious lives are not lost due to callousness. Further, accountability needs to be fixed in each case of a tragedy so that they are not repeated time and again.

CCATD demands that Ministries of Education at the Centre and the States must have a department which looks after the enforcement of mandatory safety measures in educational institutions in the country.

RSS man, assassinated Mahatma Gandhi. Then in 1949 when negotiations in response to the appeals from the RSS to lift the ban led to an agreement between then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the RSS in which the latter gave an undertaking that "RSS will not engage in political activity" and that "RSS will engage only in cultural activities."

But then Patel, not satisfied with the RSS undertaking, demanded that it incorporate the promise not to engage in political activities in their (Sangh's) constitution, to seal the agreement and to freeze RSS permanently from political activities. That was in 1949 and subsequent to that the government lifted the ban on the organization. However, in a shocking betrayal, the RSS led by its *sarsanghchalak* chief, Mohan Bhagwat, indulged in aggressive political activity from June 2013 in efforts to foist Modi, formerly a RSS pracharak, in the post of Prime Minister of India. The result is before you.

Will Latadidi stand for the poor, made homeless?

While the housing rights of residents of Campa-Cola compound have once again become a matter of public debate and *Bharatratna* Lata Mangeshkarji, herself owner of one of the flats there, has come out in support of protection to them, we welcome the debate. Let the debate and deliberation, however, get focused on the wider issues related to common people striving for shelter yet getting either bulldozed or cheated. At least now when the rich, elite families in Campa Cola are also facing betrayal, at the hands of 'Pure Drinks' with impure, illegal actions of raising storeys which were not permitted within the FSI limit, the builders-officials nexus should come to the fore.

Why were the builders permitted to carry out work beyond what was permissible, after paying fine in 1986 itself? How was the formation of co-operative societies permitted? Have the officials of the corporation who didn't take action all these years and builders been held responsible? Why should only the residents who claim their ignorance be treated as the culprits and cheaters? Whom have they cheated personally when all the sanctions and deals were between the developers and authorities?

These questions need to be asked and the judiciary is expected to look into the same. While no one can disrespect law, justice appears to be distant in this case. Lata Mangeshkar's comment that her concern is because the residents, with children and aged, are being rendered homeless is, however, exaggerated. Whether or not she is only for saving her own apartment (which is in one of the buildings as per media reports), Lataji also knows

that the well-to-do families can't become homeless by losing current house and most of them may have already made alternative arrangements.

Whatever it's, we wish Lataji could use her social and political weight in favor of all those who are poor and hence compelled to live in the so-called illegal houses.

Meet the real homeless in Azad Maidan. Support them. The case of Ambedkar nagar in Mulund is typical of many other slums. The land which they were residing on, since years was handed over with no price tag, to cooperatives of ex-bureaucrats and other upper-to-middle class citizens but with a condition to add "Slum Rehab" to the eight societies' federal projects. Samarth Spark Developers with society's promoter's son as a partner, could accommodate only 50 per cent of 600 families. "Why couldn't our Right to Shelter be protected", those declared ineligible began asking. Meanwhile the societies' project came under scanner. The statutory enquiry was carried out and the report is now out. The report recommends enquiry into the

eligibility of the people involved... yet their houses were bulldozed.

Those who purchased or built houses prior to 1995 or 2000 are out on streets. Why so?

When even though as a pe-election lollipop, Slum Act was amended to change the cut-off date from 1995 to 2000, it was and it is the duty of the State to protect them all, as per the notification dated May 2, 2014. Yet the contrary happened. On the 19th of the last month there was the brutal eviction of 130 families, when even some of their belongings got damaged.

The agitation is on since May 20th till date. All promises by the Minister of State for Housing and officials have proved to be partial, not fulfilled and the illegality involved in demolition goes unattended.

How many, if not Lataji and such eminent persons, common people - Aam Aadmis - have time and sensitivity to come forward and meet the real homeless at Azad Maidan in Mumbai?

—Medha Patkar, Sumit Wajale, Ali Shaikh,
Poonam Kanojia, Anwari Shaikh, Ramesh Kode

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

Rohini Gawankar

Published by

Kamalakar Subhedar,

Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha,

Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village, Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W), Mumbai 400072.

Mobile: 9820092255

Contribution: Rs.300+



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 21
June 22, 2014

Modi back to his agenda
Kuldip Nayar

**Does NaMo Need
a Social Agenda?**
K. S. Chalam

**Kerala deviates
from national politics**
P. Viswambharan

**Resisting Modi
through mass struggles**
Praful Bidwai

Election reforms
S. V. Nadkarni

**The Corporate is
the only winner**
Javed Jamil

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Vendetta politics

S. Viswam

One wishes that the Modi government had not succumbed to the temptation of playing vendetta politics by easing out the UPA-appointed governors out of office. The prime minister had raised high expectations in the country for ushering in a new style of governance. His initial actions and utterances had lent flesh and blood to such expectations. One gained the impression that Narendra Modi would set new conventions and traditions and not resort to narrow-minded politics which the country has got used to in the last few decades. Unfortunately, such hopes have been belied.

From all accounts it would seem that Shri Modi has come under tremendous pressure from his party to create some sinecures for its senior leaders who need to be rewarded for loyalty. Left to himself, Shri Modi may not have acted so precipitously and sought to get rid of some of the governors who are due to demit office in a few days/ weeks/ months in any case. The BJP seniors waiting in the wings to enter the various Raj Bhavans are a source of high pressure. Shri Modi must also be under pressure for

accommodating many BJP leaders in various other departments and offices under the government. Interestingly, the Modi government is not the first, nor will it be the last, to indulge in the luxury of vendetta politics. Predecessor governments have set the pattern which Shri Modi has also chosen to follow. Some governments in the past have not only got rid of governors but have dismissed duly elected and established governments of the rival party. The dismissal of governors and governments in office is a symbol of vendetta politics played by leaders like Charan Singh, V. P. Singh, Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi. Not long ago, in 2004 the first UPA government dismissed four governors for the only fault that they were appointed by the BJP and were supporters of that party. It was in that year that the propriety, and more important the constitutionality of the action was taken to the court. Centre was not a reason compelling enough to get rid of a governor nominated by or supportive of the political adversary. In every case, dismissal could be justified only by special and compelling reasons which must satisfy the demand for fairness and reasonableness.

Predictably, the Congress is protesting against the Modi government's targeting the governors, forgetting that when it was in office it also was intolerant of governors appointed by the political rival. The BJP also shouted itself hoarse when its nominees were eased out by Sonia Gandhi in 2004. The sad truth is that the spoils system has crept into the political culture of all our parties. All of them milk it when it suits them, but condemn it when it does not.

The mid-term ousting of governors - and other political appointees - will continue as long as politicians are committed to the spoils system one of the core features of which is rewarding partymen for their loyalty. Now is perhaps the time when our political class examines the possibility of setting up some healthy conventions to be followed by all parties when there is change of governments at the centre. There are already some constitutional offices well identified where incumbents change along with the change at the centre, like the office of the attorney general and solicitor general. More offices can be named and brought under the convention.

It is a sad truth, however, that most of the political appointees, regardless of the ideology of the parties nominating them, acted in a partisan manner and as political tools of the ruling party. This brought a bad name to the institution of governors and made each appointee a suspect. Governors need to place the Constitution higher than narrow party interests but they seldom do. There is no remedy for this as long as it is left to the ruling party to do favours to its leaders and ranks under the spoils system. In the ultimate

(Continued on Page 3)

How billions of rupees have been snatched from the poorest construction workers and accident victims

Bharat Dogra

Reena Mehta

We see them standing precariously at a height of over one hundred feet or perhaps two hundred feet, contributing to the creation of yet another sky scraper, and shudder to think of the consequences that can result from a single wrong step. We see their children crying amidst the dirt and dust of construction sites, as working mothers find it difficult to get a short break even to feed their babies. Far away from the observation of most of us, they also toil at the most distant and deserted places to construct dams and power-plants, tunnels and bridges, roads and defence works, bravely facing a frightening combination of occupational hazards, natural disasters and more recently violence by terrorists.

According to official estimates there are 45 million construction workers in India - men, women and children who themselves endure the most wretched housing conditions to create skyscrapers and shopping malls of 'shining' India. They are also among the most vulnerable in terms of occupational accidents and other hazards.

Instead of extending a helping hand to them, during the past 18 years 'shining' India has deprived them of billions of Rupees. (at the rate of millions of Rupees per day). Here is how the plunder of this poorest section has taken place relentlessly during the last decade.

In 1996, after a long delay, two important legislations were passed by the Parliament for construction

workers - the Building and Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996. These legislations came about only after a 12 years' long sustained campaign by the National Campaign Committee for Construction Labour (NCC-CL) in which various central trade unions campaigned unitedly. Among other things, these legislations provide for a cess to be collected on all new construction activity at the rate of one percent of the total budget of the construction being taken up. The amount thus collected has to be deposited with the Construction Workers' Welfare Board for many-sided welfare activities of construction workers including pension, assistance in case of accident, housing loan, insurance scheme, maternity benefits, education of children, etc.

These legislations apply to every building or any other construction activity which employs ten or more workers. It covers all Central and State government establishments.

These central Acts have to be implemented by the government of every state and Union Territory. Even after almost 18 years, the implementation of the Acts at the national level is highly inadequate. Construction workers under the guidance of NCC-CL have been campaigning for the implementation of the 1996 Acts but there has to be a bigger effort at the national level for satisfactory implementation. It is clear that if the rules of these

legislations had been framed and their implementation had started in true spirit within one year of the passing of these legislations, then during the last 17 years or so billions of Rupees would have become available for the welfare of the construction workers. This rightful share of workers, provided for them by Parliament 18 years back, has been held back from them because of avoidable delays in the implementation of these legislations which are of crucial importance for the welfare of over 41 million of the poorest workers in India.

For example as per affidavit submitted to Supreme Court, Uttar Pradesh had not collected any cess under the Construction Workers Act till 2009. According to the affidavit, rough estimate of cess collection is Rs. 50 crores per year. So keeping in view the non-collection of cess for 12 years this means that workers have been deprived of Rs. 600 crores. This is as per the government's under-estimate of the likely collection of cess. UP is a very big state. In smaller states like Delhi and Gujarat the rough estimates of cess collection (as given by state government) is Rs. 100 crores per year. If we make a conservative estimate that the collection in a big state should be at least one and a half times of this, then the minimum likely estimate of cess collection for UP should be Rs. 150 crores per year. If we use this estimate, then during 12 years the construction workers of Uttar Pradesh were deprived of Rs. 1800 crores.

On this basis if we make a national estimate then we can say with confidence that construction workers in India have been deprived of at least Rs. 10000

crores (or Rs. 100 billion) during the last 17 years.

In Delhi this period has seen a great spurt in construction activity as a result of the construction of several fly-overs and the metro project. Just imagine what a difference just one or two percent of these project outlays could have made to the welfare of construction workers if only the already enacted legislations had been implemented soon in the right spirit. In Delhi rules were notified in January 2002, board was constituted in September 2002 and hence the collection of cess for welfare of workers and

registration of construction workers as beneficiaries was also delayed.

So far it is only in a few places (where efforts for the welfare of workers had started much before the enacting of national legislations) that reasonable amounts have been collected for the welfare of workers. However, this is peanuts compared to the amount which should have become available as per the legislated norms. This grave injustice to construction workers should be corrected as early as possible to ensure that their faith in the justice of our democratic system is not shattered.

A young Muslim engineer writes a blog post describing an encounter in his office cafeteria after the news of Mohsin's death became general. Over tea a non-Muslim colleague says, directly, "I am sad at his death, but they should dress appropriately and be clean shaven. This religious symbolism is offensive."

This two-step response, first the cursory expression of regret and then the suggestion that 'they' bring it upon themselves in some way, has become something of a formula. Thus, the newly elected BJP MP from Pune, Anil Shirole, in a conversation with reporters outside Parliament, condemned the damage done to property and the inconvenience caused by the rioters in Pune and then said, "What appeared on Facebook was very painful. Some amount of repercussions was natural."

Both the young engineer's colleague and the BJP MP normalize violence by treating it as a symptom of something else. By describing the violence as a reflex they effectively absolve the rioters of responsibility by depriving them of volition. Shirole, in a later statement, complained that he had been misquoted, that he hadn't intended to justify the attack on Mohsin but offered no alternative reading of 'natural' repercussions.

—Mukul Kesavan, in *The Telegraph*

(Continued from Page 2)

analysis, it is left to the individual concerned whether or not he should remain true to the Constitution or to the organization doing him favours. Men of honesty will act honestly, but

then there is a responsibility on the party also for choosing men of integrity and probity so that they will think twice before saying 'yes' to the offer of a gubernatorial reward.

