

MAHATMA AND

ON MAHATMA GANDHI

Gopal Krishna Gokhale on Gandhi

“He is a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot among patriots and we may well say that in him Indian humanity at the present time has really reached its high water-mark”.

Rabindranath Tagore

Occasionally there appear in the area of politics, makers of history, whose mental height is above the common level of humanity. They wield an instrument of power, which is almost physical in its compelling force and often relentless, exploiting the weakness in human nature— its greed, fear, or vanity. When Mahatma Gandhi came and opened up the path of freedom for India, he had no obvious medium of power in his hand, no overwhelming authority of coercion. The influence which emanated from his personality was ineffable, like music, like beauty. Its claim upon others was great because of its revelation of a spontaneous self-giving.

Rajendra Prasad

Mahatma Gandhi laid stress on the purity of the methods, which had to be pursued for attaining our ends. Let us not forget that this teaching has eternal value and was not intended only for the period of stress and struggle but has as much authority and value today as it ever had before.

Jawaharlal Nehru

People talk of memorials to him in statues of bronze or marble or pillars and thus they mock him and belie his message. What tribute shall we pay to him that he would have appreciated? He has shown us the way to live and the way to die and if we have not understood that lesson, it would be better that we raised no memorial to him, for the only fitting memorial is to follow reverently in the path he showed us and to do our duty in life and in death.

Ours is a composite nation, as all great nations must necessarily be. Any narrowness in outlook, any attempt to confine the bounds of this great nation, will be a betrayal of his final lesson to us and will surely lead to disaster and to the loss of that freedom for which he laboured and which he gained for us in large measure....

The only way is to express our determination, to pledge ourselves anew, to conduct ourselves in a befitting manner and to dedicate ourselves to the great task which he undertook and which he accomplished to such a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice and thus prove, to some extent at least, worthy followers of his.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

The only thing that can relieve Gandhiji of his mental and physical agony is for us all to do all that is possible to create an atmosphere of peace and remove distress and bitterness. Let it not be said that we did not deserve the leadership of the greatest man of the world. Babu gave life to a dead country. It is the duty of all Babu's soldiers to carry out his bequest.

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari

Mahatmaji did not die in bed, he did not call for hot water or doctor or nurses. He did not die mumbling incoherent words in sickness, unable to identify the relatives and friends around him. He died standing, not even sitting down. The man who did him to death emptied a bullet into his belly and two into his chest, so that the pain lasted only one moment. He made up for his lost five minutes by going straightaway to his Ram. We have been robbed of our greatest possession by a senseless lunatic. May God help India in this hour of her greatest distress. May all hatred, all suspicion end with this sacrifice of our dearest leader.

The New York Times (January 31, 1948)

A light has gone out. The rest remains for history's inexorable hand to write down. A hush will go round the world to-day as Gandhi's frail body is borne to the banks of the sacred river Jumna, there to be turned to ashes. Out of the ashes we do not know what flowers will spring. But this we do know: that saintly man, who preached non-violence, is dead by violence. Those who saw him cut down believe that with a last gesture of forgiveness he forgave his last enemy. His undying spirit speaks now to all India and the world. He has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence.

“I am a striving servant of India and through her of humanity”

Gandhiji

MARTYRDOM

On Freedom and Democracy

Freedom is a mockery so long as men starve, go naked and pine away in voiceless anguish. Said the Mahatma : “Political freedom has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. Eighty percent of the Indian population are compulsorily unemployed for half the year...” There should be equality between cities and villages; - in food, drink, dress, habits and style of living. Villages should be self-sufficient... villages should be emancipated. Power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people.

Advice to ministers

“Be humble. Be forbearing....Now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power; power corrupts. Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember, you are in office to serve the poor in India’s villages”, advised Mahatma Gandhi when West Bengal’s first Chief Minister Prafulla Ghosh sought his blessings at Calcutta on August 15, 1947.

Distress over communal riots

Gandhiji was in intense pain and sorrow at the communal riots that shattered the lives of thousands of people. On October 1, on the eve of his 79th birthday, he said “I do not wish to be a witness to these things. I do not wish to see such a downfall. My only prayer to God is that He should take me away before that happens.....I tried to sacrifice my life for India’s freedom. I did not lose my life; but freedom came. But what is the point of remaining alive to see this happening in the wake of freedom? So I prayed to God day and night that He should take me away. Or He should give me the power to extinguish this fire.”

Gandhiji’s faith in Ramanama

“Nothing elates me so much”, wrote Gandhiji, “as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas.” He considered the Ramayana as the greatest work and declared that “only in Rama can the weak find strength.”

‘Striking resemblances’ between the two

“There are some striking resemblances between the central character in this story and his counterpart in the great Indian epic, the Ramayana. The hero of that story, Lord Ram, also travels long distances, sometimes willingly, at other times unwillingly. He too spends long periods in exile, and has a loyal and very supportive wife, whom (like Gandhi) he does not always treat with the respect and understanding she deserves. He is also a man of high moral character, who occasionally entertains dark and dangerous thoughts. Both Gandhi and Ram have powerful adversaries, who are not without a certain appeal of their own. Both men could not have done what they did, one in myth and the other in reality, without the self-effacing support of very many others. And both have enjoyed a vigorous and contentious after-life.”

Ramachandra Guha (*GANDHI BEFORE INDIA*, Penguin Books, 2013)

Fulfillment of his wish

Dear to me is Rama’s name. It is my hope that when I die I shall die with Ramanama in my heart (*Mohandas*, P.546/656)

Last words

‘Raam,Raa....m,’ (*Mohandas*, P.680)

Last dream

A fortnight before he was assassinated Gandhiji wrote: “ I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling lifegiving sunshine , I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy”. When I was young and never even read the newspapers, could read English with difficulty and my Gujarati was not satisfactory, I had the dream that if the Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims could live in amity not only in Rajkot but in the whole of India, they would all have a very happy life.

If that dream could be realized even now when I, an old man on the verge of death, my heart would dance. Children would then frolic in joy.”

Those who really wish to promote universal brotherhood, should develop a consciousness of the one spirit dwelling in all beings.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Kashmir: Can the nation win back Kashmiri hearts and minds?

(Indian Independence Day Special)

Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd)

Former Chief of Naval Staff
Ex-Chairman, National Maritime Foundation

The army restores near normalcy, at a big cost in soldiers' lives and peoples' goodwill and, on each occasion, politicians in Delhi and Srinagar belie the peoples' hope that they will step in with a panacea for Kashmir, writes Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd.) for South Asia Monitor.

Independent India and I are both septuagenarians, but since I am a trifle older, I take the liberty of indulging in some reminiscences, on behalf of us both, on the nation's 71st birthday. My early recollections are focused on Kashmir, because that is where I was born; in a town called Anantnag, near Srinagar.

Etched in my memory, is the traumatic night of 30 October 1947, when India was a mere 10 weeks old and I had just crossed three years. Clutched in my mother's arms I, along with two elder siblings, hid under bushes in our garden, as bullets ricocheted off the tin roof of our cottage. We lived in a village named Badgam, about 30 km south-west of Srinagar airport, where my father was a revenue officer in-charge of the district. The fusillade was coming from surrounding hills, occupied by Pakistani kabailis (tribals), en route from Uri and Baramulla hoping to capture Srinagar airport.

At the break of dawn, we piled into the family horse-drawn tonga, with just the clothes on our back and fled to the airport, where RIAF DC-3 Dakotas were disembarking Indian troops. My father watched, as we clambered into a departing aircraft, which flew us to Delhi, and refuge with relatives. We rejoined father in mid-1948, to start life again from scratch.

Growing up, in lovely little towns of the Valley in post-independence decades was idyllic. My playmates were all Kashmiris; of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faith. Our parents were friends; we ate in each others' homes, and celebrated festivals together. But even as

children, we clearly understood that Kashmir was not (yet) India, and that the average Kashmiri's attitude towards India was ambivalent.

India provided huge financial assistance to J&K; food, education, clothing and medicine were either free or heavily subsidised. Kashmiris would accept the largesse, but tune in every evening to Radio Pakistan which invariably played on their religious heart-strings, spouting propaganda about "occupation" of Kashmir and "atrocities" by the Bharatiya fauj (Indian Army).

Kashmir's first 'Prime Minister' Sheikh Abdullah was the state's tallest figure then; a friend of Nehru's and a staunch secularist, he was the self-styled Sher-e-Kashmir (Lion of Kashmir). In 1953 he fell from grace and was alleged to have conspired with the Americans to become "King Abdullah" of an independent Kashmir. He was arrested, and the Valley burst into flames.

