

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine



CONGRESS (I) PVT. LTD.
(ESTD. 1969)

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

THE ALEXANDRA GIRLS' ENGLISH INSTITUTION'S TIME CAPSULE

A PRINCIPAL'S PRAYER

150 years ago a man with a mission and farsighted vision
Founded a school in his home to give girls an English education;
This Parsee gentleman was our dear Manockjee Cursetjee
A person of rare stature, determination and nobility.

To be the Principal of this temple of learning has been an honour indeed

In my nineteen years I have tried to fulfill Alexandra's every need;
At the end of the eventful Sesquicentennial year
To forward the legacy to the coming generations was my desire.

To preserve till the next milestone year, ways I began to find
The idea of burying a Time capsule thus came to my mind;
A treasure chest to be put into the ground
With things, that depict Alexandrian history, most profound.

The 31st day of March 2014 dawned bright and clear
Gudi Padva it was, the auspicious New Year
When students, parents, staff and well-wishers so dear
Gathered at Alexandra, all beaming from ear to ear

The lamp was lit by the Directors and Trustees and heads
bowed in homage to the Founder, Manockjee Cursetjee and his
great grandson, Dr. Sheryar Ookerjee, too

Excerpted from the poem by School Principal Mrs. Freny Mehta

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



This unique event went largely unnoticed in the Mumbai press. The event was to mark the conclusion of a year long celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of the Alexandra Girls' English Institution (simply put the Alexandra Girls' High School) and innovating a device that would 50 years on, on its bi-centennial when re-opened, remind the then students and staff of the school of its work on the education of the girl child and all that went into it. For the discerning an accomplishment of great value, for the media in India today of no news value, barring of course the venerable *Jame-e-Jamshed*, now in its 183rd year of publication!

The moving spirit of *Freedom First* (now 62 years old) was Minoo Masani. He would have been delighted that *Freedom First* not only took notice of but shared this report and tribute to a great school and its equally great founder Manockjee Cursetjee.

What Freny Mehta and her team of children and teachers did was to put together "a record of the School's history to date, objects and memorabilia as well as details of the entire Sesquicentennial Celebrations" including letters written by her "students and staff to their counterparts in the year 2062-63"!

Freedom First warmly congratulates the Principal, the staff and the students of the School for this marvellous initiative.

Photographs courtesy: Nasneen Vajifdar.

(We have much pleasure in devoting this month's 'Nostalgia' to the Times Capsule of the The Alexandra Girls' English Institution, Mumbai - Editor).

Photographs description:

(1) Prayers being offered, (2) The beautiful plaque, (3) Things placed inside carefully wrapped in Acid free Envelope, (4) The Directors and Trustees doing the honour of lowering, (5) School girls shower sand.

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62nd Year of Publication

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B. M. N. Murthy, R.I.P.

Mr. B. M. N. Murthy a popular and a familiar personality to readers of *Freedom First* passed away on 28 March 2014. He was 83. Cancer claimed yet another victim.

On 31st January 2014 we received the following letter from Mr. Murthy. I was surprised that a person of his calibre and dedication had decided to “call it a day”. He wrote: Friends! With this article on ‘Ramana’ I will be completing 800 articles over a period of 14 years of uninterrupted literary Journey from January 2000 to January 2014. It is nothing but sheer Divine Grace, combined with your cooperation which has enabled me to complete this literary sojourn effortlessly.

With my advancing age (I am now running my 84th year) and other personal problems which warrant my better attention, I will not be able to continue with this responsible activity any more I have therefore decided to ‘call it a day while the going is good’. There would be no more weekly articles from next Saturday onwards.”

I have two regrets insofar as this warm and very productive relationship is concerned. The first was that though we had been corresponding for almost four years, yet we had not had a personal meeting; the second for which I will never forgive myself is that I did not even acknowledge his letter of January 31 of his withdrawal from the great work he was doing I realised, rather late in the day, what the “personal problem” was that warranted “better attention.” The news of his passing away made me incredibly sad. He had given us the privilege and the pleasure of publishing in *Freedom First* a number of his articles the range of which was truly staggering. His eclecticism was amazing.

Alladi Jayasri, wrote about Mr. Murthy in *The Hindu* of March 15, 2004: “To 54 members of his extended family with several courtesy nieces and nephews thrown in, Sanskrit aficionado and English literature loving B. M. N. Murthy is the sender of weekly nuggets and trivia on anything under the sun – Vedanta, Kalidasa, Taj Mahal, Kohinoor, Winston Churchill, *Time* magazine, JFK, and Ramana Maharishi, not necessarily in that order.

“It all started” she writes in January 2000 when the young and old who peopled the world of this retired Chief Engineer from the Life Insurance Corporation asked him to share his vast treasury of books on a myriad subjects with them.

Murthy’s son Ravi in an email responding to messages of condolence mentions how his father did it: “Weeklies such as *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *The International Herald Tribune* and *The Economist* constituted his regular reading fare..Storing many facts, jokes and trivia was a passion and ..many of these were documented in the many diaries that he kept...Many of my school friends were, in fact, closer to him than me.



“Like many middle-class Indians of his generation and the generation before, he was a self made man, with little parental guidance. Inspiration was largely derived through reading books, biographies... and, from a few other members of the extended family who had made impressionable, professional strides. While education today has largely assumed a tunnel-visioned form in its relentless drive towards super-specialised human beings, often depriving them of a larger perspective of the objectives of human endeavour, the education we received from him was catholic in every sense...”

That he read *Freedom First* carefully was evident from the occasional letter we would receive from him drawing attention to an error or appreciating a point made in an article and asking for the contact details of the writer, validates what Ravi writes about his father as a mentor and a teacher.

In August 2010 we sent Murthy a copy of a publication that we thought might interest him. It has a contemporary relevance hence it is being mentioned in this tribute to him. The booklet was about “*Jaswant Singh, the BJP and the RSS.*” After reading it, B. M. N. Murthy wrote a letter to *Freedom First* which was published:

“Recently I received a booklet by name “*Of Jaswant Singh, the BJP and the RSS*”, written by the well-known educationist from Rajasthan Sri K. K. Pathak and published by the Rajaji Foundation, Mumbai. In recent years I have not come across any critical analysis, either by the media or by the press, which has analyzed so thoroughly the reasons for the expulsion of Sri Jaswant Singh from the RSS about 10 months ago. Sri Pathak has analyzed the problem logically, rationally and convincingly that it is difficult to differ from him on the conclusions arrived by him as also at the remedies suggested by him for curing the disease now plaguing both the RSS and the BJP.

I was myself an active Swayamsevak of the RSS at Bangalore for about four years between 1945-1949 and I fully endorse his views on the RSS. It is high time that, as suggested by the author, the RSS comes out of its narrow ideal of ‘Hindutva’, look beyond and embrace the concept of ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ [The whole world is one Family]. If this is done I find no reason why the BJP should not become a really effective alternative democratic political party in the country. It has all the talent, the technique and the trait for the same.”

Freedom First mourns the passing away of B. M. N. Murthy whose passion was to share knowledge as widely as possibly. We convey our deepest condolences to his son Ravi Banavar and his family on their sad bereavement. We share their sense of loss.

From Our Readers

Manmohan Singh – A Political Obituary

The views of Mr. Firoze Hirjikaka on Prime Minister. Manmohan Singh, are a little harsh although not far from the truth.

Mr. Singh is an eminent economist, started his career as a civil servant, worked with one set of leaders who cannot speak untruth, and then worked under another set of leaders who cannot speak the truth. Strange circumstances pushed him to be a leader. Having worked faithfully for the then leaders in executing their orders, he was dumbfounded, when he found himself on the throne. So he became a leader who could not speak and did not speak. But due credit should be given to him for not taking the country to utter chaos and confusion as happened elsewhere in the world. More so because India is such a huge country, with so much diversity and animosity among various groups, even to move on, though slowly and unimpressively itself is a creditable achievement!

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Bitter Sugar Belt: Muzaffarnagar Riots Victims as Refugees

This refers to Ms Alka Panda's article, "Bitter Sugar Belt: Muzaffarnagar Riots Victims as Refugees" published in *Freedom First* of April, 2014.

Riots and violence inevitably take place irrespective of the parties involved when a woman's modesty is outraged. The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Iliad* (re. Helen of Troy) are examples.

I join Ms. Alka in sympathising with the Muzaffarnagar riot victims, largely Muslims. May I request her also to show sympathies for the Kashmiri Hindus rendered refugees in their own country and languishing in refugee camps for the last 24 years.

Such riots can be avoided if the parents of a boy send a marriage proposal to the parents of the girl and if the latter declines, the chapter should be allowed to be closed. Though this is the civilised method why is it not followed?

She compares the origins of the riot to a Bollywood-like story. The late Satyajit Ray, among the world's greatest film-makers, had a very poor opinion of Bollywood films

because, in his view, they do not reflect reality. On the contrary Bollywood films mislead youth and this is highly undesirable..

May I bring to the notice of Ms. Alka Panda the fact that worldwide, in an overwhelming number of cases where such riots have broken out, the Muslim community is invariably involved whether it is against Jews in Israel/Palestine; against Christians in erstwhile Yugoslavia, the USSR and the Philippines; against Hindus and Sikhs in the Indian sub-continent' or against Buddhists in Burma or Thailand.

Elimination of riots is possible only on the basis of mutual respect among parties. Are Muslims prepared for that?

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On the *Freedom First* No. 562 Editorial

I don't think by any stretch of imagination can any comparison be drawn between Rajaji's Swatantra Party & AAP. The former had a definite economic policy. Apart from the fact that it pilloried – and rightly so – the Congress for the permit-quota-licence raj, it took a very a categorical and courageous stand that every party in the country need not espouse socialism or be leftist.

The Constitutional and legal processes to be followed were very clearly delineated by the founders of the Party – all of whom were eminent men in their own right. In my view not much time need be wasted on AAP.

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Once in 1960-62, I went to fetch his autograph at a function for the blind at Robert Money High School. (I was then a strong believer of lucky things, places etc, and RMH School was lucky for me since, only few days earlier, I could meet the great Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastriji when he was Home Minister and get his valuable autograph at the same venue). So as per my routine after the function was over I approached Rajaji for his autograph but he remarked, "this is a function for the blind. Are you blind, then only I will sign." And he did not give me his

(Cont'd. on page 7)

Editorial

Congress (I) Private Ltd.

Addressing a public meeting on the 20 April, Ajit Singh, son of Charan Singh, president of the Rashtriya Lok Dal, and Union Minister for Civil Aviation in the UPA II government, compared Narendra Modi to a goat for constantly bleating the Hindi first person singular equivalent to the English 'I' (मैं). Admittedly Narendra Modi has been referring to himself most of the time and not the party he belongs to and in so doing, he is doing the right thing. The many who will vote for him are not necessarily those who would have voted for the BJP. Strategically and tactically Narendra Modi has been well advised by those managing his election campaign. He has thrown down the gauntlet not to the Congress (I) or the UPA but to Madam Sonia Gandhi.. This is what this election campaign is all about. It is not between the UPA and the NDA. Nor is it between the Congress (I) (miscalled the Indian National Congress – the INC) and the BJP. It is between Narendra Modi and Sonia Gandhi.

Politics was personalised long before 15th August 1947. Until Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (the Mahatma) came on the scene it was between Imperial Britain and the Indian National Congress with liberal leadership at the helm. By the late twenties and after the passing of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, it was Gandhiji who held the reins as a Congressman. He resigned his primary membership in 1934. Thereafter it was Gandhi versus Imperial Britain even if he became a member again in 1937.

After Britain decided to leave India, Gandhiji was sidelined and it was the INC led by Jawaharlal Nehru. After the death of Sardar Patel whose control over the INC was undisputed, Nehru took total control of the INC. This continued till 1962. After leading the country to defeat by the Chinese and in poor health J. Nehru retreated to the background though still Prime Minister and the INC reasserted itself somewhat.

When Nehru died in May 1964 he was succeeded by Lal Bahadur Shastri, with the support of the then Congress President K. Kamaraj Nadar. Shastri died at Tashkent in January 1966 under suspicious circumstances. Mrs. Indira Gandhi succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister also with the support of Kamaraj Nadar. Three years later, in 1969 she engineered a split in the INC, threw the old Congress leadership and took control. Her faction came to be known as the Indira Congress – Congress (I) Private Limited. After her assassination in 1984, she was succeeded by her son Rajiv Gandhi and after his

assassination in 1989, as his son and daughter were not ready to take over as PM, Rajiv Gandhi's wife Sonia Gandhi chose P. V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister perhaps because he had demonstrated signs of servility under Rajiv Gandhi. To her unpleasant surprise, Narasimha Rao showed his determination to be Prime Minister and take his own decisions. No wonder he was chucked out after the completion of his term in office and humiliated, even though his record as Prime Minister was outstanding. Thereafter Madam Gandhi was clear that what she needed was a Prime Minister on a pro-tem basis who would step down when her son, the Prime Minister-in-Waiting was ready to take over.

Sadly, for her, she had not reckoned with a man called Narendra Modi.

The BJP, on Narendra Modi's insistence, decided to announce him as their Prime Ministerial candidate if the BJP/NDA was returned to power. The Congress (I) Pvt. Ltd. had already readied Rahul Gandhi to be PM. The Congress (I) kept up the fiction that since they would be part of the UPA alliance it was for the alliance to choose its candidate for PM. Absolute bull.

BJP's announcement of Narendra Modi as PM came as a rude surprise to the Congress. Hence the AAP leader who did well but not so well as to form a government in Delhi was offered support by the Congress(I) if he wished to become Chief Minister of Delhi. The Madam seized the opportunity to try and checkmate Narendra Modi.

This is what the campaign and the name-calling is all about.

India has had enough of dynastic rule. Democracy and dynastic rule are like oil and water. They don't mix. India's economy is again on a cliff and there has been a rapid decline in the quality of governance. It is time Congress (I) Pvt. Ltd. goes into liquidation.

Narendra Modi is no liberal. But he is the one person who can ensure this happens. We have to take our chance and hope for the best. In 1977 Jayaprakash Narayan achieved it by routing the Congress (I); but the Janata Party was destroyed by infighting for which the BJP has to take the blame to a large extent. They have to undo the damage that enabled the Congress (I) to return!

What Congress? Which Congress?

Minoo Masani

Television and the press are full of the centenary celebrations of the Congress. What Congress? Which Congress?

Let me explain these questions. In 1932 I was detained for underground Congress activities in Bombay. In 1933 I was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment for functioning as president of the then illegal Bombay Provincial Committee. For several years, in the thirties I was a member of the All India Congress Committee and the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. I participated in the Quit India campaign and courted arrest during Gandhiji's fast in February 1943. In 1945 I was elected as a Congress candidate from Bombay to the Indian Legislative Assembly. I was a Congress member of the Constituent Assembly of India and the provisional parliament till 1952. That is the Congress I know.

So far as I know the Indian National Congress died, when India achieved independence. So I quietly dropped out of the Congress in 1952 and returned to Parliament in 1957 as an Independent. Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that the Indian National Congress should be wound up on achieving independence and its members should divide themselves into two political parties, one in power and the other in opposition. Not only was this advice ignored but the Congress politicians decided to cash in on the fruits of independence by converting themselves into the ruling party for generations to come.

The Congress was thus hijacked. What is now being celebrated is for the benefit of the Congress (I) Party and for its glorification. It has nothing in common with the Indian National Congress to which I belonged for some twenty years.

Mr. Nijalingappa, former Congress President had this to say "The late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, by dividing the Indian National Congress on 1969, had defamed, degraded and destroyed the original Congress and there was no INC as it existed before. I refuse to recognise the function held in Delhi on 6th May [1985] or the people who are planning to organise it. Now there are as many Congresses as half the letters in the alphabet."

(Freedom First, October 1985)

autograph! Needless to mention I missed his autograph for the rest of my life! This is why I call this experience as "Now or Never!"

I don't know what to classify him: as disciplined, principled, or xxxxtic!

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Well said Raju. AAP makes my stomach cringe everyday even though I do not have a vote!!

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Blisteringly good editorial Mr. Raju. I just am a witness to the antics of AAP, have no historical knowledge of the Swatantra Party, but can state this clearly- AAP as it stands today, has not managed to last the number of months from its inception that the number of years Swatantra Party lasted as a party.