Akshardham Judgment The Law at Work

Ravi Nair

Incredible India it certainly is. On the day that a majoritarian government led by luminaries who are no friends of democratic freedoms and civil liberties was voted in by one-third of the voters in the recent Lok Sabha elections, there was some cold comfort for those who would like to believe in the rule of law. The Supreme Court in its order of 16 May struck half a blow for the rule of law when it ordered the acquittal of all the innocents framed in the Akshardham temple attack case.¹ Four of the six acquitted were released after being in prison for 11 years. Three of them, Adambhai Ajmeri, Abdul Qaiyum Muftisaab Mohmed Bhai and Chand Khan were under sentence of death since July 2006. The fourth, Mohammad Salim Hanif Sheikh, was serving a life imprisonment. The fifth, Abdullamiya Yasinmiya, was on bail after having been in prison for seven years of the 10-year sentence imposed on him by the trial court. The sixth, Altaf Malek, was out after having served his five year sentence.

The Supreme Court in its judgment expressed itself in no uncertain terms about how innocents are framed and the shoddy nature of investigations, conveying its anguish about the incompetence with which the investigating agencies conducted the investigation of the case of such a grievous nature, involving the integrity and security of the Nation. Instead of booking the real culprits responsible for taking so many precious lives, the police

caught innocent people and got imposed the grievous charges against them which resulted in their conviction and subsequent sentencing (p 280, para 136).

It further declared, Here, we intend to take note of the perversity in conducting this case at various stages, right from the investigation level to the granting of sanction by the state government to prosecute the accused persons under POTA, the conviction and awarding of sentence to the accused persons by the Special Court (POTA) and confirmation of the same by the High Court. We, being the apex court cannot afford to sit with folded hands when such gross violation of fundamental rights and basic human rights of the citizens of this country were presented before us... (p 261, para 131).

And yet the reliefs it provided to the acquitted fell far short of what it loftily claimed. There was no court order granting monetary compensation or other restitution for those who had lost 11 years of their lives for a crime they did not commit. No orders were given for the prosecution of those who had held these men in illegal police custody, concealed evidence, fabricated evidence, and committed torture. Nor were there orders against elected and other public officials for dereliction of duty.

The Supreme Court saw the process adopted by the prosecution

as flawed. It held the sanction granted as “void” and illustrative of, “clear non-application of mind by the Home Minister in granting sanction” (p 109, para 77). The home portfolio was held at that time by the then chief minister of Gujarat, Narendra Damodardas Modi. His minister of state for home was a worthy by the name of Amit Shah.

The apex court even held the confessional statements obtained under torture and duress as “highly contradictory and improbable in nature” (p 255, para 125).

The Supreme Court is conscious that Parliament has placed the judiciary and the citizen in a situation that borders on the theatre of the absurd. It states, POTA was repealed in 2004. Yet, the trials, its implementation has entailed, are continuing till date. POTA was repealed for the gross violation of human rights it caused to the accused persons due to abuse of power by the police. This is an important aspect to be kept in mind while deciding this case and hence, it was pertinent to mention this in the beginning to say that we are wary of the abuse the provisions of this Act might bring... (p 97, para 90).

The initial investigation was done by V R Tolia of the Crime Branch, Gandhinagar, and later by K K Patel of the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS). It was later taken over by G L Singhal, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Crime Branch on 28

August 2003 (p 17, para 8). On the same day Ashfaq Bhavnagri (PW-50) “was interrogated, and he revealed the entire conspiracy as well as the role of A-1 [Malek] and A-3 [Sheikh] in committing the dastardly offences” (p 58, para 41).

Singhal was accused of torture by all the defendants. All six accused in their retraction statements, complained of having been beaten up by ACP Singhal, V D Vanar and R I Patel, because of which they could not stand up on their feet. On denying their complicity in the Akshardham attack, they were threatened of being encountered. Each accused persons said that every day they were called either by Singhal, V D Vanar or by R I Patel and were forced to admit their complicity in the Akshardham attack (p 45, para 32).

When the accused persons were produced before the Special Court (POTA) on 5 November 2003 all of them made an oral complaint of police atrocities during the police custody and also complained of having been in police custody for long time. According to each accused person, he was made to sign the confessional statement prepared by the police under coercion and duress and had not made the same of his own free will (p 46, para 32).

The retraction statement of the accused Ajmeri Suleman Adam says it all.

“Then Singhal Sahib abused me and told that should agree to what they say. I should agree that I am the criminal of Akshardham carnage. I told them that I have never gone to Akshardgam (sic) nor have I seen it.

Kindly do not involve me. He immediately called five or six persons and told me to have handcuffs and fetters. Vanar Saheb beat me on soles. Shri Singhal Saheb told me that I agree with the crime of Askhardham (sic), they shall not beat me and have some benefits. Then they beat me in such a way that I became unconscious and fell down.When I became conscious I was near Vanar Saheb office. I suffered much difficulty. I was weeping. It was night. At that time one constable came and told me that superior sahib was calling. I had no strength to walk or stand. I was caught and taken to Vanzara Saheb office. All four officers were present there.

“They told me to agree the crime, otherwise I shall be encountered. But I did not believe. Then they brutally beat me. There was bleeding in back portion....They gave me currents. Then I told them, sir, have mercy on me. I am not culprit. Pardon me. Please don’t make me criminal wrongly. I do not know anything in this regard. They threatened me to harass me and my family members. Even though I have not committed any crime, they wanted to agree Akshardham crime” (p 231, para 115).

Singhal, who was also an accused in the Ishrat Jehan case was reinstated in service in the last week of May. Earlier, he was enlarged on bail by the court after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) failed to chargesheet him within the mandatory 90-day period. Singhal also figured prominently in the Snoopgate controversy. Clearly, both the governments of Gujarat and India had conveniently forgotten about Article 311 of the Constitution

permitting them to effect summary dismissal of the official.

The defence brought out the role of D G Vanzara. It stated that there was serious doubt about the manner in which the evidence was sought to be fabricated by police officer, D G Vanzara whose entrusting of the case to the Crime Branch on 28.08.2003 suddenly resulted in feverish activity, whereupon the accused persons were arrested and their confessional statements were recorded.

Vanzara was not produced as a prosecution witness. This was not surprising as he went public with his sense of hurt at being let down by his political gods.

His cross-examination, had it taken place, would have proved most interesting.

The apex court is scathing about the statements of the accomplices: “we fear that the story against the accused persons and its corroboration through the statements of accomplices is an act of concoction to make up a case against them. It was recorded in the statement of [ACP Singhal] that the information regarding PW-50 was given to him by D G Vanzara. However, D G Vanzara had not even been examined in this case and there is no information as to how he came to know about [Bhavnagari] after almost a year of the attack on Akshardham. This very important aspect of the lapse in investigation had been ignored by the courts below. The learned senior counsel for the accused persons have contended that there has been a delay of around a year from the time of the attack on Akshardham in

recording the statements of the accomplices which shrouds the case of the prosecution.

We have to accept the contention of the learned senior counsel for the accused persons in this regard as there is an inordinate delay in recording of the statements of the accomplices and this casts a grave suspicion on the reliability of the testimony of the accomplices” (pp 182-83, para 96).

The role of the lower courts was not a happy one. They failed in not considering the deposition of some brave doctors who deposed in favour of the accused pointing out that they “had complained of severe beating by the police prior to recording of the confessional statements” (p 65, para 48). As is expected in such situations the medical records such as the X-ray plates were missing from the file (p 65, para 48). It is distressing that the lower court and the high court did not take umbrage at the suppression of both evidence and documents by the prosecution.

The defence counsel in the Supreme Court drew attention to the confessional statements of the accused which “were recorded without sufficient time being given for reflection” and was thus in gross violation of the principle laid down by the apex court in a plethora of cases (p 67, para 49).

The attention of the apex court was also drawn to the failure of the lower courts, to take into consideration the element of fear of further torture by the police, in the

minds of the accused persons which was bound to be present, especially when their confessional statements were recorded by PW-78 [Sanjay Gadhvi, Deputy Commissioner of Police] in his office without them being assured of being sent to judicial custody immediately after making their statements (p 67, para 49).

The defence also drew the attention of the apex court to the fact that the confessions were retracted at the earliest available opportunity and that there had to be independent evidence corroborating the confessional statements if they had been retracted (p 71, para 51). The Supreme Court held that the evidence of the accomplices could not be used to corroborate the confessional statements of the accused persons in the absence of independent evidence. Moreover, it stated, “the delay of more than one year in recording their statements causes us to disregard their evidence” (pp 188-89, para 97).

Two letters written in Urdu were allegedly found in the trouser pockets of the alleged militants who were killed during the Akshardham attack, the post mortem report of the fidayees stated that all their clothes were stained with blood and mud and all clothes bore multiple tears and holes due to perforation by bullets. In such a case, the fact that the letters remained clean, without any tear, soiling or stains of blood and soil is highly unnatural and improbable... (p 204, para 103).

The Supreme Court also chided the Gujarat High Court pointing out

we cannot accept the recording of the High Court that the secret behind the crease-free unsoiled and unstained letter lies in the divine philosophy of ‘Truth is stranger than fiction’ for this renowned epithet by the author Mark Twain comes with a caveat that says, ‘Truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction must make sense’ and rejected these letters as evidence (p 204, para 103).

It also discounted the prosecution’s contention that the car already in the possession of the Jammu and Kashmir police at the Special Operations Group camp was the car used to carry weapons from Jammu and Kashmir to Bareilly for carrying out the attack on Akshardham (p 222, para 111).

If the Akshardham judgment is to be taken forward the Supreme Court must be asked to revisit the tenability of all existing prosecutions under POTA. Moreover, its attention should be drawn to the fact that the amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in 2008 incorporate many of the POTA provisions. Justice was served in this particular case by the extraordinary fortitude of the accused and their families and credit goes to the exemplary work of the defence lawyers in the lower court and the Supreme Court. Clearly, we rejoice in the acquittals in the Akshardham judgment by the Supreme Court but the bench, the bar and citizens need to ask for more whilst also doing more. All of us should emulate Oliver Twist and ask the courts and Parliament to please do some more.

¹ Adambhai Sulemanbhai Ajmeri & Ors Appellants vs State of Gujarat ...Respondent with criminal appeal No 45 of 2011, <http://www.supremecourtindia.nic.in/outtoday/CrI.Appeal No 2295-2296of2010.pdf>.

Tackling India's economic headwinds

Arun Kumar

The Bharatiya Janata Party's dramatic electoral victory is partly the result of the United Progressive Alliance's failure to tackle the problems affecting India's economy. A high rate of inflation that persists, declining growth, inadequate employment generation, fiscal deficit, current account deficit (CAD) and corruption all contributed to public disenchantment with the UPA. Therefore, expectations are high that the new government will tackle these problems decisively and bring relief to the public.

The economy's rate of growth has declined every quarter since the end of 2010-11, i.e., for the last 12 quarters. The industrial sector has shown negative or near zero rates of growth. The services sector, the engine of growth for the economy, has experienced declining rates of growth. So has agriculture. In turn, this has led to sluggish employment generation. The problem has been compounded by the capital intensive nature of current investment which uses less labour and more capital, so that even when output rises, employment hardly grows. Most are forced to work in the informal sector at low wages which when coupled with high persisting inflation, causes economic distress and political unrest.

This state of affairs is due to the decline in the rate of investment from its peak of 38 per cent in 2007-08 because of the global economic crisis. It went up in 2009-10 but is down to about 32 per cent. It is still

high compared to the figure of around 20-23 per cent in the 1990s. It rapidly increased in the 2000s leading to the boom of 2003-2008. The rapid increase in investment was engineered by allowing national income to shift rapidly in favour of the high savers — those who have high property incomes. This was evident from the direct tax data which showed that corporate tax collections boomed after 1999. This trend has led to a rapid increase in inequality in society and a slow rise in mass consumption so that the growth of the economy has depended more than before on rising investment levels.

Hence the crucial determinant of growth in the economy in the period after 2000 has been investment. As the investment rate declined after 2010-11, the rate of growth of the economy fell. Investment in the economy depends on private investment, both foreign and domestic and on public investment. There has been a problem with each one of them.

The situation has been aggravated by developments on the external and the fiscal fronts. The green shoots in the United States did not bloom, Eurozone went into a double dip recession, Japan continued its sluggish growth and the Chinese and the other BRICS economies slowed down. Thus, the growth rate of exports has been low. But, imports rose sharply due to the high import bill for petro products and the increase in the gold import bill. The consequence has been a high trade

deficit and CAD and a decline in demand in the economy. This has also been accompanied by a reduced inflow of foreign investments so that the value of the rupee *vis-à-vis* the dollar declined sharply in the last few years. This added to the imbalance on the external front with speculation and a flight of capital aggravating it. The threat by credit rating agencies to downgrade the country has been looming large which could lead to an increase in cost of borrowing abroad and a rise in CAD.

Foreign investment has slowed down but it only constitutes around 10 per cent of the total investment in the economy. The bulk of investment is internal and this has slowed down due to several factors. One of them has been the unravelling of scams since 2009 and the subsequent intervention of courts. This has impacted the confidence of the business community which was used to employing crooked means to manage its investments and the markets. After the court interventions, there have been question marks over many decisions like allotment of spectrum, coal blocks and iron ore mining. This has unnerved businessmen who have lost the confidence that they can manage the business environment the old way.