In 1953 as a nine-year old, I recall seeing my father, then magistrate of Baramulla, coming home, bleeding from the head; there had been 'patharao' (stone-pelting) in the old town, as agitators waved Pakistani flags and shouted pro-Pakistan slogans. The paramilitary forces opened fire, and many were killed, before the Valley relapsed into sullen silence.

In 1959 when I left J&K, to join college and the navy, my parents were in Leh (Ladakh), which seemed like 'Shangri La'. The Valley, too, was peaceful, with few signs of hostility or bitterness amongst Kashmiris. However, an utterly unimaginative New Delhi seemed to have little to offer them, apart from money. The state, being a nest of corruption and nepotism, 95% of the millions that India poured into it, never reached the impoverished Kashmiri. In the absence of a politico-economic strategy for creating jobs, industry or infrastructure, Indian money merely enriched some Kashmiri politicians and aggravated the people's resentment and alienation; which Pakistan exploited.

India's maladroitness did not end here. A succession of Pakistani-orchestrated incidents, between 1963 and 1999, demonstrated the ineptness of our intelligence

In India, the nonviolent movement for independence and Gandhi's unconcern with personal power helped produce democracy.

agencies, lack of civil-military coordination and the complete strategic bankruptcy of New Delhi. This depressing sequence included the theft of Prophet Mohammad's sacred relic, kidnapping of Rubayia Sayeed, sister of ex-Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, seizure of Hazaratbal shrine, capture and burning down of the Charar-e-Sharif shrine, persecution and expulsion of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, the Kargil War and hijacking of IC-814. Add to this, the self-inflicted wound of the rigged 1987 elections which triggered armed militancy.

This reminiscence is not a history of Kashmir's travails, but merely a reminder to those who profess shock at the recent developments in the Valley, that the Indian state has, since 1947, learnt nothing from history. It repeated its mistakes and failed to convince the Kashmiri that he/she is an Indian.

We can, smugly, point out to our Kashmiri brethren, the political and economic mess in Pakistan, and that its PM-elect is, a Taliban supporter, upholder of blasphemy laws, oppressor of Ahmediyas and holds regressive views on women. But they see, at home, the political chicanery and government lassitude, which has resulted in repeated crises. The army restores near normalcy, at a big cost in soldiers' lives and peoples' goodwill and, on each occasion, politicians in Delhi and Srinagar belie the peoples' hope that they will step in with a panacea for Kashmir. In this context, serious reflection is required, whether our milieu of growing intolerance and an agenda of revoking Article 370 in a tearing hurry, will really win Kashmiri hearts and minds?

In closing, let me recall three men, forgotten today, who were legends in my Kashmiri boyhood. The gallant Major Somnath Sharma of 4th Kumaon, whose patrol made its last stand in Badgam, to successfully defend Srinagar airport against Pakistani tribals, and who earned India's first Param Vir Chakra posthumously. Brigadier Mohammad Usman, having spurned Jinnah's offer to become Pak army Chief, was Commander 50 Indian Para Brigade, which recaptured Jhangar and defended Naushera. Usman was killed by a Pakistani shell and posthumously earned the Maha Vir Chakra.

Last, but not the least was 19-year old Maqbool Sherwani, who realized that the marauding kabailihordes had to be delayed in his native Baramulla till the Indian Army's arrival in Srinagar. Using guile and deception, he succeeded; but when the enraged Pakistanis discovered his subterfuge, Sherwani was nailed to a wooden cross and shot repeatedly. A grateful Indian Army has erected a memorial to this local hero.

The French have a cynical aphorism: "the more things change, the more they remain the same". This Independence Day, let us introspect if this is also true of India's management of Kashmir?

(Courtesy: South Asia Monitor)

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'India must cash in on its global image for growth'

Steps needed to infuse confidence among minorities: says security analyst Cmde. Uday Bhaskar

(Newspaper report on the lecture delivered by Cmde. (Retd.) C.Uday Bhaskar on '21st Century India in world affairs' on September 20, 2018 at a meeting jointly organized by Centre for Policy Studies and Visakhapatnam Public Library)

India's image as a swing stage in the global arena and a reassuring power at the regional level is a welcome development and it should be utilized for the nation's emergence as a global role player, noted security analyst Cmde. C.Uday Bhaskar said. Delivering a lecture at a programme jointly organized by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and Visakhapatnam Public Library, here on Wednesday, Uday Bhaskar observed that the biggest challenge for the country now was 'domestic' and immediate steps should be initiated to infuse confidence into the minorities and disadvantaged sections for course correction. Tracing the genesis of India's foreign policy, Uday Bhaskar, who is also the president of the Delhi-based Society for Policy Studies, said, "Democracy, demography and diversity are the strengths of Indian polity on which edifice of national and foreign policies are built."

"India's role as a leader of non-aligned movement and support for the humanitarian activities of the United Nations has earned a global stature. First Former Prime Minister P.V.Narasimha Rao's economic reforms and

Gandhi has raised up three hundred millions of his fellow men, shaken the British Empire and inaugurated in human politics the most powerful movement that the world has seen for nearly two thousand years.

Romain Rolland

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shrewd balancing role in world affairs and then Atal Bihari Vajpayee's role in the Kargil war and in the 1998 nuclear explosion were the turning points in the post cold war history of world affairs," he pointed out. The dramatic transformation in the Indo-US relations from estrangement to cautious engagement is largely due to the contributions made by Vajpayee and US President Bill Clinton", he said.

Making a projection for the future, Mr. Uday Bhaskar said, ten years from now, China, the US and India, in that order would be the dominant powers at the global level while Russia, the EU and Japan would play their role at the secondary level. He lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives as steps in the right direction, especially in dealing with Russia and China.

Domestic policy

Mr. Uday Bhaskar stressed the importance of sound domestic policy, making the necessary correctives, for accelerating India's economic and social progress and for enhancing its image as a democracy that upholds its constitutional values, in consonance with its rich tradition of tolerance and accommodation as 'an equitable nation'. Dr. S. Vijayakumar, A. Prasanna Kumar of CPS and Dr. Perala Balamuralikrishna were present.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*, September 20, 2018)

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Electoral reform is the need of the hour, the key to sustainable progress of our nation-I

Dr. E.A.S. Sarma

Former Secretary to Government of India
Founder-Convener, Better Visakha

Constitutional values:

In theory:

Our Constitution has given us an elected "socialist secular democratic republic", assuring all its citizens "*justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity*" and "*fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation*". It was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on the 26th of November, 1949. Nearly seven decades have gone by since then. We

have come a long way as a nation. Should we not take a pause, ponder over for a while on each and every one of these values bequeathed to us by the elders who drafted the Constitution and see whether we, as citizens, have done enough to respect those values?

Reality:

Though ours is a multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-cultural society, the unity and the integrity of which can be safeguarded only through mutual tolerance, a secular attitude, respect for one another, there is a sizeable section among us that seems to take umbrage at the very mention of the word, "secularism". The foundation of any functional democracy is a total commitment to the rule of law. There are many among the elite of our society who believe that the laws of this country and the institutions that enforce them can be conveniently manipulated to serve their self interest. "Justice" has often been reduced to a hollow expression on paper, leave alone dispensing its fruits across the society on equitable terms. "Liberty" of thought has often been perceived, more as a threat to the ruling political elite, than as the life giving oxygen for our democracy. The terms, "equality", "fraternity" and so on, have become hollow cliches that today's political class uses to hoodwink the voter and grab political power. If anyone among our elders, who had assiduously drafted the Constitution, were to be alive today, he or she would surely wonder at the extent of degeneration that has taken place in the society, which seems to lack the capacity to nurture and protect the democratic values that our Constitution enshrines.

Dr B R Ambedkar, in his historic address to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, while presenting the draft of the Constitution, recalled the rich tradition of democratically functioning Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas more than two millennia ago and wondered whether the nation that had suffered disruptive invasions one after the other for centuries and the nation that had undergone a repressive colonial rule for more than two centuries, a nation that is weakened by a deep-rooted caste system and religious and cultural differences, characterised by severe social and economic inequalities, could ever get used to the idea of a democracy, re-introduced

The conviction came to me, that not since Socrates has the world seen his equal for absolute self-control and composure; and once or twice, putting myself in the place of men who had to confront that invincible calm and imperturbability.

