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Kashmir: Government Using Pellet Guns to Suppress Protests (Kaisar Andrabi)



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Articles and Features : **Kashmir: Government Using Pellet Guns to Suppress Protests**

Hospital visits and media reports paint a very different picture from the Modi government's narrative about what's going on in Kashmir.

SRINAGAR, Jammu & Kashmir — A steady trickle of civilian victims of pellet-gun injuries at the city hospital has lent credence to reports of unrest in the Valley, despite the Modi government's insistence that Kashmir's population has welcomed the decision to nullify Article 370, a constitutional provision that granted Jammu & Kashmir special status, and bifurcate the state.

The Indian government has deployed thousands of troops, arrested political leaders, severed phone lines, blacked out the internet, and shared carefully choreographed videos of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval meeting "locals", in an attempt to control the narrative emerging from Kashmir.

However, a visit to the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMSH) in downtown Srinagar, wire reports and accounts in Indian and international publications suggest that Kashmir is witnessing civilian protests that are violently suppressed by pellet-gun wielding paramilitary forces, often at the cost of injuring bystanders.

For the late

The total communication lockdown has made it hard to establish the exact sequence of events, but a *Reuters* report dated August 8 2019 quoted two unnamed officials, who said there had been sporadic protests.

At the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, this reporter met seven men and one woman who had been injured by pellets. Patients at the hospital said they had witnessed a protest at Nowhatta locality in downtown Srinagar, where security forces fired on protestors using pellet guns.

A doctor at the hospital said they had attended

to approximately 40 pellet victims in the past three days. However, this number could not be independently verified.

In the ophthalmology ward, 31-year-old Rafia Bano lay on a bed, her eyes puffy from a pellet that had hit her in the face. "God, save her eyesight," said her mother, Mehmooda Akhtar. "She has a baby to look after."

"I was in my courtyard when they fired pellet on me," Rafia said. "I felt my eyes burning as if someone had set them on fire."



A young man with pellet injuries on his leg

In the men's section of the ward, a young man who declined to share his name said he was visiting a friend in Nowhatta when he was caught in a protest, and was hit in the face with pellets fired by security forces.

An attending doctor said the young man had lost vision in his right eye, while his left eye was partially damaged and was still embedded with pellet fragments.

In a report dated August 9 2019, *Al Jazeera* documented the case of Asrar Khan, a class 11 schoolboy, who was hit by pellets and is currently under sedation at the hospital, fighting for his life.

"He has suffered serious head injuries and our priority right now is to save his life," a hospital official told *Al Jazeera*.

Courtesy [HuffPost.com, 09/08/2019](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/india-kashmir-protests_n_5d3a2a21e38da10008000001) 

A letter written, by Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah

Reproduced below is a letter written, by Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah, after the draft was approved by Sardar Patel. This historical document not only establishes the basis of Article 370 but also belies the claims of Amit Shah and BJP that there were differences between Nehru and Sardar Patel.

My dear Sheikh Sahib,

18 May 1949

1. In the course of the talks at Sardar Patel's residence on 15 and 16 May 1949 between some of my colleagues and me and you and your colleagues, important issues raised by you in regard to the future of Jammu and Kashmir State were discussed.
2. Among the subjects that were discussed were: (i) the framing of a constitution for the State; (ii) the subjects in respect of which the State should accede to the Union of India; (iii) the monarchical form of government in the State; (iv) the control of the State Forces, and (v) the rights of the citizens of the State to equality of opportunity for service in the Indian Army.
3. As regards (i) and (iii), it has been the settled policy of the Government of India, which on many occasions has been stated both by Sardar Patel and me, that the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir State is a matter for determination by the people of the State represented in a Constituent Assembly convened for the purpose. In the special circumstances of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of India have no objection to the Constituent Assembly of the State considering the question of the continuance of the association of the State with a constitutional monarchy.
4. In regard to (ii), Jammu and Kashmir State now stands acceded to the Indian Union in respect of three subjects, namely, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications. It will be for the Constituent Assembly of the State, when convened, to determine in respect of what other subjects the State may accede.
5. Regarding (iv), both the operational and administrative control over the State Forces has already, with the consent of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir State, been taken over by the Indian Army. (p.52) The final arrangements in this connection, for the duration of the present emergency, including financial responsibility for the expenditure involved, were agreed to between us on the 16th inst.
6. As regards (v), the citizens of the State will have equality of opportunity for service in the Indian Army. Under Article 10 of the draft of the new Constitution, as passed by the Constituent Assembly of India, equality of opportunity for employment under the State, including employment in the Indian Army, is declared to be amongst the fundamental rights of all Indian citizens.
7. I trust that the Government of India's position, as stated above, will give you the clarification that you have asked for.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah

Srinagar

Forwarded by Dr. V. N. Sharma via Bharatchintan 

Government's Decision on Jammu and Kashmir: A Long Leap into Unconstitutionality

Prem Singh

As per the decision the present day government took in the Parliament on 5 August 2019 the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir accorded under Article 370 of the Constitution of India has ended. The Article 35A also has ceased to exist. Consequently Jammu and Kashmir will no longer be even a full-fledged state. The entire area has been divided into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir (with Assembly) and Ladakh (without Assembly).

The government, which cut off the people of Kashmir through all kinds of communication channels and detained the political leadership in their houses, passed the 'Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Bill, 2019' and Presidential Orders/Resolutions in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. Since then, there has been a sharp debate all over the country about the content and the manner in which this decision has been arrived at by the government. Political leaders, activists, columnists, experts, intellectuals along with the common public are contributing to this debate using various forums including conventional and social media.

The commentariat, intellectuals, leaders even from opposition parties including the Congress are trifurcated on this contentious issue: The first group comprises of supporters who can very well be seen as being swept away in the tide of emotions and are not ready to hear anything countering the decision of government. In the second category comes people who consider the verdict right but the manner in which it has been adopted as problematic. The third category is of those who consider both, the decision and the method, as wrong. In this comment, some thoughts have

been expressed keeping this category in mind. The people of this category have rightly condemned the government's move on the basis of the Constitution of India and its democracy. But while taking the basis of the Constitution and democracy, they do not accept the fact that the Constitution and democracy are in shambles due to the neo-liberal policies of the last 30 years.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has had an agenda of abolishing Article 370, implementing Universal Civil Code, and building Ram Temple in place of Babri Masjid since the time of its inception as Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) founded in 1951. But due to the strength of the Constitution and democracy, the party could not do it. In 1991, the Congress itself began to weaken the Constitution by introducing liberalization in the name of New Economic Policies. (Already, the work of dilution of the Constitutional provisions with respect to Jammu and Kashmir had been done in the past by the Congress, for which more or less there was a national consensus. The spirit of the Instrument of Accession, a core document regarding the accession of J&K to India, had been violated by several Orders issued by the President of India since 1954. The qualities of democracy that emerged in the rest of India, could not flourish in Jammu and Kashmir. There was no Karunanidhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mayawati etc. allowed to emerge.) As a result, market nationalism (*bazarwadi rashtrawad*) based on market economy, replaced the Indian nationalism containing the values of the freedom movement and the Constitution of India. Simultaneously the democracy too was diverted to the path of market. Under the impact of neo-liberalism the

politics in India, including that of the Congress and identity based parties were put on the path of swift degeneration. Senior Communist leader Jyoti Basu declared that capitalism is the only path to development. Amit Shah, while speaking in the Lok Sabha, stated the truth of degeneration of the opposition, "... have faith in Narendra Modi government. Nothing negative will happen. All these (Opposition) people are telling you lies for their own politics. Don't listen to them." This message was addressed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir by him.

A dire need was felt to create a new alternative politics after almost complete decline of the Congress and other political parties including the players of identity politics. A serious contemplation and struggle all over India had been started for the same. But particularly progressive intellectuals did not allow that stream of alternative politics vis-a-vis neo-liberalism to flourish. They queued up behind Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal, who had come from the NGO world, making a call for the elimination of corruption. It is a proven fact that the NGOs are an integral part of neo-liberal regime created to act as safety valves. Prakash Karat's 'Lenin' Kejriwal came promptly in total support of the government's decision on Jammu and Kashmir. Such an atmosphere of political opportunism proved to be most suitable for the RSS/BJP. It collected all the remnants of degenerated politics and plunged into the neo-liberalism by throwing away the so-called robe of tenacity, sacrifice, sacraments, high character etc. The RSS/BJP had to remove the Article 370 after getting the second consecutive term to power with a full majority. One could understand this truth by going through the various resolutions/manifestos passed by the RSS/BJP time to time.

Opponents of the new law on J&K are rightly talking about a frightening future.

However, the people of J&K are experiencing a part of that frightening future now only and getting imprisoned in their homes being its one of many manifestations. The seeds of the present were sowed in 1991. It would not have happened if the Intelligentsia of India had convinced the people that the New Economic Policies are anti-constitution and anti-democracy, that a dreadful future awaits them. The crucial/central problem of our times is that the intelligentsia will not stand against the neo-liberal policies even after this decision of the government. However, from now all constitutional safeguards provided to hill and north-eastern states and marginal communities, including tribals, would be scrapped on a fast pace to facilitate the corporate control over resources. This adherence to capitalist/consumerist model of development would further erode the federal character of the Constitution in the name of new India - strong India - one India. No safeguards enshrined in the Constitution meant for states' rights and citizens' rights would be honoured in this venture. In such a situation it seems that the constitutional India would wither away in near future.

The Home Minister Amit Shah, while speaking in the Parliament, has shown false hopes of development to the Kashmiri people as if Article 370 was the only hurdle. The intelligentsia shares the same vision of development. Those who always talk of opposing the capitalist model, as per the experience till now, do this for funding and various types of national/international awards provided by the agencies of neo-liberal establishment. The continuation of their programs and awards being in their names is their ulterior motive. Amit Shah knows that Hindus of Jammu region are not forbidden to buy movable and immovable property in the valley. But nothing like this has happened in the last 70 years. It is hardly possible that

the Kashmiri Pandits, displaced from the valley, would return after this decision. In case some of them return, they will not opt for business there. Later, Amit Shah can say that foreign investment will be invited in the valley on large scales. He, in his speech, has expressed the possibility of big tourism companies coming to the valley. That is, marketist nationalism will also reach fast in the valley and Ladakh. The permission for such foreign investments might have already taken from the US president Donald Trump! The decision on J&K was as dramatic as the demonetisation. The Home Minister said that Article 370 is responsible for corruption, poverty, terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir!

A large number of people in the country believed that RSS/BJP would make LK Advani president of India, who was suddenly pushed out of the prime minister's race. They felt that if elders were not respected in the 'pariwar' (family), then where would they be? But this was not done. One can realize now that Advani might not have agreed to the decision and the method adopted by the government.

Alongside with Jammu and Kashmir are Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan. Hindu-Muslims within the country and India-Pakistan on the border - this all time saga would remain an enduring dose for marketist nationalism. Otherwise, India has 20 thousand square kilometer of land under the occupation of China, for which the Resolution to take back had been passed by the Parliament just after the Indo-China war in 1962. With this decision, it has also been decided that Pakistan can do whatever it wants to do with the occupied Kashmir. Before the decision, there were 24 vacant seats for the representatives of Pak Occupied Kashmir in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

So they could be filled when it is merged with India. Everyone knows that the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is also in the international

court. This decision will resonate there too. Maybe the government has agreed to accept any condition of America to calm the matter there!

In the light of this development the people of Kashmir should also directly question the role of separatists in the valley. They have an equal role with the government in demolishing democracy in the state. If they believe that their forefathers chose to live in secular India instead of theocratic Pakistan, then the divide of Hindu-Muslim has to be bridged in the coming decades. The separatists and terrorists want to preserve this divide and thus help the communalist elements in the polity and society. The role of Hindu citizens of Jammu region of the state would be important in this venture. It can be hoped that they will play this role positively. It is true that the RSS/BJP senior leaders, from Shyama Prasad Mookerjee to Murli Manohar Joshi, have been marching to Srinagar with their agenda. But the Gandhians, including Jai Prakash Narayan (JP) have made no less efforts to help and sympathize with the Kashmiri people.

The people of Kashmir have to understand that not only they, but the rest of the country's people were also not taken into confidence for this decision. It is reported that even some ministers of the government were not aware. They do not need to get excited and angered. They can create new leadership and politics, for which democracy is the only way. They have to understand that autonomy of entire nation is at stake. They will have to reconcile their struggle with the people of the country fighting against neo-imperialism. The next phase of the struggle in Gandhi's country should be civil disobedience based on non-violence and satyagraha, in which citizens of the entire state should participate.

(Dr. Prem Singh, a former fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, teaches Hindi in Delhi University) 

Kashmir has been cut to the quick

Wajahat Habibullah

The Centre is riding roughshod over Kashmiri public opinion already beset with disaffection



A paramilitary trooper stands guard on a road during a curfew in Srinagar on August 5, 2019. Photo Credit: AFP

In the face of a massive security build-up in Kashmir at the close of July, a seasoned journalist conjectured, "This is just the right time when militants and their masters in Rawalpindi could do with a terror attack in Kashmir." Such were the arguments trotted out by experienced media persons in seeking to account for the extraordinary lock down that had descended on Kashmir throwing its citizens into a panic, with a run on banks, petrol pumps and stores across the Valley. I began receiving phone calls from friends and associates as far as Gopalpora, Mattan and Doabgah and Sopore asking what was happening. My former colleagues in **government**, some in key positions, had no inkling and made dire predictions.