Their confidence has also been shattered by widespread public protest against large-scale acquisition of land needed for major projects. This goes back to the days

even before Singur. Resistance has continued in Jaitapur, Kudankulam, POSCO, Tata Mundra and so on. Some big ticket investment projects like the \$12-billion project by the Mittals have been called off. The problem remains unresolved because the public perceives a loot of natural resources — land, air, water, spectrum, forests and mines — at its expense. So, the execution of big projects has slowed down. The private corporate sector has been flush with funds which it has not invested due to the uncertainty and sluggish demand in the economy. In brief, the slowdown in internal investment is a result of the discredited model of investment in the country which has been based on collusion between businessmen, politicians and the bureaucracy. Thus, for different reasons, both foreign and domestic private investment has slowed down.

The last element, public investment has also slowed down because of policy paralysis in the government and even more importantly due to the sharp cutback in Plan size in each of the last five years so as to keep the fiscal deficit down; compared to budget estimates, the actual has been less by Rs.5 lakh crore in these five years. This has led to a slowdown in investment in infrastructure and an aggravation of shortages.

Because of the slowdown in the economy, tax revenue increase has suffered. That is why the fiscal deficit has tended to increase. To keep it in check, the Plan size has been curtailed. But that sets up a vicious negative cycle. As the economy slows down, the threat of a downgrade by credit rating agencies increases, revenues of the government rise less and the deficit

tends to rise, both of which lead to a loss of confidence and a further slowdown.

Can the new government tackle the difficult economic situation? Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reputed to be a “man of action” but the issue here is what action? The corporate sector has backed him in the hope that he will reverse the misfortunes of industry. The stock markets have risen sharply in the last few weeks. Can the new government simultaneously fulfil the hopes of business and those of underemployed youth hoping for a miracle?

While the rise in the stock markets signals the flow of funds from FII, it does not mean that foreign direct investment will suddenly increase. Further, there is the danger of a speculative bubble building up - as in the past - which could collapse and adversely impact the investment climate. This could be triggered by the continuing easing of the Fed intervention in the U.S. - something that is ongoing. Even if foreign investment increases, it is a small part of the total investment so it cannot be the major stimulus needed. Domestic investment - public and private - needs to be revived. Large investment is going to remain hamstrung by environmental and other clearances and difficulties in acquisition of land unless laws are changed but that would take time. Transparency in business decisions is needed to revive investment, which also needs time. So, the only thing that can be done soon is to increase public investment, especially in rural areas where infrastructure is woefully inadequate.

Schools, dispensaries, roads,

telecom, water, small irrigation and so on are needed urgently in rural India. This has the potential to create lots of jobs unlike the big investments and would be much less expensive than in urban areas because land is less expensive. Thus, it would benefit many more people and slow down the expensive and environmentally damaging urbanisation currently taking place. But this requires efficient governance.

In brief, the problems of the economy stem from the macroeconomic imbalances and corruption and unless they are addressed, the economy will not recover. The need today is not only for decisive leadership but also for a new, holistic macroeconomic approach - a break from the UPA's policies. Unfortunately, the BJP manifesto only presents a hint of its macroeconomic plan and that too towards the end of the manifesto, as if like an afterthought. Hopefully, the Union Budget will help clarify matters.

Contours of Secularism

Irfan Engineer

Triumphant and victorious in the 16th general elections for the Lok Sabha, the Hindu nationalists are attributing their victory as rejection of secularism by the Indian electorate. The election results have unwittingly started sort of questioning on the desirability of using the term secularism. It is true that secularism has become a much abused term in India. Regional parties like the Samajwadi Party in UP and the RJD in Bihar and Indian National Congress misused the slogan of secularism to cover up their mis-governance and corruption. The slogan of secularism was used opportunistically to garner votes of the minority communities. They would not have any policies or programmes to ensure equal opportunities or ensuring fair stake of the minorities in the development. To them, secularism meant ensuring security of minorities, and they failed miserably in this too. There were more than hundred riots in UP during the Samajwadi Party regime and likewise under the Congress in other states. Security and intelligence forces victimized and even staged murders and incarcerated scores of innocent Muslim youth in the name of counter-terrorism operations in what has come to be called the cow belt of India and Hyderabad. They failed to check the growth of communal forces and did not counter the stigmatization of the minorities.

Opportunistic secularism of the so-called secular parties meant joining hands with fundamentalist forces within the minority community in the hope that they would be able to deliver

at the polling booths. The fundamentalist tendencies within the minority communities are as marginal as the cultural nationalists are within the majority community. As well organized and vocal as in the majority community. They deftly use media coverage to create their larger than life image on issues like preventing Salman Rushdie from visiting India or problematizing Taslima Nasreen's visa extension or getting various books, films, websites and artistic expressions banned just like the Hindu nationalists do so (i.e. use media coverage) demolishing Babri Masjid and opposing freedom of expression on the ground that it offends their faith.

The Hindu nationalist organizations (HNOs) used this opportunistic secularism to their advantage and sought to blame and stigmatize the minorities as a whole as if they were responsible. The HNOs, well organized as they are, mobilized and instilled dislike not only against the political parties subscribing to opportunist secularism, but also against the members of the minority communities. The HNOs laid the primary blame for opportunistic secularism not on the "secular" political parties but on the very existence of the minorities within the nation, particularly those having their holy lands outside. They primarily problematize Islam and Christianity and their presumed separatist mindset rather than opportunistic secularism. HNOs propound that so long as Muslims and Christians exist, there will be parties to benefit politically from

opportunistic secularism. The solution desired by the HN ideologues therefore is either expel the minorities if possible from the nation, or subdue them to second class citizenship without any rights. It is the opportunistic secularism that needs to be problematized rather than locating the problem within any community as all communities are diverse and have diverse traditions, customs and cultures. Cultures are being made and unmade through social, economic and political changes and each individual responds dynamically to the changes occurring.

The HNOs have problematized secularism itself as a western notion to be discarded. However, one must accept that there is no universally accepted understanding of secularism. While in France, USSR and Turkey, secularism has meant uneasy tension between church and the state. In India the dominant discourse of secularism was more inclusive in its formulation of "*sarva dharma samabhav*", where state indulges all religions equally and citizens are at liberty to practice, profess and propagate their religion. State is often called upon to impartially mediate during conflicts between different religious communities.

HNOs are also Hindu supremacists though they pay lip service to the Hindu ethos of tolerance. They want privileged status for Hinduism (or rather re-invented and selective traditions of upper caste elite). Golwalkar, the revered ideologue of HNOs, wanted

minorities should dream of nothing but the glory of *Hindu rashtra* and Hindu traditions and symbols. Even in the Manifesto of the BJP for the 2014 elections, it calls for return to “civilizational consciousness” that was lost during the colonial rule. The democratic notion of liberty, equality, human dignity and citizenship sound western ideas, alien to Hindu culture.

Usage of the term Hinduism in the sense of religion was popularized during the colonial rule. Hindu community signified people living on the southern and eastern banks of river Sindhu and was inclusive of followers of diverse religious practices. Religious consciousness at popular level evolved from the resistance to the dominant upper castes, particularly the Brahmins, and their monopoly over notions of purity and pollution and structuring society into rigid hierarchies. The popular resistance was led by many bhakti saints, including Tulsidas, Kabir, Ravidas, Mirabai, Gyaneshwar, Namdeo, Tukaram, Chokha Mela, the Warkari Sampradaya, Bahinabai, Guru Nanak, Basveshwara, Narayan Guru, the Bauls in the Bengal, Shankar Deva in Assam and so on.

The popular religious consciousness of the subalterns developed due to popular compositions of the bhakti saints who opposed the notions of purity and pollution and believed in equality of all before one God. God was not a power who punished the deviants with lower status during cycles of re-births or to be feared. God was benign compassionate power to whom one should devote to and derive ecstasy from devotion. Devotion to God meant loving all God’s creation – all humans

practicing diverse traditions of worship, from any ethnic community, belonging to any culture. Loving and being non-violent towards even animals and nature. Muslim bhakti poet Salbeg is credited with numerous compositions in praise of Lord Jagannath and as tradition has it, Lord Jagannath’s rath could not be moved on its annual *yatra* till Salbeg could join the *yatra*. Raskhan similarly composed on Lord Krishna. Sufi Islam was as inclusive and contributed to the religious consciousness of Muslims as well as Hindu devotees who were attracted to their shrines. Sufi Islam like the bhakti saints emphasizes on love of compassionate and merciful God believing in inclusive traditions of worship. Sufis like Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan believed that Vedas too were revealed book of Allah and Nizamuddin Auliya would have recitation of *bhajans* in praise of Ram and Krishna every morning.

The priestly class of Brahmins and Ulemas aligned with the state seeking state patronage, blessed coronation ceremonies of the rulers advised them on “right path” of *shari’at* (Muslim Law) and rules of worship, purity and pollution. The popular religious consciousness of the subalterns on the other hand was inclusive, for them all paths reached God and respected all religions as true. Religion was more of a path that taught them to be humble, human, and to live harmoniously in society with others and with nature. The priestly class catered to the elite and were supremacist in their notions of religion. Subalterns constituted roughly about 90 per cent of the people. Therefore, the dominant ethos in India were not defining religious boundaries, recruiting followers exclusively and

then governing on the basis of religion of majority or minority. Subalterns had ambivalent attitude towards religion. To be Hindu did not exclude them from being a Muslim or a Christian. Drawing from this ambivalent attitude, the formulation of *sarva dharma samabhava* aptly described the nature of secularism desirable to Indian people. Indian experience of secularism did not come from struggle between the church and the state where one or the other had to be a victor and other vanquished.

The HNOs mislead the people of India when they claim that secularism is a Nehruvian concept borrowed from the west and in the same breath claim Hinduism to be a tolerant religion. The religion of subaltern Hindus is more than tolerant – it respects all faiths and for them truth is multi-dimensional. However, HNOs stoke intolerance. Diverse as it is, the HNOs realize that Hindus can be united only if they can be made disapprove of something in other religious communities and therefore are involved in the project of stigmatizing the minorities.

Opportunistic secularism vies for Muslim votes and in the process gives in to the demands of fundamentalists and communalists within the minority community. That strengthens and empowers the tiny but well organized fundamentalists and enables them to impose their hegemony over the community and redefine the community on their terms. The fundamentalist sections appear to be much larger than their actual strength and often the only voice within the minority community. It enables them to victimize weaker and marginalized sections, particularly women within

the community, and weed out dissenting/alternative opinions. Strengthening of hegemony of the fundamentalists within the minority community strengthens HNOs. The neutral political and cultural space is greatly reduced.

The HNOs also reduce the liberal space within the society; pose a threat to the religio-cultural diversity and pluralism and polarize attitudes and behaviour of people on issues of identities, forcing people to behave in conformity with their identity. Without constructing a totalitarian state, the HNOs cannot eliminate the liberal space where citizens are not reduced to their religio-cultural identities but are dynamic beings, agents of change, re-ordering their cultural spaces and their lives. The HNOs desire to construct cultural-totalitarian state to defend non-negotiable symbols of patriarchal upper-caste hierarchical social order.

We must then reject opportunistic secularism as well as "India First" as not being secularism in any sense. Secularism is the outcome of a process of secularisation wherein institutions are liberated from the hold of the church and institutionalized clergy. For example, knowledge and education was liberated from the Brahmins, Madrasas and Church. For secularism, we have to have a secular state and a secular society. A secular state is one which is not based on religious scriptures, theological dogmas or doctrines nor sponsored by church or any religious institution. Though the state does not profess any religion, it gives freedom to its citizen to profess practice and propagate any religion of their choice or even atheism. HNOs want the state

to privilege Hindu religion and religious symbols.

A secular state is not concerned with the religion which its citizens profess and practice. In framing public policies and laws, in executive actions, public employment, education, and in dispensing justice, religion of the citizen is irrelevant. Public policies are based only on welfare of the citizens. Secular state treats all its citizens even handedly irrespective of the religion they profess. The HNOs and the fundamentalist/communalists within minorities on the other hand seek to negotiate with the state space for their community. The fundamentalists derive their power from state recognizing them as representatives of their respective communities which they are not. A secular state is not even supposed to recognize any community. Any such recognition triggers off competitive communalism/fundamentalism and competition for more communal rights and greater share in power and state resources. Citizens are then pushed into tighter hold of the community as their rights and entitlements are essentially based on membership of community. Communal membership is more or less birth based. The state is reduced to protecting and promoting the hegemony of the fundamentalist/communal elite.

A secular state should rather protect the rights and liberties of the dissenters, however weak or minority within the group they may be. However, a secular state may frame policies for a group to address any adversity arising merely from group membership. Right to dissent, disagreement and dialogue is *sine qua non* of progress in knowledge and our understanding of truth.

Similarly, dialogue of cultures, faith and religion is essential for cultural advancement.