There is a basic falsehood at the core of AAP and its cohorts, and that would undo them soon.

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Thank you for your notes on Swatantra party and AAP. The calibre of C Rajagopalachari was much higher than the present leadership of AAP.

In national elections there are only two major policies that a government has to work on : One is economic policy and other is foreign policy. In India only economic policy is discussed.

There is no discussion on foreign policy. None of our political parties including AAP have anything to say on our foreign policy challenges.

In August we will be celebrating 100 years of the First World War. The world has changed a lot since then, though many issues which were present then still exist today. I feel sad to see that there has been no serious discussion on foreign policy nor challenging issues seriously discussed and debated during election campaigns. .

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A Tale of Two Sons

Firoze Hirjika

The Congress's failure is that it has failed to adopt a proactive approach to the relentless BJP (read Modi) attacks it has had to face.

By the time you read this, the die would have been virtually cast. More than half the country would have already voted and the rest would be on the verge of doing so. By mid-May, Indian voters will embark on a voyage of discovery about whether they have wrought a miracle or a calamity. The putative victor, Narendra Modi, has the potential to be either. One thing is certain: he will not tread a middle path. Those who are with him will be magnanimously tolerated, even rewarded. Those who are wary of his ideas and still cling foolishly to the idea of a participatory parliamentary system where dissenting voices will be patiently listened to, had better watch their backs - and that includes members of his own Party.

As L. K. Advani, Jaswant Singh and a few other BJP stalwarts have discovered to their chagrin, the old order not only changeth, it is on the verge of being destroyed. The old stallions of the BJP are being put out to pasture; and if they do not go willingly, they will be drummed out under Modi's reign. And it is not as if the younger ones can breathe easy either. Anyone who does not fit into NaMo's grand design will meet a similar fate. The Fuehrer has become accustomed to dictating his writ over his chosen yes-men in Gujarat; and he is not likely to change his spots as PM. Advani's situation is particularly poignant. He was the one who raised Modi from relative obscurity and stood behind him in difficult times. After the 2002 riots, when the then PM Vajpayee's spontaneous human reaction was one of horror and outrage at Modi's tacit acquiescence in the carnage, it was Advani who persuaded (some say pressurised) him to tone down public criticism of Modi. And now the same guru has been put in his place because he interfered with NaMo's grand design. Beware of who you wish for.

So why has Modi become so invincible that the Congress has virtually thrown in the towel? Some would attribute it to his towering personality, but I believe the Congress has handed Modi the election on a platter. The Congress strategy - or lack thereof - in this election has become a cautionary tale for political parties and a primer on how to lose an election. One would expect fresh faced novice like Rahul Gandhi to constantly put his foot in his

mouth. In fact, he seems to have a knack for saying the right thing at the wrong time. However, even Congress veterans appear to be shell shocked and clueless about how to effectively counter the Modi juggernaut. Even Mommy Dearest, who is known to be a master backroom tactician, has chosen voluntary retirement - and she could not have picked a worse time to fade into the shadows. It must be said however, that of late she has begun to accept her darling boy's limitations and has shown an inclination to get more hands on.

The Congress's failure is that it has failed to adopt a proactive approach to the relentless BJP (read Modi) attacks it has had to face. It has merely reacted to the allegations levelled against it and immediately gone on the defensive. They have ignored the universal dictum that offense is the best defence. Take the corruption issue. This is the big sledge hammer with which the BJP has been repeatedly pulverizing its political rival. The utterly stupid and ineffective Congress response of coming up with lame justifications have only succeeded in making it a laughing stock. They should have recognized the universal truth about Indian politicians: that almost all of them, irrespective of Party affiliation, have their hand in the till. The BJP may not be guilty of transgressions to match the scale of 2G, Commonwealth Games or Coalgate, but they are almost sure to have mini-corruption skeletons in their closets. With some assiduous sleuthing, the Congress could have definitely unearthed many of them; and putting them in public domain would have been the most effective strategy to counter the BJP assault. In the telecom sector, for example, the late Pramod Mahajan's machinations, during the previous NDA regime, were almost at par with those of A. Raja, but he was not pursued as relentlessly by the media then. The Congress could have done some independent sleuthing and exposed the facts to the public. I'm sure there are other examples waiting to be investigated.

The other major weapon in the BJP's arsenal is the state of the economy. The Congress's efforts to blame this on the global economic slowdown have not cut much ice with the public and have been successfully scoffed at by the BJP's self-confessed economic guru, Narendra

Modi. By the time the timid Manmohan Singh government finally took a stand against the tantrums of socialist and populist minded allies like the Left and Mamata Banerjee; and initiated long needed reforms, it was too late to make an impact on the election. Nonetheless, in recent weeks the economy is showing signs of a gradual recovery. FIIs are flocking back to India, the Sensex has reached record highs and the Rupee has rebounded from a low of 68 to the dollar to below 60. It is inexcusable that the Congress has not been exploiting this to the hilt. P C Chidambaram has started to make some noises on this issue, but it is too little too late. It is also inexplicable that they have left it to Arvind Kejriwal to raise uncomfortable doubts about Gujarat's so-called economic miracle.

Then there are the personal attacks on Narendra Modi. Constantly harping on Modi's complicity in the 2002 riots is not only ineffective, it is counterproductive. Modi has cleverly used the riots as an illustration of Congress vindictiveness and portrayed himself as an unjustly reviled victim. Another futile strategy is the unending harping on the BJP's communalism. The Indian electorate has matured enough to recognize the hollowness of buzzwords like "communalism" and "secularism" and is no longer influenced by them. The people are prepared to make a pact with the devil if it would improve their daily lives. They have had their fill of empty promises and gestures.

The Congress had more constructive missiles to launch against Modi, if it had the prescience to do so. As it is, he has started feeling the heat; and his carefully cultivated public mask is slipping. He has hitherto made a lot of effort to project himself principally as the messiah of development and economic growth. His constant barbs at the Congress and its shezadah Rahul Gandhi were more in the nature of jibes meant to ridicule rather than poison.

He ignored Arvind Kejriwal as a fly he could easily swat away. Not anymore. The transformation began with Kejriwal's foray into Gujarat and his allegations and questions which could not be dismissed with the usual glib replies. When Kejriwal showed the temerity to directly challenge the Supreme Leader in Varanasi, the gloves came off and Modi reverted to the street fighter which is his natural avatar. He labelled Kejriwal as Pakistan's agent and a traitor to India merely on the basis of a map on an Aam Aadmi Party website which showed Kashmir as disputed territory (which was more likely an oversight than deliberate). He cast similar aspersions on A K Antony on the basis of a statement that there was then no factual evidence that the Indian soldier mutilated along the LOC was the

victim of regular Pakistani soldiers.

When Modi announced his candidature from Vadodra, the Congress decided to replace its original candidate chosen by consensus in Rahul's experimental primaries with a more heavyweight contender. It was a perfectly legitimate tactical move, but Modi immediately attributed the change of guard to the fact that the first candidate was a Dalit. He has once again, in the Italian marines case, brought up the long irrelevant subject of Sonia Gandhi's Italian origin. In short, Modi has started displaying the pettiness and venality typical of a run of the mill Indian politician; and it certainly does not behove a self professed role model who is aspiring to the highest office in the land. If the Congress had exploited this readymade ammunition that fell into its lap, the invincible Modi could well have been hoist by his own petard.

There is more. For example, Modi making brouhaha about Congress giving a ticket to Ashok Chavan is typical Modi double-speak and reeks of hypocrisy. It is true that Chavan benefitted from unethical flat allotments in Adarsh. However Modi cannot afford to take the moral high ground because it is not as if all BJP candidates are souls of probity - Yedurappa being a prime example. Also, as become his trademark, Modi blithely plays fast and loose with the facts. A Supreme Court appointed panel has ruled that the Adarsh land belongs to the state government and therefore the accusation of depriving Kargil widows and orphans is baseless. The problem with Modi and others of his ilk is that they believe the public are gullible idiots. If he had frankly admitted that the BJP needs Yedurappa to get more votes, the people would have understood and maybe even tolerated it. But trotting out the hackneyed platitude about "innocent until proven guilty" (the Congress does it too) fools no one and is self defeating. And this is the Messiah who is going to "save" India.

Finally, the one big handicap Congress has faced is Rahul Gandhi himself. The man is a paradigm of indecisiveness. He has some good ideas, but he does not follow through. He has not yet realized that it is not enough to talk the talk. He has to walk it too. I believe he is sincere about cleaning up the system, but he does not have the strength of his conviction to stand up to the Congress old guard who do not want to let go of politics as usual. This lot is convinced that winnability trumps probity. The latest shocking example is the Congress candidate who openly spoke about chopping up Narendra Modi into little pieces. Rahul's natural inclination would have been to summarily expel the offender, but the seniors convinced

him that doing so might affect the minority vote. So he had to be content with a verbal condemnation. The point here is that he need not have been. There is no one in the Congress, no matter how senior, who would dare to openly defy the Dynasty. If Rahul had stood firm, he would have got his way. It would have served him and his Party

well if he had stood by his convictions and accepted the inevitable reality of defeat in the election. A stint in the Opposition would actually benefit the Congress. Rahul and likeminded leaders could use the period to clean up the Party and instil a fresh ethos. They can still do it if there is sufficient will. One can only hope.

The Son Does Not Rise

I am going to make a prediction. By the time the next but one assembly election in Maharashtra rolls around in 2019 (or earlier), the Shiv Sena will be a shadow of its former self. By 2025, it may cease to exist altogether. Before I am laughed out of the court of public opinion, let me try to explain my reasoning.

If the Shiv Sena is still a potent, though declining, force in Maharashtra politics, it is because the memory of Balasaheb Thackeray is still fresh in the minds of the Party's rank and file; and it is this memory they are loyal to – not the present satrap Uddhav Thackeray. Much like Narendra Modi in Gujarat, Balasaheb ran the Sena as his personal fiefdom. The difference is that unlike Modi, Balasaheb cheerfully acknowledged his dictatorship (he was known to remark that he had no time for this democracy nonsense); and did not try to cloak it in softer, more politically acceptable terms – even for narrow electoral gains, like Modi does. Balasaheb was one of those rare individuals who had no extraordinary qualities or intelligence, but seized, nay manufactured, an opportunity to exploit the long festering resentment among Maharashtra's majority "sons of the soil" i.e. the Marathi speaking population.

Bombay has always attracted migrants from other states; and back in the 1960s when Bangalore was still a relative backwater, Bombay saw an influx of people from South India – collectively referred to as *Madrasis* – who were perceived to snatch jobs, particularly the white collar ones, from the 'natives'. The reality was that employers favoured the Madrasis because they were industrious and willing to work longer hours for less pay as compared to the Marathi *manos*. Balasaheb cannily spotted a golden opportunity in this discord and exploited the insecurities of the city's Maharashtrians to the hilt. A keen observer of human nature, he realized that it is always easier and more natural to blame others for your problems than look inwards. He adopted the entire Marathi *manos* as his children and convinced them that they were quite justified in resenting those Madrasis who stole the bread from their mouths. He also realised that he could garner a much larger

following by appealing to man's baser instincts. It is far easier and more widespread to indulge in violence than in discourse; and he egged on his disciples to take up arms and teach those "outsiders" a lesson they would not soon forget. Even his naming of the Party was a masterstroke. He invoked the legendary Marathi warrior-king Shivaji and added a Sena, meaning army, at the end. The Shiv Sena soon gained such a fearsome reputation for hooliganism that a mere call from the Great Leader could shut down a metropolis. Although only a minority shared the Sena ideology, they did have a collective terror of the violent mobs Thackeray could mobilize with just one call.

The more refined and the better educated Maharashtrians may have been dismayed at this, but they soon realized it was prudent to maintain a discreet silence. They recognized that the phrase "Shiv Sena style" was a euphemism for state-tolerated mayhem. They also realised that the rank and file of the Mumbai police largely sympathised with the Sena and were often content to remain mere spectators. So they came to the conclusion that the only safe course was to accept the thuggery and stay at home. Taking recourse to the judiciary was equally futile. Thackeray had umpteen cases filed against him but never spent a day in jail.

In short, the Shiv Sena's USP was the fear it engendered to enforce its writ. The opportunity to indulge in sanctioned mayhem attracted the lumpen in hordes and their membership grew exponentially. When the senior Thackeray realized that advancing age and physical frailty required him to pass on the baton, he was confronted with two contenders, his son Uddhav and nephew Raj. Raj was obviously more qualified and willing to carry forward the Sena's agenda but, as often happens in India, filial partiality trumped reasoned logic. Uddhav was anointed and Raj left the Party in a huff.

Raj resembled his uncle not just in looks, but also in temperament and mannerism. He had long realized that Balasaheb had hit upon a winning formula and there was no need to change or even tweak it. When he formed his

own political party the MNS, he aped the early Shiv Sena. He hit upon emotional rather than substantive issues and then gave free reign to Party “activists” to enforce his writ in the manner they knew best. A majority of Shiv Sainiks applauded Raj as a chip off the old block. They however were constrained from expressing their admiration openly because of the bad blood between the two cousins. Moreover, a lingering affection and loyalty towards Balasaheb, even after his death, pricked their conscience and prevented them from crossing over to the new Sena offshoot.

Uddhav is not cast in his father’s mould. He has a gentler nature and when he tries to roar like Balasaheb, it lacks conviction. He is trying to steer the Sena in a more mainstream direction, since he was not entirely comfortable with the Party’s rough and tumble image. Ordinarily this would be an admirable goal, but it was not for the Sena. The “foot soldiers” of the Party literally fancy themselves as soldiers. Intimidation and violence are what they are good at; and they have no inclination to change. That is why more and more of them are gravitating towards the MNS.

Raj has proved himself to be adept at manufacturing “causes” - like the recent toll booth agitation - and then sending forth his minions to do what they do best. Thereby he ensures that he is always on the front page.

His recent praise of Narendra Modi is a masterstroke. Of all the current crop of politicians, Modi’s authoritarian style most closely resembles that of the revered Balasaheb. Offering him as a role model strikes a chord among the workers of both the MNS and the Sena. Uddhav maintaining a distance from Narendrabhai has hurt his cause. More importantly, he suffers in comparison with the BJP supremo. The Sena does not want a soft spoken leader who is uncomfortable with strong arm tactics. Nor does Uddhav’s desire to make the Shiv Sena a pan Indian Party particularly appeal to them. Maharashtra has been their traditional turf and they are content with that. Raj has not yet displayed any national ambition and this appeals to them.

If the Shiv Sena does not do well in the forthcoming national and assembly elections, many Party workers may decide that they have displayed sufficient loyalty to Balasaheb; and that it is time for them to move on. They have begun to realize the current Sena is no longer the Party their great leader founded. They will be welcomed with open arms by the MNS. Balasaheb up in heaven may already be regretting allowing parental emotion overcome his customary acumen. This is one son that did not rise to the occasion.

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A Malicious Statement by UP Socialist Party Minister Azam Khan

The Indian Ex Servicemen Movement (IESM) strongly condemns and expresses its anguish and disappointment over the irresponsible, divisive, unfortunate and totally malicious statement of Samajwadi Party Minister Azam Khan, interjecting a communal tinge into the Indian Army’s Kargil Operations and Victory.

Indian Army is the epitome of secularism. Citizens from multifarious cultural, religious and economic background join it and once they don the uniform, all meld into one team owing allegiance only to *Bharat-Mata*. While one is generally not aware of the other’s religion, caste or economic background as one goes about one’s mission functions and accomplishment in the Army, full individual freedom exists to practice one’s religion and faith. Every Unit has a “*Sarva-Dharmsthal*” - a combined praying place to cater to troops of that Unit. Thus, one may find the Temple, Gurudwara, Church and Mosque all under one roof. All festivals are celebrated by all. Such interweaving of the faiths results in the Oneness of the Unit, to the almost subjugation of individual faith. The Unit prays together. The Unit fights together. With such credentials, it is natural that the mischievous remarks of the SP leader Azam

Khan stand out for their tyrannical objective. These have NOT been taken well by the Fauji community. 527 personnel died and 1,363 were seriously wounded during the Kargil War. It’s not relevant to which religion or social group these men belonged.