A steamrolling

And then we had the statement of the Home Minister, Amit Shah, in the Rajya Sabha on the morning of Monday August 5, 2019. Under Article 370 of the Constitution of India, the State of Jammu and Kashmir had its own Constitution

and its own laws, with the President of India empowered to decide which provisions of the Indian Constitution would be applicable within the State, but only with the assent of the State.

In one fell swoop, the President, Ram Nath Kovind, declared that all provisions of the Indian Constitution shall now apply to the State, thus nullifying Article 370 with the use of that same article thereby ending the special autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir that it had enjoyed since the promulgation of India's Constitution. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill 2019 further bifurcates the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, both with a Muslim majority namely: the Union Territory (UT) of J&K and the Union Territory of Ladakh. While the UT of J&K will have a legislature, the Union Territory of Ladakh will be without one. Although in the past UTs have been upgraded to States, never has a State been downgraded, thus bringing to a consummation the process initiated with the

accession, although hardly in the manner dreamt.

Umbilical link

Article 370 has governed the accession and relationship of the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir with India under the Indian Constitution. As originally envisaged, Article 370 formed the basis of Kashmir's special and autonomous status. Mainstream political leaders such as Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and others have warned that revoking Article 370 will mean a break in the relationship between the State and India.

A devout Muslim, the then unchallenged Kashmiri leader, Sheikh Abdullah (Baba-i-Qaum to his people), 'faced a clear choice in 1947; he could join a Muslim nation or he could join a secular state, where Kashmiris would be free to live a life of their own choosing. In making his choice, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was the Sheikh's reassurance. Of Kashmiri descent, a heritage that Nehru cherished, Nehru had an inclusive vision of what India was to be'. By contrast, the leader of the newly emerging nation of Muslims, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was a cold and distant figure, a modernist who could excite awe but little affection. At the time of accession, the portion of the State where Jinnah's Muslim League had its support lay not in the Kashmir Valley but across the Pir Panjal, in Mirpur and the old Poonch principality of the feudal State of **Jammu and Kashmir**, an area a large part of which Pakistan occupies today and calls 'Azad Kashmir'.

It is important to remember that the Kashmir freedom movement was a movement to rid Kashmir of despotism, working in tandem with the national movement but not part of it. This was primarily a Kashmiri movement drawing almost universal Kashmiri support in a Muslim majority State where the Kashmiris were the largest single ethnic group. Despite efforts by Maharajah Hari Singh's Prime Minister Ram Chandra Kak in eliciting the Sheikh's support

for Independence, the latter stood steadfast in his demand for an end to the monarchy.

Visiting Srinagar on June 18- 23, India's Viceroy Lord Louis Mountbatten urged Hari Singh not to make a declaration of independence. He conveyed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's message that 'the States Department was prepared to give an assurance that, if Kashmir went to Pakistan, this would not be regarded as unfriendly by Government of India'. It was only when Jammu and Kashmir forces faced an uprising by the Poonch troops of the British Indian Army's decommissioned Sixth Punjab Regiment (in the border district of Poonch), and then a military rout by invading frontier tribesmen in the State's border town of Domel on October 22, 1947 that the Maharaja turned in desperation to India.

Pakistan's lost cause

According to the 1941 Census, 77.11% of the population of Jammu and Kashmir was Muslim, 20.12% Hindu and 1.64% Sikh. Pakistan has argued that the logic of Partition meant that the State had to be a part of Pakistan. But by recourse to an invasion by Pakistan's frontier tribesmen and the support of the invasion by Pakistan's armed forces, Pakistan virtually lost its case, certainly in the eyes of Kashmiris. India's case rested on the public will. Indeed, Sheikh Abdullah spoke for Kashmir at the United Nations in February 1948 as part of a delegation led by N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar firmly declaring, "We shall prefer death rather than join Pakistan. We shall have nothing to do with such a country." And it was this freedom within the Indian Union that Abdullah sought through the constitutional guarantee of Article 370, which read with Article 369, provided temporary powers to Parliament to make laws for J&K.

Under sub-section 3 of this Article, the President of India can revoke Article 370 only on advice from the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir. The Constituent Assembly

was dissolved in 1957, and replaced by a Legislative Assembly, which was dismissed last year after the coalition between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party collapsed and the Governor Satya Pal Malik rejected a bid for an alternative coalition. Importantly, the current Presidential order modifies Article 367 of the **Constitution**, with “Constituent Assembly” to be read as “Legislative Assembly of the State” and the State government construed as the Governor. This has enabled the President to abrogate Article 370 with the consent of the Governor as consent of the State. The people themselves, who the Constitution is designed to serve, therefore, had no part in this process. The constitutional validity of these amendments are for the Supreme Court to ponder. But the question here is that if these are indeed designed to benefit the people, was it necessary to bring them before Parliament under stealth, with the leaders of mainstream parties, the former Chief Ministers the Abdullahs (father and son), Mehbooba Mufti and the BJP’s ally Sajjad Lone all under house arrest?

Opaque moves

There is little doubt that these are bold

constitutional measures described with contrasting adjective or invective, consummating a process that began with the Constitution of India. But if the view of government was simply to rectify a constitutional error or remedy an anachronism as claimed by assiduous government spokesmen, did it not follow that democratic compulsion required that it be placed before the public most affected — the people of J&K, — before being sneaked into Parliament in tight secrecy? This without the knowledge of even the local government amidst security measures unprecedented in their intensity, surpassing even those that the Jagmohan government was forced to take following the outbreak of insurgency in 1989-90? This endeavour has meant riding roughshod over Kashmiri public opinion already beset with widespread disaffection. What it has succeeded in doing is leading to a feeling of betrayal among a section of our people and foreboding among well wishers of Kashmir.

Wajahat Habibullah is a retired civil servant, has served as Chief Information Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities

Courtesy **The Hindu**, August 07, 2019. 

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As Kashmir Is Erased, Indian Democracy Dies In Silence

Which state will next feel the sharp edge of Amit Shah's knife? Which town, district, or taluka, will be deemed too troublesome to be allowed to participate in democracy?

Aman Sethi

The decision to eliminate the state of Jammu & Kashmir by legislative decree was made in absolute secrecy, and will be executed in absolute darkness.

Thousands of troops have been deployed on the streets, opposition leaders have been put under house arrest with a midnight knock on their doors, the internet has been blacked out, and phone lines have been severed.

The only inkling of the government's moves came from a chance photograph, snapped as home minister Amit Shah entered Parliament this morning, August 5 2019.

A neat Excel sheet laid out a checklist for Kashmir's erasure:

"Inform the President —— Done", the checklist read, under the sub-head, titled 'Constitutional'. "Inform the Vice President —— Done." There was a cabinet meeting, and then the bill was brought before Parliament, where a noisy but largely ineffectual Opposition was given an hour to deliberate the redrawing of India's political map.

If all goes as planned, and there is little sign it won't, the state of Jammu and Kashmir will be replaced by two union territories — one with a legislature subservient to a puppet governor, and one with just a puppet governor.

What of the Kashmiris? Where do they appear in Amit Shah's checklist? Way down on point number 14 and 15 under "Law and Order".

While Point 14 calls for the Home Secretary to make his way down to a state that has been amputated into a colony administered by New Delhi, Point 15 reveals that colonising one's own territories carries an attendant risk: "Possibility of violent disobedience amongst sections of

uniformed personnel."

Kashmir is the boundary condition of Indian democracy; and as of now, democracy is dead in the darkness.

From the margins to the centre

Independent India has seen the creation of new states from older ones — Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand from parts of Bihar and Bengal, Uttarakhand up in the north. Union territories like Goa have become states, but this is perhaps the first time a state and its residents have simply been imagined out of existence.

So what do the Kashmiris think of all this? At the moment it is impossible to say. News from the state has simply been throttled by shutting down all lines of communication, deploying thousands of troops, and forbidding any public assembly.

As Delhi lays out Kashmir's abbreviated future, the Kashmiris have been silenced; and in this silence we see the demise of Indian democracy.

Over the long years of insurgency and counter-insurgency, we have learnt that the atrocities committed at the nation's margins have a way of finding their way to the centre.

Military doctrines honed in Kashmir are readily adopted in Jharkhand. A quirk of military rationing and troop provisioning brings the Border Security Force and Indo Tibet Border Patrol to camps in southern Bastar.

As Delhi lays out Kashmir's abbreviated future, the Kashmiris have been silenced; and in this silence we see the demise of Indian democracy.

The detention camps for so-called foreigners in Assam don't appear very different from the mass incarceration camps prototyped in

Srikakulam in the 1960s and 1970s and deployed decades later in Bastar, to suppress local populations. Draconian laws enacted to police troubled areas soon bleed out into the rest of the country, right up to the point that Parliament passes a law to denote individuals as terrorists.

Fatal urgency

“There is no emergency, only urgency,” Venkaiah Naidu, India’s Vice President, the Rajya Sabha’s Chair and formerly a minister in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)’s previous tenure, said this morning, as he shouted down the opposition.

But what is an emergency but a fatal urgency to override democracy’s slow-moving methods?

What more turbulence will this urgency bring? Which state will next feel the sharp edge of Amit Shah’s knife?

A nation of 1.2 billion citizens requires deliberation, conversation, and consensus. Take that away and all we have left is the empty spectacle of a parliament of mostly ageing, balding, bloody-thirsty men, eager to throttle any possibility of a peaceful future for the opportunity to live out their impotent fantasies of imposing their will on a besieged populace.

What more turbulence will this urgency bring? Which state will next feel the sharp edge of

Amit Shah’s knife? The populace of which town, district, taluka, mountain-side, river valley, sugar-cane field will be deemed too troublesome to be allowed to participate in democracy?

Will a troublesome province in West Bengal suddenly find it has been turned into a union territory headed by an ageing pracharak reinvented as a Governor? Or will the state of Tamil Nadu, whose entire politics has been based on a refutation of Delhi-based autocracy, suddenly find it has been urgently demoted down democracy’s ladders?

It isn’t hard to predict how the erasure of Kashmir will play out over the next few weeks. The government’s gaggle of friendly news anchors have already begun dancing to their master’s tunes. At some point, someone will hail this as a political masterstroke. Someone will find a way to blame the opposition.

But a rubicon has been crossed, a boundary has been breached, a state has been erased and a populace has been blanked out of the national conversation.

For us citizens, there is urgency, yes. But there is also a state of emergency.

Aman Sethi is Editor-in-Chief,

HuffPost India

Courtesy **HuffPost India**, 05/08/2019. 

“Selections from The Radical Humanist” on the website

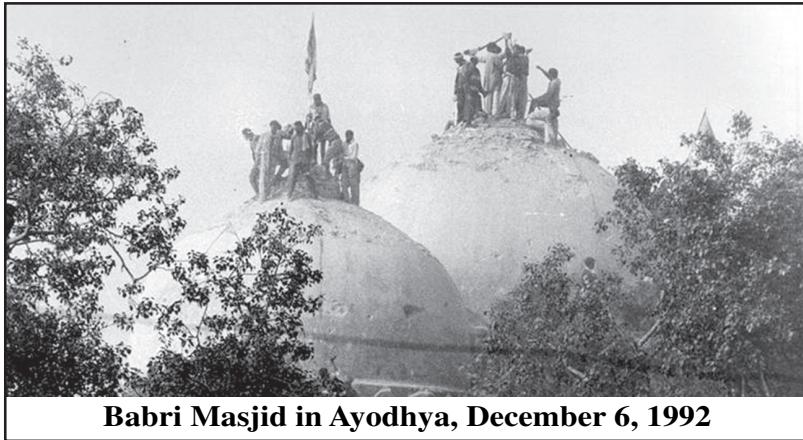
‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume I (1970 to 2005) and II (2006 to 2018) containing articles by all-time greats like M.N. Roy, (Justice) V.M. Tarkunde, Prof. Sib Narayan Ray, (Justice) Rajindar Sachar, (Justice) R.A. Jahagirdar, Kuldip Nayar and others on democratic freedoms, radical humanism, human rights, and emancipation of the downtrodden are now available at the website www.lohiatoday.com on the periodicals page where ‘The Radical Humanist’ magazine is put every month. The two volumes are also available at www.academia.edu and have been accessed by more than 500 people from various Indian cities and across the world from more than 35 countries. Readers may download these volumes from there and read whenever they like.

- Mahi Pal Singh

The striking similarities between Babri Masjid demolition and Article 370 abrogation

In 2019, remembering 1992 — a different kind of government, a different kind of protest

Ramchandra Guha



Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, December 6, 1992

The Babri Masjid was demolished by a crazed mob in broad daylight in 1992. Article 370 was abrogated at night by a secretive government in 2019. That said, there are some striking similarities between these two events, occurring 27 years apart. Both were justified as righting historical wrongs; both were triumphantly acclaimed by the Sangh Parivar and their supporters; both were quietly mourned by those affirming the constitutional values on which this Republic was founded.

When the Babri Masjid was demolished, I was living in New Delhi, in the home of Dharma Kumar, Professor of Economic History at the Delhi School of Economics. Her many students and friends — some active in public life today — will remember Dharma both for her personal charm and for her intellectual courage. She was a classical liberal, equally opposed to the extremities of the Marxist left as well as of the Hindutva right.