Edward Thompson

in this modern age. True to the fear expressed by Dr Ambedkar, we seem to have become a democracy only in form, not in content. While colonial rulers have left, colonial mindsets have survived. Elections are seen by the political elite more as a means to aggrandise itself for five years, than an opportunity to serve the people at large. The magnitude of election spending has sky-rocketed in leaps and bounds and political parties have, by and large, become puppets in the hands of mining barons, liquor mafia and other business entities that provide them funds. In return, the political elite in power manipulates policies and governance to allow its crony capitalist friends to exploit the precious natural resources of the country and profiteer at the cost of the public. At times, the ruling political parties are even prepared to mortgage the future of the nation to foreign agencies, merely to widen the floodgates to political funding and remain in power. As a result, the plight of the downtrodden, the marginalised sections of the society, who have little political leverage, has worsened during the last seven decades; income inequalities have widened; the vast human capital resources of the country have remained under-utilised and the nation's progress in terms of its socio-economic development has remained pitifully stunted.

While politicians seem to revel in competing with one another by referring to the ephemeral rate of GDP growth each has achieved, they are blissfully indifferent to the havoc they have caused in terms of the natural resources they have squandered, the damage they have inflicted on the environment and the human right violations they have committed. To be able to live in air-conditioned comfort and conduct affairs of the State in five-star environment, the successive governments, irrespective of their political hue, have displayed no hesitation whatsoever in benumbing the poor with liquor and extracting their hard earned wage savings to fill the State's coffers. The bulk of the disease burden of the poor in India can be directly attributed to this. It is a standing example of how the egregious greed of a few can spread debilitating sickness all around.

How long can this seemingly democratic system

survive?

Civil society's role in reversing the process of degeneration:

Clearly, the key to reversing the process of degeneration lies in bringing about some paradigm changes in the electoral processes of the country, as it is those processes that either strengthen or weaken the foundations of our democracy. One can argue that the political system we have inherited over the last seven decades cannot be repaired easily and the ordinary citizen can do nothing about it. Considering that a business-as-usual approach will only further weaken the nation and jeopardise the well being of our children and grand children, it will be criminal on our part to give up hope and remain passive spectators to the way our body politic is being infected with cancer. We should remember that, if the civil society resolves to act now, nothing is impossible to achieve. It is with a sense of optimism that each one of us should look at this problem, tackle it at the earliest before it becomes far too formidable and find solutions that are far more enduring.

There have been many examples of the will of the people persuading the political elite to accept positive changes.

Transparency in governance (Article 19):

A few conscientious citizens had approached the apex court with the contention that the manner in which the public authorities and government agencies function should be transparent and that the voter should know the antecedents of candidates contesting elections. Interpreting Article 19(1) of the Constitution ("freedom of speech and expression"), the apex court ordered that the citizen/voter is entitled to this as a fundamental right.

This in turn led to the enactment of Freedom of Information Act, 2002, replaced later by Right to Information Act (RTI Act) in 2005. Today, RTI Act has become an effective weapon in the hands of the citizen to question every deed of the government.

The apex court's interpretation of Article 19 also led to the mandatory requirement that candidates contesting

elections should make a public disclosure of their assets, income sources and criminal background, thus bringing about a fundamental shift in favour of transparency in elections. There have been several instances of candidates getting disqualified for filing false affidavits at the time of contesting elections. NGOs like Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) often use this information to analyse and report to the public such crucial aspects of elections as the criminal background, if any, of the candidates, the assets accumulated by them between one election and another, the company donations received by the political parties and the amounts spent by them on electioneering. This has undoubtedly generated a healthy debate on the credibility of the candidates put up by the political parties and the extent of electoral corruption that exists.

The lesson one could draw from this is that the citizens can and should organise themselves to bring pressure on the political parties and persuade them to submit themselves to stringent norms of transparency and public accountability. Transparency is the best way to cleanse the system of corruption.

It is not as though the civil society has had a cake walk in persuading the political leadership at any particular time to accept positive changes readily and willingly. Successive governments at the Centre have been trying to dilute the rigour of the RTI Act. There have been heinous attacks on RTI activists. Political parties themselves have refused to submit themselves to the discipline of RTI Act, despite court judgements that bring them within the RTI ambit. Nevertheless, civil society organisations have collectively stood firm and made it difficult for the governments to steamroll RTI.

The civil society has more challenges to face. Deliberately, the Centre and the States have disempowered the institution of the Information Commissions by leaving vacancies unfilled and adopting non-transparent procedures for selecting the Information Commissioners, thereby loading the Commissions with pliable officials. Unless the civil society collectively campaigns against this, the efforts made so far to translate Article 19 into reality will become futile.

Evidently, eternal vigilance on the part of the society is the price of liberty and good governance. If individual citizens remain alert, the civil society as a whole will become effective.

Extravagance in electioneering:

A singularly disturbing aspect of electioneering in India is the mind boggling magnitude of expenses incurred by the political parties on electioneering. This in turn has prompted the political parties to approach private companies to give them donations. The donor companies are ever willing to fund the political parties as they are confident of extracting undue benefits from those political parties that come to power. This is the vicious cycle of electoral corruption in India, which in turn has spread the scourge of corruption all around. This cycle cannot be broken unless the people at large discourage extravagance in electioneering and prohibit political parties from accepting company donations.

Election Commission of India (ECI) organised an all-party meeting in August, 2018 to seek the political parties' views on capping election expenses. Ironically, the party in power has vehemently opposed it, as it is that party that has succeeded, election after election, to bamboozle the electorate with extravagant rallies and impossible promises.

The evil influence of private company donations on political parties has been a subject of serious debate in India for more than half a century.

A news report that appeared in *The Hindu* on November 28, 1967, should make the present day political leaders introspect on how they have dealt with this problem in the recent years.

The *Hindu* report read as follows.

“The Government of India has decided at the highest level to impose a ban on contributions by companies to political parties. This decision has been taken independently of the Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha by Mr Madhu Limaye (S.S.P.) demanding a curb on such donations. It is reliably learnt that quite sometime ago the Union Minister for Industrial Development and Company Affairs was asked to go into the entire

Gandhi's teaching on the merging of matter and spirit – his insistence on the quiet hours of thinking and prayer – his humility, these are aids we have received from this great saint whom we all seem to know so well even if we have never met him personally.

question and based on his recommendation the Union Cabinet proposed that there should be a total ban on such contributions.”

What prompted the government in 1967 to ban company donations then was that Cement Allocation and Coordination Organisation, a private agency, had distributed nearly Rs 40 lakhs as donations to various political parties and individuals for election purposes. The political leaders at that time, passionately motivated by their earlier involvement in the freedom struggle against colonial rule, thought that such donations would dent the hard earned freedom of the country and make a mockery of our democracy. They knew that business houses give donations to political parties, not out of love for democracy, but for highly profitable quid pro quos from the ruling party.

Powerful MNCs are known to fund elections indirectly in many developing countries and dictate terms to the elected governments. To prevent this, the Indian government enacted the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) in 1976 to prohibit political parties and their members from accepting donations from foreign sources.

(to be concluded)

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PHANTOM PARADISE OF THE SUICIDE TERRORISTS

Prof. Manoj Das

The range of mountains along the Caspian Sea off Lebanon, known as the Elburz, contained multi-tiered valleys ordinarily inaccessible. Out of these valleys suddenly would emerge a gang of mysterious horsemen. Half visible in the fog and dust they would storm into caravans and distant towns and villages and disappear leaving behind them thousands of men and animals butchered and localities burnt. It was believed that they commanded the whirlwind to accompany them. The fact was they had been trained to gallop with the whirlwinds that frequently swept across the desert areas.

They were recruits of one Hassan Ben Sabbah, notorious as the Old Man of the Mountain. His terror began towards the end of 11th century and continued for a few decades. No expeditions sent by monarchs

could approach his citadel; so strategically was it situated amidst steep ravines and awe-inspiring rocks as sentinels around.

Exiled from Persia, Hassan Sabbah, along with some followers, had colonised the valleys. The first task he had undertaken was to create a garden, following the description of paradise in the Quran. Streams of milk and other drinks, luxurious couches, means for satisfying any desire at the disposal of a dweller in paradise could have esoteric meaning in that holy book, but Hassan Sabbah created their gross versions meticulously exact, charming damsels as means ready to satisfy lucky entrants into it.