Azam Khan’s utterances are treacherous in that they attempt to divide the ONLY Indian secular institution – its Defence Services on communal lines. This is dangerous for the nation’s security and particularly alarming since it comes from a senior leader of a Party that at some stage might play a role in the Government formation if the political equations go that way. How dangerous this sort of muddled thinking can be, is hard to fathom.

We strongly demand that legal action must be taken against the individual for attempting to cause divisiveness in the armed forces. It clearly amounts to tyranny. He should additionally be barred from public life forever.

Press Statement by Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Satbir Singh, Chairman, Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement issued on 09 April, 2014. Email: satbirism@gmail.com,

A Tale of Two Manifestos – Their Economic Significance

Sunil S. Bhandare

In the ultimate analysis the art of actual policy-making and its implementation is certainly going to be far more arduous than preparing promising manifestos

Who stole my manifesto? Immediately after the release of the BJP manifesto, several key spokespersons of the Congress Party [INC] frontally accused the BJP for indulging in “copy - paste” of ideas, policies and programs from its manifesto. One is a bit amused and reminded of the title of an excellent motivational book, ‘Who Moved My Cheese’? What is wrong if there is a greater degree of commonality in two sets of manifestos? Indeed, we need to feel happy with the emerging prospect of a broader national consensus on many crucial policy issues. Why fret and frown? There are no easy discoveries and inventions in economic policy making. But what is important is inventing a new style of governance and executing tough decisions to put our political economy back on the track of sustainable development. And the next few months [hope not years!] are, thus, going to be very crucial for this purpose!

Having so said, an election manifesto is invariably a dull and drab document, while remaining an integral part of the election process in a democratic system. It provides a useful avenue for a political party to glide the voter into ‘a make believe world’. By and large, all the major political parties have faithfully completed this ritual of unveiling their respective manifestos. A typical manifesto represents a statement of intentions, hopes and aspirations, and tall promises. In the case of an incumbent government – the Congress (I) – it has also provided an opportunity for glorification of its report card.

To what extent manifestos *per se* influences voters’ preferences either in favour or against a particular political party always remains a matter of enigma. Neither political experts nor psephologists would find it easy or possible to disaggregate the contribution of an election manifesto in changing voting behaviour. Yet political parties of all hues would have us believe in the sincerity of their commitments to all that is being promised. The gullible falls into the trap, while the discernible voter would perhaps make a wiser choice!

But, despite their various fault-lines, it is imperative for all the stakeholders to evaluate the substantive policy

issues enshrined in such manifestos. On the forefront of UPA, is the Indian National Congress Manifesto [INC-M], while, in the case of NDA, we have the Bharatiya Janata Party Manifesto [BJP-M]. All the rest are mostly the variants of these two – with CPI/CPM offering an extreme left stance – and various regional parties’ sharp focus on regional/local issues. AAP, which is the new entrant on our political firmament, seeks to proclaim its own independent identity.

Searching for the USP!

What is then the respective unique selling proposition [USP] of INC-M and BJP-M? At the slogan level, the difference is in the metaphor, and not in the substance; for example INC-M talks about “*Har hath shakti, har hath tarakki*” versus BJP’s “*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*”. Looking at the massive canvass of promises and programs – wherein their respective offerings are being differentiated – one wonders whether the electorates are supposed to vote them for the next five years or for the next fifteen years! Even if one-third of what is proposed were to be performed during the five-year tenure of the government, the Indian voters would be more than rewarded and delighted!

Be that as it may, our focus is to reflect upon some of the economic issues and policy strategies emerging from these two key manifestos. While the language and contents are bound to be different, there is substantive convergence on a number of crucial issues. Of course, at a broad ideological/ philosophical level, INC-M proclaims that the fight is between “Secular Liberal Nationalism vs. Narrow-minded Communalism; and Inclusive Democracy vs. Divisive Authoritarianism”. Such rhetoric is also writ large in the BJP-M.

What comes upfront in the 15-Point Agenda of INC-M is its new charter on minimum socio-economic rights – health, pension, housing, social security, dignity and humane working conditions and entrepreneurship – six new rights in all. These are over and above the ambitious social welfare programs of UPA II government in recent

years like right to food security, right to education, etc, which are still in the early stages of implementation, and whose fiscal and operational dimensions are yet to be fully comprehended. This “rights-based” economic strategy / USP is doubtless faulty and myopic in design in the absence of “growth and governance first” approach. In contrast, the BJP-M approach is seemingly distinctive – not being overwhelmed by compulsions of offering various such rights, albeit not being oblivious to them. There is greater emphasis on attending to the immediate tasks of price rise, corruption, black money, overcoming government deficit and strengthening the framework of governance.

Specific Economic Issues and Policies

With this backdrop, let us evaluate both the manifestos in terms of some crucial economic policies and strategies. Over the last three years, the country has been confronted with many tough challenges – stubbornly high inflation, decelerating economic growth, manufacturing stagnation, investment slowdown, external imbalances, jobless growth, strained centre-states relations, loss of consumer and investor confidence, and so on. Most of these issues call for immediate policy responses.

INC-M spells out broadly two sets of approaches: First, a 100-day agenda for growth, which *per se* is quite ambitious covering not only some of the pending issues of tax reforms [GST & DTC], but also creation of new institutions like National Investment Facilitation Authority, National Environmental Appraisal and Monitoring Authority, and many others. Second, in the medium / long-term perspective, apart from its “rights-based” strategy, there is a wide-ranging inclusion of several pending and new policy proposals: for example, jobless growth, flexible labour policy, encouraging FDI, planned urbanisation and creation of inclusive cities, setting up of 100 new urban clusters, transparent policy for the development of natural resources, Green National Accounts, governance reforms and so on.

On most of these issues, the BJP-M deals with similar policy prescriptions, albeit couched in a different wording and style. The major divergence is found in its uncalled for opposition to FDI in multi-brand retail. It makes a pledge for “*Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat*”, which encompasses participatory democracy, empowerment of people, inclusive and sustainable development and many more such ideals. It also sets out a huge reform agenda covering issues of governance, tax reforms [including adoption of GST], various other sector-specific policy

measures, etc. While INC-M talks about 100-day agenda, BJP-M highlights the imperatives of addressing current critical challenges [*a la* price rise, jobless growth, corruption, policy paralysis, etc] on a priority basis. Some more substantive issues of convergence / divergence are as follows:

- **Economic Growth:** INC-M envisages restoration of 8% plus growth within three years. In contrast, BJP-M is more guarded and qualitative in its growth vision; it suggests that “through consistent, long-term policies, we will not just spur the process of economic growth, but also ensure that it is stable as well as balanced”.
- **Manufacturing:** INC-M commits to its earlier [but yet to be effectively implemented] National Manufacturing Policy, envisaging 10% annual growth, creation of National Investment Manufacturing Zones, industrial corridors, enhancing the share of manufacturing to 25% and building India as the world leader in manufacturing. Likewise, without prescribing any quantitative target, BJP-M talks of India becoming “a Global Manufacturing Hub” through the creation of an enabling environment for modern, competitive and caring industry.
- **Inflation:** Breaking the vicious cycle of high inflation assumes top priority in the BJP-M in contrast to a mere assurance in the INC-M that “we will take firm action to control inflation even in a difficult global economic scenario”. While the INC-M lacks clear policy thrust, BJP-M promises a series of policy measures like (a) Special Courts to stop hoarding and black marketing; (b) setting up a Price Stabilisation Fund; (c) unbundling FCI operations into procurement, storage and distribution for greater efficiency; (d) evolving a single ‘National Agriculture Market’; etc.
- **Corruption and Black Money:** In its list of priorities, BJP-M talks about eliminating the scope for corruption and minimization of black money generation. Further, it assures that corruption would be dealt with through public awareness, governance reforms, rationalization and simplification of the tax regime, etc. For bringing back black money stashed in foreign banks and offshore accounts, it proposes to set up a Task Force. There are no new ideas in this area in the INC-M, except reiterating its commitment to all that has been done by it in recent years – the RTI legislation, the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, the Public Procurement Bill, etc.

- **Foreign Direct Investment:** INC-M reiterates its commitment to encourage FDI, especially in labour intensive sectors. In contrast, as mentioned earlier, BJP-M points out that barring the multi-brand retail sector, FDI will be allowed in sectors wherever needed for job and asset creation, infrastructure and acquisition of niche technology and specialized expertise. Further, it commits to protect the interests of small and medium retailers, SMEs and those employed by them. It also promises that the FIPB functioning will be made more efficient and investor-friendly.
- **Strengthening Centre-State relations:** BJP-M offers some distinctive and refreshing proposals in this area. It talks about (a) the Central Government to be an enabler and facilitator in the rapid progress of states by evolving a model of national development, which is driven by the states; (b) Team India not to be limited to the Prime Minister led team sitting in Delhi, but will also include Chief Ministers and other functionaries as equal partners; (c) creation of 'Regional Councils of States', with common problems and concerns, with a view to seeking solutions that are applicable across a group of states; and (d) involving states in the promotion of foreign trade and commerce. In contrast, INC-M only generally recognises the imperatives of more intensive decentralisation. Doubtless, socio-political-economic pressures from the states will be increasingly intensive in the coming years, and hence the urgency of offering a more holistic strategy in this vital area.

In summing up, what has been highlighted above

are some of the crucial areas of convergence and divergence in two sets of manifestos. The fact remains whichever party is voted to power will have to confront some of the toughest immediate policy challenges, be it with respect to fiscal consolidation, inflation control, industrial revival or rebuilding the lost confidence of consumers and investors. Surely, both the political parties have done enough homework in preparing their respective comprehensive documents. In the case of INC-M, there is repetitiveness of what we have been listening to for the past many years, while in the case of BJP-M, there are some refreshing new thoughts and policy orientations, especially in areas of centre-state relationship, land use policy [creation of the National Land Use Authority], etc.

In the ultimate analysis, however, the art of actual policy-making and its implementation is certainly going to be far more arduous than preparing promising manifestos. That is what all the stakeholders will be more keenly awaiting in the post-election scenario! Suffice it to say, India is at the cusp of a major transition. Intensely "confrontationist" stance of different political parties during the current electioneering process must now yield place to more temperate, healthy and conciliatory national policy discourse and preparation of strategic framework of its implementation. The challenges before the country are truly enormous, which both the manifestos seem to recognize fully. But neither competitive populism nor audaciously ambitious promises can usher India on a smooth and sustainable path of high growth and inclusive development!

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Why Do Police Officers Join Politics?

V. Balachandran

Early in March 2014, a leading economic daily gave a list of senior police officers who had joined politics. It, however, failed to explain why police officers were singled out for special attention and not a teacher or a lawyer, when they join politics. Is there something contradictory if a police officer joins politics? The article also failed to mention what police officers hope to achieve in politics, something that they could not accomplish during their long service where the basic principle is to serve the community...

Long after being trained to be "apolitical" or "non-political", we see a police leader joining politics with an objective to do "public service". The question is why he or she was not able to achieve this noble aim when the law gave them enough power to do public service through

impartial behaviour and by investigating crime without prejudices. That power is certainly not with ordinary politicians, unless they become ministers. Some have attributed this due to deep frustration among IPS officers under a particular state administration.

Do they hope to change this system by joining mainstream political parties who have in the past shown no such inclination except for re-asserting their control over the police? Also, do they feel comfortable to be in the ranks of most of our political parties who are reportedly giving tickets to gangsters and criminals as reports reveal

Excerpted from V.Balachandran's article "What attracts police officers to politics" in his column 'Police & State, Sunday Guardian, March 23, 2014

Of Rahul Gandhi's Lies and Communists' Opportunism

T. H. Chowdary

It is not out of regard for the Mahatma that his assassination is lamented and fobbed off on the RSS

Rahul Gandhi has been, either out of unforgivable ignorance or deliberate indulgence in the manner of Goebbelsian propagation of falsehood, saying that the RSS was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and that Narendra Modi's innocence in regard to Gujarat's riots of 2002 has not yet been finally established. Let us see this pretender Gandhi through.

It is not out of regard for the Mahatma that his assassination is lamented and fobbed off on the RSS. On the contrary, the Nehru dynasty while misappropriating the Mahatma's surname has been consistently disregarding and dishonouring the Mahatma's creed. Gandhiji desired and publicly advised that the Congress should be wound up as a political party after India's independence and transform itself into a nation-building, constructive organisation to undertake social service and reform. Rahul's great grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru disregarded the Mahatma's advice and cashed in on the brand name of the Congress which indeed was an umbrella organisation for all patriotic Indians. Nehru's attempts to commit the Congress to socialism never succeeded during the lifetime of the Mahatma and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. After the death of Gandhi and Patel, Nehru transformed the Gandhi bhajan into Nehru bhajan; this bhajanification of Congressmen was continued by his successors as evident from the mantra, 'Indira is India – India is Indira'; followed by prefixing Rajiv's names to about 420 projects, welfare schemes, airports, hospitals, colleges, urban development missions, roads and so on, even eclipsing the memorials to Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi not only disapproved but denounced the myriad Christian missionaries' mendacious, alluring and inveigling evangelisation and conversion of the least informed and most indigent poor Hindus to Christianity. The Mahatma gave a categorical answer to a Christian missionary's question as to what he would do to Missionary (conversion) activities when India attained independence from (Christian) foreign rule. He said that if he had the power, he would expel the missionaries unless they cease conversions and confine themselves to pure humanitarian work.

Have Sonia (the leader, director and proprietor of the Congress since 1998 without a break), Rajiv, Indira and Nehru heeded to and respected and implemented the

Mahatma's clear, considered and publicly expressed view? On the contrary, since Sonia's rule from year 2004, proselytization of the poor and ignorant is patronised by the Congress. A convert, J. D. Seelam, a Rajya Sabha Member from A.P at a public meeting in Jangareddigudem (West Godavari District in A.P) in the year 2013 exhorted the public to vote for the Congress as that would strengthen Christianity. Within weeks, he was made a Minister in Sonia's UPA-II government. Is this Christianisation of India in reverence to Mahatma whose assassination Rahul laments and falsely attributes to the RSS?

Which investigation, which legal court pronounced RSS as guilty of the assassination of the Mahatma? None. True the RSS was banned by the Nehru government on suspicion but the ban was lifted when not even a shred of evidence was found. Jawaharlal used to breathe fire against the RSS. He used to publicly boast that he would crush the RSS. Poor Nehru was crushed and humiliated not by the RSS but by his bhai-bhai, communist China's Mao Tse Tung and Chou en Lai in 1962 when they attacked and destroyed India's Armed Forces. Nehru died because of back-stabbing by his venerable Communist China.

The very mighty man, Rahul's great grandfather, requested and invited the very same RSS which he vowed to crush, to parade on Republic Day in Delhi in 1963! Does not Rahul know this? If the RSS was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, why did Gandhi's legatee invite the very RSS to be honoured by its participation in the Republic Day Parade?

Now about Narendra Modi's Gobbelsianly repeated involvement in the Ahmedabad's communal riots in the wake of the burning alive of two score and a half Hindus in rail bogies in Godhra in February 2002. Rahul's father was the Prime Minister and was present in Delhi in October/November 1984 when under the direction of the Congress Party leaders, over 3,000 Sikhs were burnt and killed in an unobstructed orgy in retaliation to Indira's assassination by a lone Sikh. What did Rajiv say and do for days while the massacre was going on? He said, "When a big tree falls, the earth around will shake"! And he did nothing for days to stop the slaughter of Sikhs by his party men. Modi was denounced for saying that he would feel sorry

even if a cat is run over by his car – unlike Rajiv who dismissed (likened) the slaughter of Sikhs under his very nose and rule, as a natural phenomenon!

Special Investigating Teams of the government run by Rahul's mother and courts have not found Modi guilty for the Ahmedabad riots in which besides Muslims, Hindus also perished. Not a few, but many including a Minister were tried and convicted for the Gujarat riots; but successive Sonia-led Congress governments could not and did not try the Congressmen, minions of the dynasty, who carried out the slaughter of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. On the other hand, they were rewarded with membership of Parliament and ministerships. When questioned on a TV interview, Rahul's answer was, "I was not there"!