Dharma had grown up in Mumbai in the last years of the Raj, where she had sometimes attended Mahatma Gandhi's prayer meetings on Juhu beach. Now, seeing his ideals violated in a

nation which claimed him as its founder, she set out to publicly defend them. She drafted a statement, which she had inserted as an advertisement on the front page of the most widely circulated newspaper in India. The statement read: "If you are a Hindu, read on. Do you believe that the demolition of the Babri Masjid restored Hindu pride,

enhanced national honour, strengthened India? If so, consider the possibility that the act debased Hindu culture, shamed the nation across the world, increased the tensions between all communities and so weakened India".

Designed by an artist friend of Dharma's, the statement was printed on white type against a black background. Alongside appeared the names of 19 signatories. They included the scientist MS Swaminathan, the writer Vikram Seth, the former RBI Governor, IG Patel, the curator, Pupul Jayakar, the former Solicitor General, Ashok Desai, and the former Chief of Army Staff, K Sundarji. Although Dharma thought up and paid for the ad, and canvassed each signature, she did not — out of both propriety and modesty — put her own name on it.

Notably, the list of brave, civic-minded Indians who signed Dharma's appeal began with six widely admired industrialists. These were Bharat Ram, RP Goenka, Lalit Thapar, Nanubhai B Amin, Raj Thiagarajan, and Desh Bandhu Gupta. That they signed this statement made it far more credible for the readers of the paper in which it appeared. It could not now be dismissed as the

malignant handiwork of misguided jholawalas.

When I heard of the abrogation of Article 370, my mind went back to December 1992. The silencing of the millions of people in whose name this constitutional change was allegedly being enacted seemed — since it was done by a government and not a mob — an even greater violation of the republic's ideals. As I lay awake at night, I remembered Professor Dharma Kumar and what she had done. I was now in my sixties, as she had been in 1992. I had the same sort of position in our intellectual life as she had then. I, too, had a wide spectrum of influential friends in other professions.

My first thought was to emulate my teacher, to draft a statement appealing to my fellow citizens to abjure crude triumphalism, alerting them to the moral and political consequences of this awful act. This statement might have said: "If you are a patriotic Indian, read on. Do you believe that the abrogation of Article 370 overnight and without deliberation enhanced national honour and strengthened India? If so, consider the possibility that the act undermined the Constitution, degraded our democratic ethos, and increased rather than decreased tensions between Kashmir and the rest of India".

Had I drafted this statement, I could have raised the money to pay for it to be printed in the leading newspaper of the day. Would I have had Dharma's success in getting people of comparable stature to sign? The writers and artists would have been easy work. But which contemporary analogues of Lalit Thapar or RP Goenka would have joined in?

I personally know at least a dozen industrialists even more successful than the ones Dharma had contacted. I know them to be honest, of liberal values, and democratic to the core. While some may have had reservations about the existence of Article 370, none would have approved of the arbitrary, authoritarian manner in which it was removed. I could, I am sure, have drafted a statement which reflected their sentiments

accurately and honestly. But, with perhaps only one exception, none would have put their names on it.

This is because — for all the other parallels I began this column with — in one critical respect, 2019 is not 1992. This is that the government now in power in New Delhi is far more vindictive and vengeful than the one that was in power when the Babri Masjid was demolished. When Bharat Ram and Lalit Thapar were approached by Dharma Kumar, they did not think that the fate of the tens of thousands of workers they employed would be put at risk by the mere act of their signing a statement. But were I to approach their counterparts today, even if they entirely approved of what I was trying to do, they would be too scared to sign on. They would have feared retribution, in the form of unannounced raids, cooked-up cases, arrests, and worse.

The comparison with the past is instructive, and with other democracies perhaps even more so. When President Trump imposed an arbitrary travel ban on citizens of six Muslim countries, the CEOs of his country's top companies rose in unison to oppose it. They could express their views openly — because they knew that the president and his cabinet did not have the power to set the FBI or the IRS upon them. These American entrepreneurs also knew that, for merely speaking their mind, they would not be abused by ruling party politicians and demonised in social media as enemies of the nation.

In India today, industrialists — even the most upright and patriotic — are far more fearful than they were in 1992. Like the people of the Kashmir Valley, they have been silenced by the state into submission; by different (but no less malevolent) means. That even the richest and most successful Indians cannot say in public what they truly think tells us all that we need to know about the state of our democracy in the year 2019.

*The writer is a Bengaluru-based historian
Courtesy The Indian Express,
9 August 2019.* 

Kashmir: A Coup against the Constitution and the Kashmiris

The PUCL condemns the abrogation of key portions of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and the bifurcation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and taking away its statehood. While the deed by itself is deceitful, the manner in which it was done is even more so. All the constitutional provisions, procedures, safeguards and values have been disregarded. What pains us most is that this change of status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was carried out with stealth, completely unilaterally, without even talking or consulting the people of Jammu and Kashmir, even as part of Government tokenism.

PUCL, in particular, strongly condemns the planned and sinister manner by which the Government of India has gone about arresting at midnight of Sunday, 4-5th August, 2019 important leaders of political parties in Jammu and Kashmir, including former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and others, soon after airlifting over 35,000 troops and suddenly and abruptly asking all Amarnath Yatris and holiday visitors to leave the state creating acute sense of fear and panic. Simultaneously, the Government in a concerted manner, also shut down all communication and telecom services to and from the valley, effectively ghettoizing the entire state into a state of forced silence, while also imposing curfew in the state preventing movement of people, thereby creating chaos, distress and disruption of normal life. Students from other states were asked to leave Kashmir while Kashmiris outside the state continue to live in panic unable to communicate with their families in the Valley.

The ulterior plan behind such unprecedented action became apparent on Monday, 5th August, 2019, with the Government quickly pushing

through legislations to abrogate major portion of Art. 370 thereby discontinuing Special Status to J&K and bifurcating the State into two Union territories: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

It is pertinent to point out that Article 370 of the Constitution of India is a self contained Article. It determined how the Constitution of India would apply to J&K and also specifically provided for the procedure for the abrogation of Article 370 itself.. The President can pass an order under Article 370 (3), removing article 370 only if the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir recommended the same.

Since the Constituent Assembly of J&K ceased functioning in 1957, the Supreme Court in its judgement in '*SBI vs Santosh Gupta*', (2017)', held that the Article 370 has become permanent ***unless another Constituent Assembly of J&K was constituted***. In order to get over this constitutional roadblock, the present BJP Government adopted a rather devious and unconstitutional route.

Article 370 (1) (d) of the Constitution empowers the President, from time to time, to issue notifications modifying the manner in which the constitutional provisions can be made applicable to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Article 367 of the Constitution of India explains how phrases in the Constitution are to be interpreted. The issue, in case of abrogation of Art. 370, was the need for recommendation of 'Constituent Assembly of the State'.

What the BJP Government did was very insidious and cunning. On 5th August, 2019, they introduced a 3-step Amendment process. In the first step a Presidential Notification under Article 370 (1)(d) was issued amending Article 367 by introducing a new Sub-clause (4) which stated

that the expression “Constituent Assembly” in Article 370(3) shall be read as “Legislative Assembly of the State”. The effect was that after this change, Article 370 of the Constitution could be amended removing the necessity to obtain the recommendation of the ‘Constituent Assembly’.

Now, since J&K has been under President’s Rule since December, 2018, it means that the powers of the ‘State Legislature’ are being exercised by the President of India. This, in effect, results in a farcical situation in which the President of India has consented to permit himself (as Head of the State Government of J&K) to recommend abrogation of Art. 370 of the Constitution!

In other words, what could not be done directly was done indirectly and the constitutional provisions have been undermined. This is a clear subversion of the constitutional provisions by the BJP Government.

What is shocking is the utter contempt that the current dispensation has been exhibiting for constitutional procedures and democratic processes, which actually is a consistent pattern we have witnessed in the recent past with the passing of a slew of legislations which have serious ramifications, as a Money Bill.

The change in the status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir from a State to a Union Territory is an unethical and undemocratic act. It robs the people of Kashmir the little democratic space they have and will only further alienate the people of Kashmir from the Indian State.

The argument that Article 370 is a clause which obstructed the complete integration of Kashmir with the rest of India and prevented development is a totally flawed logic. The unamended Article 370, was put in place to recognise in principle, the distinct identity and autonomy of the Kashmiri people. This was necessitated by the history and the context of

accession of Kashmir with India. It is most troubling that political leaders of Kashmir who never disputed the accession of Kashmir with India and who participated in the Indian democratic process have been placed under preventive detention and were kept completely in the dark when decisions which impacts the state were taken. In this entire exercise the lives, rights, aspirations and hopes of the people of Kashmir are the biggest casualties.

PUCL apprehends that there is another insidious dimension in taking away the statehood of the Jammu and Kashmir. It is a ploy to take control of their natural resources, their water, mountains, the hills and fields and forests. It is yet another act to aggrandise and deprive the common Kashmiri and convert the valley into a real estate venture. In the three speeches in the Rajya Sabha made by the Home Minister, he continuously spoke of how the state was in the dark ages and needed to be brought into the main stream with hotels and other people of India having an opportunity to buy land, build houses and live there.

Lastly the actions of the BJP government not to have provided with at least two days notice to the MPs to study the ‘Reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir Bill’ or the President’s resolution to repeal Article 370, shows that the BJP not only does not want scrutiny and deliberation, which is the key to any democratic process but also just wants to convert the Parliament to a rubber stamp, which is what the first session of Parliament of the 17th Lok Sabha has become. The passage of 32 bills, in haste, without pre-legislative consultation with public or discussions with those to be impacted by the concerned bills or denying the right to send bills to the select committee, not only confirms this but also indicates what await us in the near future.

The PUCL would urge the people of India to see yesterday’s process in Parliament as one more effort to repress and subjugate the people

of Kashmir and should oppose this decision of the Government peacefully. We would also like our sisters and brothers in Kashmir to know that we are with them and share their loss and grief against this latest attack by the GOI on them.

PUCL demands:

- (1) That the clampdown on telecom services and communication and restrictions on movement be immediately lifted;
- (2) All Political / Opposition leaders be released,
- (3) Normalcy be restored in the Valley.
- (4) All the troops be withdrawn.
- (5) The three legislation introduced on 5th

August, 2019, viz., the (i) The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019 - Presidential order CO 272, (ii) Statutory Resolution introduced in the Rajya Sabha and (iii) The Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill be rolled back; and

- (6) Undertake any action with regard to Kashmir only after consulting the Kashmiri people.

Ravi Kiran Jain, National President, PUCL;
Dr. V. Suresh, National General Secretary,
PUCL 

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Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

The Long Dark Night in Kashmir

At the stroke of the midnight hour on 5 August 2019, Jammu and Kashmir was blanketed in a state of siege. 35,000 fresh troops in addition to the existing 6.5 lakhs were present with orders to shoot, curfew, internet and phone shut down, media black out, and all major elected leaders under house arrest. Already, there was escalated aggression over the past week, with reports of military takeover of state institutions and frenzied evacuation of tourists and Amarnath yatris. Schools, universities and hostels were also shut down, and movement across the state restricted. With a complete gag on democratic space, and unprecedented terror among people, Union Home Minister Amit Shah tabled the resolution in Rajya Sabha to revoke autonomy in Jammu and Kashmir.

At 11:15am on 5 August 2019, Amit Shah announced that the President had already passed orders effectively abrogating Article 370, by extending all the provisions of the Constitution to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Through convoluted and illegal processes and amendments, Amit Shah then moved to introduce the J&K Reorganisation Bill in Parliament among heavy protest and disruption—a power that the Parliament would not have been allowed under the unamended Article 370. The Bill bifurcates the state into two Union Territories: one of Ladakh, and one of Jammu and Kashmir. The UT of Ladakh is under the direct control of the Union Government through the Lt. Governor, while the UT of Jammu and Kashmir has a Legislative Assembly of its own with extremely limited powers, and is overall

under the Lt. Governor.

The BJP government did not circulate the Bills in the House beforehand, and the Speaker Venkaiah Naidu allowed MPs time only until 12:30 pm to propose amendments. It appears that preparations for the move had been underway for months, as the imposition of President's Rule in December 2018 helped facilitate the government's actions today. The people of Kashmir themselves are denied any voice through the unconstitutional capture of state institutions and elected representatives, and the force of sheer state terror.

As the day progressed, the Rajya Sabha has passed the Reorganization Bill, and it is now due to be tabled before the Lok Sabha tomorrow. 8000 fresh paramilitary troops and counting have been moved to Kashmir from the states of UP, Odisha, and Assam; and law and order forces of the entire country have been placed on high alert. By the evening, Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah have also been taken into preventive detention. The blackout in the Valley prevents any access to information about the conditions of the people on the ground at the moment, and we fear ominous consequences as the BJP government brings its plan for the people of Kashmir into action at gunpoint.

We strongly oppose the move of the BJP government to unilaterally attempt to revoke the autonomy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, with no regard to the Constitution and the rights it enshrines.

**Shahana Bhattacharya and
Deppika Tandon, Secretaries** 

Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I Fell down and got back up again.