Secular state does not emerge from the vacuum. Though Indian Constitution is secular, state in India strengthens cultural entrepreneurs. As the majority in the scenario are more influential and powerful, they corner larger share in social space and national resources. For example, Supreme Court Judgment stating *Hindutva* is way of life, or anti-cow slaughter and anti-conversion legislations euphemistically named as Freedom of Religion Acts or non-protection of minorities by security forces during riots and targeting minorities in police encounters.

State action should not be based on group identity. The cultural entrepreneurs of the minority community demand more protected and secure space for themselves and tighter hold over the community resistance to any change in their Personal Laws, tighter control over women from the community.

Nothing is so sacred that it should be put beyond the rational scrutiny. But that does not mean disrespecting the sentiments of the believers. One has to be not only rational, but also reasonable person when we share political space with members belonging to different communities. Religion is often conceived as a threat to secularisation. It is not religion but cultural entrepreneurs misusing religion and religious institutions that oppose secularisation and liberties. Religion and egalitarian values associated with religion can be a resource in secularisation of the society as the *bhakti* and *sufi* understanding of religion are.

It's time to promote illiteracy

K. S. Chalam

Yes, you are reading it right that we predict the introduction of laws that might prohibit literate learning in India so that access to knowledge can be regulated. This is the message we get from the recent books banning spree score. Democratisation of education has made India to enter the modern era shedding its past vulgar record. In this context, the editorial of a leading English daily has sarcastically argued for a ban on reading and writing so that books might join the ranks of endangered species. This is written with reference to a demand for banning of noted historian Sekhar Bandopadhyay's decade old book 'From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India' by a right wing academic. Interestingly, the so-called right wing Shiksha Andolan not only subsisted, but even thrived on the alleged grants from the UPA schemes. But, the policy makers of the previous regime started now declaring lip sympathy, rather with bleak voice, for the victims of knowledge policing. It seems the newspaper is right in saying that it is better to remain in ignorance rather than know something that opens vistas to modern living as part of a process of human civilization. Some of the ideas and actions of the right wing radicals are so depraved that it almost deprives Indians as a nation of being a part of the comity of nations of rational beings. We can see the double standards of these gentlemen who are always on the mercy of the West in getting recognition, education, service, FDIs, etc. for the survival of their kith and kin and encourage the

Western economic order in India. They talk less about corruption, frauds, economic and religious, technology and oppose all that is part of natural process of human progress.

The punchisset not only for Sekhar Bandopadhyay's books, but whatever they consider as blasphemous including the well-researched studies that may challenge some of their outmoded beliefs and old-fashioned values, are branded as anti-Hindu, a concept invented for their convenience. In fact, Bandopadhyaya is one of our topmost historians teaching in New Zealand and is considered as an authority on Modern Bengal. All his publications by prestigious publishing houses are used as text books or reference material in the university system. We know that Bandopadhyay being the Director of Indian studies in New Zealand is helping to establish academic links with India through adequate grants. The academics particularly social scientists have become fragile beings due to the hegemony of neo-liberal agenda of teaching in universities where subjects like history, sociology, anthropology, etc. are given a tepid treatment. It is alleged that the West, particularly the USA, had a limited course of history with no ancient past, they being constituted by settlers. They adopt their native history and stare at others who have a rich and glorious past with derision. Some of them discourage studies in ancient past of countries that provide them an identity. The mind-set is that of

colonial and feudal in nature. Fascinatingly, the so-called knowledge police of India who boast of their nationalistic passion brazenly adopt the outlook of the West in matters of history and philosophy.

There seems to be a misreading about the attitude and militancy of some of the right wing activists. They have become virile after the partition. They had carved the idea of Hindu Rashtra when Pakistan and Afghanistan and South Asia were part of British India. Even their ideas were fabricated by the colonists. This has facilitated their justification of their argument that the aliens (Aryans) were Indians and the protagonists are the kinship relatives or what is called the 'long lost brethren'. In other words, they had placed their claim on the legacy of Vedic ethos (in fact it belongs to humanity) and not for those who would reside east of Sindhu and mount Meru. Therefore, the false propaganda based on the myth is shattered once the borders are created. It is quite natural for them to change their attitude like the parted brethren hatching jealousy and hatred to show that they are independent and rightful inheritors of the legacy. You do not find this outlook in the south as they are considered different. The problem persists due to the fact that majority of the Indians do not care for this and love to live in peace under diversity. It is only the fringe groups with the above mind-set conditioned by dishonest schooling with treason and hegemony at heart that create

problems for the majority. It is time that they should be brought under the mainstream society with adequate education and real nationalistic commitment.

The modernists in India do not have an agenda of reform or restructuring of the society including its culture. They simply make some noise when incidents of such blatant retrograde steps or actions are taken up by the select bigots take place. They seem to have no agency to counter the attempts to hoodwink the genuine scholarship, publishing houses etc to encourage rational and scientific literature. The general publishing firms, who have developed some benchmarks of their own, are vulnerable to simple threats and are withdrawing the questioned publications. The secularists and so-called leftists who claim to be non-partisan have failed to develop an alternative secular ethos and allowed religious fundamentalists to flourish with the aid of modern technology. We have seen debates by some Marxists defending religion on dubious grounds as they have failed to practice what they preach. This is contrary to the theories that religion will disappear with the advent of capitalism and modernization. But, both religion and capitalism are not only surviving but even collaborating with each other for their conquest over nations.

The creamy layer of all political parties in India shares a common bondage and tradition in collaborating with each other in times of crisis. They appear to be fighting for the public eye, but in practice do not move into contested issues that govern our modern living. None of them has realised the fact that Hinduism is a term invented in the 19th century (Coomaraswamy) for convenience is different from sanatana dhrama. Hinduism, more than any other religion stands for diversity incorporating in it other belief systems such as Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism as per the

Reinforcing the welfare agenda

Harsh Mander

There are many who interpret the emphatic rejection of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the significant endorsement of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the elections of 2014 as a mandate to end the architecture of rights-based legislation for social and economic welfare constructed during the 10-year UPA regime. Commentators opposed to the regime of social protection see in the electoral outcomes its decisive defeat and celebrate what they describe as the “end of doles”.

I do not agree. The voters who have given the Indian National Congress its worst drubbing in elections since it was instituted 129 years ago did not reject its welfare agenda, but its performance. In fact, in states in which rights-based welfare programmes have been implemented creditably—such as Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Odisha, and indeed the BJP-ruled states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh—voters have enthusiastically endorsed the incumbent state governments.

Voters were weary and angry with the UPA government because in its second term, the government failed to implement its own programmes with conviction. A diluted National Food Security Bill was passed barely eight months before the end of the government’s term, which indicated no seriousness in actually implementing its provisions. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 laid minimum standards for all

schools including government schools; but this nationwide quantum upgrading of public elementary education becoming a reality entailed a substantial increase in public spending on school education, which was promised but never delivered. Therefore the Act remained unfulfilled aspirations on paper, and even poor parents switched to low-cost private schools in droves because at least these schools opened every morning with a full contingent of teachers who took classes.

Legitimate claims to land ownership under the Forest Rights Act of millions of tribal people were crushed by a hostile administration. Under the flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which is believed to have contributed to the unexpectedly good showing of the UPA in 2009, wages were pegged below minimum wages and routinely paid months late, which led to a sharp decline in person-days in many states. The loan-waiver for farmers in the first innings of the government was never followed up by increased public spending in the countryside in rural infrastructure and rural credit, therefore agriculture sank deeper in its sickness and farmers continued to kill themselves in despair. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana which for the first time recognized the rights of slum dwellers to be settled in their present locations with in situ upgrading of public services rather than demolition was never implemented; demolitions remained the norm, and

slums remained starved of clean water and sanitation.

The government announced direct benefit transfers of wages, pensions and school scholarships to people's bank accounts, but it never first installed a countrywide architecture of universal financial inclusion which was necessary before it could be implemented. Like many of the government's promises to India's mass of poor people, this one too was frustratingly forgotten along the way.

It was a strangely divided schizophrenic government, with one part of its leadership championing a comprehensive regime of social protection and another consistently inimical to it. The result was a government at war with itself, one which diluted and often actively subverted its own declared key policies. The end result after five years was that the government had no credible story to tell about either its priorities or its performance to its voters. It neither promoted welfare nor markets with conviction. Heaped on this was the ignominy of gigantic corruption scandals, a public sense of policy paralysis and a fatal malfunction of communication, which was interpreted not as diffidence and modesty but as an amalgam of insensitivity and arrogance. None of this adds up to a decisive rejection—or endorsement—of a regime of welfare and rights, based on state provisioning of public goods such as education, healthcare, social security, food and nutrition, and possibly even shelter.

But I am convinced that public expenditure in public education, public health, social security, decent housing and nutrition are not doles

but investments in human beings, both as a worthy end in itself and also to derive the best economic outcomes from India's burgeoning young population. Also that even small amounts of more money in millions of more people's hands can spur growth from below, by creating new and larger markets. However, measures such as wage-guarantees and food transfers are not envisaged as solutions to poverty, unemployment and hunger. These must be seen as measures of social protection. Of course I do not laud a future in which poor people will depend on government for unskilled labour employment in perpetuity. Until the economy is able to generate enough labour-intensive jobs in the manufacturing

and services sectors, promoting and protecting small-farmers, dependent on rain-fed agriculture, through public wage-guarantee will allow a form of dignified survival.

It is also not my suggestion that the answer to mass hunger is that the state feeds people in perpetuity. Far from it, we need a range of measures to tackle the causes of poverty, and these include stimulating inclusive economic growth, but many other steps as well. But while all of this unfolds, it is economically (and morally) unacceptable for people to have to live with hunger and its consequences, therefore the state must provision food as long—and only as long—as it remains necessary.

What a coincidence that two democratic actions of disciples of Dr Rammanohar Lohia debarred Indira Nehru Gandhi from her membership from Lok Sabha.

While Rajnarain first contested against her in 1971 mid-term general elections from Rae Bareilly. He was defeated, but he filed a petition against Smt. in Allahabad High Court where she was found guilty of electoral malpractices and her election was set aside on 12th June 1975 and as a consequence she was barred from holding electoral office for six years and she imposed Emergency on 25th June 1975. Later on Rajnarain defeated her during 1977 general elections from the

same Rae Bareilly.

Indira Gandhi lost her Lok Sabha membership again in a privilege motion moved by another disciple of Dr Lohia, a veteran parliamentarian Madhu Limaye in the fifth Lok Sabha. After her defeat in 1977, Smt. Indira Nehru Gandhi got elected to sixth Lok Sabha in 1978 from a bye-election from Chikmanglur in Karnataka but the sixth Lok Sabha disqualified her when it was proved by Madhu Limaye through his privilege motion that she had to the Parliament on a question asked by him in the fifth Lok Sabha related to Smt. Gandhi's son Sanjay's Maruti Company!

—Qurban Ali

When the battle's lost and won

Jawed Naqvi

In the baking heat of Delhi, the squirrels are lying flat on their belly in flowerpots I had watered in the morning, cooling their bodies with the residual moisture that takes its time to evaporate.

There were no cooling flowerpots at the meeting I attended of grass-roots workers from across India. They ranged from earnest environment experts and opponents of big dams to anti-nuclear campaigners who fear a Fukushima-like disaster could not be ruled out in India, not least because foreign collaborators of nuclear plants they build will not accept responsibility if things go wrong. What are they afraid of?

The meeting included critics of India's recent economic policies that have widened the rich-poor divide and now, in a payback moment for businesses that supported Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election, threaten to evict millions from their ancestral mineral-rich forestlands, abodes of predominantly tribal people in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and the north-eastern states.

An eerie apprehension was palpable among the discussants of a state-directed assault, aborted by Manmohan Singh under public pressure. A military campaign was imminent, if the discussants had it right, to uproot the tribespeople's resistance, which according to the Indian state is led by the "most serious internal security challenge" - the Maoists. The state doesn't want to admit how exploiting mineral and

water-rich land was a ruthless way to reap private profits during the country's ongoing economic downturn. It only projects the Maoists as a nuisance.

We have seen this before. "It is the dream of every merchant to be able to sell without having to buy," wrote historian Irfan Habib about Clive's plunder of Bengal. A bloodless way to send the Maoists packing was to terminate what the local people have for decades called "the bania-contractor-politician nexus". The nexus, they say, has exploited tribal women, land, water, timber and minerals mercilessly. The state doesn't want to hear that.

The men and women I met were no Maoists, of course. On the contrary, the Maoists have targeted some of the environment activists gathered there. The motley group was, in fact, meeting to figure out the challenges its members faced from the nation's first unadulterated right-wing government.

The meeting consisted of eager, experienced, patriotic and extremely worried but equally hardy activists up for a fight. What struck me though from their discussion were familiar disputes over what needed to be done to get things back on track. It was tempting to share the assumption that there would be another chance to redeem their pledge as humanists.