Strange Political Actors – the Communists

The conduct and moves of the communist parties in India, especially in the context of the run up to the Lok Sabha election 2014 expose their total irrelevance and their persistent misadventures. Of the plethora of communist parties, the more vocal are the CPM and CPI. The others are CPI (ML), CP (New Democracy), the CP of the United States of India, the Telengana Communist Party and the notorious Maoist CP with its guerrilla war groups battling the Indian State since 1976. One would wonder why there are so many communist parties and yet despite their claims of perpetual struggles to advance people's interest, all of them put together do not get more than 5% of the popular vote. It is to the credit of the communists that despite repeated rejection by the people, they persevere in saying that the people are with them and they are involved in myriad people's movements to defend their interests, to end exploitation, inequality and bring in real democracy.

The former USSR, which disintegrated in 1991, was the fatherland for Indian communists. Significantly, there are no communist parties in any of the satellite States of the erstwhile USSR. In Russia proper, the communist party is a remnant and totally irrelevant in politics. The CPI used to draw its inspiration and guidance from the USSR. The CPM broke away from the CPI in 1964 shifting its allegiance from the USSR to Maoist communist China. Now that China has given up any pretence of communism except in name and has taken to the capitalist path of development, the poor CPM has no mentor. Thus the two main communist parties in India are orphans.

The rest of the communist parties are sticking to the Marxist- Leninist- Stalinist- Maoist- Castroist fundamentalism, each interpreting Marx in its own way. India's communists split into many factions each claiming exclusive and correct truth. Each is led by one theoretician who thinks he has the only correct understanding of

Marxism, Stalinism and Maoism.

In Andhra Pradesh, very unabashedly the CPI is ready to ally with the TRS or the Congress, whichever is prepared to have it. The TRS and the Congress are sworn enemies but the CPI has no moral stamina to choose the better of these two. To gain a few seats, it can commit its followers to any one! The CPM is seeking alliance with the YSR Congress Party led by Jagan Mohan Reddy who is supposed to have inherited land, business, and shares, to the tune of one lakh crore Rupees received from companies which benefited from his father Rajasekhara Reddy's government. Till recently, CPM had been a deadly critique of the gargantuan corruption of the government. The CPM has no scruples in choosing any one as its ally. The other communist parties don't count very much yet every time statements are issued in the name of "eight left parties" in the A.P. Obviously they are all 'statement parties'. The Maoists in the jungles are waging a war and are surviving thanks to their sympathisers in the Congress.

At the all-India level, the CPM/CPI leaders dream of a Third Front of some regional parties, the leader of each aspiring to be the Prime Minister. The regional parties are proprietary, casteist and minority-courting enterprises. The communist parties are ever in the company of disintegrating forces; they have visceral hostility to Hinduism which motivates their every move. They cover up that hostility chanting secularism, minority welfare, autonomy and even independence for secessionist regions. Strange indeed are India's communists, relics of Marx-Lenin-Stalin-Mao-Castro brand ideologues.

Communists in India have become totally irrelevant. Marxism- Leninism as economic or social theory implemented by communist parties in several countries has utterly failed. No serious intellectual believes in any one of them. There are only two countries left in the world in the Marxist – Leninist – Stalinist – Maoist mould. The one in North Korea has become dynastic and murderous just like Stalinist Russia. The other in Cuba, where the government has become a family affair with the octogenarian Fidel Castro physically disabled to rule but his sibling taking over the reins. The communist governments in Vietnam and China are only namesakes. They are totalitarian and oligarchic parties intensely nationalist and firmly committed to virtues of work, thrift, discipline and private entrepreneurship.

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise person examines all sides before coming to a conclusion. This is an attempt to present various sides of an issue so that a considered opinion can be formed.

Self-Determination – Some Doubts

1. The right to self-determination means the right of people to choose their form of government or the right of an ethnic, linguistic, or religious group to redefine existing national borders to achieve a separate national sovereignty. Russia's 'acquisition' of Crimea on the basis of Crimea's referendum to break away from Ukraine has stirred a hornet's nest. The Cold War is back. Crimea opted to join Russia but is the break-up of Ukraine justified? The high moral principle of the people's right to self-determination is cited to justify Russia's action. Self-determination is an important pillar of democracy and became a by-word after the War of American Independence. It offered a solution for the world's territorial disputes. Only till the US Civil War! ***When the US was threatened with dismemberment of the Southern States, a staunch defendant of liberty like Lincoln opposed self-determination if it led the break up of a well established national entity. The question came to haunt President Woodrow Wilson later (after WWI) as he was trapped between two US heroes; George Washington's espousal of self-determination and Lincoln's exception to it.*** Wilson's Secretary of State (Lansing) put it succinctly, declaring, "We as a nation are committed to the principle that a national state may by force, if necessary, prevent a portion of its territory from seceding without its consent ...". ***Wilson's dream of the League of Nations as the final arbiter of territorial disputes on the basis of the principle of self-determination and later (after WWII) Jawaharlal Nehru's faith in the UN were dreams that failed to materialize in the face of harsh reality.***

1. India is faced with the Hobson's choice of supporting Crimea's right to self-determination (meaning merger with Russia) or the West's rejection of dismemberment of Ukraine. India upholds the democratic right of the people to decide which State they want to join but has to worry about its fallout in its own backyard. Lansing's warning that a sovereign State may be forced to prevent, by use of force, its dismemberment and oppose the idea of self-determination applies to India to a great extent. In Ukraine's case, the use of force is ruled out as a weak sovereign State (Ukraine) faces a powerful opponent (Russia) backing the breakaway entity (Crimea). The stalemate is obvious, notwithstanding the US and the EU's helpless protests. ***On a moral level, India has to decide as to what level of self-determination it would advocate or tolerate. Is integrity of a sovereign state more important than the vaulted eminence of the principle of self-determination? The dilemma faced by Woodrow Wilson in 1914 is faced by upholders of democracy all over again.*** Russia which swears by Crimea's right of self-determination would certainly be loath to extend it to its own Chechnya and Dagestan! Nationalities are spread across international boundaries and can be cited to grab territories through plebiscites based on national affinities. It shows that ***principles and ideals are respected only in speeches in International Forums but abandoned when national self-interest comes in the way. Might is often right as nobody will go to war to help a weak country.***

Paid News

2. The Election Commission has itself expressed concern over both print and electronic media's vulnerability to external influences as their capacity to formulate public opinion is exploited by politicians for their selfish ends. Some newspapers openly declare that news dissemination is not a mission but a business. If so, what is the price they would charge to dispense favourable and slanted news? On the other hand, government always controls a chunk of newspaper space through its advertisements. At times, it also uses its muscle to control the media. Business houses own newspapers and TV channels, which is an additional worry. Arvind Kejriwal's ire at the electronic

2. The remedy to 'paid news' lies not in banning or controlling the media. A sledge-hammer approach would be worse than the disease. Democracy provides a built-in safeguard. Plurality of ideologies, opinions and opinion makers provides the answer. There is safety in numbers. Most countries have newspapers and TV channels that subscribe to rival ideologies and challenge each other's views. Then there are others that are ideologically neutral. The third category reduces the effect of biased reporting. Media was the backbone of the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement, Kejriwal's meteoric rise and the fortunes of the AAP. If he is honest, Kejriwal should ask who paid

media for projecting his AAP in poor light and his suspicion that Ambanis are behind his every ill brought the old debate to the fore. Kejriwal is not alone in suspecting the media. Even Narendra Modi had complained that he was being vilified before the last Gujarat elections. Now suddenly he has become the darling of the media. Kejriwal will blame Ambanis or Adanis of playing the trick but the issue is not as simple as Kejriwal makes it out. Lashing out at Corporate Houses is not a solution. Paid media is a problem in all democracies; under a dictatorship the media has no chance; it is punished unless it falls in line. In spite of shades of the Emergency, we do not want that to happen again in India! Private media houses are indeed better than government controlled media. Therefore, fulminations against the media need to be tempered

the media then. The governing factor for the media is its popularity; the TRPs are the oxygen for TV Channels and readership for newspapers. An event that would attract eye-balls will be broadcast by the channels, irrespective of the views of the controlling moneybags. In fact, the moneybags would be interested in the profits made by the Channels. For the Corporate Houses, hated by Kejriwal, political preferences come low in their calculation; they generally back both sides as a cover for exigencies. Kejriwal provided TRPs at one point and he appeared on TV relentlessly but now he does not and Modi does. While paid news is an abhorrent practice, the one sobering thought is that there are so many Channels and newspapers that if one plays foul, others would do justice! Indian democracy is not threatened by the media; in fact it is safeguarded by the media.

Scams and Witch-Hunts

3. In the last three years, we have been assaulted by so many scams that we have started looking for scams in every corner. There is a new breed of Sherlock Holmes that has developed expertise in detecting the tiniest scam in most unlikely places. After the Commonwealth Games, 2-G, Coalgate, Adarsh and Westland Helicopter deals, people cannot be blamed for believing every allegation that is flung at any official or politician. The BJP has listed 21 major scams (involving more than Rs.10,000 crore each) in the UPA regime. People are now ready to believe that everybody is corrupt. Many more potential scams are lurking: bullet proof vests, irrigation backlog in Maharashtra, CCTV camera purchases, Tatra trucks, 4-G deal...it's an unending list. The climate of distrust that nothing happens without grease money is seriously damaging the administrative structure in the country. We want to elect honest politicians but paradoxically we are made to believe that nobody with any power - politician or bureaucrat – can remain honest. We have reached this stage because UPA refused to act on any complaint of corruption. Everything was brushed under the carpet and in doing so lost the people's faith.

3. The difficulty is that any deal can be questioned retrospectively. To oversimplify it, if one buys mangoes @ Rs. 800 per dozen, somebody somewhere can claim that the same were available @ Rs.700 per dozen in another market. Lo and behold, Rs. 100 were swindled by your wife! Any big deal can be made to look dicey. If the dealer is related to somebody's relative's relative somewhere, it is crony capitalism plain and simple. It is immediately declared that the official and the Minister who dealt with the case are guilty; the CBI must arrest them straight away or the CBI is itself hand in glove with the corrupt. Life is simplified when you think you are the only honest person and everybody else needs to be in jail. The Administration is tied in knots, not knowing which decision would hit whom. Show me a deal and I will show you a scam! The bitter truth is that the UPA Government has lost credibility and the next generation will suffer the witch hunt. The atmosphere of cynicism, distrust and despondency must be cleared as early as possible if the country has to move forward.

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

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

When India finally threw off the suffocating rule of the British, the world confidentially expected a great Indian renaissance. It looked forward to the Indian Einstein, the Indian Michaelangelo, the Indian Beethoven, the Indian John Milton. Instead it got the Indian politician.

Aubrey Menen, quoted in *The Sunday Observer* of September 25, 1985, and cited in *Freedom First*, October 1985.

Detering the Dragon: Countervailing Coalition Needed

B. Ramesh Babu

This is the time for the US-India-Japan Trilateral to emerge as a new international combine and give a more enduring institutional shape to their new found proximity. The three countries should shed their inherited inhibitions and come together positively with the avowed objective of curbing the aggressive expansionism of China in the bud.

By activating the hitherto dormant maritime and jurisdictional disputes with many countries, China has become a virtual threat to peace and stability in Asia-Pacific and beyond, as pointed out in last month's article. Every week brings fresh evidence of the dragon indulging in force to back its territorial claims. As recently as 9 March 2014, Philippines lodged a formal protest after two of her vessels were prevented by the Chinese Coast Guard from taking supplies to marines on a shoal in the disputed Spratly island group.

If every rising power uses force to reclaim all the territories that allegedly belonged to her some time or the other in the past, the world would be engulfed in endless conflicts and bloody wars forever! Imagine what would happen if China seeks to dislodge Japan from Senkaku islands by claiming that they belonged to her earlier; Japan seeks to oust Russia from northern Sakhalin by force; China seeks to occupy Arunachal Pradesh by dubbing it as Southern Tibet, and India lays counter claims to Manas Sarovar and Kailash as the most sacred Hindu icons!

While mechanisms for peaceful resolution of territorial and jurisdictional disputes are necessary, countering aggressive expansionism of the Chinese variety is the need of the hour. China has territorial and maritime disputes with over 20 countries (including India and Russia) around the world. China's spectacular rise as an economic super power has naturally boosted her self-esteem as a nation. The Chinese people have every right to be proud of their country's rise as a global player. However, this sentiment is now turning into chauvinism and has become a serious threat to most of her neighbours! Unless this dangerous trend is curbed effectively and quickly there would be no stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific region stretching from the Himalayas to the Philippines and from Japan to Java! Creating a countervailing coalition of concerned countries and nurturing it over the long haul is the most crucial constituent of an effective and credible deterrent against the aggressive rise of China.

The US-China Equation

As the key offshore balancer in the region, the mighty US is the natural king pin of such a coalition. However, the entire responsibility of countering China cannot be thrust on America today. The US-China equation in the 21st century is vastly different from the US-USSR equation of the cold war era. Then, the two super powers were caught in an all out strategic and ideological conflict short of war all over the world. But, they did not have significant commercial and economic inter-dependence to contend with. On the contrary, the US-China equation is a symbiotic relationship, mutual economic interdependence on a scale unprecedented in history. The two cannot function without each other. Conflict between them could quickly turn into a "mutual hostage" situation, which both sides would try their best to avoid. At the same time, China will continue to work against America's global hegemony on all fronts short of a direct military conflict. Reciprocally, the US will continue to oppose China's expansionism short of going to war against the country.

In such a scenario, the US would naturally prefer to encourage regional stake holders (like India, Japan, and the ASEAN countries) to stand up to China individually and collectively even if they do not necessarily share America's concerns vis-à-vis China in all respects (say human rights, democracy, rule of law, etc). For example, the Government of India is ready and willing to build on her strategic partnership with the US and conduct joint naval exercises with America, Japan, and Australia in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. However, India is unwilling to formally join any formal military alliance directed against China.

The North-South Divide

India and China are on the same side of the North-South divide on most global political, economic, and environmental issues. They are the leading champions of the developing countries in all the international forums. Decentralization of the global power structure (a multi-

polar world) and democratization of institutions of global governance (the UN, IMF, World Bank, WTO, and World Court etc.) have been the enduring goals of Indian foreign policy from the beginning. Towards this end and to promote global economic recovery, cooperation between the two vast and growing economies of India and China is crucial. South-South cooperation to redress the inbuilt imbalance in the North-South equation governing global politics is of vital importance for all the poor countries. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) launched the intercontinental organization with the avowed purpose of countering the political, economic, financial, and monetary hegemony of the West over the Rest, it must be pointed out. A BRICS Bank is on the cards to eventually develop as an alternative to the US dollar as global currency!

Japan Enters the Scene

Japan is grooming itself to be an important new player in global affairs. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Abe, the country is shedding the shackles imposed on the nation's role in foreign affairs in the aftermath of the Second World War. While prudently continuing to be a member of the American military alliance system, Japan is ready and willing to play a leading role in global politics. China's policy of activating the hitherto dormant dispute with Japan over the Senkai/Diaoyu islands has come as the last straw on the camel's back. Naturally, Japan is ready and willing to join forces with India, which is equally enthusiastic to rope in Japan on her side vis-à-vis China. The growing economic and commercial relations between the two countries are now extended to cooperation in civilian nuclear and strategic security areas. Japan and India are conducting joint naval exercises at the bilateral as well as multilateral levels with the US and Australia in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. For Japan this symbolizes a paradigm shift in her foreign policy. Prime Minister Abe's re-election by a huge margin is an enthusiastic endorsement of his growth oriented economic reforms at home and the policy of nationalist reassertion abroad.

The US-India-Japan Trilateral

This is the time for the US-India-Japan Trilateral to emerge as a new international combine and give a more enduring institutional shape to their new found proximity. The three countries should shed their inherited inhibitions and come together positively with the avowed objective of nipping the aggressive expansionism of China in the bud. It is important to send out the message to China that her bid to forcefully occupy the territories it claims will be met with counter force and her cunning strategy of dealing with each country separately will be resisted collectively. All the ASEAN countries will join such an

international enterprise enthusiastically. It is appropriate to recall at this juncture that in 2011 the ASEAN countries passed a formal resolution prescribing a "code of conduct" for all members in dealing with the growing number of maritime and jurisdictional disputes in the region in the presence of China. That the dragon chose to defy it soon after is another matter.