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Statement of a BJP MLA from UP, Vijay Goel, a Rajya Sabha M.P. and Manohar Lal Khattar, CM, Haryana, reflective of their rotten mentality, not condemned by any BJP leader:

Muslims, bachelors in BJP can now marry ‘gori’ Kashmiri girls: UP MLA Vikram Saini

Mohd Dilshad | TNN

Muzaffarnagar: A day after the Centre moved to scrap special privileges to J&K under Article 370, BJP MLA Vikram Saini said that Muslims in the country should be happy that they can now marry “gori” Kashmiri girls without any fear. He added that bachelors in BJP are now welcome to go to Kashmir, buy plots of land and get married.

Addressing a gathering in Khatauli of Muzaffarnagar on Tuesday, BJP MLA Vikram Saini said, “Modi Ji has fulfilled our dream. All bachelor BJP members who are eager to get married can go to Kashmir, and we have no problem with it. In fact, JBP’s Muslim activists should be happy as they can now get married to

“gori (fair) Kashmiri girls,” the Khatauli MLA said.

According to sources, an event was held in a banquet hall of Khatauli, in which over a hundred BJP workers participated, to celebrate the Centre’s move on Article 370.

In February, the MLA had offered to go to Pakistan with a nuclear bomb attached to him and destroy the neighbouring country. A month earlier in January, he had said, “Those who feel unsafe in this country are anti-nationals and do not deserve to live. Give me a ministry and I’ll attach a bomb to their posteriors and blast them.”

Courtesy **The Times of India**,
Aug 7, 2019 

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- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist

1. DCW chief wants FIR against Khattar, Goel for “sexist” remarks; BJP MP hits back

New Delhi, Aug 10 : Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal said on Saturday that Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar and BJP MP Vijay Goel should be booked for their “sexist and misogynist remarks and acts” after scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status.

Her statement drew a sharp retort from Goel who said it reflects the “disappointment among anti-nationals” over the government decision on Article 370.

In a statement issued here, the DCW chief said the BJP leader’ acts and remarks not only amount to outraging the modesty of Kashmiri daughters and sisters and denting their dignity, but also impacted women across the country.

They may end up inciting violence in the already sensitive area of Kashmir, she said.

“The Delhi Commission for Women has taken suo-motu cognizance of the sexist and misogynist acts and statements given by Mr. Vijay Goel, MP Rajya Sabha and Mr. ML Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana,” she said.

The DCW’s statement came after Khattar on Friday courted a controversy with his remarks that “some people are now saying that as Kashmir is open and brides will be brought from there”, apparently in reference to the scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status.

The women’s panel also rebuked Goel for allegedly putting up hoardings of Kashmiri girls outside his Delhi residence.

“Such statements by those in high constitutional offices reinforce the notions of a patriarchal society and severely undermine the value and voice of women and girls,” the Delhi women’s panel chief said.

“At a time when several states are on high alert, such insensitive and crass comments

that hurt the sentiments of an entire state, have the potential of flaring up violence and need to be checked urgently,” the DCW chief said.

“The commission strongly recommends registration of an FIR in both the matters without considering the issue of territorial jurisdiction,” the women’s panel head said.

She also demanded an action taken report in the matter from Delhi Police’s Crime Branch by September 14.

Khattar, however, on Saturday accused the media of “running a misleading and factless campaign” against him. “Daughters are our pride. The daughters of entire country are our daughters,” Khattar tweeted clarifying his position.

On his part, Goel responded by saying that even though Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal welcomed the revocation of provisions of Article 370, the “frustration” among his “brigade” was palpable.

Taking to Twitter to respond the DCW’s charges, Goel said that Maliwal should have “clean thoughts”.

“Fearing the public of Delhi, they supported the revocation of Article 370 but the frustration of Kejriwa’s brigade is clearly visible. These statements reflect the disappointment among anti-nationals because of abrogation of Article 370,” Goel tweeted in Hindi.

Maliwal replied through a tweet, “Nationalism runs in my blood & my constant work for my country is testimony but Goel’s only achievement was embarrassing India at Olympics & now disturbing peace & PM’s good work in Kashmir! Don’t need certificate from a filthy sick minded moron! Won’t let the leacher get away!”

Courtesy **Outlook**, 10 August 2019. 

2. ‘Women’s Bodies Are Not Battlegrounds’: Why Men Searching for ‘Kashmiri Brides’ Is Deeply Sexist

“Kashmiri women are not spoils of war. They are human beings with agency and the right to consent or not consent.”

Reuters

Women’s rights advocates have slammed a torrent of online posts by men from across India who expressed enthusiasm about marrying women from Kashmir after the government repealed Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which gave the state of Jammu and Kashmir special rights.

“It’s deeply sexist,” said Rituparna Chatterjee, an activist writing a book on the #MeToo movement in India. “Women’s bodies have been battlegrounds for men for centuries. The latest comments of Kashmiri women, are only testimony to this fact,” she said.

India struck down a constitutional provision on Monday that granted special status to residents of Jammu and Kashmir state, whose population is majority Muslim, including exclusive rights to owning property and getting state government jobs there.

Under the previous rules, women from the state who married outsiders lost those rights, and outsiders couldn’t buy property in Kashmir.

Now, residents of the state and people from other parts of India will be on an equal legal footing in Kashmir.

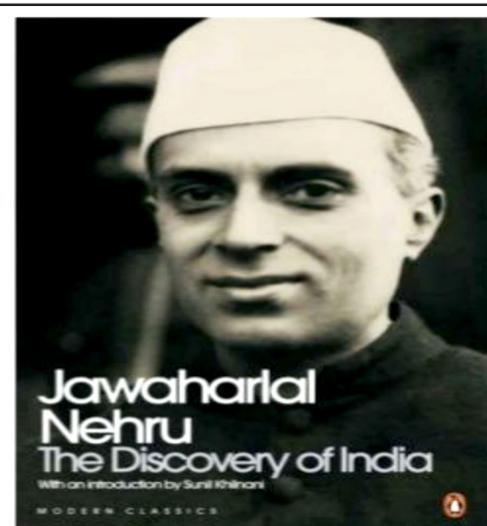
As social media was flooded with posts expressing jubilation about the constitutional change, many men among them said on Twitter and the video platform TikTok that this would make it easier for them to marry Kashmiris.

“Congrats India now unmarried boys can marry these smart girls from Kashmir after 370 removal,” said one post, referring to the constitutional provision that was struck down. Another said: “Every Indian boy’s dream right now: 1. Plot in Kashmir 2. Job in Kashmir 3. Marriage with Kashmiri girl.

Mihira Sood, a Supreme Court lawyer in New Delhi, who specialises in gender issues, called it “objectification of women.”

“Kashmiri women are not spoils of war. They are human beings with agency and the right to consent or not consent,” she said.

Courtesy News18, August 8, 2019 



The Discovery Of India was written by Jawaharlal Nehru during his 3 years imprisonment inside the Ahmednagar Fort. He had written the book while he was interned in the room in the record period of five months from April 1944 to September 1944 and during his Twentieth month of stay in this prison.

Comment :

BJP: from ‘being different’ to ‘being dishonourable’

Under Advani, being a ‘party with a difference’ was BJP’s article of faith; under Modi, the claim is just a nostalgic memory

These days, I find myself increasingly thinking of Lal Krishna Advani. He was the president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1990 when I returned to India and started working as a journalist. In those days, privately owned news channels did not exist. Doordarshan was a monopoly. The only way independent current affairs was possible was through video magazines. There were two that were best known: Newstrack and Eyewitness. I was the editor of the latter.

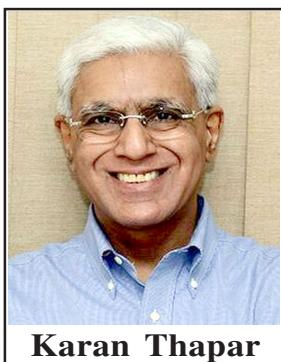
I did many interviews with Mr. Advani, probably more than I did of any other politician in that *fin de siècle* period. The common thread that ran through the interviews was a ploy I was rather fond of. Whenever my focus was on an issue or a decision that smelt of realpolitik and appeared less than ethical, I would counter Mr. Advani’s defensive answers with a set statement, which I delivered with a grin: “That answer may be okay for other leaders but how can it be acceptable for the president of a party that calls itself ‘a party with a difference’?”

There wasn’t a single occasion when this didn’t make Mr. Advani wince. It wasn’t just embarrassment that I could discern but pain, of the sort that’s self-inflicted and, therefore, more hurtful. Whenever that happened, I knew I had made my point. Mr. Advani was too shrewd a politician to verbally concede but the look on his face said it all.

Part of moral core

In those days, the BJP genuinely believed that it was different from every other party. This difference was its moral core. It convinced

the party that it was superior to others. At that time, it had 85 MPs in the Lok Sabha but even when six years earlier it just had two, it drew its strength from its moral conviction as much as from its legislative numbers.



Karan Thapar

I wonder what Mr. Advani would make of his party’s behaviour today? Since the swearing in of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a second term, the BJP has been on an unparalleled — and, it seems, unstoppable — spree of luring MPs, MLAs and even corporators. This has happened in Karnataka, West Bengal, **Goa**, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. And it has happened by a variety of novel methods. On one occasion, two-thirds of a party’s strength in the legislature defected; on another, a sizeable number of MLAs resigned to enable the BJP to cross the majority mark.

Not only is the BJP unconcerned about what this has done to its moral image, but also, perhaps more surprisingly, it is indifferent to what this will do to its internal cohesion and ideology. Consider Goa. The 10 Congress MLAs who switched to the BJP had been elected to oppose it but three of them are now members of its government. One is the Deputy Chief Minister. Just two months ago, they were strong opponents of Hindutva. Today, they are its champions. No doubt this says a lot about them but it also speaks volumes about the sincerity of the BJP’s Hindutva message.

Embracing the defectors

Let me go one step further. Atanasio

‘Babush’ Monserrate faces several serious criminal charges, including over the rape of a minor in 2016. This was forcefully raised by the BJP in the Panaji byelection just two months ago. ‘Save Goa from Babush’ was the party’s slogan. On that occasion, he won and defeated the BJP candidate. Today, the BJP has opened its arms and embraced him. His wife Jennifer is a Minister in its government. The charges he faces have been forgotten and forgiven.

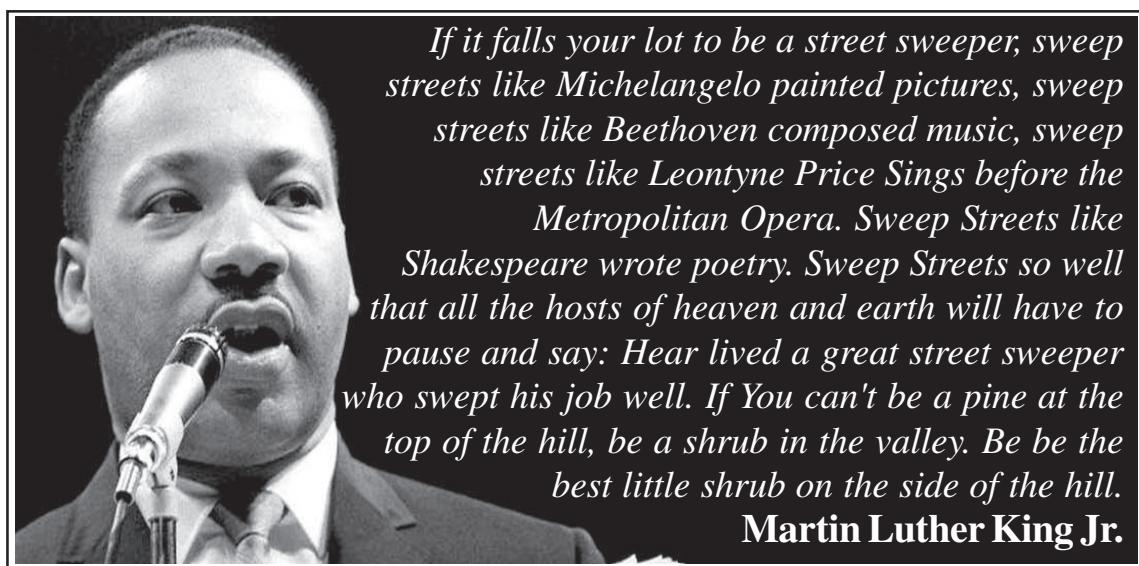
It seems that in its inexorable march to a comprehensive domination of Indian politics, the BJP is trampling upon its own moral principles and ethical values. No doubt this first happened in **Karnataka** in 2008 with ‘Operation Lotus’ but, at the time, that was a one-off and the BJP was not proud of it. Now, there’s a brazen defiance of ethics and unconcern with the consequences. The party wants to form a government or gain legislative strength no matter what the cost. It’s the end that matters not the means. Success is its own justification.

So where does this leave the BJP’s vaunted claim of being a ‘party with a difference’? The truth is that under Narendra Modi and Amit

Shah, the BJP feels like any other party. In 1980, when members of the Haryana Janata Party under Bhajan Lal defected *en masse* to Indira Gandhi’s Congress, Mr. Advani would have called it the worst example of ‘Congressisation of Indian politics’. Today we’re witnessing the ‘Congressisation of the BJP’.

There is, however, a deeper irony here. Few would deny that Mr. Advani is a founding architect of the BJP. He took it from two seats in 1984 to six years in power beginning 1998. During those three decades (1984 to 2004), the claim of being a ‘party with a difference’ was not just meaningful but, for many, an article of faith. A mere decade and a half later, Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah have taken the BJP to another level altogether. Mr. Advani could only have dreamed of where it has got to. But, in the process, the party’s proud claim of ‘being different’ has been scrubbed. Today, that is just a nostalgic memory for Mr. Advani’s generation. I bet the modern BJP doesn’t even know what it means or, if it does, considers it a foolish commitment.