His lieutenants would capture or invite youths and treat them to a special potion of hashish. The befuddled guests soon vulnerable to fantasy, would be carried into the “paradise”. After they had enjoyed to their fill, the damsels would offer them another drink and they would be in a stupor. Once they came to senses – but with senses haunted by the irresistible memory of the paradise - they would be assured of their eligibility to dwell there eternally after death if they joined the gang. Hassan Sabbah dangled before them a dazzling key – the open sesame to paradise! And, of course, he was its sole custodian.

The gang he built up, subsequently known as Hassassins because of their hashish-orientation and then Assassins, was not only perverse brutal to others, but also least hesitant to face death. In fact as Marco Polo, the 13th century Italian adventurer who gathered their history while passing by the mountains, says, “they longed for death”. According to a reminiscence, in order to demonstrate before a royal guest how committed his men were to him, the Chief once turned towards a group of his “fanatic followers who were standing idly on a nearby tower, and with a wave of his arm gestured that they should leap from the walls. Unhesitatingly the young men obeyed and jumped straight to their deaths on the rocks far below.” (T. Severin: “Tracking Marco Polo”)

It was Hulagu Khan and his huge Tartar army that ultimately destroyed the Assassins and all their fortifications. (The word Assassin bears their memory.)

The contemporary suicide-terrorists too are assured of their after-life luxury or eternally blissful existence. Considerable number of researches has been done on the motivation of these people and that is a vast subject.

Just as an aquatic bird, like the pelican, dives into water without the water wetting its plumage, so the perfect man lives in the world but the world does not touch him.

Sri Ramakrishna

Those who kill and get killed in the name of religion, since religions including Islam unambiguously forbid suicide, cover the sinful act by misappropriating the glorious term martyrdom. But even when the “suicide candidate” consciously does not visualise a celestial reward, his subconscious anticipates it. Their brainwashers promise them experiences such as joy of death as Mohammed Atta, leader of the September 11 attack did. Needless to say, that sort of joy could be had only if one was there after one’s death. Subconsciously every terrorist believes that he will be there to enjoy the consequence of the panic, the tragedy, the violence he perpetrates, unless he is one of those compelled to act and it is too late for him to back out.

But be it terror suicide or any other class of suicide, parapsychic studies unambiguously establish that suicide does not yield any variety of paradise. Of several objective researches in this regard, let us look at one by Raymond A Moody. His “Life after Life” presents the “after-death” experiences of men and women declared clinically dead but, call it destiny’s freak or miracle, who returned to life. They brought sweet memories of peace and protection they experienced during those moments when they could see themselves separated from their bodies. But invariably opposite was the case with those who committed suicide (not just attempted) and returned to life inexplicably. They suffered their anguish “with added complications. In their disembodied state they were unable to do anything about their problems, and they also had to view the unfortunate consequences which resulted from their acts.” There are findings that are horrifying, reminding of the mythical hell.

About eighty years ago when somebody informed Sri Aurobindo about somebody planning to commit suicide, the Mahayogi replied, “He will only carry his difficulties with him into a more miserable condition of existence beyond and bring them back to another life on earth.”

With suicide becoming a chosen ritual for youths ranging from would-be terrorists to “Blue Whale” addicts, it should do well to introduce such observations in our academic syllabi. But this is probably too much to propose in a country where contradictions dominate all the sphere of life. Behind every suicide there are several subtle causes though one cause may be highlighted. A student leader X,

claiming to be an Ambedkarite commits suicide forgetting that Ambedkar did not commit suicide, but valiantly fought against injustice. Another student leader, Y, declares that X is his hero, forgetting that thereby he was idealising suicide. Next, leaders of even such parties who are supposed to be progressive speak about both X and Y in such terms that as if the two were the epitome of revolution. This too is a face of India today!

* * *

Shifting Perceptions and Images-II Curzon, Viceroy of India (1899-1905)

Dr.R.V.Vaidyanatha Ayyar I.A.S.(Retd)
Former Secretary,HRD,Govt of India
& Prof.IIM,Bengaluru

‘The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones’. Is that famous declamation by Mark Antony in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar always true? It is not if one goes by the posthumous reputation of Curzon among those who are knowledgeable about the history of Indian education and archaeology. Contemporaries are often poor judges of historic personages and events as they bring to bear on their assessment their subjective likes and dislikes, what seems to be happening is not necessarily what happened, and the true significance of events can be known only with passage of time. With the distance that passage of time provides one can see the whole face and not just warts and all.

Curzon was the ablest and most hated Viceroy of India. He was an out and out imperialist. He did not hesitate to openly state that ‘it will be well for England, better for India and best for all for the cause of progressive civilisation in general’ if it is ‘clearly understood from the outset that we have not the slightest intention of abandoning our Indian possession’; he believed so much in the permanence of British rule in India that he was sure that ‘even our posterity’ would not have such an intention. He considered Indians to be intellectually and morally unfit to occupy high positions; he was against ‘any surrender of power to nationalists who, in his opinion, were indifferent to the welfare of the masses’. Hell has no fury like Curzon’s umbrage at any of his subject claiming to be an equal, much less

This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others,
the rest are more dead than alive.

Swami Vivekananda

seek to dispossess him. He did everything possible to weaken and discredit the Congress, and one of his great ambitions while in India was to hasten the demise of the Congress. Yet, ironically, he fathered the radicalisation of nationalist politics through the Partition of Bengal; the anti-Partition riots which his decision spawned the first mass mobilisation against British rule and turned out to be the prelude to the end of the British Raj. Symptomatic of the feelings Indians had for him was the Marathi play *Kichaka vadh* (The Killing of Kichaka) by Krushnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, an associate of the eminent nationalist leader Tilak. The playwright used the story of Kichaka in the Mahabharata to write an allegorical play about the contemporary political situation. The play was enacted all over the Deccan including the Bombay city to houses packed with large Indian audiences. Although Curzon's name was nowhere uttered on the stage or mentioned in the printed play, everyone in the audience knew that Kichaka was Curzon, Draupadi India and Bhima the extreme nationalists led by Tilak.

Curzon was equally unpopular with the British in India. For all his unalloyed imperialist sentiment he did not share the prejudices of a large proportion of the British in India. He refused to accept as norm acts of violence committed against Indians by British soldiers and planters; he penalised a whole British regiment for the gang rape of a Bengali woman by its soldiers and insisted on an appeal being filed against the lenient sentencing of a British planter who beat an Indian worker to death. He never 'wavered in a strict and inflexible justice between the two races'; that alone he believed was 'the sole justification and the only stable foundation for our rule'. He alienated the Civil Service because he believed that he was the most superior person and the most indispensable, and that it is no good to trust another human being to do a thing for him, and that nothing was ever right unless one did everything himself. He often did right things but in a wrong way, alienating even those who would have supported him. He was equally unpopular with his peers in England, the reason being his lack of emotional intelligence; it was said of him that 'while in many ways a genius, he was a crashing snob (both socially and intellectually), supremely arrogant, pompous

to the point of caricature and nakedly ambitious with an off-putting certainty that he was a Man of Destiny'. His unpredictability and extreme fussiness were notorious. 'He abused us like pickpockets one day', said one deputy, 'and wrote us ecstatic letters of appreciation the next.' Another recalled he never knew which Curzon he was going to meet, the 'exacting boss' or the 'kind master who thought about the home life and holidays of secretaries'. He was 'one of those people who complain when anyone- a friend, a daughter, a valet, an under-secretary- behave not quite as he thinks that he himself would have done'- not a trait which endears him to anyone who interacted with him. All in all, he was a person whom it is easy to dislike. All great careers, wrote Enoch Powell, end in failure; Powell's career itself was an example, and so is Curzon's.

There are so many achievements of his six-year viceroyalty that it is difficult to single out his crowning achievement. He rationalised the police, reformed currency, universities and railways, and reorganised the irrigation system. More railway lines were constructed in his time than under any other Viceroy; the Punjab canal system is his legacy; in the fields of agriculture and cooperation "he was a pioneer, inaugurating fresh lines of governmental activity beneficial to rural India and 'the patient, humble and silent millions'", and; he was the first Viceroy to give positive assistance to industry. Yet his second term was abruptly terminated when the Government would not support him in his clash with General Kitchener over the civilian control of the army, and he resigned. After India he had a brilliant ministerial career in Britain and no one was more qualified than him to be the Prime Minister; yet the top post eluded him as his fellow conservative members considered him too 'uppity'.