Were some of the participants right in abandoning the Congress party as unworthy of their trust? The

question was a familiar point of discord. Or had the Congress abandoned its secular sheen, as some others argued, to become a B team of the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party?

The BJP had got an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha after a long, unrelenting journey since its inception as the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 1952.

Should the defeated left parties link up with the Aam Aadmi Party? There was a dispute among the discussants about the AAP. Was it a standard-bearer of secularism and economic populism, even if it was somewhat inexperienced to fill the vacuum created by the left's absence? Or should the vanquished comrades go back to the Congress, cap in hand, even if they felt betrayed by it at times, given the enviable physical reach of India's oldest political behemoth?

Some comrades suggested that the AAP was a Hindutva ploy to weaken the Congress. Others saw its involvement with electoral politics as counterproductive. They wanted AAP and themselves to go back to leading and organising people's campaigns.

Someone brought up the subject of doctored EVMs (electronic voting machines) to shore up a suspicion first articulated by the BJP about the veracity of the voting system that India has adopted for elections.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 69 No. 22

June 29, 2014

A helpless pursuit?

S. Viswam

Switching over to Hindi?

Kuldip Nayar

Cash casts its shadow over polls

Madabhushi Sridhar

**From Baghdad to Bolangir
Labour Laws in India**

Saba Sharma

**That darkness
still stalks our dreams**

M.G. Devasahayam

**We need freeways, but we also
need forests.**

Kalpana Sharma

**How GM crops harm farmers
scientific evidence grows**

Bharat Dogra

Life story of a crusader

Sonal Shah

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

There is something odd and pathetic in the latest Indian efforts to bring back money stashed away in foreign (mostly Swiss) banks by Indian citizens. Odd, because no new development warrants the hope that the latest efforts will succeed where the earlier ones failed. Pathetic, because no such effort can succeed till the Swiss dilute, relax or do away with secrecy provisions relating to the operations of their banks. There is no indication that they propose to do any such thing.

It is because of the strict Swiss secrecy laws that no effort to obtain information about deposits by foreigners in Swiss banks has succeeded so far. The only difference between the new attempts and the earlier ones is that the Supreme Court has now set up a special investigation team on black money to probe the phenomenon and come up with solutions. Whether the SIT will succeed is a matter of conjecture right now.

However, one encouraging factor in this regard is that the Swiss authorities seem more sympathetic to the requests by foreign countries to share vital information with them. They have

assured India that Switzerland will work with India in support of the campaign against tax evaders. Some rules are likely to be changed soon so that the Indian government's steps to curb tax crimes could receive vital inputs from the Swiss. This perhaps relates to specific demands on specific accounts by New Delhi.

There were some newspaper reports earlier that the Swiss government had decided to share information with India on Indians having unaccounted money in Swiss banks. These reports however were subsequently denied. The Swiss do not propose to share any information.

The chairman of the SIT Justice M. B. Shah has candidly acknowledged that the Swiss denial is a setback to the efforts at investigating the phenomenon. The helplessness inherent in the situation has not escaped his attention. He is aware that without Swiss co-operation no effort will succeed. "As of now," he said, "even if an official SIT team is sent to Switzerland, nothing can be done without Swiss cooperation."

According to newspaper reports, accessing information on tax crimes

from Switzerland may become easier with a proposed revision in their Tax Administrative Assistance Act to do away with a requirement to inform individuals prior to sharing their details with a foreign jurisdiction for alleged tax crimes. This again perhaps relates to individual cases.

There is however no doubt that India is now keen that the campaign for unearthing unaccounted money is taken a step forward. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has written to the Swiss authorities, the government has set up a SIT on the prodding of the Apex Court and the BJP election manifesto has accorded highest priority to bringing the black money hoarded abroad. The Reserve Bank has directed all banks to ensure that information sought by the SIT is promptly made available to it.

Although in terms of the total foreign deposits in Swiss banks, an estimated at 1.6 trillion US dollars, Indian deposits are only around two billion US dollars, an equivalent of Rs. 14000 crores. Not much in global scales but substantial enough for a country whose economy is yet to take off. If even half the amount stashed is brought back it will make a difference, even if peripheral, to India's fast-growing economy.

Time was when the extent of black money circulating domestically was so large that India was virtually in the grip of a parallel economy, with fears that the black money was even more voluminous than the white money. Things have improved now, thanks largely to the fact that India's developing economy has sought investments from a variety of investors, many of whom have undoubtedly converted black into white while "investing" in projects. However, even now, the volume of

(Continued on Page 8)

Between the lines

Switching over to Hindi?

Kuldip Nayar

I am convinced that the Narendra Modi government is guided, if not goaded, by the Hindi chauvinists. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has several liberal leaders who realize that the pace of switch over to Hindi would have to be slow, keeping in mind unity in diversity. Apparently, they do not have much say.

Within the very first fortnight of the Modi's regime, the central government offices have received a circular that Hindi should be used on social media. This is an entrance through the backdoor. Non-Hindi speaking states spotted the fugitive move and protested against it. New Delhi readily withdrew its step and declared that the circular was meant for the Hindi-speaking states.

This belated realization does not convince anyone. I think the government was testing the waters. When it found that what it considered an innocuous step has evoked strong opposition, it changed its stance. But the circular has done the damage. The fears of non-Hindi speaking people have got rekindled. And they are afraid of what may happen tomorrow.

India has gone through large linguistic riots in the late '50s and early '60s. At that time also the Home Ministry had issued instructions to different departments to make preparations for a switchover from English to Hindi as laid down in the Constitution. Riots took place in southern states and one man immolated himself in Tamil Nadu to

convey his refusal to accept Hindi. Even the old slogan of secession got renewed.

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was unhappy but did not want to interfere. However, when he saw the fire spreading, he gave an assurance on the floor of parliament that there would be no switchover until the non-Hindi speaking people themselves said that they were ready for Hindi to be an exclusive language of Union administration. This categorical statement disappointed Hindi fanatics but the nation on the whole heaved a sigh of relief that India had retrieved from the brink.

No doubt, Modi feels at home with Hindi and his sweep in the Lok Sabha elections is primarily because of the campaign he led in Hindi, somewhat Sanskritised for northern Indians. But he should remember Nehru's promise made in 1963 that both Hindi and English would continue to be the link languages for administration throughout the country. He did not fix any deadline for the exclusive use of Hindi.

I wish this bilingualism should have continued without anyone tinkering with it. But then the Modi's men were in a hurry. They wanted to restrict the use of English to certain fields. Yet they realize that their haste can tell upon the country's unity. Non-Hindi speaking states, particularly Tamil Nadu, have accepted the constitutional provision that Hindi is the Indian Union's language. But

they want time to learn it and come up to the standards of people living in the Hindi belt like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan.

Already some candidates from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, whose mother tongue is not Hindi, have excelled in competitive examinations. India of today is very different from what it was 50 years ago, each linguistic group asserting for its identity. The turmoil during the States' Reorganization process should be a warning. The idea of India can be jeopardized. The entire fabric can get torn if the sensitivities of the people are not allayed. What is the hurry? A few more decades' wait is too small a price to pay for preserving the nation's cohesion.

I recall how the Hindi fanatics offered quotas in jobs in cases where the use of English was stopped. This approach by ex-speaker Purshotam Das Tandon from Uttar Pradesh was ridiculed by a parliament member in Kerala. He warned him not to open the floodgates of quota lest there should be a demand for such an arrangement in every field. All other members from non-Hindi speaking areas also supported him. Finally, the proposal was dropped.

There are 22 languages recognized in the Constitution, each with its own script. True, Hindi is a link language along with English, but all the 22 languages are national. This was conceded by the parliamentary committee on language commission, although the committee gave Hindi the status of principal language and additional language status to English.

The purpose of my narration is that the status quo should continue

(Continued on Page 9)

Cash casts its shadow over polls

Madabhushi Sridhar

It is strange that corruption was not at all an issue in the current elections; may be because it is difficult to say who is not corrupt, including the 'voters'!

But every political party leader talked about corruption of the other party. Recent scams were highlights of all the public speeches. Besides some filthy abuses, rest of the talk was about 'the nation being looted by ...' Almost each political leader accused the other for 'selling' tickets i.e., 'B' Forms to the candidates. It was also whispered and strongly alleged in internal discussions that those who could influence 'high command' were on high demand and made lots of money in enabling alliances between two political parties and disabling them in some. From the synchronization of political wave length, Congress and TRS who were for creating Telangana should have aligned in Telangana and BJP could not have shook hands with TDP as they stood on extreme ends so far as division of Andhra Pradesh was concerned. Why it happened? What influenced? New political parties appeared on the eve of polls and stormed with abuses, why? For a matinee idol it was more a call sheet than a campaign trail.

Hundreds of crores of Rupees in cash was caught while being transported. None knows how much was transferred by hawala and other invisible means. The VVIP campaigners were busy with election tours, though most of them did not address public meeting! What were they doing? Why did they come? Whether they used their VVIP immunity cover to hide anything?

Thus from Dillee to Galle, the money monitored and the currency shocked like current of electricity. The sacred Dhanalakshmi was stuffed in bayonets, by the side of burning engine, under carpets, etc. One did not mind if some of stashed cash destroyed in fire or lifted by onlookers when left out by those who fled the scene for fear of prosecution and publicity.

The bribery percolated through top leaders, to distributors, to workers and ultimately to voters. The families and groups demanded a particular rate for voting favourably. While some stinking rich candidates were enthusiastic to distribute the cash, others who were in the middle range found it difficult to cope up with voters' demands for specific price and ran for debts. Most strikingly the educated have put their votes to auction and bargained to get better price. They shocked some MPs who really worked for people's development, helped certain sections and stood by a cause, when those who received such helps turned around to demand money. An educated voter bargained with an MP candidate in Telangana; "We are four in our family, we are interested in your party and you in particular. So we came to you. You know the prevailing rate. Rs 1000 per vote, we will adjust, though other party is ready to pay more, we do not give to them..." The price varies with the fierceness of competition, the rate offered by other candidate and the richness of the candidate.

Most revealing factor is: Education did not add any value to the voter, but increased the price like dowry rate

of post-graduate groom. Most of the educated voters preferred selling off their votes. It is proved with postal ballots. Those posted to perform election duties had applied for postal ballots and got them. Their concern for democracy is great. But the truth is different. Those teachers gazetted officers and engineers, etc have put those ballots before the 'candidates' for sale and secured highest price possible. There were officers who walked away with 40 to 60 thousand Rupees for their ten votes (both for MP and MLA). Candidate too has a justification. He says: we are sure that these votes will poll for us because they handed over the ballots to them. We only mark them and post. Secrecy of vote has gone with winds. Such 'facility' is not available for other ballots. The candidates are at risk as the educated or uneducated voter could change his mind at any moment. An MP candidate agent said "but you know, rural voter is more credible." It is open secret that secrecy of voting is no more a secret.

After the postal voters, it was group voters who demanded substantial money to vote en masse. It was pathetic that contestants could not dare to come back home even at late night for fear of women groups and self help groups demanding huge amounts of money for their bulk votes. However they could not escape. "If you also demand like this where we go, sister..." pleaded a candidate. Answer was immediate: 'Anna should women not ask money, because they are female? We surely vote you unlike male members who get influenced by liquor or false promises.' The candidate has to keep quiet and pay.

A journalist quoted the following conversation between a candidate and an educated voter:

Candidate (MP): I wrote several letters, forwarded your representations, met the minister and pleaded to sanction road, school etc. for your village, and still you want me to pay money?

Voter (MA): Sir, did we ask you to do all that? Why did you do? If at all, it was for your name and fame. Now again for five years you will be in the fame. ... You know how the system runs...

The MP candidate was upset, did not want to purchase the votes from thankless voters. But elders around him and their 'better sense' prevailed ultimately.

Voter too had a strong argument: when you are remunerated why not I? When there is no honest candidate in the field, why should you expect voter to be pure?

A senior leader of a prominent political party told me: "please do not think otherwise, let me tell you that these so-called educated voters are highly corrupt, more than anybody...the illiterate were honest and decisive".

Yet another open secret is: the people will not attend any public meeting unless their TA and DA is arranged. Rs one crore is minimum the party has to shell down for organizing a fairly 'big' meeting so that media coverage conveys a message that they still remain a force. The cars or taxis have to be sent based on the rate per seat, like Rs five to ten thousand per vehicle, which include money for food, travel and also liquor if demand is high. Days of truck carrying people have gone. We generally find the same audience in different meeting. (What's wrong?) Whether empowered or not, the voter is certainly enriched in most of the

villages. Education begets more enrichment, alas!

There are MPs who pledged everything and ran into debts worth crores to meet their rivals in battle for ballot. Rich candidates with undisclosed money were more comfortable. They were neither tense nor worried to get the rates reduced.