Karan Thapar is a broadcast journalist
Courtesy **The Hindu**, 27 July, 2019. 



If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leontyne Price Sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep Streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep Streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say: Hear lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well. If You can't be a pine at the top of the hill, be a shrub in the valley. Be be the best little shrub on the side of the hill.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Rising incidents of hate crimes point to the growing power of the lumpen

Radha Kumar

The national bar against hate crime has been lowered, but resolute corrective action is possible

Once again, the first weeks of the Narendra Modi administration have been marked by hate crimes — two Muslim men beaten by mobs in Jharkhand and Mumbai, demanding they shout ‘Jai Shri Ram’, one so mercilessly that he died. Another man, a tribal, lynched in Tripura on suspicion of being a cattle thief. Most recently, 24 men accused of being cattle smugglers, beaten and made to shout ‘Gau Mata ki Jai’, in Rajasthan.

This time, however, there is a rising tide of concern, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, there have been a number of editorials, OpEds and talk shows calling for action; internationally, India has begun to feature prominently on a growing list of countries marked by hate crime, including hate speech in electoral campaigns.

A rising graph

Studies of **hate crimes** in India show that they have steadily risen over the past five years. Amnesty International India documented 721 such incidents between 2015 and 2018. Last year alone, it tracked 218 hate crimes, 142 of which were against Dalits, 50 against Muslims, 40 against women, and eight each against Christians, Adivasis, and transgenders. The more common hate crimes, they found, were honour killings — that have sadly occurred for decades — and ‘cow-related violence’, that was rare earlier but has become more frequent over the past five years.

According to Hate Crime Watch, crimes based on religious identity were in single digits until 2014, when they surged from nine in 2013 to 92 in 2018. Of the 291 incidents mentioned by the website, 152 occurred in Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP)-ruled States, 40 in Congress-ruled States and the rest in States ruled by regional parties or coalitions. Rarely, if ever, did bystanders attempt to stop the violence or police arrive on time to do so. In both studies, Uttar Pradesh topped the list of States with the largest number of hate crimes for the third year, followed by Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Bihar.

These facts are striking enough to concern any **government**. The Prime Minister expressed pain at the sickening murder of Tabrez Ansari in Jharkhand, but clearly far more is required. The Rajasthan administration is introducing a Bill prohibiting cow vigilantism, but that deals with only one hate crime. An omnibus act against all hate crimes, including hate speech, is required across India and should be a priority of the 17th Lok Sabha. Germany, for example, amended Section 46 of its Criminal Procedure Code, dealing with sentencing in violent crime, to say the sentence must be based on consideration of ‘the motives and aims of the offender, particularly where they are of a racist or xenophobic nature or where they show contempt for human dignity’.

We have a number of sections in the Indian Penal Code that can be used to punish or even prevent hate crime, but they are disparate and few policemen are aware of them. Those that are, fear to use them in areas whose political leaders mobilise through hate speech. Though some Indian analysts debate whether there is a correlation between hate speech and hate crime, worldwide data show that hate speech encourages or legitimises acts of violence and a climate of impunity. France has a a draft Bill

to prohibit hate speech, and Germany has already enacted one.

According to a study by NDTV there are at least 45 politicians in our newly elected union legislature who have indulged in hate speech over the past five years; 35 of them belong to the BJP. No action has been taken as yet by the party, though it is in such a position of strength electorally that it would lose little by acting against them.

Court directives

In 2018, the Supreme Court directed Central and State governments to make it widely known that lynching and mob violence would ‘invite serious consequence under the law’ (*Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India & Ors*). Then Home Minister Rajnath Singh told Parliament that the government had formed a panel to suggest measures to tackle mob violence, and would enact a law if necessary. The panel’s recommendations are not in the public domain, and acts of hate crime do not appear to have diminished in the year since Mr. Singh’s promise.

In a May 2019 report, Human Rights Watch India pointed out that only some States had complied with the Supreme Court’s orders to designate a senior police officer in every district to prevent incidents of mob violence and ensure that the police take prompt action, including safety for witnesses; set up fast-track courts in such cases; and take action against policemen or officials who failed to comply. Those State governments that did comply, the report commented, did so only partially. In several instances, the police actually obstructed investigations, even filing charges against the victims.

Whether it is political hate speech or police bias on the ground, there is little doubt that the national bar against hate crime has been lowered. On television, we see replays of hate speech and videos of lynching. Though the accompanying commentary is critical, repeated

iterations normalise the hateful. Indeed, anchors themselves resort to invective far more often than before — note how Kashmiris are routinely heckled and abused on talk shows. The print media too is failing. Several newspapers now publish triumphalist opinion articles, including comments to articles that are hate speech by any definition. Criticism of blatantly communal government actions such as extension of refuge and citizenship on religious identity has grown increasingly muted.

Key steps needed

One of the policy issues that is high on the Modi administration’s list is dealing with incitement to violence through social media. But the focus is on hate in relation to terrorism, and it is unclear whether government policy will extend to cover hate crime. Important as it is to do so, the digital media is not the only offender. In fact, there are several obvious steps which would be easier to take and yield more immediate results than regulation of the digital media. **Parliament** could enact an omnibus act against hate crime, and the Home Minister could set benchmarks for policemen and administrators to deal with hate crime. The legislature and political parties could suspend or dismiss members who are implicated in hate crimes or practise hate speech. The electronic and print media could stop showing or publishing hateful comments and threats. Priests could preach the values of tolerance and respect that are common to all religions and schools could revitalise courses on the directive principles of our Constitution.

For Mr. Modi, there is an additional challenge. He has twice spoken out against hate crime, but his words of pain have not been backed by action, either by his party or by BJP-led administrations. Does he have so little influence over his own? We have to hope not.

For a demographically diverse country such as India, hate crimes — including crimes of contempt are a disaster.

(To be Contd....on Page - 38)

The Daily Fix: Why is the Modi government ignoring all the alarm bells from the economy?

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said she 'isn't worried'. She should be.

"I wouldn't say [I'm] worried," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman about the state of the Indian economy, in an interview to the *Economic Times*. "I don't want to sound complacent, but it is also a fact that in spite of global headwinds, India is keeping its head well above the water."

This is what India keeping its head above the water looks like:

Growth in eight core industries was down to 0.2% in June, a 50-month low, with some of those contracting. Nine of 11 automobile companies saw a double-digit drop in sales in July, the ninth straight month of falling sales. Maruti, the market leader, saw sales fall by more than 30%, the worst decline in two decades. Companies have already begun suspending production and there is fear among workers in the industry about layoffs.

Top Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies like Hindustan Unilever, ITC and Godrej have all registered single-digit growth in the first quarter of 2019. *Min's Macro Tracker*, a report based on trends from 16 high-frequency economic indicators shows that the slowdown is not abating anytime soon. As Bajaj Auto's chairman, Rahul Bajaj, put it, "There is no demand and no private investment, so where will growth come from? It doesn't fall from heavens."

Some of these indicators may be cyclical, and indeed India is at the bad end of the cycle at the moment. Industry might hope that the upcoming festival season might spur some demand and offer light at the end of the tunnel.

But there are also clear signs that the downturn is structural, a reflection of something deeper in the Indian economy. The decline in demand is

Rohan Venkataramakrishnan

alarming because the consumption economy was one of the two main engines keeping India going for the last few years, with deficit-funded public investment being the other. But its fall reflects an extremely troubling indicator: Household savings have sharply declined over the past five years, from around 22% (as a percentage of GDP) in 2013-'14 to less than 17% now.

India is coming into its "demographic dividend", a nearly four-decade period in which the working-age population is larger than dependents either young or old. One would expect household savings to grow at a time like this, simply because there are more people working and hopefully putting away money. But this does not seem to be the case.

Meanwhile, more troubling data has emerged from government itself. The Centre's gross tax collections saw only a 1.4% growth in the first quarter of this financial year. Remember, Finance Minister Sitharaman's budget projected growth of 18.3% for the whole year, meaning in the next four quarters tax collections will have to hit 22.3% – even as the economy continues slowing down.

Maybe Sitharaman's metaphor was apt. It does seem like the deluge is here, and India is only able to keep its head above the water. But even that may be illusory. As the former Chief Economic Adviser, Arvind Subramanian, has pointed out, India's Gross Domestic Product figures seem extremely suspect and are likely to be significantly lower.

If all of this isn't worrying the finance minister and the government of India, which unveiled a lacklustre budget that made no note of the slowdown, what will it take to get them to pay attention before even the head is submerged?

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, Aug 05, 2019 · 

Lohia's Chaukhamba Raj & Good Governance: Relevance in Present-Day India

Dr. Ramesh Kumar*

Introduction

The concept of 'Good Governance' is construed as an indeterminate term currently in vogue in the development discourse to explain as to how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources. Widely viewed as the process of decision-making, the notion of governance also entails the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.

Broadly speaking, the concept of 'Good Governance' facilitates comparison between ineffective economies or political bodies and viable economies or political bodies. Accordingly, this concept focuses on the responsibility of governments and governing bodies to come up to the expectations of the masses as opposed to select groups in society. However, Sam Agere has pointed out: "The discretionary space left by the lack of a clear well-defined scope for what governance encompasses allows users to choose and set their own parameters."¹

Dr Ram Manohar Lohia had acquired a vast range of the social and political thoughts through his life experiences and owing to his quest for knowledge and 'untiring participation in the social and political issues facing the country at various points of time.' His vast spectrum of thoughts varied from, on the one hand, his astute analysis of the problems such as poverty and systems of government, and innovative solutions like ideas of *sapta kranti* and 'Chaukhamba Model' of government demonstrates his deep understanding of the grassroots issues of the country. On the other hand, his perspectives and conceptualisations on international issues such as world peace and world government sufficiently illustrate the

internationalist vision of Lohia. However, his thinking on 'New Socialism', undoubtedly, remains the basic theoretical construct for which Lohia is acknowledged as the 'frontal figure' of the socialist thought and movement in India. This paper endeavours to analyse Lohia's 'Chaukhamba Model' and its relevance for good governance in contemporary India.

Chaukhamba Model

Reiterating his faith in the idea of democracy, as a system of government, to provide for basic institutional framework of government in India, Lohia; however, also expressed his anxiety with democracy having the tendency of turning into a sterile—and sometimes oppressive—model, if it was not properly supported by positive orientations in the policies and programmes of the government. He, therefore, argued for adapting the system of democracy to the complex and unique socio-economic conditions prevailing in India. He was in favour of guaranteeing basic fundamental freedoms of the people, provided it was ensured that the basic needs of each and every citizen would be fulfilled. In Lohia's opinion, the notion of democracy must not be limited merely in allocating certain civil and political rights to the people, but be understood in such a way that it leads to generation of such socio-economic conditions where nobody remains without securing the basic minimum needs of life.

Disenchanted with the existing two-pillar model of government, i.e., Centre and the States, in India, he pioneered the notion of four-pillar model of government, which envisaged an arrangement when a constitution was framed on the basis of the fourpillar state, the village, the district, the province and the centre,

being four pillars of equal majesty and dignity. It was construed as an integral part of Lohia's conception of socialism. Lohia's 'Chaukhamba Model' was apparently not a mere executive arrangement under which the superior parliaments could legislate and the village and district organs were left with the execution of the laws, rather it was both a legislative as well as a full-fledged executive arrangement.

Construed as a way of life extending to all spheres of human activity, for instance, production, ownership, administration, planning, education and the like, the 'Chaukhamba Model' provides a structure and a way in which the community of a state is to be so organised and sovereign power so diffused that each little community in it lives the way of life that it chose. These various ways of life is a commonly strong bond that unite the numerous communities into a state. The state, therefore, was to be organised in such a manner that it could allow the widest opportunity for popular participation, "Sovereign power must not reside alone in centre and federating units. It must be broken up and diffused over smallest region where a group of men and women live."²

The idea of such a state however, did not represent the idea of a self-sufficient village but of the 'intelligent and vital village.' Under such a structure of the state each little community would live intelligently and strive after the integrity and unity of the nation.³

In the 'Chaukhamba Model' or four-pillar state the armed forces of the state might be controlled by the centre, the armed police by the province but all other police might be brought under district and village control. While industries like the railways or iron and steel might be controlled by the Centre, the small unit textile industry of the future might be left to district and village ownership. While price fixing might be a central subject the structure of agriculture and the ratio of capital and labour in it might be left to the choice of the district

and the village. A substantial part of state revenues should stay with the village and the district. As far as possible the principle of election might be applied to administrative, instead of nominations or selections.