What Curzon achieved as an administrator in India is spectacular but what distinguishes him from other great Governors-General was what he did in the fields of education and archaeology. No Governor-General before him or later addressed the issues of Indian education and archaeology as passionately and with so much understanding and discernment as Curzon, so much so that the eminent educationist J.P. Naik

observed that Curzon ‘touched almost every aspect of education and touched nothing that he did not reform’ and is ‘the author of the great movement for educational reconstruction’ which started in the beginning of the twentieth century, and Nehru than whom there could be no greater foe of British imperialism said of Curzon: ‘After every other viceroy has been forgotten, Curzon will be remembered because he restored all that was beautiful about India’. And as educationist Amarnath Jha aptly said, ‘now that the ashes of numerous strifes are cold, all Indians are grateful to the wise statesmanship of the great Viceroy who did so much to preserve our ancient monuments and raise our educational standards. By these achievements he still lives, and generations of Indians will bless him for them’. What did he do to earn such praise from such widely diverse personalities? This article attempts to provide an answer,

Curzon’s Educational Reforms

It has been said that philosophy is no more than awkward answers each generation of philosophers give to perennial questions; for all the answers the questions and questioning remain; educational reform is no different. No one before Curzon attempted to identify and address the challenges that Indian education faced. What he said about Indian education and attempted to do have a contemporary ring.

Curzon’s life before being Viceroy was one of studious preparation for the job of Viceroy, a job which he yearned for so much. He arrived in India determined to carry out his list of twelve major reforms which included educational reconstruction and preservation of ancient monuments. As he told the Conference of Directors of Public Instruction (1905) when he landed in India educational reforms loomed large as one of those objects which deserved a prominent place in any programme of administrative reconstruction, and ‘he who can offer the right educational prescription is the true physician of the state’. The emphasis he laid on education was exceptional. Thus, only in the initial years after Independence and during the first three years of Rajiv Gandhi’s Government was educational development considered to be a part of nation building. Exceptions apart, educational reform,

whenever undertaken, was viewed in isolation. Thus, back in 1991, I found no takers for my argument that educational reform should be integrated with the architecture of economic reforms, and that educational reform was about making public systems function better while economic reforms was about making markets function better.

The first step that Curzon took in reforming Indian education was to organise the country’s first All India Conference on education in 1901 which was attended by all Provincial Directors of Public instruction and a few select educationists. He opened the Conference with his speech, the longest ever he gave as a Viceroy, which touched every aspect of education, and set out his diagnosis of the ailments which afflicted Indian education, and his prescription to cure those ailments. What stand out in his speech was his condemnation of excessive reliance on the examination system for ‘a pupil could not rise in the scale of intelligence by memory alone’; the education system lacked a common principle and common aim with the result that there was often a misdirection and waste of force, and; the education of the Indian people was as much the responsibility of the Central Government as the police of their cities.

Curzon’s reforms in every field, be it railways or agriculture or industry or education or archaeology included creating institutions for carrying out reforms. Thus, he created the railway board, the post of Inspector General of Agriculture, the Department of Industry and Commerce, the post of Educational Adviser, and the Department of Archaeology. He found it appalling that educational development was left to Provinces without any central direction. Education was, in his words, ‘a sub-heading’ of ‘the greatly overstrained Home Department’. ‘When questions of supreme educational interests are referred to us for decision, we have no expert to guide us, no staff trained to the business, nothing but the precedents recorded in our files to fall back upon... We have to rely upon the opinions of officers who are constantly changing, and who may very likely never have had any experience of education in their lives’. He put an end to what he called ‘systemless system’ by appointing an Education

If knowledge is power, practical education is the source of both power and wealth. A very widespread system of vocational education is one of the greatest needs of the day in order to prepare people for business life.

Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya

Advisor, thereby paving the way for the creation of a Department of Education in Government of India. And what he had to say about the Education Adviser is still of relevance to the education departments at the Centre and in the States. 'I do not desire [an] Imperial Education Department, packed with pedagogues, and crusted with officialism... I do not want anything that will turn the Universities into a Department... [the adviser] will help us to secure that community of principle and of aim without which go drifting about like a deserted bulk on chopping seas... his custody of the leading principles of Indian Education will prevent those vagaries of policy and sharp revulsions of action which distract our administration without reforming it. He would not issue orders to the Provincial governments [but guide them]'. The creation of the post of Education Adviser paved the way for the creation of a Department of Education in the Government of India. A concrete outcome of the Government of India assuming the stewardship of Indian educational development was the issue in 1904 of the first Government of India Resolution on Education Policy which covered all aspects of education. And, no less importantly, he put, figuratively, his money where his mouth was; he instituted a system of providing specific grants to Provinces for educational improvement, and thereby paved the way for Centre assuming greater responsibility for financing educational development.

Before moving on, it should be most of the secondary and higher education development in our country was led by private effort (missionaries and Indians), and that Government supported such efforts through a grants-in-aid system which linked grant with performance. Curzon's diagnosis of the Indian higher education system is best said in his own words: 'we found in some of the affiliated colleges a low standard of teaching, ill-paid and insufficient teachers, pupils crowded together in insanitary buildings, and management on unsound principles'. In universities 'we found courses of study and a system of tests which were lowering the quality while steadily increasing the human output; students driven from classroom to classroom and examination to examination; textbooks badly chosen, degrees pursued for their commercial value; Senates with over swollen numbers selected on every principle but

that of educational fitness; the Syndicates devoid of statutory powers, a huge system of active but often misdirected effort, over which like some evil phantom, seemed to hover the monstrous and maleficent spirit of "cram"'. He was alarmed by 'the rush of immature stripling to our Indian Universities, not to learn but to earn', the multiplication of colleges 'without regard to any criterion either of necessity or merit', the 'examination curse' tightening 'its grip upon the life of the rising generation', standards sinking 'lower and lower', and output steadily swelling 'in volume, at the cost of all that education ought to mean'. He laid the foundation for the reform of Indian universities by appointing India's first University Commission (1902) and based on its recommendations enacting the Indian Universities Act (1904). The Act led to far reaching changes in the governance and purpose of universities. Hitherto Indian universities were mainly examining bodies; the 1904 Act introduced the idea that every university ought to be also a teaching university and pruned the size of governing bodies like Senate so that they are not unwieldy and function as effective governing bodies. Curzon introduced the system of grant-in-aid to universities; hitherto no grant was provided as the only expenditure to be incurred by a university was a small office for affiliating colleges and conduct of examinations. The greatest challenge in education is, as J.P. Naik put it, to grapple the elusive triangle of quantity, quality and equity. In higher and secondary education, Curzon emphasised quality as against quantitative expansion while at the primary level he emphasised expansion of schools and enrolment along with improvement, thereby anticipating the National Policy on Education, 1986. Stricter conditions of affiliation and a system of periodic inspections were introduced; they led to the elimination of colleges without facilities and made it difficult for new colleges to spring. His policy evoked a firestorm of protest by Indian nationalists who suspected his motives and believed that the restriction on expansion was a ploy to deny Indians of higher education, and reform of governance a design to tighten of the stranglehold of bureaucracy over college managements. It is apposite to mention that a policy of restricting expansion of higher education

For the developing world, digital technologies represent a palette of possibilities on a blank slate. India's example shows that there is a better way ensuring that citizens get access to a fair and open Internet and empowering them with their data.

Nandan Nilekani

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always elicits visceral opposition. A case in point is the recommendation of the Kothari Commission that admissions to higher education should be selective and linked with the manpower needs of the economy so that quality is not compromised by the proliferation of institutions and educated unemployment does not surge because of lack of linkage between expansion of higher education and manpower needs. The Committee of MPs appointed to study the report of the Commission rejected the recommendation; Jagjivan Ram felt that the recommendation went against the interests of the weaker sections and threatened to launch a satyagraha if the recommendations were accepted by the Government. As a corollary to the reforms of the universities, Curzon introduced reforms at the collegiate level, and enhanced grants to private colleges to enable them to conform to the higher standards expected by the new university regulations, and make better provision for hostels, laboratories and libraries. Curzon felt that education was far too literary and gave an impetus to professional education. He gave a great impetus to the growth of agricultural education, instituted scholarships for study of technological education abroad, and reformed schools of art. Naik's assessment of the outcome of Curzon's reform of higher education is worth noting. Indians who opposed the reforms found that their fears were unfounded; the reforms did not throw Indian education into the hands of Europeans any more than it already was; the reforms did infuse resources into universities and colleges, and hence they were not 'all control and no funds' as they believed. At the same time, the reforms which Curzon carried through with so much zest and in the midst of so much opposition did not accomplish what all was sought. As Sadler Commission appointed in 1917 to study the problems of the Calcutta University noted Curzon succeeded in creating the most completely governmental universities in the world.