Less said is better about media (most of them, if not all) and its rate for paid news and paid bulletins on TV screen. Broadsheet is full of ads in camouflage of news or constituency analysis. The package deals have assumed the shape of compulsions rather than consensual contracts. At times there was no bargain at all. 'They fixed the rates and hence no bargain please...' was the curt reply to politicians from journalists. Scene has been reversed for a while as MPs were trying to lobby to influence managing editors for rebates in package deals. Rich MP candidates was taxed with Rs 25 lakhs minimum while journalists were sympathetic with some who were given a special price of 20 or 15 lakh rupees. The reciprocal benefit is regular favourable appraisal of poll situation or at least no adverse publicity. Though not a blackmail, it was a thorough exploitation of fear of losing that enriched the media organizations, whether organized or individually operated. Somewhere in AP journalists got brand new Maruthi Swift cars for their objective performance of duties.

The question is who is corrupt, or who is not? Whether Representation of People's Act, the Constitution of India, moral (model) code of conduct, the Election Commission of India or any other force under sky can prevent influence of money over the minds of people?

From Baghdad to Bolangir Labour Laws in India

Saba Sharma

From the crisis in Iraq, a story is emerging of 40 construction workers in Mosul who have gone missing, some reports claim because they were trying to escape from the city and were captured by militants in the process. Many of these workers, feared kidnapped by ISIS, refused both their employers' and the Indian government's help to evacuate, as many have not been paid up to five months' wages. Another report reveals that a group of 46 nurses from Kerala, working in a hospital in Tikrit, have refused to leave despite an offer from Delhi to help them evacuate. They need the money, as do their families back at home, so they would rather move to a safe zone in Iraq than return. Two nurses in the same hospital, who are on holiday in India, told the BBC that they would return despite the travel advisory issued by India advising citizens not to travel to Iraq. For them, failing to return means defaulting on loans taken to pay recruitment agents.

A few days before, on June 16, the NDA government announced that it was looking at liberalizing labour laws, primarily to make easier the retrenchment of workers. The UPA, and former PM Manmohan Singh in particular, also had labour law reform as an agenda, propelled by constant laments from industry saying 'obsolete' labour laws hindering growth and holding back the economy. The Vansundhara Raje government is already amending some state-level acts in Rajasthan to 'liberate the corporate sector from the shackles of stringent

requirements of the laws', as one report put it.

As the story slowly shifts from the workers to the impact of the crisis on our supply of oil from Iraq, it is an important moment to examine why so many Indians go to the middle east for work, and why they continue to stay despite the widely reported abuse and exploitation of many unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the region, including non-payment of wages. This is not the story of well-travelled businessmen and corporate employees who have the opportunity to live and work in countries like Dubai and Kuwait in conditions of their choosing, it is the less acknowledged and far more prevalent tale of domestic workers who have their passports taken away, and construction workers who would rather risk their lives than come home without nearly half a year's worth of wages.

In the India Exclusion Report, an examination of labour rights in India (written, among others, by Coen Kompier of the ILO), paints a very different situation of the regulation of working conditions in India than what is imagined and portrayed by industry and governments. To begin with, labour laws, however 'obsolete', primarily apply to those in the formal sector, and a vast majority of workers, 86 per cent (or 400 million workers), are in the informal sector, and have little protection under existing labour laws. Most of these workers, if not self-employed, work as casual labourers or on a contractual basis,

often going through middlemen who negotiate the terms of their engagement. Even in the formal sector, however, there are new employment practices that reduce the security of a formal job. Over half (51 per cent) of workers in the formal sector do not have tenured employment but are employed on a contractual basis, implying a high degree of 'informality' in their employment. Among those employed on a contractual basis, employers often artificially diminish working hours, or move workers from one location to another so that they fall outside the scope of legislation.

Among the Rajasthan government's amendments to labour laws is the provision that increases the percentage of workers needed for the formation of a union from 15 per cent to 30 per cent. Trade unions in Rajasthan have protested this move, alleging that these moves have been undertaken without their consent. At present, only one in every five workers in India have trade union membership, reasons for which are the high rate of migration, as well as the preference of employers for outstation workers, which dampens chances of collectivization. Labour authorities often refuse to register unions, without which they have no bargaining power with employers, who are not bound by the law to recognize such unions, even though it is not a prerequisite for their establishment. Because of definitional issues, informally employed domestic workers or

(Continued on Page 12)

home-based workers, among others, do not have the legal status of 'employee' to form recognized unions.

Despite the constant bad press that 'stringent' labour laws have received, facts reveal that not only are they implemented poorly, but that even where law and judiciary do act, it is in favour of employers, not workers. Conviction rate for violation of labour laws is under 2 per cent, as employers lobby against compliance with law terming it 'inspector raj'. Since 2001, a series of court judgments, beginning with SAIL (Steel Authority of India Ltd and Ors. v. National Union Waterfront Workers and Ors.), did away with many entitlements of contract workers, allowing employers to have more 'flexible' workforces. Further court judgments ruled that workers employed for long periods did not have to be made permanent, employers were not obliged to keep employment records, the right to strike was restricted, and workers terminated illegally were not entitled to reinstatement. In essence, employers are freed from most responsibilities towards employees within the framework of the law. Since the emergence, in particular, of middlemen to handle contract labour, not only are many administrative costs driven down, but employers also do not have a direct relationship with employees, effectively creating uncertainty about who is ultimately responsible for workers' rights.

It is not hard to imagine why working in Iraq is as good as or preferable to trying one's luck in the labour law lottery of India. Even where provisions for workers exist

That darkness still stalks our dreams

M.G. Devasahayam

On the midnight of June 25, 1975, prime minister Indira Gandhi nearly destroyed India's democratic framework with a piece of paper that proclaimed a state of emergency. It was carried by her private secretary to the President, who meekly signed it. The misgovernance that followed extinguished freedom, suspended fundamental rights, fettered the press, suppressed dissent. More than one lakh citizens were illegally detained. Draconian laws followed. Democratic governance collapsed.

At that time, I was the district magistrate of Chandigarh, a Union Territory governed by the Centre. The home ministry and the PMO were directly monitoring my "eminent prisoner", Jayaprakash Narayan, India's tallest leader after Mohandas Gandhi, and then Enemy No. 1 of the state. He'd been arrested by the district magistrate of Delhi and sent to me for safe custody. So I had a ringside view of the Emergency, right from the corridors of power in Delhi to the streets of Chandigarh. Everyone could see the Emergency drama around them, but I—a member of the elite IAS, but primarily a freedom-loving citizen—had the opportunity to witness, feel and be a part of the intense struggle of JP, the "revolutionary in chains".

In my own humble way, I initiated certain moves for reconciliation between JP and Indira Gandhi so that the Emergency would be lifted and democracy restored at the earliest. I'd even roped in Sheikh Abdullah for the purpose through the good offices of Punjab chief minister Giani Zail

Singh. These efforts were repeatedly sabotaged by an extra-constitutional authority at Delhi's pinnacle of power. Mysteriously, starting early November, the health of JP, who was lodged at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh, began to deteriorate sharply. I had every reason to suspect that a conspiracy was on to incapacitate JP by damaging his kidneys and put him out of harm's way if not eliminate him. Probably, Delhi durbar felt that JP was the only person of moral stature who could challenge the dynasty. Later events proved me right.

By divine grace, I could defeat the conspiracy by playing hardball with the Centre with a pointed poser: "What if JP dies in detention?" That sent shivers in the PMO, for just a few weeks earlier, sleuths had rehearsed a "death-in-detention" drill. Within a week, JP was released on unconditional parole. In defiance of Delhi durbar, I commandeered seats on a flight and sent JP to Jaslok Hospital in Bombay with his brother Rajeshwar Prasad and friend Minoo Masani. We were just in time for his kidneys to be saved. JP lived for four more years, albeit on dialysis twice a week. For this audacity, I did incur the wrath of the 'dynasty' scion and his minions. But I had the honour of JP calling me "the son I never had" and Dr Manmohan Singh complimenting me, saying, "Deva, you did not merely save JP, you saved Indian democracy."

In the 1977 election, JP led the Janata combine and threw the

(Continued on Page 12)

Congress out of power. Needless to say, the conspiracy to damage JP's kidneys was never fully investigated and the Alva commission set up by Janata government was wound up under intense pressure from vested interests still owing allegiance to the Congress dynasty.

Be that as it may, a 'secret' IB report leaked on June 11 lists me among 'eminent persons' who are part of an anti-national, foreign-funded "Superior Network of pan-India NGOs", including Greenpeace and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCI). These NGOs are allegedly "taking down development", impacting GDP by three per cent and endangering "national economic security" by articulating people-centric issues. Is that not the sort of language used during the Emergency? The PUCI, founded by that great patriot JP, responded that the report was an attempt to intimidate and kill dissent from those who raise an often lonely voice against life-and-livelihood-destroying development programmes.

Indeed, I have been speaking up against big-ticket, forest-destroying, coast-ravaging and livelihood-killing projects such as Vedanta and Posco. Also against resource-guzzling, secretive and extremely expensive nuclear projects such as the 2,000 MW Koodankulam plant (to be expanded to 6,000 MW) and the 2,800 MW Gorakhpur plant (in Haryana).

I oppose the Koodankulam project because it has devastated the southeastern seabed and would rob lakhs of fisherfolk of a livelihood. It could also hang like a sword of Damocles over millions of project-affected people because of unsafe equipment. As recently as May 14,

six personnel were seriously injured at the Koodankulam plant because of malfunctioning valves. I oppose the Gorakhpur project because the 320 cusecs of Bhakra canal water allotted to this plant would deprive 1.4 lakh acres of farmland of water. The region is semi-arid and the cotton, wheat, pulses and oilseeds grown here depend on irrigation from the canal. Farming supports the lives of about a million directly engaged in it here. Villages here are also the habitat of blackbuck (a "near-threatened" species) and the project will cause the animals immense harm. Another reason I oppose nuclear reactors is because post-Fukushima, they raise great worries about being a threat to life itself. Nuclear energy, which generates just one per cent of the country's needs, is not the answer to India's electricity problems. It is also very expensive, if all costs—capital, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and safe storage of spent-fuel—are honestly factored in.

This 'development' model is anti-poor. Opposing them, in fact, is in consonance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governance agenda, unveiled in the President's address to Parliament on June 9. It swears by '*sabka saath, sabka vikas*' or inclusive development and goes on to say: "...my government commits itself to the goal of poverty elimination. With a firm belief that the first claim on development belongs to the poor, the government will focus its attention on those who need the basic necessities of life most urgently. It will take necessary steps to provide security in its entirety to all citizens, through empathy, support and empowerment." It is precisely these people-centric issues that the 'listed' individuals and

NGOs are advancing. Intriguingly, the IB report was leaked the very day after this speech. Is it to scuttle Modi's pro-poor agenda? The jury is out!

Back to the Emergency. Even after four decades, this dark era continues to haunt the nation. Writing in Outlook in June 2010, Arundhati Roy wrote: "June 26 is the 35th anniversary of the Emergency. Perhaps the Indian people should declare that this country is still in a state of Emergency." When the UPA government threatened Maoist sympathisers with imprisonment under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, rights activists retorted: "We consider this as an attack on civil society reminiscent of the Emergency era." Anchoring CNN-IBN's Face the Nation debate on the censorship of Prakash Jha's movie Raajneeti, Sagarika Ghosh's poser was, "Are we under Emergency?" What now, with some top guns pushing for a harsher POTA and the decimation of 'Maoists' by deploying the military?

Despite the fact that the Emergency is remembered and recalled whenever any blatantly unlawful act or excess is committed, people at large, particularly those of the younger generation, have no idea as to what it was all about. On the eve of the 36th anniversary of the Emergency, veteran journalist Kuldeep Nayar wrote: "The new generation must understand that today's non-governance or misgovernance is the fallout of what Indira Gandhi had done 36 years ago by destroying an established democratic order.... How do you make the new generation relate to the Emergency imposed some 36 years ago this week? I have been asked this question many a time...I do not have an answer."

Nayar's anguish is proof enough as to how this crucial part of India's freedom-killing post-Independence history has been pushed under the carpet!

At the peak of the Emergency, when Indira Gandhi proclaimed that "food is more important than freedom", JP had thundered: "Freedom became one of the beacon lights of my life and it has remained so ever since. Freedom...transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel—above all it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of my life and I shall not see it compromised for bread, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the state or for anything else."

According to some accounts, JP was Modi's guiding beacon during his long sociopolitical journey. Will Modi—who worshipped at the 'temple of democracy' before entering it—honour his icon's freedom agenda or let petty minds belittle it? This is the billion people question for Modi!

(Continued from Page 2)

black or Number Two money floating about is frightening. Unfortunately, the existence and circulation of number two money has become a fact of life in India and is taken for granted. The circulation of black money domestically and the volume of unaccounted stashes abroad together constitute a great danger to the Indian economy. The two have to be addressed simultaneously. The Modi government's next target should be the black money in motion at home and an assault on it brooks no delay.