Australia will certainly join hands as a NATO ally. Putin's Russia will not oppose international efforts to curb aggressive expansionism of the dragon. Russia is also worried over China's territorial and demographic designs over the vast and under populated regions of Siberia and Mongolia.

Conclusion

India should give top most priority to strengthening its defence capabilities in the border region on a systematic basis. It should be made crystal clear to the hostile neighbour to the north that another war on the border will be met with force.

In dealing with India, China's greatest anxiety is our proximity to the US. We should continue to enhance and strengthen our strategic security relationship with America. The US, India, Japan, Australia joint naval exercises should be held on a regular basis. India should take the initiative in bringing Japan to her side in order to counter Chinese expansionism. The US, Japan, and India ought to take the initiative to build a coalition of concerned countries to deter Chinese adventurism.

Cooperation with China on shared concerns on global issues dividing the North and the South is very important. But, it cannot be at the expense of security on the border. If China is genuinely interested in settling the border dispute on a mutually agreed basis, India should respond positively. But, India should be wary of China's policy of blowing hot and cold on the bilateral equation between the two countries.

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It will be hard to counter Putin because he has refused to play by Western rules. He seems not to fear political isolation; he invites it. He seems not worry about the closing of borders; he hopes for it. His foreign policy amounts to a deep rejection of Europe and an attempt to draw a clear line between its world and Russia's.

Ivan Krastev, Foreign Affairs.

Review of Indo-China Talks on Border Dispute

Suresh C. Sharma

In 2003, Vajpayee accepted Tibet as part of China without obtaining any favourable undertaking for India. China's response was to declare Arunachal as Southern Tibet.

Prime Minister [PM] Rajiv Gandhi visited China in 1988, about 35 years after the last visit of a former PM. All the PMs have been claiming grand results by signing treaties to India's disadvantage. In this visit, while the border dispute was not discussed, an agreement was signed to build bilateral relations. The proposal made by General Krishna Rao to build infrastructure in border areas when Indira Gandhi was PM was given up and it was decided to rely on diplomacy. China, on the contrary, continued to build their infrastructure in Tibet.

Rajiv's visit was followed by PM Narasimha Rao in 1983 when he signed the Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement [BPTA]. It was decided that the talks could be conducted separately for the three sectors – Western, Middle and Eastern. Prior to this Agreement, there were only two incursions – at Nathu La in 1967 and in Sumdusong, Arunachal in 1986. In both the cases, we had shown political resolve to use military force. The intrusions increased after the BPTA.

Chinese Claims and the LAC

The Line of Actual Control [LAC] is neither marked on the ground nor on the map. Reluctance and refusal persists on the part of China to show its version of the LAC. The Chinese troops take advantage of this to keep on pushing their claims in Ladakh and Arunachal. India was too preoccupied with maintaining peace. In 2003, Vajpayee accepted Tibet as part of China without obtaining any favourable undertaking for India. China's response was to declare Arunachal as Southern Tibet. In due course of time, China started calling Indian Army's presence in Tawang as intrusion in Chinese territory. The Chinese Ambassador in reply to a correspondent in a press conference in New Delhi declared that China was not claiming Tawang alone but the entire Arunachal. A visiting Chinese professor commented that if the people of China wanted to assert their rights over Arunachal, the Chinese Army would have to carry out their wishes. Just before the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was to visit India, China declared that the Indo- China border was only 200 kms and not 4,506 kms as claimed by India. It excluded Ladakh as it was not a border but a LAC held by the military. China has insisted on terms that make it possible for it to nibble at Indian Territory.

The move of 4,000 Chinese troops into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir [POK] is part of a plan to encircle

sensitive areas in Jammu and Kashmir. The next step in this game was to issue stapled visas to residents of Kashmir and denial of visa to Lt General B S Jamwal in July 2010 for violation of human rights. We should have cancelled the visit of the delegation instead of accepting such insults.

The Border Defence Cooperation Agreement [BCDA] signed on 23 October 2013 during the visit of Dr. Manmohan Singh is designed to reduce tensions at the border but is no different from earlier agreements. It commits the two sides to non-specific "periodic meetings" of military and civil officials, border patrols not tailing each other, a hot line to be established and cooperation in cases of natural disaster or infectious diseases.

The main issue of defining the LAC has not been solved or even attempted. Since the two countries have not agreed upon an LAC, border intrusions are likely to continue to occur. The mechanism of meetings between civil and military officers will not help when the two sides have different versions of the LAC. In April 2013, the Chinese Army had established a camp in the Depsang Plateau in the Indian Territory. This happened in spite of several meetings of the joint working group and four confidence building measures signed in 1993, 1996, 2005 and 2012.

In December 2013, the Chinese Army detained some herdsmen for five days at Chumar in Ladakh. The hardship caused to the people of Ladakh due to denial of their pasture lands has not been appreciated by New Delhi. There is nothing novel in the joint meetings mentioned in the BCDA as this measure has been in force for several years. Talks have been held on the border dispute since 1981 and no worthwhile agreement has been reached. In 2010, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao stated in New Delhi that "the dispute would take a long time to resolve. Even after resolving the border dispute, we will have problems with India in Tibet, with us in Pakistan and in the Indian Ocean. So why try so hard?" The status quo is in China's favour with a well developed infrastructure including airfields in Tibet and the presence of 400,000 PLA troops in the two regions opposite India. India had given up building infrastructure in the border areas under a false belief that it would reduce tension.

Lack of Political Will

It may be noted that China has displayed its

belligerent attitude by creating East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone in the Senkaku islands in the Pacific. China is already claiming that one foreign plane which violated the “zone” was expelled. Soon after the setting up of the “air defence zone” China assured that a similar zone would not be established on the Indo-Chinese disputed border. India has played up this news little realizing that policy can be changed. Will India display the political will to defy Chinese restriction as Japan and South Korea did in the Pacific and will USA support India?

Vietnam had invited India to participate in off-shore oil exploration. It has been objected to by China. Can we stand our ground? Even though the BCDA lays down that the two sides will not use their military against each other, empty words have no importance as the entire Agreement lacks commitment. The important and urgent issue is to exchange information on the LAC, build up India’s military power and ensure support of foreign countries, which are victims of similar aggression by China.

India has made a start by taking up road construction along the borders but a number of posts are still served by air or by a gruelling march over high mountain passes. One armour unit each has been earmarked for the Eastern and Western sectors. One Corps comprising two divisions is being raised for offensive operations in the Eastern Sector.

Two squadrons of SU-30 fighter aircraft have been located in the East. These developments are welcome for a serious attempt needs to be made to make up for the deficiency of arms and shortfall in officer strength.

Shall we defy the illegal zone or surrender in air too as we have done on land by instructing the Army to avoid the territories claimed by China? The statement by Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid does not inspire confidence when he declared that in spite of our border dispute, we have been able to establish a good working relationship and that the border dispute should not stand in the way of this growing relationship. He added that “India and China have to cooperate and collaborate. There are strengths that China has and there are strengths that India has... I do hope that the working arrangements and the instruments of peace and tranquillity... that have been developed by our leadership... will serve us towards moving forward.”

This relationship is the export of ores against import of poor quality manufactured products resulting in a huge trade deficit! He should be more concerned with China’s strengths and India’s weaknesses.

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Illegal Immigration from Bangladesh

Suresh C. Sharma

General Bikram Singh, Chief of Army Staff, commented in his talk at a seminar on 'Border and Naxal Management' that contrary to the report by the Government claiming decrease in illegal immigration from Bangladesh, it continues to be an issue of grave concern for national security. It has led to serious security challenges in Assam and a threat to demographic changes in the North East.

General Bikram Singh, Chief of Army Staff, commented in his talk at a seminar on 'Border and Naxal Management' that contrary to the report by the Government claiming decrease in illegal immigration from Bangladesh, it continues to be an issue of grave concern for national security. It has led to serious security challenges in Assam and a threat to demographic changes in the North East. Nine illegal immigrants from Bangladesh were found to be working in an army establishment in Bangalore. They had entered India and had travelled from Kolkata to Bangalore by train. One of them had also managed to obtain an Aadhaar card. Investigations are on to find out how he got it.

In addition to the demographic changes, there is the risk of some of the immigrants having links with the terrorist organizations. They get support from the political parties in return for their votes and benefit from the laxity or complicity of the bureaucrats. It is surprising that no one is concerned about the unemployment created amongst our own population. Anna Hazare is trying to bring all the political parties together to block this immigration. Recently, the Coast Guard had detected foreign fishing boats operating in clusters of five or six boats under one license number, same name and the same colour. The crews were of foreign origin, mostly Bangladeshis. It is a security risk.

Illegal immigration is a serious problem in other countries as well, notably in the UK, the USA, Spain and Australia. With the exception of the USA, other countries have a sea-barrier and only well organized gangs can succeed in smuggling illegal immigrants. The liberal laws of the Western States make it possible for them to settle down and take up mostly manual jobs which the local citizens avoid. The immigration authorities do repatriate them whenever detected. Infiltration from Mexico into the USA has some similarities to the influx of people from Bangladesh in that the borders are porous and it is easy to cross over. A large number of them have already built a base to receive and help others to settle down. They pose as citizens of Assam and there are coaching institutes

in Bangladesh to teach them Assamese language.

The Assam Immigration Act was passed to help them. It was declared null and void by the courts due to the persistent efforts by one advocate but the ruling political party immediately provided the earlier facility through the Foreigners Registration Act in utter disregard for national security. They easily manage to get ration cards and voting rights. Only once, the Government of Maharashtra, when BJP was in power, made an attempt to round up a batch of immigrants and send them to Kolkata by train for onward travel to Bangladesh. The train was stoned in Kolkata and all the occupants sent back to Maharashtra. The Government found an excuse not to try it again. It is like the cordon and search operations often conducted by the Security Forces. One failure does not mean not to repeat such operations again. Even if not successful, the disturbance caused to their life is a disincentive for further infiltration.

Under Barak Obama, the US authorities have started a campaign to deport illegal immigrants. They are expelling them at nine times the rate of twenty years ago. During the Obama tenure, two million of them have been deported. Border patrol agents are not merely patrolling but also searching for them in the interior. A fence has been erected to make infiltration more difficult. The deportation agency costs more than all other areas of law enforcement machinery. For the first time the outflow has been more than the inflow. Deporting all the illegal immigrants, believed to be 11.7 million strong, may be difficult. The administration has concentrated on expelling the people with criminal background first. A tough law was passed in 1996 permitting deportation due to misdemeanour. Time limit has also been removed, thus permitting deportation even for a crime committed twenty years earlier. A difficulty arises when the home country declines to accept them. Law has made the company employing illegal immigrants liable to penalty. Both in UK and USA employing an illegal worker at home or office leads to disqualification for

(Cont'd. on page 25)

Admiral D. K. Joshi

The Dignified Exit of an Officer and a Gentleman

Nitin G. Raut

The multiple mishaps on Indian Naval ships are no reflection on the men at arms but symptomatic of the struggle of the Chiefs of the Armed Forces to modernise the forces under their command.

The Chief of Naval Staff Admiral D. K. Joshi's resignation following the mishap of the submarine INS 'Sindhuratna' is in the highest standard of military tradition. He has taken moral responsibility.

Admiral Joshi's resignation has its parallel in General V. K. Singh's exit as Chief of Army Staff. All that General Singh had asked for was night vision equipments, tanks, rifles, howitzers, and ammunition. Instead of addressing the problem, the UPA II made a controversy of his birth date - a trivial issue that could have been resolved behind closed doors.

The Importance of the Navy

The importance of the Navy, given India's crucial geostrategic position overlooking the Indian Ocean, is still not realised. India is on the fault line of the convergence of vital maritime sea lanes. To the west is the Persian Gulf from where 70% of the world's oil requirements are transported. To the east and very close to India's Andaman and Nicobar Command is the Straits of Malacca. It is the only sea lane from the South China Sea and the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. India has a 7,000 Kilometre long coastline. Thus the great importance of the Navy's role both during war and peace.

In India it always takes a cataclysmic event of sorts to take notice of issues of national security. It took the 26/11 terrorist attack to realize the flaws in coastal security. It took Kargil to wake us up to our defence requirements in our northern borders. And now it takes the death of 18 sailors of INS Sindhurakshak and two officers of INS 'Sindhuratna' to be reminded of the sad state of the Indian Navy. The multiple mishaps on Indian Naval ships are no reflection on the men at arms but symptomatic of the struggle of the Chiefs of the Armed Forces to modernise the forces under their command.

The present strength of India's submarine fleet after the sinking of 'Sindhurakshak' is twelve, of which half are aging and will need to be decommissioned by 2016. The very fact that 'Sindhuratna' of 1988 vintage was undergoing refitting and upgrading raises serious

questions regarding our defence policy and priorities. Attempts to extend the lifespan of ships by the refitting process not only endanger the lives of our sailors but seriously affect the potency of fire power and the level of offensive capability.

Need For a Sagacious Policy

Instead of frittering away resources on refitting, a sagacious defence policy would have had the foresight and vision to acquire new ships or a time-bound programme to build ships in India. The programme for acquiring new submarines was launched in 1999 and by 2010 the Navy should have had twenty submarines. Instead today India's submarine fleet has come down to the level of the Pakistan Navy of five submarines and way behind China's fleet of fifty submarines, with fifteen to be added even though half of the existing fifty subs are aging. Does India's political leadership want our five subs to combat an enemy which has a fleet ten times stronger? Even the six Scorpene subs under construction with French technology at the Mazgaon Docks are scheduled for delivery only in 2016-17. Given the tardy pace it is anybody's guess how much longer it would take.

The aircraft carrier INS 'Vikramaditya' after undergoing extensive repairs faced glitches on its voyage back to India despite its delivery being behind schedule. Of the Navy's 140 strong fleet 50% are more than twenty years old and well beyond their life span. The Navy operates with 60% of its frigates and 40% of its destroyers. Most combat ships are without their helicopter. While the UPA II had money for the fifteen expensive Augusta Westland helicopters till the bribe scandal surfaced, there is no money for new ships or battle tanks, naval copters, and army howitzers to replace the 1987 Bofors, or for new aircraft to retire the 'Flying Coffins'.

The 2007 plan for six new stealth submarines is gathering dust in spite of Admiral Joshi stressing its urgency. The Navy still does not have deep submergence rescue vessels for the submarines. The colossal human tragedy of the Russian nuclear Sub 'Kursk' sinking with its crew which even the US and Russians Navies were

unable to salvage has not created even a ripple in the India's Ministry of Defence.

Moreover, the Navy is badly in need of minesweepers, amphibious landing platforms, multi-role helicopters and refuelling ships. In the Sir Creek, the Navy is still not given light water crafts for patrolling when the entire water body is claimed by Pak contrary to international law which considers the mid-line of the water body to be the border.

Political Neglect of the Navy

In respect of INS 'Sindhuratna' a kilo-class Soviet-made sub codenamed Kilo by the NATO, the Western Naval Command had on 3.4.2012, 27.8.2012 and 8.5.2013 begged for new batteries without any response. Ultimately the Navy had to cannibalize the battery from another Sub. Making even the acquisition of locally available battery so difficult would amount to criminal negligence of national security even if it is a fact that the 'Sindhuratna' of 1988 vintage was not seaworthy and refitting was no substitute for modernization. The twin process of aging and mishaps coupled with lack of strategic vision of an ineptitude political leadership has seriously crippled operational mobility and the strike capability of the Indian Navy.

The UPA II and even its predecessors have failed to realize that India needs an effective blue water Navy. A blue water navy is a fleet of multi-role battleships led by an aircraft carrier. It is a self sustaining naval armada in terms of ammunition, fuel, water, food with both combat and non combat personnel. It is virtually a floating township. A modern blue water Navy, like that of the United

States, even has a marine force for amphibious land assault. In its present state, can the Indian Navy show its flag effectively even in the Indian Ocean?

The Indian Ocean has become a potential hotbed with China wanting to hold sway over South China Sea. With the availability of the Pak port of Gwadar and anchorage facilities in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, China's 'String of Pearls' policy is aimed at throttling India in the Indian Ocean Rim States area. Asian powers like Japan and the Southeast Asian States would look towards India to counterbalance China. But can an aging Indian Navy fleet inspire confidence?