In the field of secondary education also Curzon emphasised quality, and his thrust was similar to that with colleges. He wanted to put an end to the system which conferred the 'privilege of recognition' on 'schools with mostly inadequate and untrained and incompetent teachers, imparting instruction devoid of

life to pupils subjected to a pressure of examinations that encroached upon them out of school hours and was already sapping the brain power and as well as physical strength of the rising generation'. Many of these schools were accommodated in 'wretched buildings'; vernacular languages which 'must be the sole instrument of diffusion of knowledge among Indian people' were 'in the danger of being neglected and degraded in the pursuit of English – and in many cases very bad English- for the sake of its mercantile value'. What he had to say about the relationship between English and Indian languages has not lost any of its relevance; 'By any means, teach English... but let it rest upon the solid foundation of indigenous languages, for no pupil will ever use another tongue with advantage that cannot first use its own with ease'. His reform agenda proceeded from his diagnosis of the state of secondary education; the system of recognition was tightened up along with enhanced grants for improvement of both Government and private school facilities. He expected Government schools to improve their instruction and efficiency and thereby serve as models for private schools. Teacher education was revamped and more teacher training institutions established; fillip was granted to teaching in vernacular languages. My own experience is that secondary education often falls between two stools, the stool of a constitutionally mandated elementary education and the stool of higher education propped up by powerful academic lobbies; hence till the Rashtriya Madhyamika Shiksha Mission was started in 2009, little attention and financial support was given to secondary education by the Central Government. Way back in the beginning of the 20th century Curzon presciently cautioned against the neglect of secondary education and forcefully articulated why secondary education was important. 'We cannot have good colleges without good schools. Secondary education is the basis of all industrial or professional education. There is just a danger that between the resonant calls of higher education and the pathetic small voice of elementary education the claims of secondary education would be overlooked'.

Curzon felt that Government did not do its duty in the matter of elementary education. Four of every

The information revolution is likely to be even more disruptive than the Industrial Revolution was, and to make matters worse, it is unfolding in an unstable world awash in nuclear weapons.

Walter Russell Mead

five villages were without school; three out of every four boys grew up without education; only one girl in forty received any kind of education. We cannot forget 'female education', 'conscious that man is to a large extent what woman makes him, and that an educated mother means educated children'. 'Ever since the cold breath of Macaulay's rhetoric passed over Indian languages and textbooks', he declared, 'the elementary education of the people in their own tongue had shrivelled and pined'. What needs to be done is immense; however, he presciently observed that 'it is apt to be neglected in the calls of the louder calls and more showy results of higher education'. Both higher and elementary education were needed; however, higher education is the coping stone while elementary education was the foundation. Those responsible 'must be careful not to forget the needs of the voiceless masses while we provide for the interests of the highly favoured minority who can protect themselves. The correctness of his observation is vouched by two instances. Thus, the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) called for overriding priority to basic education (elementary education and adult education) in countries which have not yet universalised elementary education and literacy. This caused apprehension among quite a few, and they spearheaded efforts to ensure that the priority for basic education did not translate into a lessening of priority for higher education, and that the Declaration provided for explicit safeguards for higher education, research, and access to high technology. They were partially successful and the Jomtien declaration included an article which called for improving higher education and developing scientific research to insure (sic) a strong intellectual and scientific environment for basic education. In the 1990 and 1991 India was in the midst of a balance of crisis so acute that gold reserves had to be flown out to raise scarce foreign exchange and avoid the country defaulting in its payment obligations. It took quite a while for the economy to recover after economic reforms were initiated by the P V Narasimha Rao Government. It was inevitable that in the midst of acute resource crunch resources for plan development shrunk, and during that period it was decided that within the resources available

priority should be given to elementary education which catered to the needs of the poor. Reams of paper were consumed to write scholarly papers why it was wrong to give priority to elementary education at the expense of higher education. Against this backdrop, the justification Curzon provided for giving priority to elementary education was relevant till recently before universal access was achieved in elementary education. Curzon's policy in regard to primary education laid rapid emphasis on expansion of access to elementary education by opening up Government schools at pace faster than before, entrusting elementary education to district boards, enhancing the grant-in-aid provided to private schools, increasing the number of teachers, improving their salaries as well as their competence by strengthening teacher education and expanding the number of teacher training institutions, reforming curriculum and emphasising the use of Indian languages as media of education. He backed up these measures by sanctioning large grants to Provinces. Steps were initiated to overhaul the 'female inspecting staff' in most Provinces, and to start good girls' model schools and good training schools for 'female' teachers. Suffice he left no arc of education untouched.

To conclude, Curzon could be faulted for failing to carry with him educated Indians whose support would have made his reforms more acceptable. It is now accepted practice in democracies to consult 'stakeholders' and enlist them in efforts to improve governance. But that was a different age, and Curzon would not have been Curzon if he were not authoritarian. His diagnosis was perfect, and his prescription was mostly right. However, the medicines he gave fell short of his prescription, and the outcomes of his reform efforts were far short of expectations. But then in his justification it can be said that educational reform is not a one-shot affair. The corollary of the Confucian saying that 'If your plan is for one-year, plant rice. If your plan is for ten years, plant trees. If your plan is for one hundred years, educate children' is that educational reform has to be carefully tended for a long period before it can yield tangible results. That is rarely possible; not everyone at the helm is a Curzon with the steely resolve to push ahead reform, and it is human nature to build anew rather than carry on with the legacy of one's

predecessor. Naik is absolutely right in saying that he is ‘the author of the great movement for educational reconstruction’ which started in the beginning of the twentieth century’; that movement is still on.

(First in the series was published in the Bulletin, June 2, 2018)

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A Letter-note to Yehuda

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan

Indian Postal Service (Retd.) Former Member Postal Services Board and Chairman Investment Board

This letter-note was in response to a request by my friend, the late Israeli educationist and philosopher and Auschwitz survivor, Prof Yehuda Elkana, a leading figure in Western intellectual circles and for a long time associated with the German Institute of Advanced Study, Wissenschaftskolleg- Berlin. He had asked for my thoughts on an Institute of advanced study in a country like India.

At the time of writing (2007), Yehuda was President and Rector of the Central European University Budapest founded on a large donation from the financier George Soros. Professor Yehuda Elkana went on to head the University, popularly known as CEU for 10 years (1999-2009) and transformed it into one of Europe’s leading institutions of higher learning with faculty and students from around a 100 countries. I was, at his invitation, twice Visiting Fellow at CEU in 2007 and then for a year in 2010-11. I am happy to share this mail, which I think could be useful in looking at the role of scholars, administrators and policy makers and the ordinary citizens of a country in whose name, but very often without their consent, a lot of big decisions are taken.

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan, Bangalore
23rd September 2018

Dear Yehuda,

I read your paper, the Future of Wissenschaftskolleg. Thank you for sharing. As a discussion paper, it certainly made me think.

I find the principles on which the Wissenschaftskolleg

was founded, and on which it has endured, wonderful. My reason for reacting is how relevant can such an institution be made for a country like India.

In a cynical world, it is not easy to sustain such an institution as the ‘Kolleg’, where apparently, nothing is done but a lot really is achieved, by allowing a freedom for those selected, to think ideas through – in effect cogitate. I also understand from your paper that the Wissenschaftskolleg could do with a makeover in view of new issues concerning the world and the areas from which fresh intellectual challenges are emerging.

It is also perhaps not possible to go on replicating the Kolleg. As you state ‘In my opinion it is sheer delusion to hope that establishment of Centers of Excellence or of institutes of Advanced Study will solve the problem of the universities, the fact remains that there will be soon in Europe tens of Institutes of Advanced Study, all competing for funds and recognition’. So where does the idea of the Kolleg go from here? Should it have branches or are similar institutions suggested outside the European universe? In either case, I think there is a need to redefine or even, as you had advocated in the case of the Enlightenment, ‘rethink’ the Kolleg. I will add the other important dimension you bring out in your paper – reinvent the Kolleg by creating ‘an academic atmosphere ...in which the value-free scholar is replaced by the concerned scholar.’