Economic decentralisation, corresponding to political and administration decentralisation, might be brought about through maximum utilisation of small machines.⁴

The 'Chaukhamba Model' rose above the issues of regionalism and factionalism. It diffused power also within people's organisations and corporations. Lohia opined that four-pillar state might indeed appear fanatic to many in view of the special conditions of the country, its illiteracy, its fears and superstitions and above all, its castes. The village representatives may indeed be selfish and ignorant and raise caste above justice. And yet to give him power seemed the only way to deliver the people from inertia as well as an administration that was both top-heavy and corrupt. Lohia believed that by giving power to small communities of men, democracy of the first grade was possible. The four-pillar state ensured effective and intelligent democracy to the common man.⁵

Lohia accorded equal and simultaneous emphasis on economic and political decentralisation. Decentralisation of economic and political power was the core of his conception of 'Chaukhamba Model.' While underlining that political decentralisation was symbol of equality and prosperity, he asserted that there could be no political democracy without economic democracy as there could be no economic democracy without political democracy. He was opposed to political centralisation because it could engender monopoly of the politician- business-bureaucracy nexus wherein masses are victimised. He explicitly stated that political centralisation "conditioned human thinking; ideas have been replaced by propaganda and

thinking has become subservient to power.”⁶ According to him, centralised political power renders the common people to become mere pawns in the hands of those wielding power and thus rendered helpless under the centralised power system and such a system defeats the very purpose of democracy.

Lohia wanted the community of a state so organised and sovereign power so diffused that each of little community in it lives the way of life it chooses. These various ways of life must indeed run a common bond strong enough to bond the numerous communities in to a state. With regard to the question as to how strong must these bonds be in their four-pillar order, Lohia’s reply was that it ‘must be left for the time to determine.’⁷ Asserting that no precise list of federal or state or district or village or concurrent subjects could be drawn up, Lohia argued that experience and time and perhaps the next Constituent Assembly of India could make precise allocations. He further added: “For the present time, there must be unhedged will to diffuse power and to let each little community live intelligently consistent with the unity and integrity of the nation.”⁸

Cautioning that the popular principle of the four-pillar state may cause great confusion and occasion numerous errors in the beginning, Lohia averred that it “will clean up the administration in the end by the process of forcing the vast mass to act and judge. For instance, the only way to purify controls is to leave their administration to the village, town and district Panchayat and to take them out of the hands of the legislators and government servants.”⁹

Lohia wanted private property to go, except such as did not occasion employment of one person by another. He was not in favour of ownership of property by the state exclusively at the centre as it was disastrous both for bread and freedom. Part of property must be owned by the village and the province as much as by

the centre and by co-operative.¹⁰

Lohia wanted legislative decentralisation along with administrative decentralisation. In order to make decentralisation of the administration meaningful, Lohia was in favour of allocating some limited legislative powers to the district administration and village Panchayats so that they could manage their affairs appropriately.¹¹

While arguing for abolishing the office of the Governor, Lohia stated that the limited functional relationship between the Centre and state should be discharged by a single official only. He was in favour of amending the Evidence Act along with Criminal Procedure Code in such a manner so that common man should have justice at minimum cost. He was also in favour of constituting a committee to reconsider the existing laws and suggest remedial measures to remove the undemocratic elements from those laws. He wanted single High Court and single Public Service Commission for two or three states so that the number of courts and public service commissions could be reduced and their jurisdiction could be expanded for more efficiency.¹² Therefore, it was the thinking of Lohia that through political and economic decentralisation, the citizens could be able to run the local administration and raise necessary resources for the development of the nation.

In the opinion of Lohia, the citizens can become the architect of their destinies only through decentralisation of power. And democratic participation of all citizens could be possible under Chaukhamba Raj. Undoubtedly, Lohia acknowledged democracy of the people, by the people and for the people; nevertheless, he averred that Chaukhamba Raj was essential to making democracy really functional because it facilitates the establishment of rule of the community, by the community and for the community, which is essential for a vibrant democracy.

Broadly speaking, Lohia's 'Chaukhamba Model' is the outcome of his views on socialism and emphasis on decentralisation – economic, political and legislative – forms the core of this model. Hence it deems appropriate to have a brief overview of Lohia's socialism.

Lohia's New Socialism

Lohia's criticism of the Western ideological constructs appears to be aimed at paving the way for establishing socialism as the most appropriate theoretical format for steering India on the trajectory of an equitable and all-round socio-economic development. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that even his ideology of socialism kept on getting improvised and enriched with

newer intellectual inputs imbibed by him from time to time. Undoubtedly, Lohia accepted socialism as the viable ideology for India and tried to conceptualise it in the light of the Gandhian inputs; nonetheless, he came out with the idea of New Socialism in 1959 with the plea that it offers a comprehensive system of socio-economic and political life for the people in India.¹³

In his conceptualisation of the notion of socialism, Lohia opined that, ...the concept of socialism has too long lagged 'behind the cohorts of capitalism or of communism' and has lived 'on borrowed breath' leading to hesitancy in the action of socialists and that it must be developed, if it is to have an effective appeal, into a doctrine independent of other political ideologies.¹⁴ Accordingly, Lohia sought to rid the ideology of socialism from 'its borrowed breadth' by infusing the spirit of Gandhism in it, specifically by dovetailing the philosophy with the Gandhian doctrines of satyagraha, theory of ends-means consistency, economic system rooted in the small machine technology and, finally, the idea of political decentralisation.

He maintained that the incorporation of

Gandhian principles in the socialist philosophy would lend greater practicability of socialism to the Indian situations. The core of socialism as visualised by Lohia drew its spirit and substance from the Gandhian principles of socioeconomic and political reconstruction of the Indian society and formed the doctrinal foundations of socialism as conceptualised by Lohia.¹⁵ What, however, was unique to Lohia was his notion of decentralised socialism whose essence lay in emphasis on things like small machine, cooperative labour, village government and decentralised planning.¹⁶

Lohia's conception of New Socialism in 1959 was greatly influenced by his 'circumstantial motivations and lived experiences'. Evidently, more comprehensive in scope and reflective of the holistic vision of its proponent, the theory of New Socialism was founded on the basis of six fundamental elements encompassing both domestic as well as foreign aspects of the life of the people. These six elements were: egalitarian standards in the areas of income and expenditure, growing economic interdependence, world parliament system based on adult franchise, democratic freedoms inclusive of right to private life, Gandhian technique of individual and collective civil disobedience, and dignity and rights of common man.¹⁷

Lohia opined that the cumulative impact of his notion of New Socialism would lie in providing such a complex web of system of life for the people that they would not only be able to live an egalitarian and contented life within the country but would also aspire to become a part of the world government. His advocacy of socialism in the form of a new civilisation, which could be referred to as 'socialist humanism', could be said to have given a new direction and dimension to the socialist movement in India. He called on all the socialist parties of the world to think in terms of an effective world union through world

government. Reinforcing his faith in the world government, Lohia modified his notion of 'four pillars of state' to include the 'fifth pillar' in it in the form of the world government and established the World Development Council in his endeavour to set up world government to maintain peace in the world.

Rationale

Undoubtedly, Lohia's 'Chaukhamba Model' was based on his vastly acquired knowledge livable experiences in the contemporary India wherein he was disenchanted with the existing socio-economic and political mechanism owing to its inability to solve the problems confronting the multitude of the masses in the country. The principles underlying Lohia's 'Chaukhamba Model' seem more utopian than pragmatic because putting these principles into practice by formulating necessary laws requires various amendments to the Indian Constitution, which is a tedious process on which consensus cannot be built. Besides, Lohia's conception of this 'Chaukhamba Model' is not fully illustrated in details, as Lohia himself admitted that details would be determined by the time as well as the future Constituent Assembly to frame a new Constitution incorporating the principles enunciated by Lohia in his various writings and speeches from time to time.

Besides, the existing constitutional provisions facilitate two-pillar federal model – Centre and States –in the country which is being carried on somewhat properly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution of India. The 73 and 74 amendments to the Constitution have, to some extent, made attempts at empowering people at the village and municipal levels. However, these measures don't meet the expectations enumerated in the 'Chaukhamba Model' and much needs to be done in this regard.

In the wake of globalisation and the path of economic reforms embarked upon by India for

the past two decades, there has been over emphasis on privatisation and this is major stumbling block to the 'Chaukhamba Model'.

Conclusion

Lohia's concept of Chaukhamba Raj represents a middle path between Gandhian notion of self-reliant village and modern federalism. He has tried to provide a solid shape to his political views, like his economic views, through his notion of Chaukhamba Raj and administrative decentralisation. Gandhian influence on his notion of political decentralisation is clearly visible. He endeavoured to build a true democracy by vesting the control over bureaucracy in the hands of elected representatives of the people. Such an arrangement, on the one hand, can be helpful in putting an end of red-tapism; and on the other hand, it can also be helpful in reducing the chances of corruption and immoral practices because the ruling party will not be able to make misuse of the bureaucracy. Besides, the government officials can discharge their duties properly when they are free from political pressure.

In sum, Lohia's creditable contribution to the system of government is seemingly his model of four pillars of state called the 'Chaukhamba Model', which was contextualised within the framework of decentralised democratic polity that Lohia recommended for India. In the present-day political discourse in India, Lohia's name is invoked for garnering political support and votes in the elections. During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP appropriated the name of Lohia in his electoral campaigns in Uttar Pradesh despite the fact that the BJP has nothing to do with Lohia's ideology. However, Samajwadi party in Uttar Pradesh professes to be the heir to the legacy of Ram Manohar Lohia, not exclusively but in tandem with Gandhism, socialism and its economic ideology having undergone various transformations over the

years.

Undoubtedly, Lohia's ideology bears rationale for the present-day Indian politics; nevertheless, the travesty of truth is that there is no dedicated grouping to carry forward this task sincerely in letter and spirit. As Anirban Ganguly has aptly observed:

"Unfortunately there are very few, or perhaps none at all, within Lohia's own party or its pale form that claims to be 'Samajwadi', who read Lohia, can match his intellectual

sweep and vigour or even produce a grain of what he had given in terms of a prolific intellectual output. Lohia's political heirs — those who claim today to be carrying forward his legacy in Indian

politics, have little use of him and even less understanding of his genius."¹⁸

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Life and Work of late M.N. Roy To be published by California Varsity

(I am sending herewith the press cutting from Amrit Bazar Patrika, 21st April, 1962 which I have found going through old papers. You may find it interesting enough to publish it in R.H. Readers may find it absorbing and fascinating. It shows the deep serious concern of California University in the life and works of M.N. Roy. It is tragically regrettable that, so far as I know, whether any Indian university has ever attempted to do justice to M.N. Roy. - P.A.S Prasad)

New York, April 21

A California University press has planned to publish a series of volumes on the life and work of the Indian revolutionary, the late M.N. Roy, on the basis of twelve years of research undertaken by Prof. Robert C. North, a Stanford political scientist.

The first of the series is scheduled for publication next fall. Judging by the press release of the Stanford University News Service, the work would be a sympathetic portrayal, and the volumes might show that the late Roy played a larger role in world revolutionary movement than is generally realised.

“Roy’s importance in the Communist movement in the brief time he had been associated with it”, according to Prof. North, “is seen by the fact that after Lenin had stated his ‘thesis A’ – revolution in all colonies and sub-colonies – Roy put forward a ‘thesis B’ – roughly the same idea with a heavier emphasis on ‘revolution from below’.

“Roy thus helped draw up the basic blueprint for the Communist take-over in under-developed countries which is still used as a guide, 42 years later,” Prof North says.

Roy’s Philosophy

The philosophy of the late Roy, as ultimately evolved into a Radical Humanist philosophy, is described by Prof. North as having “basically the non-materialistic Indian approach towards the betterment of mankind.”

By starting a Radical Humanist movement, Roy is regarded as having “broken completely

then with the materialistic Marxist philosophy”.

The work recalls that Roy went to China in 1927 “to try to hold Chiang Kai Shek, Wang Chiang-Wei and the Chinese Communists together organisationally”.

Roy had failed in China, as history had shown “partly because then as now the Communists were never able to decide how much revolution should come from above and how much should come from below”.

Roy’s “Below” Theory

Prof. North says Roy espoused the ‘below’ theory of communalised agrarian revolution rooted in the people as opposed to “tactical alliance with nationalist leaders which the Communist leaders favoured then and still favour today”.

The Professor points out that this is one of the elements in the present controversy between Soviet Premier Khrushchev and the Communist leader Mao Tse-Tung.

The late Roy came to the United States in 1916 to raise arms and keep in touch with the large Sikh population which was contributing money to the Indian freedom struggle.

Under this plan, the Professor says, North American arms were to be bought and shipped from San Diego to nationalist groups in Calcutta, Madras, Malabar, Bombay and Karachi.

American officials co-operated with the British in preventing this, according to the Professor. Roy and his new American wife then fled to Mexico and the rest of the Indian “plotters” were tried in San Francisco. 

In Man's Own Image

By Ellen Roy and Sibnarayan Ray

Continued from the last issue...

Man's Place in Nature - II

Society is a creation of man. It is nothing without him. He makes it and composes it. This society is also part of the physical Universe and subject to its laws of rationality, of logic and causality. The law-governedness of human society we call Historical Determinism. And while law-governedness in the inanimate Universe (or in the world of lower animate beings) functions automatically, in the society of human beings it has to function on the level of intelligence. When the level of intelligence is low, the degree of knowledge limited, society is not organised by the conscious will and co-operative effort of rational human beings. The amount of freedom in such a society is small. As man's consciousness of his essential rationality increases, history provides a record of attempts at organising society more and more rationally, affording a larger and larger amount of freedom. It may be a record of relative failure in every instance. But considered as a process, it is a record of progressive approximation (the action of estimating something fairly accurately). And it is at a speed which accelerates as we approach contemporary history. This is evident from the shorter intervals between revolutions in modern times. Revolutions are the manifestations of the consciously directed impact of human will on the determined (law-governed) process of evolution in the realm of human society. **Historical Determinism, therefore, does not exclude freedom of the will. As a matter of fact, human will is the most powerful determining factor. Otherwise, there would be no room for revolutions in a rationally determined**

Simplified by Vinod Jain

process of history.