Book Review

Life story of a crusader

It is a book that needed to be written. It is a book that needs to be read. Penned by Rohini Gawankar, Mrinal Gore's close friend and colleague of over six decades, it is an inspiring, virtually eye-witness account of one of India's tallest women leaders. Yet the book - published on the International Women's Day, 2014 - is much more than that - to an extent it is the quintessential life story of that band of Indian Socialists that participated in the freedom struggle and who were staunch practitioners of their "spade-prison-vote" philosophy to achieve "complete economic, social and political equality." I can think of Pramila and Madhu Dandavate, Champa and Madhu Limaye, Sudha and Sadanandu Varde, Pramila and Prabhubhai Sanghvi, Veena and Pannalal Surana, Ratan and Baban D'souza or Mangla and GG Parikh, and scores of other such socialist couples for whom sacrifice for their beliefs has been a way of life.

Written with great warmth and affection, Rohini Gawankar recounts the various stages in Mrinal's life, "without resorting to any kind of exaggeration, or making the subject larger than life..." as Bhai Vaidya, President of the Socialist Party (India) states in the Preface.

At the outset the author admits that the book was written in English at the behest of many, who felt that this would ensure a wider readership. It is immediately apparent that this is not a medium that she is very comfortable with. Yet, go beyond the lacunae of language and you find a very moving and enriching story of a determined, generous and warm-hearted woman who dedicated her

life to the empowerment of women and ameliorating the everyday hardships of the common man. Of an incorruptible politician's fight for equality and justice, who did not compromise the socialist values she believed in till her last. Of a socialist leader who rose from the ranks to become the first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra assembly and went on to become a Member of Parliament and had the courage of her convictions to turn down ministership at the Centre, not once but twice. Of a brave young woman widowed at 30, with a five-year-old daughter, who despite stringent financial circumstances and parental duties fulfilled the dream she and her husband Keshav had set out to achieve. Of a pair of young socialists belonging to different castes, (she, a woman from the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu caste and medical student; he, a Brahmin and full-time party worker) who got married despite parental disapproval - and how his conservative parents died without ever setting eyes on their "accomplished daughter-in-law".

Dr Gawankar divides the tome into chapters chronologically, dealing with various stages of Mrinal's life from her birth on June 24th, 1928 till her death on July 17th, 2012.

It was towards the end of her school days that Mrinal Gore came into contact with Rashtra Seva Dal - the cultural and social wing of the Socialist Party. Sane Guruji became her inspiration and Mrinal's intense involvement in the RSD activities brought her in close touch with dynamic leaders like S M

Joshi, Rammanohar Lohia, N G Goray, Madhu Limaye and Keshav Gore who mentored the young recruits in those idealistic pre-Independence days. This was the crucible of zealous commitment to principles, lofty intellectualism and fiery nationalism that forged the Mrinal Gore that we so admire.

The biography is aptly titled “Footprints of a Crusader”, as Bhai Vaidya describes Mrinal as a “socialist warrior” and goes on to state that the secret of her popularity was her “integrity, sincerity, simplicity, and genuine love for common people especially the down-trodden....fighting so bravely for simple needs like water, shelter, ration and price rise.”

Rohini Gawankar deals systematically with Mrinal’s work with women in the Goregaon neighbourhood, the vision she and Bandu, as her husband was affectionately called, shared, her slum rehabilitation efforts through Nagari Niwara Parishad, how she earned the famed moniker “*paaniwali bai*” and how she spearheaded the anti-price rise agitation in the early 1970s using the rolling pin as a dramatic symbol of women power. She also provides a graphic account of Mrinal’s torturous incarceration during the Emergency and her continued dedication to public good and social work even when virtually bedridden.

This book needs to be read for another reason also. It provides an important account of Indian politics of the last six decades, of the travails of the Socialists in their attempts to stamp their legacy on Indian public life and an insight into the dynamics of politics, especially in Maharashtra. Unfortunately, the importance and value of this

book are somewhat eroded due to the inadequate or incomplete introduction of several characters and this is evident throughout the volume. For instance, the Principal of Poddar High School is simply mentioned as “Bakshi sir” or the

**Footprints of A Crusader
(The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)**
Pps XVI+250

Author

Dr. Rohini Gawankar

Publisher

Sathi Kamlakar Subhedar,
Samata Shikshan Sanstha,
Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village,
Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W),
Mumbai 400072.
Mobile: 9820092255
Charity contribution: Rs.300

officer in the Mantralaya who was helpful to Mrinal while she was in the Assembly and was her old classmate as “Saletoor”. There are too many such instances to enumerate here. True, the author states in her introduction that the book is based on personal knowledge and interviews and is “not intended as a work of reference but my personal tribute”. However, it would surely have not been too difficult for younger associates of Mrinal to obtain complete names, designations or correct details. I sincerely hope this shortfall will be rectified by the publishers in the next edition. A bit more careful editing and proofreading will enhance the readability of this admirable biographical tribute.

—Sonal Shah

(Continued from Page 3)

until the nation can have a consensus on some other formula. This means that the push currently given to Hindi will have to take into consideration the feelings and aspirations of each area and assure that there is no alienation of any language of any linguistic community. Modi’s fiat to quicken the pace of switchover to Hindi have created the alarm.

Meanwhile, the chauvinist supporters of Hindi should patiently wait till people all over the country are proficient in Hindi. Already, it is a compulsory subject in all the states except Tamil Nadu. Job seekers from different states too have underlined the necessity of learning Hindi. Films have spread the language throughout the country and one can converse in the south in Hindi or Hindustani. A few more years will see the entire non-Hindi speaking population speaking the language fluently.

Language is a very potent force. Urdu in preference to Bengali gave birth to Bangladesh. The step-motherly treatment meted out to Baluchi is at the back of demand for an autonomous Baluchistan in neighbouring Pakistan.

In fact, the rulers’ worry should be how to save regional languages like Punjabi which is being gradually discarded at Punjabi homes. The new generation is indifferent to their mother tongue and for them English, which brightens their employment prospects, comes first because it helps them to secure bread and butter.

Heritage is linked with languages and therefore leaders all over the country will have to devise ways and means whereby regional languages get succor. Without a long-term plan to reinvigorate them, some regional languages would fall by the wayside as the days go by. How many regional languages will survive 50 years hence is anybody’s guess.

We need freeways, but we also need forests.

Kalpana Sharma

Crimes against women have been constantly in the news. But crimes against nature remain largely unreported.

Given the current climate, with the Intelligence Bureau claiming that non-governmental organisations like the crusading international environmental group Greenpeace, are detrimental to India's progress, and with the ubiquitous 'foreign hand' making a serendipitous comeback, such crimes are likely to become invisible, noticed only by those who have been damned as 'obstructionist' or worse still, 'anti-national'.

As I tend to identify with that tribe, let me address this column to the elements that ensure that our physical environment does not become an endless landscape of roads and buildings, leaving no space for the unregulated, the wild, the unexpected that only the natural environment, left inviolate, provides.

A big part of this unregulated environment is trees. Today, they are in danger. They will drown as more dams are built, or the height of existing dams is raised. They will be razed to make way for infrastructure — roads and highways, airports, electric power stations. They will be stifled and killed by the concrete pavements surrounding them in our expanding cities. They will be excavated from our forests to make way for open-pit mines producing the minerals considered essential for a 'modern' India.

The former environment minister Jairam Ramesh and the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi both

spoke of the need for toilets rather than temples. Will anyone now say that India needs more forests not freeways? That even if factories, roads and railways, airports and sea ports are essential, so is a tree cover that saves the soil, replenishes the water, provides sustenance to millions of forest dwellers, cleans the air and absorbs some of the filth and poisons being generated by our modern lifestyles, poisons that will accumulate in the atmosphere and ruin the health of future generations.

The new environment minister, Prakash Javadekar, whose ministry is also supposed to take care of forests and address climate change, is a man in a hurry. He wants to clear 'obstacles' to progress in the form of pending environmental clearances. To do that, he wants to change the old criteria that classified forested areas as 'violate' or 'inviolate'. The latter category was formulated to ensure that nothing - no project, no mine, no dam - could disturb certain forested areas.

The parameters set out to decide whether a forest area is 'violate' or 'inviolate' are the quality of the forest area, the produce it generates, its biodiversity, hydrological, social, aesthetic and economic value. All these are essential. So in what way can this list be 'rationalised' or altered by the new minister? Why should these parameters be changed? The only reason would be to find a way to grant clearances to projects that will go against these criteria.

Forests are also about people, not just trees. An estimated 350-400

million people in 173,000 villages live within forests, or depend on them. That is not a small number. So if forests are destroyed, to make way for a mine, a factory, a dam, a power plant, there are people whose lives are also destroyed. The previous government passed laws protecting their rights, giving them the power to decide whether a forest area can be diverted to other uses.

What will happen to these rights? In the name of 'progress' and fast-tracking environmental clearances, will laws like the Forest Rights Act be revised or negated? If and when this happens, will the voices of those who have fought for the rights of forest dwellers, and for the protection of our remaining forests, be heard?

These are questions that need to be asked now, not after policies are put in place that facilitate the destruction of the natural environment and that deprive nature-dependent communities of their rights. If environmentalists are apprehensive about the future, they are justified. So far, nothing has been said or done to assuage their fears.

Despite this, what they can and must do is document the importance of fighting to preserve the environment - in the way the TreesIndia Group is doing on the India Biodiversity Portal (<http://treesindia.indiabiodiversity.org/>). Spend a few minutes on this site. It will give you a sense of the wealth that we have in India and what could disappear without a trace if we don't speak up now on behalf of nature.

Anti-Emergency Day

Every year we observe 25th /26th June as Anti-Emergency Day to remember those dark days when internal emergency was imposed in the country on the mid-night of 25th/26th June 1975 which continued for 19 months. Fundamental rights were suspended, press was gagged, voice of dissent throttled and more than one lakh opposition leaders and critics were detained without trial. Dictatorship was in full swing. Supreme Court, the highest seat of justice, ruled that even if a policeman shot dead a citizen without any cause - or even with malafide intention,

the victim had no avenue of redress.

On this day we also take stock of the prevailing situation to see as to what extent human rights are secure and what should be done to check the growing authoritarian tendencies in the governmental set up. At present the attack on the rights of the minorities, dalits, tribals, human right activists and other people's rights organizations are on increase in spite of the change of the government at the Centre. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act i.e. UAPA was amended last

year to include threat to 'economic security' within the definition of the 'terrorist act' and thereafter the I.B. has dutifully brought out a report listing organizations which are posing threats to the 'economy' of India. Around 150 Maruti workers still languish in jail for the last two and half years which basically is a labour-management dispute in which around 2500 workers were rendered jobless and their families on starvation. News of large scale retrenchments are pouring in. Such instances are only tip of the iceberg.

- PUCL-CFD

Anti-Fascist Day

The June 25 / 26 observance needs to be reformulated so as to mark it as a day against political and social fascism.

For June 25/26 marks not only the declaration of Emergency in 1975. June 25 is also the Day in 1934 when a lethal bomb was hurled at Gandhi

and his cavalcade by Hindu right-wingers in Pune when he was on his anti-untouchability tour.

-Anil Nauriya

Chetavani Dharna

The two day 'Chetavni Dharna' of hundreds of Sardar Sarovar Project affected families at Jantar Mantar in Delhi concluded on June 25 with a strong warning to the Prime Minister and NDA Governmentt. to undertake a serious review of the illegal decision to raise the height of the Sardar Sarovar Project and assess the true costs and benefits of the roject, which is to cost Rs. 90000 crores, while the Government has decided to submerge 2.5 lakh people in the valley. In the name of Kutch and Saurashtra, Gujarat plans to dole out lakhs of hectares of command area land and water to the corporates and industries.

Briefing two key concerned Union Ministers Uma Bharti, Water Resources Ministry and Thavaar Chand Gehlot, Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, Medha Patkar and delegates exposed the illegality of decisions of NCA and clearance to the project by the sub-groups (Environment and R&R), on the basis of official documents, court orders and Ministerial correspondence and in violation of Court order.

Smt. Bharti directed the officials of the Narmada Control Authority to look into the serious issues pointed out by the delegation and review the decisions in a participatory manner.

It was learned that Shri Gehlot was wrongly briefed by officials that the recent decision was in "compliance" of the Supreme court judgement while the reality is diametrically opposite and clearance to the dam is utter violation of the court.

Earlier in the day, Medha Patkar, Yogendra Yadav, AAP; Prashant Bhushan, Supreme Court lawyer, Nikhil Dey of National Campaign for People's Right to Information addressed the press. Shri Bhushan condemned the fast-track clearance approach of the Modi Government in all matters and attempt to quell the voice of people's movements, who are actually trying to raise real

people's issues in the country and challenge undemocratic decisions, as also loot Yogendra Yadav pointed out that the SSP decision is not just one step by the NDA Government. but is fully indicative of the approach of Shri Modi, which they would like to continue for five years. This means decisions would be towards destroying environment, suppressing the legitimate rights and voice of people. He challenged the Government against submerging hundreds of villages while 1000 crore judicial inquiry into R&R corruption is ongoing and called the country's aam aadmi and aam aurat to stand up against every undemocratic decision of the new government.