I do not know the content of the discussion that followed your paper in 2006 – a happy state indeed, for it enables me to give you an ‘unconditioned’ take on what I think the Kolleg could do in future. It is unexceptionable to state that everyone needs to have a broad understanding of the world around him. This is increasingly necessary in a world of specializations where academics retreat into the narrow cubbyholes of their own interests and stay there. To that extent, the Wissenschaftskolleg is a good model to replicate. It sure does bring people from various backgrounds sometimes-even non-academics out of their familiar surroundings, to think ideas through in an enabling environment.

Instaparents are at the mercy of their children. Our gadgets are doing their job: spying on us.

However, we could perhaps tweak the Kolleg model rather than clone it. I put forward some suggestion and observations in this regard, centered on the theme ‘how the three groups of communities in society - those of Scholarship, Need and Knowledge- can be brought together and made to collaborate and learn from one another effectively’. This, I feel is best done within the framework of the existing Wissenschaftskolleg.

The Three Communities

Academia must connect to the larger humanity outside its boundaries and contribute more directly to the common good. You make this point in your paper too.

For this to happen a revamped Wissenschaftskolleg should be a place where scholars from different disciplines (I will call them Communities of Scholarship) meet and exchange ideas and think through initiatives with those who can benefit from them and I will call these, Communities Of Need i.e. those who need knowledge for practical applications. In this, I envisage the involvement of a third group of players, the ones with hands on experience working with the other two groups. I would call these, Communities of Support - they could be NGOs, public servants, business people even consultants and advisors whose view, opinions and decisions affect the everyday lives of people .

In a world that is under increasing threat from global warming, earthquakes, tsunamis and human conflicts of various kinds, such an institution should connect people across divides and hasten the pace and flow of awareness and understandings, leading to quicker action on the ground - the implementation of workable solutions. View this in much the same way we would the more effective administration of medicine – oral, intravenous or any other.

The responsibility such an institution has will also prove to be a challenge to its everyday existence – the continuous need to ensure that the Communities of Scholarship and Knowledge do not overwhelm or talk down to the Communities of Need. The mechanisms required do not exist. The challenge is to develop and apply them to ensure:

- A level playing field
- That the players are aware of the terms of engagement
- Have processes that enable those from the Communities of Need to hold their own and put across their concerns without being overwhelmed or intimidated by the Scholarship and Support groups ...and learn from them. In the new Wissenschaftskolleg this is necessary because two Communities – that of Scholarship and Support have a long history of intimidating and excluding the other perhaps most vital group the Communities of Need, by patronizingly suggesting:

‘We know all about you and what we don’t we will get to know – we are concerned about you and know you well enough to speak for you – you do not have it in you to project yourself on issues that concern you well enough. We can do the job better.’

In reality, the work anyone does has ordinary people at the end of it and they are the primary stakeholders in any issue be it cloning, GM foods, and the establishment of a steel plant or space research. Thus it is important to think beyond existing definitions of what constitutes ‘intellectual’ and bring in those lying outside the current understanding of the term – unorganized labour, the agriculturist, the tribes, the fisher folk, the street hawkers and big and small business persons, to name a few.

Peter Hill talks of the responsibility academia and the theatrical professions have for keeping theatre alive for society. I suggest that the Communities of Scholarship and Communities of Support need to be conscious of their responsibility to build and sustain an informed society – merely to talk amongst themselves and even with each other is not only an insult to the millions who sustain them; it also constitutes an inexcusable hubris of an extreme and possibly violent kind.

With warm regards

Uday,
London
19/10/2007

Gandhi is unique in political history. We are fortunate and should be grateful that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary – a beacon to the generations to come.

The Gate Swings Wide With a Protesting Jar-I

Dr.(Mrs.) Prema Nandakumar

Almost a century ago, a choice group of intellectuals (among them stalwarts like J.B. Kripalani and T.V. Kapali Sastri) eagerly waited for the post to get the month's issue of *Arya*. They were anxious to read the latest chapters of *The Life Divine*.

What was it that made them believe in what a self-exile from British India wrote in the magazine? It was wonderful English style, of course. But did they have not more pressing problems on hand? Like gaining India's political independence, for instance. If the *Arya* brought them a philosophy of man-transformation, they had little to think of it as a possibility. Politically the nation's mantra of independence had been silenced. Economically, people were increasingly selling their lives for the drudgery of government jobs and had to silently watch India's wealth being transported abroad by a ravenous government. In the field of education Macaulay's writ ran large. Traditional studies, traditional medicine and traditional ways of agriculture (which never denuded the land of its riches) were being given up speedily. Even the dress was western, and the hot clime of South India watched men packed in unhealthy suits and smoking unhealthy cigarettes (the traditional beedi is less harmful to the body). Sri Aurobindo himself has given a graphic picture of the times when he saw that English rule had made us turn away from our own strong and multi-hued culture to ape the self-defeating, bourgeois culture of the west. In a remarkable essay written as early as 1907, Sri Aurobindo described this genre of educated Indians, and how they had de-Indianised themselves. It is unfortunate that the cap continues to fit some even today!

“An University degree, knowledge of English, possession of a post in Government service or a professional diploma, a Government title, European clothes or a sleek dress and appearance, a big house full of English furniture, these were the badges by which Society recognised its chosen. These signs were all purely conventional. The degree did not necessarily denote a good education nor the knowledge of English

a wide culture or successful living into new ideas, nor the Government post administrative capacity, nor the diploma a special fitness for the profession, nor the title any merit in the holder, nor the big house or fine dress a mastery of the art of social life, nor the English clothes, European grit, science and enterprise. They were merely counters borrowed from Europe ...”

Yet, the exceptions prove the rule. Those who lived in those dark days of hopelessness, read *The Life Divine* and dared to accept the philosophy projected by the book. It was not easy and the author knew it and hence he used a simile that simply made the readers lock their knees and stand straight::

“It is not very easy for the customary mind of man, always attached to its past and present associations, to conceive of an existence still human, yet radically changed in what are now our fixed circumstances. We are in respect to our possible higher evolution much in the position of the original Ape of the Darwinian theory. It would have been impossible for that Ape leading his instinctive arboreal life in primeval forests to conceive that there would be one day an animal on the earth who would use a new faculty called reason upon the materials of his inner and outer existence, who would dominate by that power his instincts and habits, change the circumstances of his physical life, build for himself houses of stone, manipulate Nature's forces, sail the seas, ride the air, develop codes of conduct, evolve conscious methods for his mental and spiritual development.”

Sri Aurobindo was writing one hundred years ago when we were still far, far away from the television and satellite communications, cell phone and Skype. The way Sri Aurobindo put it before his readers, they could realize that there has been a transformation down the years but the years have to be counted in terms of millennia. Nay in terms of billennia as the scientific community does use the phrase “the billennia of evolutionary time” in scholarly journals. So patience becomes the keyword when we take up the Aurobindonian concept of transformation. All we can do is to perform tapasya, a single-minded concentration on the subject, and find out whether we are justified in hoping for a greater dawn for this earth.

The great advantage of a hotel is that it is a refuge from home.

George Bernard Shaw

Are there any signs that do give us that this is no mere probability but a definite possibility?

The same millennia of human experience has crystallized a lesson with the proverb, “it is darkest before dawn.” The human race has created instruments in the forge of human experience to help us not lose faith in our future. There is the familiar proverb: “It is darkest before dawn.” Again, which one of us here has not followed the life of Edmond Dantes, the young merchant sailor who is unjustly condemned to imprisonment for fourteen years in Chateau d’If, gets his lessons in life from Abbe Faria, becomes the Count of Monte Cristo, punishes the wicked in a systematic manner and goes away from France with Haydee after leaving his property and a letter for Maximilian. The last words of the Count are that all human wisdom is contained in two words: Wait and Hope.

So we have got to wait from this dawn of Savitri Studies to the Greater Dawn of Savitri Consciousness. But not a passive wait. This has to be a period of experience-garnering awareness. Along with it, whatever that we can do for avoiding regressions in this evolutionary spiral has to be undertaken, even if it be a miniscule, unseen, unrecognised endeavour. It could be the struggle to keep the environment clean. The striving with one’s own greed-self not to grab and deplete Nature’s sources. Whatever we do, if done with complete faith in the Mother, is tapasya. And if we keep the light of tapasya aglow, the grace of the Divine is sure to do the rest. As the Upanishad says: *tapah prabhaavat deva prasaadascha.*

If we do train ourselves to be aware, what is it that strikes us to draw conclusions for successfully reaching the goal? An aspiration which is “an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature.”