It is this fearful scenario that confronted Admiral D. K. Joshi as the Chief of the Naval Staff when he, along with other Chiefs, pressed the UPA II to fast-track, the modernization programme. Following Sindhuratna's mishap, the political leadership had no answer to Admiral Joshi's loaded question to the Defence Minister, A.K. Antony, as to what the Navy is expected to do with a sub of 1988. Do the Service Chiefs have to beg? After all for whose security are the weapons being asked for?

The resignation of Admiral Joshi also reflects a serious disconnect between the military and the civil leadership. Accepted that in a democracy the military is under the control of the elected government, but that does not mean that the advice of the Armed Forces should be treated with contempt and disregard.

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Illegal Immigration from Bangladesh *(Cont'd. from page 23)*

important posts. A proposal is under study to introduce a digital system for employers to check the immigration status of workers.

Both the two major political parties in USA, the Democrats and the Republicans, are opposed to immigration of unskilled people and support entry of educated and skilled workers. It is well realized that the software professionals from Asia have made significant contributions to the US industry and wealth. The unskilled workers from Mexico also contributed to the US economy, paid due taxes and took up jobs which the settled citizens were reluctant to accept. A change has come due to the slowdown in the US industry and migration of manufacturing business overseas resulting in unemployment. Another reason for the Republicans being opposed to the influx of Mexicans was that they did not

fit into the social fabric of USA. The Democrats talked about forging a path for granting citizenship to those who had entered USA but never implemented it. The Republicans opposed any liberalization of rules for citizenship for them. The issue is well debated in the Congress.

In India, no political party takes up this issue for apprehension of loss of their vote bank. Even the ruling party in Assam which came to power on opposing immigration has fallen prey to vote bank politics.

May be the Supreme Court could intervene and issue a directive for checking this influx.

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Band of Men in Their Yellow Submarine!

Probir Roy

Unlike the lyrics of the famous Beatles song, one does not “live a life of ease, and have all you need”, if you join the submarine arm of the Armed Forces.

As recent events have shown, the submarine accidents are not the domain of ‘happens only in India’! From 1947 to now probably around 80 accidents have taken place around the world. Since the year 2000, there have been twenty-seven major naval incidents involving submarines: ten American submarines, five Russian, five British, two Canadian, one Chinese, two Indian, one Australian, and one French. Eight nuclear submarines have sunk as a consequence of either an accident or extensive damage: two from the United States Navy, four from the Soviet Navy, and two from the Russian Navy. Only three were lost with all hands: two from the United States Navy and one from the Russian Navy. All sank as a result of an accident with the exception of K-27, which was scuttled in the Kara Sea when repair was deemed impossible and decommissioning too expensive. All of the Soviet/Russian submarines belonged to the Northern Fleet. Although the Soviet submarine K-129 (Golf II) carried nuclear ballistic missiles when it sank, it was a diesel-electric submarine and is not in the list below. Of the 8 sinking’s, two were due to fires, two were due to explosions of weapons systems, one was due to flooding, one was weather-related, and one was sunk intentionally due to a damaged nuclear reactor. In one case, the cause of sinking is unknown. All of the subs are in the Northern Hemisphere, and there are none in either the Indian or Pacific Oceans.

In fact it is to the credit of the Indian Navy to have had over 40 years of submarine operation almost blemish free. While I don’t think of any other Navy can claim the same track record, the Indian Navy has to continue to meet its superior submarine operations to keep up their record compared to top world navies. They have to be held to a higher standard to be the premier subsea force. Therefore there is no excuse for any peacetime accident in one’s own berthing station regardless of the cause.

Commanding any warships is an uncompromising job. The Captain of a warship is responsible and accountable for his ship and men at all times, short of an unpredictable act of God. While losing a submarine in war is forgiven, losing it in peacetime while on patrol or exercise, and more so losing your ship while it is in harbour or tied

up alongside is certainly not acceptable. Captains, whose ships are hit and sunk in wartime, therefore choose to go down with their ships to avoid the shame and ignominy of their fellow men in not being able to secure their ships, and bring their men home back safely. This is the naval tradition of seamanship for centuries. Death before dishonour best describes this practice. Nothing has changed since.

Other than the usual suspects (engineering / material failure / faulty equipment, battery, electrical, aux, etc) that will be investigated, the issues that merit some attention involve:

- 1) human error by way of standard operating procedures (SOP’s), inspection regime before and during handling of ordinance loading and availability, preparedness
- 2) adherence to ‘Stand by’ SOP’s in case of exigency / eventualities of such nature
- 3) any reduction in the recently concluded ‘full overhaul’ for submarine fleet operational reasons

If I recollect, this was the third incident within Mumbai naval dockyard and harbour in the last few years. There have been six incidents in harbour, Arabian Sea and Visakhapatnam within the last six months which have merited the removal from command of CO’s, and a summon to New Delhi of a C in C, the latter unprecedented in Naval history.

Sinking at a berthing station was last evidenced at Pearl Harbour! And that was during imminent hostile action. Since then, the US Navy changed their strategy, as did all professional navies of the world. The sinking’s of USS Thresher (1963) and USS Scorpion (1968) with all hands on deck were defining points in submarine history. This kicked off the most ambitious program to instil a culture of safety / rescue program – (SUBSAFE) – in the submarine community.

Perhaps this will give a fillip to (a) expediting the 30 sub fleet plan and replacement of obsolescence (b) improve submarine rescue capability, and (c) last but not least, a secular and steady programme of navy

indigenization – with near zero dependence on diffident suppliers of yore! Sending ships to and fro to their original yards and paying precious dollars for such services for major overhaul and refits creates an unhealthy dependency.

After the salvage is complete, I hope the Navy Board Of Inquiry headed by a senior submariner does indeed get to the bottom of this mishap and makes requisite changes in SOP's, inspection and verification regime, safety regulations compliance, command and control, training, drills, exercises, manuals, contingency plans, emergency response, etc.

When you join the submarine arm, it is not just a well paid job or post with good retirement benefits, it is a calling, a passion, where the margins of error are zero, and the consequence is life!

PROBIR ROY is the son of late Vice Admiral M.K ('Miki') Roy PVSM, AVSM, and grew up in a close naval family. From an early age he had a natural and keen interest in all things Navy and took all available opportunities to absorb, see, experience, share and often talk with his father on defence matters, naval profession and life.

He has been associated with IT over the last 20 years in diverse and varied leadership capacities. He currently runs his own Company in the Information Technology called PAYMATE, which is a leading player in the area of mobile payments.

Defence Planning - a ticking time bomb waiting to explode

There is something faintly dubious when one reads about a recent report in a reputed publication (Business Standard, Feb 3,2014) that the armed forces of India have two major problems (a) the annual capital budget, (for acquisitions/procurement of weapon systems, hardware and platforms) – just 5 percent is earmarked for new acquisitions (i.e. Rs.2,955 crores in FY 2014), with the balance going for payments due on account of past years acquisitions and purchases, and (b) even then, the forces are able to spend just 50-60% of that remaining balance capital allocation!

Contributed by Brig. Suresh C. Sharma

We want a society where a people are free to make choices, to make a mistakes, to be generous and compassionate. This is what we mean by a moral society; not a society where the state is responsible for everything, and no one is responsible for the state.

Margaret Thatcher. Quoted in *The Heritage Foundation*; morningbell@heritage.org.



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A Sound Barrier – An Ancient Aviator's Anecdote

Cecil Parker

*We of course philosophised that impaired hearing was only nature's way
of protecting air veterans from noise!*

My generation of young men, who in the aftermath of Independence joined the flying branch of the Air Force, did our pilot training on noisy propeller driven aircrafts (ACs) where the pilots were seated just behind the aero engine. Post graduation, we went on to fly even more deafening piston engine fighter and transport ACs of World War II vintage. The induction of jet ACs in the early 1950s reduced the decibel level in the sealed cockpit somewhat as the engine was now located behind the pilot. However, the ear splitting whine of the jet engine was harmful for the ground crew, so ear defenders were procured for technicians on the tarmac. We were of course fit, keen and active young fliers but were yet to understand the meaning of 'sound pollution' or assess its long term effects on our sense of hearing.

As we progressed to more powerful and faster combat ACs, we were introduced to 'sound barrier' and taught how to break it. For safety purposes, this training exercise was carried out at very high altitudes. In some ways, the actual experience was a bit disappointing as it was only an instrument in the cockpit (the Mach meter) that indicated that one was now flying faster than sound; the pilot himself hears nothing as he goes through the famed sound barrier. One was thereafter presented with a certificate of membership in the Mach Busters Club!

Active fliers spend most of their Air Force careers working and living on military airfields and thus continue to be exposed to high levels of noise generated by the operation of ACs day and night. The resulting hearing loss is very gradual and not significant enough to show up in the annual medical examinations. Due to a disciplined life style, most aircrews remain fully fit throughout their flying careers.

In 1980, while on duty as an air commodore in the UK, I was authorized to fly four familiarisation sorties on the Hawk jet trainer as it was being considered for possible induction into our Air Force. That it took 25 years to do so is another story! During my pre-flight medical check, the doctor did mention a slight loss of hearing in one ear. It in no way affected my flying but was likely to do so in the years to come. He then introduced me to a tiny little gadget called a hearing aid!

Post retirement and in my 70s, I was fitted with a hearing aid in each ear one click of which ensured adequate audibility. Due to population growth, voluminous traffic and other high decibel activities (especially in urban areas) we now live in a much noisier world than my generation did. At a recent reunion of my course mates (all of us octogenarians), I was comforted to observe that nearly all of them were also sporting the tiny little 'add-on'! We of course philosophised that impaired hearing was only nature's way of protecting air veterans from noise! Pleading 'deafness' was also a plausible defence when confronted with complaints from the wife who undoubtedly continues to be the most reliable hearing aide! The electronic hearing aid has broken the 'sound barrier' by providing an option to hear when required, or to retreat into the peaceful sound of silence, when not!

CECIL PARKER, retired Air Vice Marshal of the IAF and a freelance writer. shirleygloria70@yahoo.com.

A poem by the late Khushwant Singh at his 92nd birthday party!!

'Pickled In Rum'

The horse and the mule live for 30 years
And know nothing of wines and beer;
The goat and sheep at 20 die,
And never get a taste of Scotch and rye.
The cow drinks water by the tonne
And at 18 is mostly done.
The cat in milk and water soaks,
And then in 12 short years it croaks.
The modest, sober, bone-dry hen
Lays eggs for others, then dies at 10.
All animals are strictly dry,
They sinless live and swiftly die.
But sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men
Survive for three score years and ten,
And some of them, though very few,
Stay pickled till they're 92.
Three Cheers!!

From the Net.
Contributed by Col. (Retd.) T. S.Tanwar.

Interlinking of Rivers in India

K. S. Puttaswamy

Last September Freedom First carried an article on India's National Water Policy (2012) by Justice A. K. Rajan (Retd.), who described it as an "Affront to Federalism." Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) continues the discussion commenting on a Supreme Court Judgement delivered on 27th February 2013 on the "Networking of Rivers". The Supreme Court was disposing off two writ petitions - No. 512 and 668 both of 2002.

The writ petitions were actually the result of a statement made by the then President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, in his Independence Day speech on August 14, 2002. In his speech the President had, *inter alia*, referred to the paradoxical phenomena of floods in one part of the country and droughts in the other parts, and in this context emphasizing the need for interlinking interstate rivers in our country. The Writ Petitions sought to give effect to this suggestion of a former President of India. The petition was heard on 16 September 2002. Responding to this petition the Supreme Court took the view that it would more appropriate to treat it as independent Public Interest Litigation with the cause title "Networking Of Rivers affecting all the states in India. In response to the notices issued to the states, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu supported the proposal; Assam, Sikkim, Karnataka, Bihar and Punjab, gave their approval in principle but with definite reservations. Madhya Pradesh took the position that networking of rivers was a subject falling within the jurisdiction of the Central Government and therefore it was for the Central Government to consider the matter.

It must be mentioned in this connection that at all times, the Government of India irrespective of the party or coalition in power, was in favour of the interlinking of Rivers in our country. Besides, the Standing Committee of Parliament, in its report of 23rd August 2004 to parliament strongly approved the proposal.

The Bench of Three Judges consisting Chief Justice S. H. Kapadia, Justice A. K. Patnaik and Justice Swatanter Kumar. pronounced their unanimous judgment on 27 February 2013.

The following are some highlights from this judgement:

In para 9 of the Judgment, the Court noticed in extenso the National Perspective Plan (NPP) formulated in 1980 on the Optimum Utilisation of Water resources in our Country. It pointed out that the National Water Development Authority (NWDA) was set up as an autonomous registered society under the aegis of Ministry of Water Resources, in New Delhi in 1992. Its task was to

prepare Feasibility Reports (FRs) conduct water-balance and other scientific studies, etc. for peninsular Region rivers, (as was undertaken in 1990 for the Himalayan Region rivers) and headed by the Union Minister of Water Resources with Chief Ministers and/or Ministers and the Secretaries as their in charge of Water Resources/Irrigation as their nominees of the State governments as its members. The pre-feasibility reports of all 30 identified links had been completed by the NWDA.

Pointing out that considerable preliminary studies (Status Reports) had already had already been completed, the judgement noted that while the process of consensus building was on-going in regard to the feasibility of implementing other interlinking projects and provided enough evidence of the unquestionable benefits that would accrue on the implementation of the interlinking projects the fact was that as on the date of this judgement, no minor or major project had been actually implemented despite the fact that this case has been pending before this Court for more than ten years (the reference was to earlier writ petitions filed in 1998, 1999 and 2002). Commented the judgement "this does not speak well of the intention on the part of any of the concerned Governments to implement these projects, despite the fact that there is unanimity of views that this project is in the national interest among everyone

The court saw merit in the recommendation by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) that Irrigation costs had to be borne by the user. It quoted the following from the NCAER recommendations: "*Water rates are form of user charges, and not a tax. Users of public irrigation must meet the cost of the irrigation service*" (*emphasis mine*).

The judgement went on to cite the NCAER on the question of the maintenance of separate river basin organizations: "In the summing up of its Report, the NCAER has stated that water is essential for production of food - economic growth, health and support to the environment. Its main contribution to economic well-being is through its use of agriculture to improve food security. Water is essential to increase agricultural productivity under modern technology. Nearly 64 per cent of the

population in rural area and 4 per cent in urban area depends on agriculture as their principal source of income. In order to put our economy on the high growth path and improve the quality for life of people in the rural areas, a mixed policy of both increased availability of irrigation and increasing non-farm activity is required”.

“It is clear”, said the judgement, “ that primarily there is unanimity between all concerned authorities - including the Centre and a majority of the State Governments, with the exception of one or two, that implementation of river linking will be very beneficial...***This project, when it becomes a reality, will provide immeasurable benefits*** (emphasis mine), We see no reason as to why the Governments should not take appropriate and timely – interest in the execution of this project, particularly when, in the various affidavits filed by the Central and the State Governments, it has been affirmed that the governments are very keen to implement this project with great sincerity and effectiveness”. In the succeeding paragraphs, the Court has noticed the stand of the various States, as also the recommendations of the National Commission for Review of the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) 2002.

In this context the judgement clearly observes “Be that as it may, we have no hesitation in observing that the national interest must take precedence over the interest of the individual States. The State Governments are expected to view national problems with a greater objectivity, rationality and spirit of service to the nation and ill-founded objections may result in greater harm, not only to the neighbouring States but also to the nation at large”.

The Court directed the Government of India’s Ministry of Water Resources to appoint a 9-Member Committee for Inter-linking of Rivers’ headed by the Minister for Water Resources plus experts from various bodies like the Planning Commission etc, for implementation of the Project at the nearest available opportunity.

The Judgement concluded with the hope of speedy implementation and also issued a mandamus to the Central and the State Governments concerned to comply with the directions contained in this judgment effectively and expeditiously and without default. “This is a matter of national benefit and progress. We see no reason why any State should lag behind in contributing its bit to bring the Inter-linking River Program to a success, thus saving the people living in drought-prone zones from hunger and people living in flood-prone areas from the destruction caused by floods”

In the Editorial Note of the Supreme Court Cases,

it has been stated that 8 meetings of the committee were held till March 2012. I wrote a letter to the Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources on 2.1.2014 and reminded him on 21.1.2014 to which he has not responded till date (22.2.2014). I then wrote to Mr. Ranjit Kumar (the Amicus Curiae and also the Petitioner0 on 29.1.2014, to which he graciously responded by his letter dated 12.2.2014. In his reply he wrote that very strangely the Union of India which had supported the proposal before the Supreme Court filed three belated review petitions seeking for review of the Judgment of the Court and the very Bench which had rendered its judgment dismissed all three.