Medha Patkar expressed shock at the fact that decision of the Narmada Control Authority, is basically a political decision pushed by Narendra Modi, in violation of not just law and in contempt of court, but also by bypassing the three concerned Union Ministers, Uma Bharti, Thavaar Chand Gehlot and Prakash Javdekar, all from Madhya Pradesh who had virtually no role in the decision making process. She urged Shri Modi to face the reality, hear the people and come forward for a comprehensive review of the entire project, which is his duty as the Prime Minister of India.

Nikhil Dey of NCPRI denounced those ministers who call themselves *deshbhakts* but actually work against the interests of the people, if *acche din* would come then it will be for a few people at the cost of *bure din* for millions of poor people. He expressed hope that the time is not far away when they will rise against this tyranny.

Brinda Karat of CPIM challenged the arbitrary and anti-people decisions of Modi Sarkar, be it the 14 per cent rail fare hike, proposals to dilute labour laws of the country as also the move to drown 2.5 lakh people in the three states organized under a three decade old non-violent social movement..

Gautam Mody, Secretary of NTUI lent support to the struggle and called for coming together of farmers, workers and industrial labour to challenge the corporate agenda and the time has come when every people's movement in the country have to start talking to each other and understand the deep rooted inter-linkages of the issues and tyranny of the political class.

People raised slogans that the country does not belong to Ambanis and Adanis but to aam aadmi and adivasis, the farmers, fisherpeople, workers, small traders and toiling masses, who represent 90 per cent of the country's population.

Speaking at the protest, Supreme Court Lawyer Sanjay Parikh stated that the stipulation of the Narmada Award and Supreme Court has been fully violated by the Governments, especially in Madhya Pradesh where the illegal policy of encashment has led to absolute loot of tribals and poor people and massive corruption.

Alok Agrawal, struggling for the rights of oustees for Indira Sagar, Omkareshwar etc for more than 20 years challenged the illegality in dam after dam including SSP and called for a complete review of the cascade of dams on the Narmada which is displacing lakhs of family and submerging lakhs of hectares of forest and agricultural land. Advocate Clifton D'Rozario, Organising Secretary AICCTU, told the gathering that time has come again for the tillers and toilers to stand up against the inhuman displacement and provide an example to movements of this country.

A team of MPs and distinguished citizens would visit the Narmada valley very soon, mostly before the beginning of the monsoon session of Parliament.

Concluding the two-day dharna, a *mashaal juloos* was taken out by the protesters and it was resolved that satyagraha will be held in every village of the submergence area.

—Meera

(Continued from Page 5)

in the law, such as the Minimum Wages Act, or the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, which makes it mandatory for workers to be registered when migrating across states, they are rarely enforced. There is a very low conviction rate for violating laws, and protesting, unionizing, and striking is more

likely to result in imprisonment or being branded Maoists and terrorists, than it is grievance redressal. For those who can, the payoff from going abroad, often in massive debt, and living amidst, war, hardship, and exploitation is higher than experiencing diminishing security from labour authorities and courts

at home, while continuing to be deemed an obstruction to economic growth.

For more data and details of court judgments, see the India Exclusion Report 2013–14, released on 25 June 2014.

How GM crops harm farmers scientific evidence grows

Bharat Dogra

As the controversy over GM (genetically modified) or GE (genetically engineered) crops has peaked in recent years, so has the scientific evidence regarding how harmful these crops can be for farmers and farming, as well as more broadly for health and environment. These issues are inter-linked as any claim of increase in yield of food crops is meaningless, if the food produced is unsafe or unhealthy.

An eminent group of scientists from various countries who constitute the Independent Science Panel have said in their conclusion after examining all aspects of GM crops: "GM crops have failed to deliver the promised benefits and are posing escalating problems on the farm. Transgenic contamination is now widely acknowledged to be unavoidable, and hence there can be no co-existence of GM and non-GM agriculture. Most important of all, GM crops have not been proven safe. On the contrary, sufficient evidence has emerged to raise serious safety concerns, that if ignored could result in irreversible damage to health and the environment. GM crops should be firmly rejected now."

According to the report of the Independent Science Panel, "The consistent finding from independent research and on-farm surveys since 1999 is that genetically modified (GM) crops have failed to deliver the promised benefits of significantly increasing yields or reducing herbicide and pesticide use. The instability of transgenic

lines has plagued the industry from the beginning, and this may be responsible for a string of major crop failures."

Summarising the evidences of the last three decades on GM crops Prof Jack A. Heinemann, Director, Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand recently wrote, "Those countries choosing to innovate in agriculture using GM are demonstrating lower productivity increases and greater dependence on chemical inputs in all crops compared to economically and environmentally comparable countries choosing to not use GM crops."

Prof. Heinemann continues, "The cost of GM seeds is the fastest growing expense for U.S. farmers who are simultaneously suffering from weeds resistant to the herbicides excessively used on GM crops and pests resistant to the insecticides over-used in Bt crops. That likely would be India's experience had it commercialised Bt brinjal which was developed with the least effective form of Bt for the target pest."

These statements on overall world-level experience of GM crops should be heeded by those who make high claims on behalf of GM crops on the basis of highly manipulated data. Before coming to more detailed evidence on yields and safety, let's first look at the some inherent weaknesses of GM technology.

Several scientists involved in studying the implications and impacts

of genetic engineering got together at the International Conference on 'Redefining of Life Sciences' organised at Penang, Malaysia, by the Third World Network. They issued a statement (the Penang Statement, or PS) which questioned the scientific basis of genetic engineering. This statement said:

"The new biotechnology based upon genetic engineering makes the assumption that each specific feature of an organism is encoded in one or a few specific, stable genes, so that the transfer of these genes results in the transfer of a discrete feature. This extreme form of genetic reductionism has already been rejected by the majority of biologists and many other members of the intellectual community because it fails to take into account the complex interactions between genes and their cellular, extracellular and external environments that are involved in the development of all traits.

"It has thus been impossible to predict the consequences of transferring a gene from one type of organism to another in a significant number of cases. The limited ability to transfer identifiable molecular characteristics between organisms through genetic engineering does not constitute the demonstration of any comprehensive or reliable system for predicting all the significant effects of transposing genes."

In a widely quoted paper titled 'The Biotechnology Bubble' Dr. Mae-Wan Ho (who heads Bio-

Electrodynamics lab of the Open University in the UK), Joe Cummins (Professor Emeritus of Genetics in Canada) and Hartmut Meyer have summarised the results of several experiments, trials and commercial releases of GMOs. They write: "There are many signs of the problems caused in genetic engineering organisms. For every product that reaches the market, there are perhaps 20 or more that fail. It is particularly disastrous for animal welfare.

- * The "superpig" engineered with human growth hormone gene turned out arthritic, ulcerous, blind and impotent.

- * The 'supersalmon' engineered, again, to grow as fast as possible, with genes belonging to other fish, ended up with big monstrous heads and died from not being able to see, breathe or feed properly.

- * The latest clones of the transgenic sheep Dolly are abnormal and eight times as likely to die at birth compared with ordinary lambs.

- * Even products that reach the market are failing, including crops that have been widely planted.

The authors of this widely quoted paper (published in the *Ecologist*) concluded: "It is important to realise that the failures are not just teething problems. They are very much the result of a reductionist science and a hit or miss technology. The transgenic foods created are unwholesome, because they involve stressing the developmental and metabolic system of organisms out of balance. There are bound to be unintended effects including toxins and allergens, which current risk assessments are designed to conceal rather than reveal. The major problem is the instability of transgenic lines."

The Independent Science Panel (ISP) has stated, "By far the most insidious dangers of genetic engineering are inherent to the process itself, which greatly enhances the scope and probability of horizontal gene transfer and recombination, the main route to creating viruses and bacteria that cause disease epidemics. This was highlighted, in 2001, by the 'accidental' creation of a killer mouse virus in the course of an apparently innocent genetic engineering experiment. Newer techniques, such as DNA shuffling, are allowing geneticists to create in a matter of minutes in the laboratory millions of recombinant viruses that have never existed in billions of years of evolution. Disease-causing viruses and bacteria and their genetic material are the predominant materials and tools for genetic engineering, as much as for the intentional creation of bio-weapons."

Marcello Buiatti (Plants Genetics Department, University of Florence), has concluded in an essay, "GMOs-facts and fiction, "Far from being the new science, which will solve all the problems of humanity in a short time, present day genetic engineering is based on obsolete knowledge and an equally obsolete and wrong conception of life."

Cesare Gessler, The ETH Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, says, "The products of genetic engineering today are still at the level of a dinosaur technology. We use genes, which are foreign to a species, not knowing where they are inserted or what else will change in the whole chain from gene to protein."

Dr. Peter Wills, theoretical biologist, Auckland University, says, "By transferring genes across species barriers, which have existed for aeons between species

like humans and sheep, we risk breaching natural thresholds against unexpected biological processes. For example, an incorrectly folded form of an ordinary cellular protein can under certain circumstances be replicative and give rise to infectious neurological disease."

Robert Mann, biochemist, University of Auckland, says, "The gene-manipulators claim they can foresee the evolutionary results of their artificial transposings of human genes into sheep, bovine genes into tomatoes, altered bacterial genes into eggplant, etc. But such claims are a reflection more of arrogance than of scientific analysis."

Now let's look more closely at some safety aspects. Recently seventeen distinguished scientists from Europe, USA, Canada and New Zealand wrote in a letter to the Prime Minister of India, "GM transformation can produce novel biochemical processes that are unpredictable and for which there is no natural history to assume are safe.

"The GM transformation process is highly mutagenic leading to disruptions to host plant genetic structure and function, which in turn leads to disturbances in the biochemistry of the plant. This can lead to novel toxin and allergen production as well as reduced/altered nutritional quality.

"It is not a question of if there are disturbances to gene function and biochemistry but to what degree they will be present within any given GM plant. For example, the levels of more than 40 proteins are altered significantly in the commercialised GM MON810 corn compared to equivalent non-GM corn, which included production of a new allergenic protein.

“Numerous animal feeding studies demonstrate negative health impacts of GM feed on kidney, liver, gut, blood cells, blood biochemistry and the immune system.

“Of greatest concern is that studies show negative health effects with GM crops that have already been approved and which have been grown commercially for 10-13 years.

This highlights the inadequacy of the original criteria and set of data on the basis of which marketing approval was and is still being granted.”

(to be Concluded)

Union Council of Ministers

National Election Watch (NEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) had sent a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, on the 20th of May, 2014 bringing to his notice the disturbing fact that the newly formed 16th Lok Sabha has a sizeable number of MPs (112 i.e. 21%) facing serious criminal charges and requesting him to include only clean representatives in his Cabinet. Shri Modi committed to critically examine MPs with self-declared criminal cases and fast tracking cases against them during the recent Lok Sabha campaign said, “the next Parliament would be cleaned by punishing the guilty”.

(NEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 44 Ministers out of 46 Ministers (including the Prime Minister) from Lok Sabha 2014 and current Rajya Sabha. The details of Prakash Javadekar and Nirmala Sitharaman were not analysed as they are not currently members of either house.

Ministers with Criminal Cases: Out of the 44 Ministers analysed, 13 (30%) Ministers have declared criminal cases against themselves.

Ministers with Serious Criminal Cases: 8 (18%) Ministers have declared serious criminal cases including cases related to attempt to murder, communal disharmony, kidnapping, electoral violations, etc.

Ministers with cases related to causing Communal Disharmony: Uma Bharti from Jhansi constituency, Uttar Pradesh of BJP has declared a case Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony (IPC Section-153A)

Ministers with cases related to Electoral Violations: Uma Bharti of BJP from Jhansi constituency, Uttar Pradesh, has declared a case related to illegal payments in connection with an election (IPC Section-171H). Upendra Kushwaha of Rashtriya Lok Samta Party from Karakat constituency, Bihar and Ram Vilas Paswan of LJP from Hajipur constituency, Bihar have each declared a case related to Bribery (IPC Section – 171E)

Corepati Ministers : Out of the 44 Ministers analysed, 40 (91%) are corepatis.

Average Assets: The average assets per minister is Rs.13.47 crores.

High Asset Ministers: 5 Ministers have declared more than Rs.30 crores worth of assets: ranging from Rs. 30 crore+ to Rs.113 crore+

Low Asset Ministers: A total of 4 Ministers have declared assets less than Rs. 1 crore: from Rs. 65 lacs+ to Rs. 96 lacs+

Education Details of Ministers: 8(18%) Ministers have declared that have an education qualification of 12th pass or below while 35(80%) Ministers have declared having an educational qualification of graduate or above.

Age Details of Ministers: 9(20%) Ministers have declared their age to be between 31 to 50 years while 33(75%) Ministers have declared their age to be between 51 to 70 years and 2 Ministers have declared their age to be above 70 years.

Gender Details of Ministers: There are 7 (15%) women ministers out of a total of 46 ministers.

For more details visit :
www.myneta.info

–Association for Democratic Reforms

Madhu Dandavate

By
B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**