The incentive behind the will to act and the urge to create is man's basic urge for freedom. **Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals.** In so far as will is not sufficiently differentiated, by intelligence (choice, selection), from the mechanistic biological function of impulse or instinct, it leads to actions not in tune with the law-governedness of the Universe and rationality. Then it is, we might say, out of harmony. So when man is out of tune with the laws of nature, it is disharmony with the law-governedness of the Universe. It is so, particularly in their functioning (as rationality) in his immediate environments (i.e., society – causing friction, which impedes the development of man's potentialities) and in that measure deprives him of freedom. The avoidance of disharmony is therefore rational. Man's being essentially rational expresses itself in his will to be free.

And because harmony is also the essence of aesthetics, we may perceive in this striving the common ground of ethics and aesthetics. Harmony would give satisfaction to man's aesthetic aspirations and requirements. In human society, harmony is an ethical postulate (suggest or accept that something is true as a basis for theory or discussion). And moral behaviour is a means to achieve that ethics. Therefore we say that **man, (as an instinctively rational being) is moral because he is rational.** Whatever man does in pursuit of harmony with the law-governedness of the Universe, (which includes also his own social world) is conducive to his greater freedom.

Since man cannot ultimately achieve his individual freedom without striving for the freedom of all individuals, his pursuit of freedom is also ethical. Thus another urge of man (inherent in his rationality) is being fulfilled – that of reducing all categories to a minimum basic number. And we arrive at a monistic philosophy which (because it is more rational than all other philosophies) is more conducive to man's freedom.

Because the quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level, of the biological struggle for existence. The search for truth is the corollary thereof. In order to be free, man must first exist. The original form of man's fight for freedom is the struggle for existence. Like that, of all the pre-human animate beings, man's struggle for existence was first a negative endeavour. It was a fight against annihilation and extinction of the species, guided by the laws of the jungle. The fight for existence, or for survival, in the jungle took the form of physical adaptation. Thus for example, certain plants and trees had to grow taller than others (out of the thickets of uncontrolled vegetation), to get enough air and light. The animals, too, developed either heavier bulk to smother their rivals, or teeth and claws to kill and eat them. Man's more immediate ancestors had superior advantages to earlier animals in organic continuity because they had developed quick and agile and more articulate limbs to swing themselves from tree to tree, away from pursuing enemies. They developed longer arms to break from the higher branches the fruits which served them as nourishment.

The appearance of the human species is marked by a change of method in the struggle for existence. When some animal approximating homo sapiens hit on the idea of breaking a branch from a tree in order to get down the fruits with its help, and with it even hold his enemies at bay and strike terror

in their hearts – then, the struggle for existence has already changed its level. And the new animal was functionally an anthropoid (ape).

The qualitative difference consists in that the struggle for existence is no longer carried on through organic adaptation to surroundings. It is carried on by subjecting surroundings to the organism's purpose, by making use of part of the surroundings themselves to fit them better for the purpose of survival. The newness is the method which presupposes consciousness. The purpose is at first still only survival. But the novel method is so effective that the negative purpose of freeing man from the threat of annihilation and extinction is soon largely attained. And the struggle for existence consequently changes its level. It assumes a new character; it becomes a pursuit of more positive forms of freedom.

The difference lies in the quality of man's brain. The lower animal gets an impression registered in its brain, say of an approaching dangerous enemy; an emotion, say of fear, is evoked, and an automatic reaction takes place. It runs for its life and hides. For that purpose, it is equipped with long and swift legs, or a protective colour. Man, in a similar situation will experience the same sensations. But his reaction can be to take his stick and slay the enemy, which may be physically much more powerful. To use the stick was an idea. It was a creative act. To react to surroundings and their stimuli, with ideas, instead of more instinctive responses, is what distinguished man (more than anything else) from the lower animals. It is at the same time a more powerful weapon in the struggle for existence, in the fight for freedom.

Many examples could be given to show the qualitative difference between the reactions of man and those of the lower animals to impressions and experiences, and to the

tyranny of the forces of nature. The animal is thirsty, it must drink. In many parts of the world, there is no water unless it rains. When there is draught, the animal suffers from thirst and may die of it. Man observed, when it rained, that water gathered in mud puddles; the sun dried the mud; the water stood in the puddle for some time. Man had another idea: of mud he shaped a form in imitation of the puddle, dried it in the sun and used it to store water. He made enough of these forms to preserve water for non-rainy days. So, another creative act, born of an idea, and the risk of man's annihilation by thirst was so much reduced.

Thus, perhaps, man's first handiwork was born. And thus one can visualise the origin of all crafts and arts and industries – as the sequel of an idea. **The brain is a means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity – ideas.** In response to the requirements of a given situation, man coordinates various elements of his knowledge into ideas. These ideas manifest themselves in certain acts or creations which, even when the situation no longer exists, still continue to have an existence of their own. They continue to exist not only in their manifestations, but as ideas embodied in symbols. These have consequences, (a) **abstractly** in man's brain, where they form elements of new associations and co-ordination, (b) in their **practical** manifestations, where they influence man's life, his language and his behaviour, having become part of this environment.

At an early stage of his evolution, man must have had the idea of purposeful organisation. Animals also herd together in the instinct of survival. But when man began to live in groups, the instinct was transformed into a purpose which went beyond self-preservation. The purpose was to use man's creations –

his tools and other handiworks – to better avail and organise their production. This was conducive to greater fitness in his struggle for existence, and therefore to man's greater freedom. **The purpose of all human endeavour, individual as well as collective, is attainment of freedom in ever increasing measure.** At a certain stage of this collective endeavour for freer existence, labour was divided between (a) some who were put on guard, in charge of defending the community against approaching enemies; (b) some who produced the instruments and tools for the use of the community; and (c) some who thought it all out and administered the affairs of this primitive society according to the light of their reason, their knowledge and their understanding. Thus we can visualise the origin of society, as a creation of man. In course of time, organised politically as the State, society developed into a veritable Frankenstein (a thing that becomes terrifying or destructive to its maker) threatening to annihilate its own creator. This relation between man and society must change, if society is to serve the purpose of its origin. Society must be reconstructed so as to be the means for man's struggle for freedom. It should enable him to attain a greater and greater degree of freedom, instead of demanding his surrender as an individual. Unless society is so organised it will ultimately become man's doom. It will deprive him of his place of pride and dignity as the creator of the world he lives in.

Man's struggle for existence shows briefly: (a) production of man's first handiwork, (b) taming of his co-creatures to serve him, first directly as food and then as means for producing more food by cultivating the earth, (c) from there to the creation of the first vehicles to carry him on land and on water where his feet could not walk or not walk

fast and far enough, (d) from the first wooden plough to the tractor, (e) from the earliest observation of the forces of nature and the first sun-dial to the abstract science and the stratospheric rocket, and (f) from the developing of purposive grouping to the complexities of modern society. This is how man's struggle for existence has successively, (even if with long lapses and intervals), been taking place on ever higher levels. But his **brain** has remained his mightiest instrument in the struggle for existence. His **brain** has been his most powerful means of production. It (brain) is ever producing ideas, which embrace the whole of the Universe. So, the whole evolution of man can be traced if we can trace the history of his ideas. (It shows how) His struggle for existence has become a positive quest for freedom.

Yet man is not free. He can still not develop all his potentialities. And that is so because one of his earliest creations – his society – has not developed in proportion with man's requirements in the quest for freedom and search for truth. The reason for this misfortune is that generally man has remained unconscious of the fact that he is the **archetype** of society. (Archetype: an original model which others follow).

Unless society is so reconstructed, all the great things that man has thought and done since the dawn of his career, all that he has achieved and created, will be of no avail to him. The problem before modern man is to shape his society so as to make freedom possible. His future depends on the solution of this problem. Our philosophy may solve the problem, because it starts from man, it aims at his freedom, and it visualises action in harmony with this aim. Our philosophy is based on the contention that man is rational and therefore moral; and only such action (of reshaping society) can lead to freedom.

We know of philosophies in the earlier days

of human history which were to the men of their time intellectually or morally satisfactory. But these failed to provide them with the incentive to purposive action. That was the case with most religious philosophies which guided man's pursuits up to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We know of others which seemed to provide satisfaction to both kinds of requirements, but, (being based on incomplete or fallacious knowledge and co-ordination of experience) also failed to lead man to greater freedom. That was the case with the naturalist-liberal philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Man's ideas in any given epoch are found to be co-ordinated in systems of philosophy. And man's history in that epoch, his life in society – intellectual, cultural, political and economic – is guided by, and reflects, those ideas. At the same time, the experiences of man, made in all his pursuits, influence and correct his ideas. **The dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually. But in no particular point of the process of the integral human evolution can a direct causal relation be established between historical events and the movements of ideas.**

It may be helpful if we briefly note what the condition of man in society was when it was guided respectively by these philosophies. Leaving aside antiquity, they can be broadly identified as (a) the religious – theocratic – feudal, (b) the naturalist – liberal – bourgeois, and (c) the materialist – Marxist – proletarian eras. For the purpose of this exposition, we can also leave aside the religious philosophies and their political feudal counterpart [i.e., (a)]. Few would want modern society to be organised under monarchs who rule by the grace of God and with no other sanction than sheer force.

(Concluded) 

Readership of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist', Volumes I & II at Academia.edu. The Editor wrote to the Radical Humanists:

In encouraging reports from academia.edu where I had put the two volumes of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist' the readership has been growing at a rapid pace all over the world. Till 19.7.2019 there were 64 Followers, 6 Following & 758 Total Views in 78 cities all over the world, including India and for several weeks the two volumes of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist' have been our top papers on academia.edu.

Academia.edu also wrote on 28 July 2019:

Mahi Pal: Your paper "The Radical Humanist Volume I" is reaching a larger audience. We're suggesting your paper "The Radical Humanist Volume I" on 9 related papers.

A total of 1,424 papers on Academia mention your name.

The following comments have been received:

1. Congrats. Happy with the spreading of our humanist ideas. Very glad. Hope we get good reviews abroad. **Narisetti Innaiah**

2. Dear Shri Mahi Pal Singh, so many thanks and. very hearty congratulations. The idea, planning, effort and hard work, and therefore the credit for the stupendous success are entirely yours. We are all admirers and supporters. Sharing your joy and feeling. Mighty proud of being in the RH family.

Regards, **P.A.S. Prasad**

Rising incidents of hate crimes ...

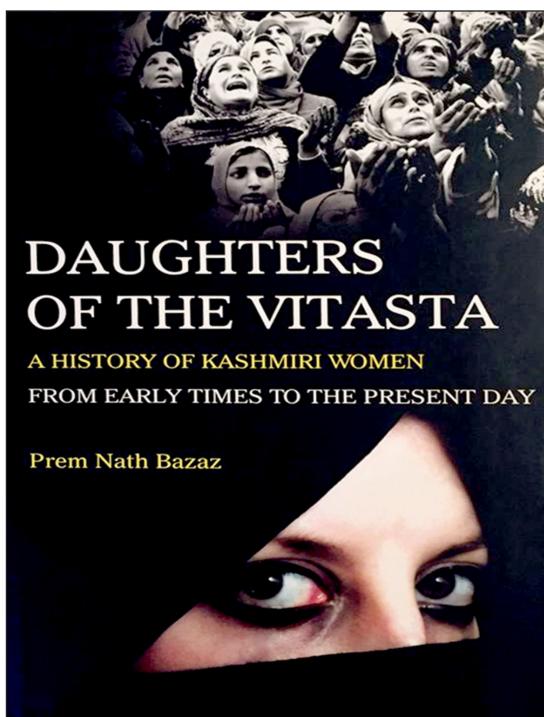
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Each of our religious and caste communities number in the millions, and crimes that are directed against any of these groups could result in a magnitude of disaffection that impels violence, even terrorism. Far less diverse countries than India are already suffering the result of hate 'moving into the mainstream', as UN Secretary General António Guterres recently highlighted. We can still contain its spread if we act resolutely. Or else our political leaders might find the lumpen tail wagging their dog.

Radha Kumar is a writer and policy analyst 

Daughters of the Vitasta

by Prem Nath Bazaz



'Daughters of the Vitasta' written by **Prem Nath Bazaz**, who was considered a special scholar on Kashmir affairs.

This is history of Kashmiri women from early times to 1950. Though published during 1959, and two editions one in 2005 and another in 2011, it is not a rare book, indeed.

Mr Premnath was an authority on Kashmir. He fought for the freedom of Kashmir and liberation of Kashmiri Pandits. Of course he was victim of the fight and banished from Kashmir. A friend of Sheikh Abdullah in the freedom fight, Mr Premnath settled in Delhi and continued his fight.

'Daughters of the Vitasta' is unique in its theme where Mr Premnath traced the history of heroic role of women in Kashmir since early days till 1940s. It has to be noted that the book

was dedicated to his illustrious daughters: Gauri (who was a leader in the Radical Humanist movement), Indu, Vitasta, Vijay and Madhu.

By the time I met Mr Bazaz during 1970s at the Radical Humanist conference at Hyderabad I was not aware of this great work of Premnath. Later he also produced a monumental critique on the Gita after meeting late V. R. Narla who also published 'The Truth about the Gita'.