The term of the Lok Sabha expires on 31st May 2014. After elections in April and May, a new Government at the Center of one or other party or a coalition of parties, will be in place from first June 2014. Earlier I have indicated the enactment of an Act to regulate the implementation of the project.

A couple of years ago, I asked a leading Swiss expert on dams, Raymond Lafitte, when he was visiting New Delhi, what his view was on China’s Three Gorges Project. He thought for a while and said that it was a most laudable venture because after just two decades it would take to build, commission and operate, 50 million people downstream would be able to cultivate their lands without flooding and be assured of regular releases. I asked him, ‘what about the over one million people that have been deprived of their homes and have to be resettled elsewhere on account of this mega project?’ And he replied. ‘That is the price we must pay for future progress!’ But what a price! I told the Swiss expert that the Three Gorges Project – beneficial as it is in the long run – can never be a possibility in India, under a democracy based on individual rights and freedoms.” Three Gorges project implementation had commenced in 1999 and the same may take another 10 years to complete. What has been stated by the Swiss expert, applies equally to the Interlinking of Inter State Rivers in our Country.

I have written this Article, to stimulate an intellectual discussion by intellectuals, experts and the public expressing their views, either for or against the same and forward them to the Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources for further action. Space has restrained *Freedom First* from reproducing the full article of nearly 4,800 words. The editor has assured me that the full text will be published in the Web edition of *Freedom First* and will also be made available on Facebook. I am hoping that this topic of the utmost importance to our countrymen will generate a useful discussion leading to a public demand for the implementation the interlinking of rivers which will benefit the people of India as a whole.

JUSTICE K. S. PUTTASWAMY, Retired Judge Karnataka High Court.

BOOK REVIEWS



ATLANTIC GANDHI: THE MAHATMA OVERSEAS by Nalini Natarajan • Sage Publications, India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi • 2013 • Pages: 258 • Rs. 695

Reviewed by Dr. Parvathi Vasudevan, formerly Reader, University of Mumbai, Mumbai. She specialized in international relations.

Nalini Natarajan's well researched and well documented book offers "an interdisciplinary perspective" of the trials and tribulations experienced not merely by the father of the Indian nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, but the 'coolie

English to transfer the labour from agriculture to mining given the general unwillingness of the workforce to be a part of the mining economy with its attendant adverse impact on their health profile.

The author discusses at some length Gandhi's writings in the 'Hind Swaraj', the hand written version of which was penned by Gandhi when he was on a ship and written on the ship's stationery. The print edition of the manuscript, the author points out, was seized by the British – an act which Gandhi felt was very "unBritish" in nature. One fatal flaw according to the author was when Gandhi in his writing said, "when the Europeans settled in Africa they found "Negroes there...slaves of America who had escaped from their cruel bondage by navigating to Africa" (p.97), when actually they were native Africans.

Nalini Natarajan also points how the Atlantic Gandhi (though Gandhi himself had not sailed the waters of the Atlantic) had equated Britain with modernity and Satan and India with the ancient and God. Gandhi, it seems from the book, preferred the bullock cart or travel by foot, rather than the train as his preferred mode of transport because he felt that it was the railways that were responsible for the spread of the bubonic plague, increased famines and also rendered India's holy places unholy since rogues and fake devotees also started visiting Rameshwaram in the south, Juggernaut (Puri Jagannath) in the east and Hardwar in the north. Gandhi's call for as many Indians as possible to return to the villages and its values needs to be best understood in this context. A cynic could possibly argue that Gandhi's preference for travel by foot or by the bullock cart over travel by train could be related to the experience of being "thrown out of the train on a cold night" on June 1st 1893" (p.85). This was indeed a traumatic experience for Gandhi – a young anglicized Gujarati from a well-to-do and a well connected family from Kathiawar in his home state of Gujarat.

Gandhi's successful role in the significant transformation of women's position, especially the Tamil women in the Transvaal region of South Africa gets pride of place in the book. For long, these women, prior to Gandhi's attempts were treated as maids, prostitutes or

class' alias the indentured labour force, mostly migrants from all over India (and who worked side by side with West African slaves brought from the Atlantic seaboard) as also by the Indian merchant and the trading class primarily from Gujarat. Gandhi, as a lawyer, the author points out, represented the legal briefs of both, he was fondly called the "coolie barrister". Natarajan however says surprisingly, that Gandhi did make a distinction between the different Diasporas. In the process, the author points out, Gandhi's "own racial blind spots shows up consistently". (p. 77)

By the time Gandhi returned to India for good at age 45, Gandhi had experienced a range of emotions. These ranged from being a "transoceanic migrant" after having grasped the crutch of "Indianness in exilic anxiety" (p.71 to) to being a successful spokesperson for the rights of the underprivileged irrespective of the social classifications that characterized Indians both at home and abroad to becoming an Indian nationalist par excellence.

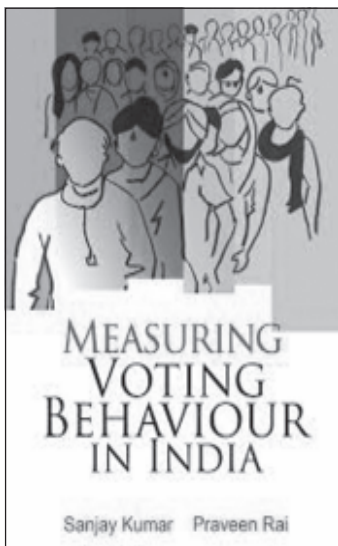
In his book 'Satyagraha in South Africa' (1928), Gandhi detailed the slow evolution of Satyagraha or the insistence on truth and considered it as a potent weapon in the fight for justice. Gandhi also indicates how South Africa evolved from being an agriculture entity to a mineral based economy with the discovery of gold and diamonds. Gandhi is aghast at how the autonomy of the Zulus, the Khoikhois and the San is eroded when they are unable to pay a hut tax they had unwillingly become a part of the mining labour class. The author wonders whether this was not a carefully worked out ploy on the part of the

errant wives. Gandhi championed the view that they be regarded as upright respectable wives, in particular the rights of Muslim women, especially if she was the second wife wanting to migrate with her husband to South Africa. Gandhi was full of praise for Muslims “because they don’t change their personal habits.” Gandhi was however critical of the rapacious male vis-a-vis the coolie women.

The amicable relationship that existed between Gandhi and C. F. Andrews (an Englishman from York who was inspired by writers like Tagore and Munshiram) is also discussed at length. Gandhi called him Charlie while Andrews preferred calling him Mohan and often referred to Gandhi as dressed in ‘langoti’ (the Indian form of undergarment) and shawl. For that matter Andrews is

described as one who looked like a Hindu ‘sanyasi’ and who had no hesitation in taking the Holy Communion in Bengali. The similarity also extended to the extensive travels undertaken by the two - Gandhi’s travel in South Africa in trains covered Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Transvaal, and Andrew’s travels by trains in India covered Calcutta, Delhi and Shimla. The author points out that both men were a “testament of the myriad possibilities offered by a diasporic life”. (p.184).

The author, a professor of English in the US, concludes that Gandhi, with tactic and skill developed as a Diaspora and as a cosmopolitan, over the years became a role model for leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.



MEASURING VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA, by Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Rai
 ● Published by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi ● 2013 ● Pages 175
 ● Rs. 350.

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

The authors are faculty members of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies [CSDS]. The book aims to educate the readers about the various tools for measuring voting behaviour in elections.

The hostility to survey based research on political attitudes is a result of ignorance. The book is an attempt to correct this bias. Survey needs considerable discussions based on carefully designed questionnaire. Election forecasts are based on study of behaviour of samples and are fairly accurate. While they cannot be as precise as measurements in physical sciences, their main focus in measuring voting behaviour is to understand how the voters arrive at voting decisions.

Polling started with the founding of the Institute of Public Opinion by Dr. Gallop in Princeton, USA in 1935. In order to ensure objectivity, it was decided not to accept any sponsorship from the two major political parties. Dr. Gallop’s survey correctly predicted the victory of President Roosevelt but failed in the prediction of election of Truman in 1948 and that of Jimmy Carter in 1976. Besides prediction of winners, polling also provided a comprehensive account of voting behaviour of the electorate. In India, polling surveys were started in the 1950s by Dr. Eric de Costa, an economist and founder of the Indian Institute of Public

Opinion [IIPO]. The IIPO’s election forecast of 1957 turned out to be accurate. The hallmark of this study was scientific sampling, in-depth questionnaire and rigorous field work. A published work, called the National Election Study [NES], was first published in 1971.

In the 1980s, Dr. Prannoy Roy started conducting opinion polls to predict election results. In 1989, he collaborated with Marketing and Research Group [MARG] to conduct exit polls by interviewing 77,000 voters as they came out of the polling booths. Media channels undertook similar studies and exit polls have now become a regular feature. Pre-poll surveys provided useful information of electoral behaviour of various sections to the political parties. Another method used for measuring electoral behaviour was case studies. It gave more comprehensive observation of minute details at localized level.

In Chapter 3, the authors have discussed various methods of studying voting behaviour. In a study of one constituency or town, the interviewer could spend considerable time in obtaining views of the voters. For a large area, the polling agency has to depend on more than one researcher. Standardization is necessary to ensure reliability of data. In the last two elections in India, predictions of surveys turned out to be wrong while in the USA exit polls gave correct results. The difference is due to the methods adopted in the two countries. The popular method in USA is to collect data by using telephones or e-mail due to prohibitive costs of face to

face interviews. In India, the popular technique is to collect data by resorting to face to face interviews.

In India, pre-poll surveys are generally conducted a few weeks before the elections and fail to give a correct picture since some of the voters may not have made up their minds by then or may change their choice. Samples are not selected scientifically. The CSDS use scientific methods to select samples and identify the issues which determine the choice of voters.

Due to limited resources, information can be collected only from a limited number of voters. The accuracy of the result depends upon how representative the sample is. Even a small sample can give accurate results if chosen scientifically eliminating bias in selection of locality and voters. In some cases interviews are limited to urban areas only. The authors have explained the various methods of sampling for pre-polling and exit surveys. We need sampling experts and statisticians to determine the correct method of selecting samples.

A well structured questionnaire is an essential tool for survey. The questions elicit views about political parties and opinion about political leaders. The quality of data depends upon the design of questions, sequence in which questions are put, language used and the way questions are put. To ensure standardization, the questions should be simple, clearly understood, specific, and appropriate to the objective and convey the same meaning to all the respondents. The first step is to identify the issue that motivates the search and translate it into simple questions. A good question should get different answers from various people. A question is not good if all the people give the same type of answer. Loaded questions are sometimes framed to please the sponsor. Double negatives are to be avoided and forced choices may be used. Queries may be on facts or on opinions. A pilot survey among a small sample helps to check the quality of the questionnaire.

Sampling and design of questionnaire is carried out in the office involving only a few people. A large number of field workers have to be employed for data collection over a large area. It is difficult to exercise control over their activities and therefore it is necessary to train them in acceptable field practices. Most of the polling agencies fail to emphasize and indoctrinate the enumerators with the importance of adhering to instructions. They need to organize practical or simulated sessions and training workshops. Mock interviews help in practical lessons. Obtaining information by distributing list of questions is not a desirable practice.

For election surveys, dummy ballot boxes may be

used and information solicited about voting preferences. The subject of data collection is not taught in Indian universities as the teaching is confined to class rooms. In training for field work, they have to learn how to persuade reluctant or even hostile respondents. In Andhra Pradesh, supporters of Telangana opposed any survey. They did not want any dissidence. In Kashmir, sympathizers with the separatist movement wanted to be sure that the survey was not linked to any political party.

The final step is data processing and preparation of report. The first level of checking is usually done by a local supervisor due to diversity of languages. The second level of checking is done by the central team and an electronic file created. Data is analyzed and report prepared. The report should include sampling method used, profile of voters and purpose of survey. Poll survey measures vote share of different political parties which is the basis of predicting likely results. In earlier models, vote share gave the seat share at the national level. This turned out to be correct when the contest was between two major political parties. It has not given good results when multiple political parties are contesting, when the share of a party varies from state to state and when there is a split in a party.

It has been alleged that pre-poll surveys were unfair as it influenced the opinion of voters. As a result, the Election Commission imposed a ban on dissemination of the results of opinion polls and exit polls during election period in the General Elections of 1998. This ban was challenged in the Supreme Court by the magazine *Frontline*. The court declined to intervene, adjourned the case and advised that the "Press might take risks." The petition seeking a ban on election surveys was finally decided by the Supreme Court which said that the Election Commission is free to frame its guidelines to regulate publication of survey results. The Election Commission has banned the dissemination of results of opinion or exit polls during the period of 48 hours before voting time. The Press Council of India has laid down its own guidelines for the conduct of pre-poll and exit polls so that the media is not manipulated. The book explains in simple language the methods to be used in conducting election surveys and is useful for both professionals and general readers.

Polling is merely an instrument for gauging public opinion. When a president or any other leader pays attention to poll results, he is, in effect, paying attention to the views of the people. Any other interpretation is nonsense.

George Gallup

Educating Adults

Neglect of Vocational and Skills Education

One of the great conundrums of post-independence India's national development effort is why for over six decades and counting, successive governments at the Centre and in the states have grossly neglected early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education right across the spectrum. Surely it's always been self-evident that unless we have a well-educated population, the country will never develop into a healthy democracy or economy. True, Nehruvian India took a Soviet-inspired wrong turn which required massive deployment of resources into public sector heavy industry, starving the social sectors. But for all their faults which resulted in the global collapse of communism in 1989, neither the erstwhile Soviet Union nor communist China neglected education. Both these countries are almost wholly literate, while one-third of India's population is illiterate and another 50 percent just about so. Could there be some substance in the charge made by India's communist parties that the middle class establishment which rules the country has deliberately neglected public education to retain the masses in ignorance and poverty to ensure ready availability of a huge pool of cheap labour?

Regrettably, the original sin of neglecting school and higher education has been compounded by ignorance about the socio-economic value of vocational and skills education. Whereas China has 500,000 VET (vocational education and training) centres countrywide, India has 11,250. And while 60-80 percent of workers in all forms of employment in the industrial OECD countries have received formal VET education, in India barely 2 percent have. The upshot of neglect of VET is that the output and total factor productivity per factory worker in India is half of China's, and perhaps one-tenth of German and European labour.

Fortunately even if belatedly, perhaps spooked by the phenomenon of severe shortages of skilled workers in the midst of rising youth unemployment — the country needs to create 12 million new jobs per year — the Delhi

establishment has finally awoken to the need to disseminate VET on a massive scale to make the country's youth employable. In 2009, it promoted the National Skill Development Corporation, a public-private partnership to fund VET education providers countrywide. But while NSDC is making steady progress in its national mission, a more exciting and high-potential development is the rising number of technology professionals, trusts and philanthropists who have stepped forward to empower and enable India's national skilling mission. In our cover story, we profile five promising NGOs which are scaling and racing to skill India's short-changed children and youth. May their tribe increase.

And with polling in the 16th General Election about to begin, in our second lead feature, managing editor Summiya Yasmeen reports that lip service and ritual promises is all that spokespersons of major political parties have to offer to education reforms and development. The communists may be right after all. Dilip Thakore's "From the Editor" in the *Education World*, April 2014.

For the text of the second lead feature "General Election 2014 – Education Apathy" by managing editor Summiya Yasmeen visit www.educationworld.in April 2014.

COURTESY: Dilip Thakore's Editorial in *Education World*, April 2014.

'We cannot so easily hand over a good writer to the Modi camp, not without a fight...' Those are the words of S. Anand, founder-publisher of Navayana, in an interview with *Business Standard*. Navayana is the publishing house that withdrew an agreement to publish the translation of a novel by noted Tamil author Joe D'Cruz because he praised Narendra Modi. So, the intellectual world's worst-kept secret is out.. Writers and artists belong to 'camps'. They don't inhabit the free, boundary-less world of ideas ..