The present book under review is extraordinary from several angles. The collection of material itself is outstanding which covers from early period till 1950s.

Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini' is the starting point where one finds juicy stories and details of women in Kashmir and especially the ruling class. Everyone quotes 'Rajatarangini' but Mr Premnath observed that it lacks scientific details except juicy stories about how the ruling class enjoyed life and led luxurious living. The monumental work of 'Rajatarangini' lacks details about living conditions of common people but entertaining details about princes and their stories are fully covered. Hence everyone quotes 'Rajatarangini'.

Mr Bazaz took another angle in this book. He studied the role of women from early days till 1950s. That research is laudable.

The first major point is that Kashmiri women enjoyed freedom until the 13th century. Their social status was better. Queens of Kashmir had their own funds and they were at liberty to spend the amounts. Similarly women gained much importance under Buddhism. Women did not attach much importance to religious matters.

Then Mr Premnath narrated one curious incident when Adi Sankaracharya visited

Kashmir, to debate with Madan Mishra. As a referee Ubhaya Bharati concluded and asked Sankaracharya to acquire knowledge and experience for the next sitting with argument. This is a new point to be noted.

Of course Mr Premnath pointed out that there was no veil (purdah) in Kashmir in those days.

It is surprising that no book written by Kashmiri women survived and Mr Bazaz lamented at that particular point.

Kashmir had polygamy as pointed out by Bazaz. Swayamvara was also quite in vogue in Kashmir, says Mr Premnath.

It is to be noted that self immolation after the death of husband was abolished by King Akbar which was rejoiced in Kashmir. Islam allowed remarriage of widows, pointed out Mr Bazaz.

Mr Bazaz narrated how women played prominent role in Kashmir. He pointed out how some queens ruled with iron hand. He quoted Dogras, Yashovati, Didda, Kotadevi, Suryamati, Radhadevi.

Bazaz provided details about other prominent women like Lalla, Jayamati and so on. Didda's rule was cruel, despotic where she killed her grandsons for survival of her kingdom. Of course these details are quite historical. The point emphasized by Mr Bazaz was how the historians neglected the positive and negative role of women in Kashmir.

For centuries Kashmiri women had no veil, no seclusion and no dress restrictions. Islam introduced the seclusion and others continued.

Another very interesting fact revealed by

Mr Premnath was that Mr Birbal's wife Kudamal was tortured by King Azam Khan, a pathan ruler but she did not yield. Instead she gulped stone and died.

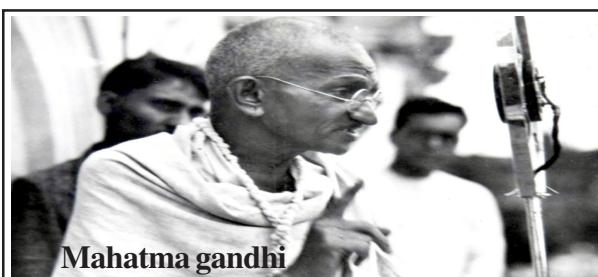
The story of slave girl FIRZI who rose to the heights of ruler in Kashmir is quite unique and narrated by Premanth in a fascinating way.

Mr Bazaz (1905-1984) toured USA where he educated about Kashmir situation. He was banned from Kashmir and hence was forced to settle in New Delhi. He contributed several articles to The Radical Humanist.

The theme of the book, which is special contribution of women, is rare and outstanding. The book must be available to wide public. This 278 page book about Kashmiri women is rare and readable.

Mr Bazaz worked as teacher for a short period but remained as freedom fighter of Kashmir throughout his life. He suffered banishment along with Sheikh Abdullah. Bazaz came close to M. N. Roy and emerged as a New or Radical Humanist.

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah is former Director, Centre for Inquiry (CFI), India. He did his Ph.D. on Philosophy of Modern Science. He is a veteran Radical Humanist who has translated maximum books written by M.N. Roy as well as other books on humanism into Telugu. He has written books in English and Telugu on humanism, exposing blind belief systems, and translations of M. N. Roy, Richard Dawkins, Paul Kurtz, V. R. Narla, Sibnarayan Ray, V. B. Karnik, Agehananda Bharati, Sam Harris etc. ☺



Mahatma gandhi

First they ignore you,
then they laugh at you,
then they fight you,
then you win.

Book Review :

Anavarat

A Gujarati Fiction: explaining and propagating humanist values with help of a storyline

Anavarat a 180-page book by Prof. Jayanti Patel was published by Gujarati monthly newsletter Vaishwika Manavvad in 2018. Jayantibhai, as he is fondly addressed by fellow-activists, mentions in the beginning of this book being a fiction derived from intellectual discourses and activism during first five decades of twentieth century. He opines that activism along with intellectual awakening during this period has been more of a struggle to spread humanist values having focus on human dignity, liberty, freedom, equality, rationalism and secularism. Though, liberty in social, economic, political and ideological sector is still eluding; and such struggle to realize it has been ongoing even after attaining Independence. He feels that such struggle is continuous and will have to continue infinitely and therefore the book gets the name *Anavarat*; meaning continuous, ongoing, and uninterrupted. In the preface he has termed rebels as most valuable assets of human race; they have been pioneers and agents of change that emphatically contributed in assertion of human values and for constructive progress of human civilization.

It is a story revolving around couple of characters like teenager Naresh, rebellious youth Trikam and rebel philosopher activist Manoj. Story line does not mention timing, but turn of events make it clear that it's happening in India during beginning of twentieth century. Story starts with a schooling and upbringing of Naresh, an inquisitive personality and his dialogue with school teacher as well as mother. Trikam enters the scene as a freedom fighter living underground by travelling across country while staying at homes of likeminded families. He is young, energetic and has desire to change the world. He also broods with many ideas that are raw and needs mentoring. People he meets around enlighten him with various philosophies and value

Reviewed by: Kiran Nanavati

systems. Manoj joins him at a later stage. He is a deep thinker and has travelled even outside India. He has reservations for ongoing independence struggle and questions efficacy of the same.

Questions and confusions of Naresh are focusing mainly on religious discourses. Preaching of Dayanand Saraswati on futility of praying deities and performing rituals finds space here when Naresh reads his books; and he is able to grasp and digest the knowledge. This is demonstrated when his inquisitiveness doubts commitment of religious preachers who talk humanity at one hand and ill-treat Dalits on the other. In similar ways, author mentions salient features in philosophies of various thinkers like Bertrand Russell, Aristotle, various Indian philosophical systems and Charvak vis-à-vis actual practices that are against their preaching. Likewise, Naresh also learns about Russian Revolution when he attends a lecture on it. He gradually gathers an opinion on religion being a tool created by vested interest and is used merely for exploitation. He becomes a rebel in making.

Trikam, another character, enters as a visitor to Naresh's home. He is a youth and a rebel who has travelled across length and breadth of India. Through his interaction with school teacher and others, author describes condition of India under British rule. Trikam has knowledge on present sorrowful state of the nation and teacher explains the history of ancient times that had similar tragedies but could be surpassed by appropriate countering. Such past events are optimism for better future. Author focuses here on ills of superstitious, ignorance, caste system, exploitation coupled with weak leadership to fall back on; while also dwelling on optimism derived from past events of change and development. His preaching characters carefully harp on

dangers of violent revolutions as non-viable options because even if that shall soon ousts the present rulers but shall also pose risk of fascist taking over the helm. Whereas, non-violent measure would take more time in achieving desired goals, but would deliver a better future.

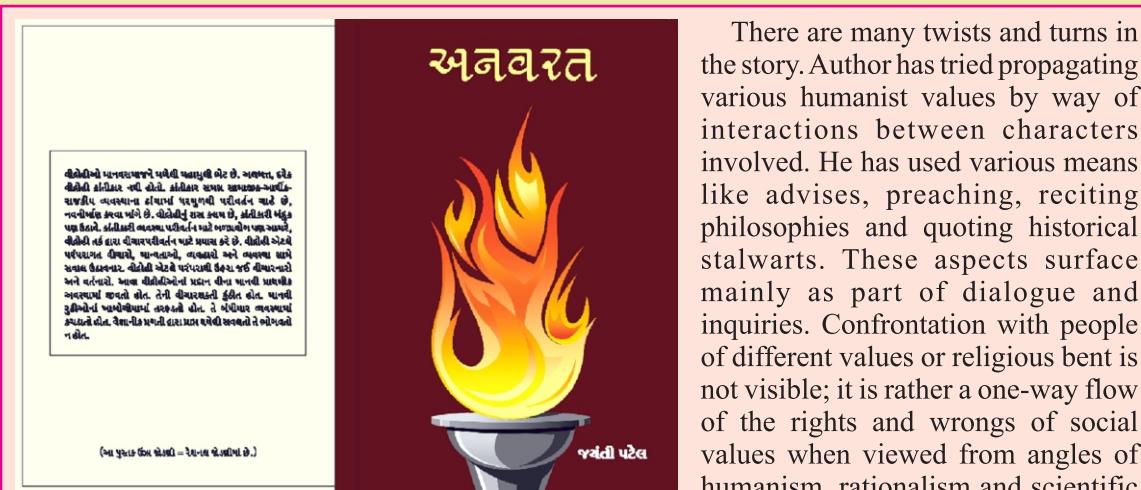
Trikam is rebel who has gone underground because the police under British rule are hunting him. While moving from one place to other with help of other rebels and staying at homes of such families, he keeps debating with various thinkers. Debate surfaces the inefficacy of resident rulers of ancient India wherein each one fought one's own battle single handedly. Such solitaire battle by Queen of Jhansi, Bahadurshah, Nana Saheb, Kunwarsingh, Bakhtyar and Tatya Tope are mentioned, and they were fought at different location and at different time but were against only one enemy – British Rule. Caste beliefs also played adverse role because only Kshatriyas were to be warriors; so they would not pass on their battling skills to people from other castes. Therefore, majority of population had no skills to take up battle fields. An opinion is also floated that such fragmented revolt of 1857 was a major one, though its success would have delivered different type of Independent India having smaller states ruled by autocrats.

Conversations on various subjects also enlightens on philosophers like Charvak, Gautam Buddha and Mahavir negating god; but their followers choose to continue with idea on reincarnation, KARMA theory, rituals and presence of heaven-hell. This brings debate on existence of god; religious school of thought consider universe as created by god, then who created god. Here they chose to designate god as self-created. It is interesting enough that idea of self-creation does exist but is earmarked for god. However, instead of terming god self-creator who created universe; it is more palatable to consider universe as self-created. We experience universe being law-governed and no power has been able to defy these laws. The book also

engulfs moral values in daily routine. It discusses relations between a woman and a man and morale attached with it and makes young woman discuss about it with elderly one. While talking about gender and equality of women, the book recounts an episode from Ramayana wherein Sita is asked to prove her fidelity by entering into fire and not getting burnt. Author also mentions sexual pleasures that religion forbids to talk about despite being a natural human instinct.

Story further adds other characters when Trikam is on the move. He joins other rebels Upendra, Harisingh and Manoj. They, jointly or individually, travel to many places like Bengal, Gujarat, Shantiniketan, Sundervan, Tashkent, Kolkata, Samarkand, Russia while spreading the message to rebel and thrive for independence from British rule. At advance stage of story, author focuses on political discourses in India. He raises issues on political uncertainty that prevailed during freedom-struggle, "What shall we have after independence? Which type of political system shall we establish?"

This question is reverberated in a speech by Manoj in Gujarat, "... Each one of us desire independence. Who would not want independence? Independence for whom, is the question. Will it be for few capitalist mediators of British Raj? We will not tolerate if this independence is limited only for Mill-owners who exploit labours or Land-owners who exploit farmers ... We will not accept it if only four or five leaders of political parties rule over nation in the name of democracy. In Democracy, Government should be for the people, by the people and of the people. Many claim their government to be for the people. Dictatorial governments also claim theirs to be in favour of people. There are also governments by the people and governed by peoples' representatives. Factually, those are governed by top leaders of political parties. We need peoples' government that people have formed from ground level ..."



temper. However, speech by Manoj is example enough that book has also discussed current socio-political scenario of non-humanist bent and it suggests possible way forward.

Closing chapters describe efforts put in by activists wedded to Gandhian and socialist ideologies. Their fight had been not only to uplift downtrodden and exploited mass, but also a struggle against injustice, exploitation, discrimination in rural as well as urban civilization. Many humanists would equate several events and particularly the speech above with life and times of M. N. Roy. It is not surprising, though, because Jayantibhai has been professor of Political Science and has been part of many struggles, including that of spreading Humanism to bring social reform. In his late eighties now, he has been busy propagating ideas for better political environment in the country.



Book launched Function on May 12, 2018
(L to R): Lankesh Chakravarty, Indukumar Jani, Jayanti Patel, Manishi Jani, Neerav Patel, Kiran Nanavati

There are many twists and turns in the story. Author has tried propagating various humanist values by way of interactions between characters involved. He has used various means like advises, preaching, reciting philosophies and quoting historical stalwarts. These aspects surface mainly as part of dialogue and inquiries. Confrontation with people of different values or religious bent is not visible; it is rather a one-way flow of the rights and wrongs of social values when viewed from angles of humanism, rationalism and scientific

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DAUGHTERS OF THE VITASTA

A HISTORY OF KASHMIRI WOMEN
FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

Prem Nath Bazaz



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