Seetha. Excerpted from her article in *First Post*



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A Second Chance for India Inc – CSR for Education and Health

The imposition of a mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) expenditure obligation upon Indian industry by the new Companies Act, 2013 offers India Inc an opportunity to redeem itself for its inexplicable half-hearted engagement with Indian education over the past half century. Under the Act, every company with a net worth of Rs. 500 crore or more, or revenue above Rs.1,000 crore or a net profit of Rs.5 crore-plus is obliged to spend at least 2 percent of its average net profit of the past three years on CSR activities.

Although it's undeniable that early 20th century business leaders such as J. N. Tata, G.D. Birla and Lala Shri Ram among others, generously promoted and endowed landmark institutions of higher education such as the Indian Institute of Science, BITS, Pilani and the Shri Ram colleges in Delhi, and this tradition has been continued by a few latter-day business tycoons like Shiv Nadar and Azim Premji, the reality that contemporary India's higher education system can accommodate only 18 percent of youth in the age group 18-24 as against 28 percent in China and over 60 percent in developed OECD countries, bears testimony that neither the Central nor state governments or India Inc, have paid sufficient attention to the growth and development of higher education.

The indifference of India Inc and the establishment to education attainment and excellence is also evidenced by the even worse condition of early childhood and primary education systems. The Annual Status of Education Report 2013 published by the highly-respected education NGO

Pratham, indicates a steady and precipitous decline of learning outcomes in the country's 700,000 rural — particularly government-run — primary schools.

Surprisingly, leaders of Indian industry who have to make do with poorly developed human resources have maintained a complicit silence while the human capital of the nation has been destroyed. The mandatory CSR obligation imposed upon profitable business enterprises offers corporate India a second chance to redeem itself for its sins of omission and commission vis-à-vis Indian education.

However, given the history of government over-regulation of industry and business in post-independence India, fears that the new legislation will translate into yet another opportunity for government officials and inspectors to harass and extort bribes from corporates for trivial procedural lapses in discharging this obligation, are not unfounded. Therefore the new legislation needs to be liberally interpreted, with wide latitude given to corporate managements to discharge their CSR activities as per their discretion. Curiously, India's business community has been reluctant to invest in public education and health despite it being almost axiomatic that the prime beneficiary of a healthy and well-educated population is inevitably business itself. The new mandatory CSR obligation offers Indian industry another chance to rectify this blindspot.

COURTESY: Dilip Thakore's Editorial in *Education World*, April 2014

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Girls' Education

Suresh C. Sharma

“Educate a man and you educate one person, educate a woman and you educate the whole family.”

Girls' education provides the highest returns on investment in developing countries. An uneducated child is a burden on the society and it is even more so in the case of girls. The men are busy in earning a livelihood. But an educated girl can look after the children's schooling and ensure that they inculcate

good manners. Their education also qualifies them for jobs in factories or as school teachers. The direct result of such employment is awareness of family planning. She will want to ensure good education for her children which would be possible only with small families. It helps to overcome the evils of dowry deaths and gender discrimination. The

World Bank has also endorsed that female education leads to reduction in maternal mortality, lower fertility rates, improvement in child nutrition and health and reduction in exploitation of women.

Project Nanhi Kali was started by K C Mahindra Education Trust [KCMET] in 1996 to provide education to the underprivileged girls in India. Parents in rural areas often sent the girl children to schools only for primary classes. This project aims at schooling for ten years for all female children. A good start has been made and some of the girls who never thought of going to school are training to be teachers and doctors.

In 2005, NGO Naandi Foundation also joined the KCMET for management of the project. Presently, 21 NGOs are helping to implement the project to ensure that the girls receive quality education. Admission is based on family background and aptitude of children. Classes are conducted before or after school hours to help students

to overcome weaknesses in core subjects. The NGOs keep in touch with the parents to sensitize them on gender equality.

The project is making good progress. For example, a start was made in Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu with 3,500 children in 70 schools. It soon expanded to admit 7,000 girls.

The project has not started its own schools but collaborates with government schools. A monitoring system ensures that children make the best of the facility. Review of learning ability showed an increase by 40% in Chhattisgarh and by 70% in Mumbai. Presently, about one lac children in seven states are supported by this project. The drop-out rates are less than 10%

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Two Poems

Where I Am From

I am from a place with poverty.
But also wealth.
I am from a place with sadness.
But also happiness.
I am from a dangerous place.

My family lives there.
In a two story house.
With eight bedrooms.
Two gardens.
One in the back.
One in the front.

I go out and smell the spices.
I hear fireworks being lit.
And the place lighting up.
To celebrate a festival.

I see rain and coldness.
But then the weather changes.
To hot and humid.
I go out and see the biggest population in the world.

This is where I am from.
Where I will always be from.
This my home country.
It is India.

What I See

Everybody sees the sea.
They see it as a peaceful place.
I see it differently.
I see war!

I see fish squirming
for their lives.
While the shark
chases them.
I see a hook
sinking in the water.
Catching a fish or a shark.
I see a whale scooping down
looking for scrumptious scrawny plankton

I see misery.
I see death.
I see enemies.
I see war.

11-year old ARJUN KARNIK is the great grandson of V. B. Karnik.

The Carving of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka: When...??

Durba Das, Khushboo Mishra

The Sri Lankan civil war started in 1983, against the Sri Lankan government by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the LTTE, also known as The Tamil Tigers. LTTE is a militant organization which has been fighting to create an independent Tamil State known in Tamil as Tamil Eelam. After 26 years of military campaign, the Sri Lankan military defeated the Tamil Tigers in May 2009, bringing the civil war to an end but the trouble for the Tamils in Sri Lanka continues.

At the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting in November 2013 at Sri Lanka, David Cameron, Prime Minister of UK visited the Tamil areas in the North of Sri Lanka. About 300 families told him of the missing family members. They are unable to go to their homes from their camps. Cameron called for an independent investigation of the alleged war crimes and a UN led enquiry.

India has given considerable aid to Sri Lanka to build railways, hospitals and refugee camps. Yet, the relations between the two countries remain strained due to issues related to the Tamils in Sri Lanka. There is a growing fear that if India does not resolve the issue with Sri Lanka, China and Pakistan will step in to adversely impact India's strategic interests there.

To trace the origin, history and growth of the problem it can be said that the roots of the modern conflict lie in the British colonial rule when the country was called Ceylon. In the beginning there was hardly any tension among the Sri Lanka's two largest ethnic groups Sinhalese and Tamils.

In 1919, the Sinhalese and the Tamil political organization united to form the Ceylon National Congress under the leadership of Punnambalam Arunachalam, a Tamil. The Ceylon National Congress began to pressurize the British for constitutional reforms. The British governor William Manning encouraged communal representation and began to follow the policy of Divide and Rule. This was done by reserving seats for Tamils and Sinhalese and by replacing English by Sinhalese as the official language. This was done on purpose to isolate the Tamils. In 1948, immediately after independence the Indian Tamil minority found it very difficult to obtain citizenship. This rendered 7 lakh Tamil stateless and homeless. Finally, in 1946, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike passed the 'Sinhala Only Act' by which Sinhala became the official language. Hence, the Tamils were discouraged to join the Sri Lankan Civil Services. Thereafter, riots became wide spread.

In the late 1960s, the idea of a separate Tamil State began to flow. In response to this the government adopted greater discriminatory policies against the Tamils. The worst was the Standardization Act, which discriminated against Sri Lankan Tamil students entering the Universities. For example- a Tamil student was required to obtain 250 marks out of 400 for admission in medicine while a Sinhalese could get admission with 229 marks. These discriminatory policies led to the establishment of TNT that is the Tamil New Tigers in 1972. This was followed by the making of EROS that is Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students in Manchester and London. These organizations continued to fight the Sinhalese government and promoted militancy. The TNT later changed its name to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam that is LTTE in 1976.

In 1983 the LTTE ambushed the Sri Lankan Army killing its officer and soldiers. This resulted in a counter attack and Tamils were massacred in Colombo. Thus, began the civil war.

During the civil war there were suicide attacks and the LTTE continued to engage in bloody operations for the establishment of Tamil Eelam.

India became involved in the war in the 1980s and supported the cause of the Tamils. At first, the Indian government gave arms, training and support to 6 Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups including LTTE through its intelligence agency RAW. Also the Indian Air force dropped 25 tons of food parcel and medicine at Jaffna during the civil war.

Negotiations were held between the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Jayawardhane by which the Sri Lankan Government agreed to give concession to the Tamils and India was to send the IPKF that is the Indian Peace Keeping Force to help end the conflict. To a large extent this negotiation did control the full scale conflict but the Tamils disliked the appointment of the IPKF. Gradually, the pressure mounted on the Indian government to withdraw the IPKF from both the sides. The IPKF remained in the Sri Lankan soil for 32 months before being withdrawn in March 1990. 1,200 Indian soldiers and over 5000 Sri Lankan died. It cost the Indian government more than 10.3 billion rupees. This was followed by the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 which was planned by LTTE chief Prabhakaran.

By remaining an outside observer at the

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Sri Lanka in November 2013 India is only clearing the way to be sidelined and making it worthwhile for the entry of

China and Pakistan.

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Displacement and Migration of Kashmiri Pandits

Agnes George

Migration and displacement is a historic phenomenon. It has resulted in the past due to wars and conflict or natural disaster and now it is happening due to development of infrastructure such as building roads, railways, embankments, highways, dams, hospital, new cities and SEZ's. Migration may result in crossing boundaries but it is also possible in the case of Internally Displaced People where people have to cross their cities/district or state boundaries. In 2010 there were 4.2 million IDP's worldwide due to natural disasters. In the last 20 years 1 million people have fled their homes in north-east India due to ethnic violence.

Around 1,40,000 Kashmiri pandits fled the Kashmir valley between 1980 to 1998. There have been similar incident of ethnic violence in Gujarat and several parts of India including the financial capital of Mumbai.

The problems faced by the migrants are many which include stigmatization, sexual abuse, homelessness, lack of food, unemployment, unhygienic and insanitary conditions of stay. Under such conditions the youth get attracted to terrorist and anti-social activities. By way of example we can look at the "Advasi Cobra Militant Force" & "The Birsa Commando Force" which were formed by the displaced Santhals in western Assam.

Although the United Nation's Human Rights Commission has developed rules and regulations for migrants crossing boundaries for various reasons. These rules are not applied to IDP's. However these can become the guidelines for "humanitarian, intervention in the case of IDP's. However International humanitarian law can be instrumental in protecting the physical and psychological trauma of the IDP's.

The outbreak of militancy in the Kashmir valley in the last 80's resulted in the displacement of Kashmir pandits from the Valley. The entire community was exiled to take refuge either in Jammu or other parts of the country. Some blamed the Muslim community while others were of the opinion that it was the work of Armed groups backed by Pakistan.

History of the Kashmir Valley

Zulju, probably a Mongol from Turkistan, wreaked

devastation in 1320 in many regions of the Kashmir Valley. Later Sultan Sikandar Butshikam being an iconoclast, in the late 14th century destroyed non-Muslim religious symbols and forced the population to convert. Many who did not convert to Islam were forced to move to other parts of India, these migrants were the pundits from Kashmir. The outcome of this shift both in population and in religion was that the Kashmir valley became predominantly a Muslim region.

Butshikans heir Zain-ul-Abiden was tolerant of Hindus to the extent of sanctioning them to return to Hinduism. He also brought tolerance for the Hindu temples. He respected the educated learned pandits and encouraged those who had left to return by giving them land.

Akbar had conquered Kashmir in 1587 A.D during his rule the Hindus enjoyed security of person and property and were allotted high government posts. It was he who gave them the surname pandit. The Mughal rule was followed by that of Afghans when many Kashmiris converted to Islam, leaving a smaller population of Kashmir pundits who still practised the Shaivite religion. Not much was done to win back the converts to Hinduism during this period although the majority was still of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir

By 1981 the pandit population amounted to 5 percent of the total. They began to leave in much greater numbers. Since the 1990's many of the refugee Kashmir pandits have been living in miserable condition in refugee camps of Jammu. The government had reported of the terrorist threats to pandits still living in the Kashmir region.

In 2010, the government of Jammu and Kashmir noted that 808 pandits families comprising of 3,445 people were still living in the valley and had extended financial help to encourage them to return there. The exodus of the late 20th century was not of a similar nature as of the 15th century, in 1989 the pandits had felt that it was a displacement of a temporary nature. However it is extremely unfortunate that they were soon to realize that it was a 'permanent displacement'. Their dream of going back to their homeland remains a distant dream even today.

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INSIDE THE MIND OF NARENDRA MODI

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi's strongest facet as a ruler which plays a key role in his success is his ability to generate pride among the people on the basis of past achievements of the

society and of the great men of the region. He then links this to a sense of national pride... For instance, during his district level Sadbhavna mission in 2011, which he undertook to spread his message of communal harmony, each of his visits was marked by an exhibition demonstrating the geographical strengths and history of that district. The district exhibitions focused on its achievers, natural resources, and struggle against the British rule, saints and other important figures. For example ...in Anand, the focus was on Tribhuvandas Patel, a cooperative leader who identified Verghese Kurien, thus making way for India's milk revolution....

The most significant innovation however from Modi when it comes to generating pride is his historic and unprecedented decision to celebrate Independence and Republic Days not in the State capital, Gandhinagar, but in a new district every year.. In 2003, Modi set another great example of recovering lost pride when he brought back the ashes of the great revolutionary, freedom fighter, and social reformer Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma in response to Varma's will which he left in Geneva when he died in 1930. It said that the urn containing his ashes should be kept in Switzerland and sent to India only when India attained independence from British rule. Modi not only brought back his ashes but built a beautiful monument in Varma's memory at his birth place in Mandvi in Kutch... for 55 years no government during these five decades showed the sensitivity to honour the last wishes of the great revolutionary. The splendid memorial that Modi has built to this son of India who could never set foot on the soil of Independent ...is today a tourist attraction.

*

A charge that Modi has often faced is that he is publicity crazy and tries to derive mileage out of the smallest of things. Big and small hoardings spread across Gujarat with Modi's photo popping out of them as part of one Government scheme or the other are cited as evidence of his hunger for publicity. But Modi is unapologetic about it. Once when I confronted him with this question in 2007, he hit back and quite convincingly: 'Why should I not if I am doing good work?'

Along with the power of detached observation, Modi also possesses another trait equally necessary for a good ruler – the power of instilling fear mixed with awe in the minds of his followers as well as his rivals by his actions and behaviour....He has been able to create this mix of fear and awe by not allowing anyone, even the closest of his aides, to read till the last moment as to what decision he is going to take in all important matters. This element of surprise that he holds out has also played a big role in his administrative and political success as the awe it inspires among the people makes them adhere to his decisions. For example, after the 2007 State Assembly Polls when everyone was expecting an elderly person to be made the Speaker of the House, Modi selected 42-year-old tribal MLA, Ganpat Vasava. Vasava was the youngest Speaker ever in Gujarat's legislative history and also the first ever tribal.

In discussions with his juniors he is measured, not allowing them to read his mind when he has the slightest doubt and expressing his full and wholehearted support when he is convinced of a decision or a policy...

Last, there is one episode about Modi that is embedded in my mind. In October 2002 when Modi embarked on the Gujarat Gaurav Yatra in a rath at the height of what was seen as an unprecedented Hindutva wave, I had the occasion to accompany him on one of his trips that covered the central Gujarat tribal belt. As we were passing by Chhota Udepur town, Modi asked the driver to stop in response to a Muslim couple waving to him, the man having a BJP scarf wrapped around his neck. The couple had two small daughters with them, both less than seven.

As we stopped, the man came to Modi with his family and introduced himself as a local BJP worker. Modi put his fingers on the cheek of one of the daughters and said, 'Do send them to school at any cost. I want at least one of them to be a doctor or an engineer. Come to me if you need help.' As the rath marched further, an emotional Modi said with a flick of his hand: 'The love I am getting from the people of the state has overwhelmed me. Today I have made a resolve. I will never let the people of Gujarat down for the faith they have reposed in me.' If you look at his chief ministerial journey marked by both controversy as well as achievements, Modi seems to have lived up to his promise, perhaps more than he thought.

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