The very fact that man has indeed succeeded so far is an assurance that he will succeed in the future as well. Once we look at life around us taking in what Sri Aurobindo has said about human achievement so far, we realise that there has indeed been a mind-boggling, great leap forward. This has also meant excruciating

agony because the hurdles have also been as massive and seemingly impassable.

Again and again the instinct for survival and for achieving the next step has been doing its best. Apart from what the eye sees, there has been a planning of human life so that it will not fall back into chaos. If we look into the records, we do gain illuminations. So many religions to show the right path: so many “codes of conduct” too. In India, apart from the Shastras meant exclusively for listing such codes, its literature itself has been involved in this work.

(to be concluded)

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Epilepsy—Need for Social Awareness

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Epilepsy, commonly known in general parlance as ‘fits, seizures’ is one of the common neurological illnesses with prevalence of 5 per 1000 persons. By definition epilepsy has a tendency to recur putting the patient at risk of injury. Isolated seizures occur in 1% of all individuals in their life time, but never recur thus not qualifying to be called epilepsy. This categorisation is very important because only patients with established epilepsy need long term treatment with medicines.

Epilepsy is known since ages, but mired in superstition. The attempts of stalwarts in the medical history such as Hippocrates and Galen (130-210 AD) to establish epilepsy as a natural disease of the brain could not however succeed in convincing subsequent generations of physicians and general public. The reasons may be due to partly the overwhelming superstition of the influence of spirits on the illness and partly the lack of effective medical treatment to cure the condition.

No age, gender, race, ethnicity is exempt from this malady. Whether a country is developed or developing, the prevalence is the same. Only causes differ in their frequency. It is more common at extremes of age. In

There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But the real great man is the man who makes every man feel great.

Charles Dickens

countries like India, infections, head injuries including birth trauma are leading causes. In developed countries strokes and degenerative disorders predominate. 10% have a genetic background. In many, a cause cannot be established.

Diagnosis:

In majority, the event can be recognised which has a stereotyped presentation. The individual yells, loses consciousness, becomes stiff, and jerks one or more limbs. He may vomit, void urine in the clothes, bite his tongue and seriously injure himself by hitting against a sharp object. Unless he sustains serious head injury, recovery is the rule in 2-3 minutes. On recovery, he may complain of severe headache and may be confused for a while. If restrained they may turn violent. Less common presentations include dazed look, purposeless and odd behaviours for which they have no memory subsequently. Children may have spells of inattentiveness for 5-15 seconds which may be mistaken for day dreaming. Violent jerks throwing them to the ground can be another presentation.

In spite of advance in radiology and imaging, the diagnosis rests mainly on detailed description from an observant witness regarding the event. If available, it would spare many uncertainties about the diagnosis, guide further investigations and plan treatment. An electroencephalogram (EEG) akin to ECG for the heart will support the clinical diagnosis of epilepsy if it records abnormalities in the short period of 30 minutes of recording which it does only 40% of the times. A CT scan or MRI will identify cause of epilepsy like tumours or infections. For patients in whom diagnosis cannot be settled by above means, further advanced techniques are available to unravel the mystery.

Management: Medical

Majority of patients, approximately 70%, respond to medical treatment with one or two medications, appropriately chosen, given in right doses. Compliance, which refers to taking medication as prescribed, is the most essential prerequisite for complete control of seizures. For an illness for which treatment runs for years forgetting medication is very common. Hence parent or spouse should keep a track of medication count so that they can remind

the patient in case of missing dose and also inform the doctor in case of seizure recurrence. In the last 20 years there is profusion of anti seizure medication in the market each with its own advantages so that doctor can select one which best fits that particular patient. Side effects are common which the patient should be informed. If noticed, they should be promptly brought to the notice of the doctor. Some of them can be life threatening which if detected in time can be treated. The duration of treatment varies from case to case. But some general guidelines can be issued. Five years of seizure free periods for adults while on medication and two years for children. Common causes of failure to control seizures include inappropriate choice of medication and its dose, non adherence to treatment schedule, affordability and adverse effects related to medication. Periodic follow up is necessary to address all these issues. Precipitating factors should be identified and avoided like indulgence in excess alcohol, sleepless nights.

Surgical:

For patients who are refractory to medication, surgical options are available. Various investigative modalities are available in these patients to identify the culprit site in brain generating seizures. Advances in neurosurgery have made it possible to resect the focus without causing any additional deficits. All these measures not only should control seizures but also improve 'quality of life'.

First aid:

First aid has many myths like pouring water, handing keys, chappals which have no scientific rationale. Injury should be avoided by keeping away any sharp objects. Loosening tight garments and avoiding crowding by curious onlookers may help patient breathe in fresh air. It is not possible to introduce anything in between clenched teeth to avoid tongue biting which in fact can be injurious. Noticing details of seizures and informing the doctor can be helpful. Most of the times, the patient recovers consciousness in 2-3 minutes and can go home or to hospital. Those whose seizures continue beyond 5 minutes and who are injured should be rushed to hospital.

Problems in developing countries:

There is a foolish corner in the brain of the wisest man.

Aristotle

An issue in developing countries is the ‘treatment gap’. This refers to the difference in the number of eligible patients who need a particular treatment and the number who actually can access it. There are too few centres in India which can offer surgical expertise and their waiting lists are very long. The global burden of epilepsy works out to 40 million patients of which only 10 million receive treatment. It is estimated that there may be about 6-12 million people with epilepsy in India. The reasons for this treatment gap are not only economical, but also related to ignorance and misconceptions about the illness. Healthcare in developing countries like India is beset with huge disease burden, inadequate infrastructure, problems of affordability and acceptability and lack of reliable information. India accounts for 75% of the global burden. While 70% Indians live in rural areas, 70% medical manpower lives in urban areas. A majority of the 1500 neurologists in our country practice in urban areas.

Social issues:

While advances in medical field have made life easy for the people with epilepsy, society has not been kind to them. Myths and ignorance about illness remain prevalent and discrimination in terms of education, employment of affected individuals persist. Women face particular difficulty in finding a suitable partner. Late marriages and harassment by in laws are quite common. It is shocking to know that till recently epilepsy is equated to insanity and people with epilepsy are barred from marrying. It is only because of the continued efforts of Indian Epilepsy Association that Indian parliament has enacted a law, making marriage in patients legally viable. Nobody can claim divorce on the grounds of epilepsy.

Epilepsy and Law:

Despite good advances in medical therapy, Persons with Epilepsy (PWE) still face issues which seem to compromise their normal life style. While social issues form major part of their impaired life style, they face many legal hurdles making their overall life more difficult than normal individuals. In the recent past various organisations have taken upon themselves including Indian Epilepsy Association to impress upon the Government of India to modify various laws

in favour of PWE so that the benefits meant for people with disabilities can be extended to them also. Steps have been taken to improve public knowledge of the subject through various media. This will empower the patients to become more aware of their rights. They should be in a position to exercise their full legal rights and for this purpose the medical profession should become their first source of helpful information.

Education:

Certain benefits are provided for students with disability (and/or epilepsy) under Govt of India’s Sarva Siksha Abhiyan or other similar narratives. Though epilepsy alone doesn’t qualify them for these benefits, disabilities commonly associated with it like low vision and mental retardation will make them eligible to enjoy these privileges.

Sports:

People with epilepsy (PWEs) are often advised against participating in sports and exercise, mostly because of fear, overprotection, and ignorance about the specific benefits and risks associated with such activities. Available evidence suggests that physical exercise and active participation in sports may favourably affect seizure control, in addition to producing broader health and psychosocial benefits. In general, if a person is free from seizures he/she and is on antiepileptic drugs, most of the sports and leisure activities can be undertaken. The problem arises when the seizures are frequent and poorly controlled. For them any type of activities, which may endanger their life or that of others due to an accident resulting from a seizure, should be avoided.

Driving:

Current status on issuing of Driving License is that all applicants irrespective of age, have to fill up Form – 1 (Application cum declaration to the physical fitness) and if declared as having epilepsy, then has to undergo a medical examination. In spite of medical recommendations, there is no provision to issue a driving license if the person has epilepsy. Thus, according to current Indian Law, as of now a person with epilepsy cannot drive. Efforts are on way to modify these laws so that persons with well controlled epilepsy can acquire a driving licence.

Employment:

There is a general feeling that a person with epilepsy is not capable of doing a job. It is also believed that PWE are frequently absent from work due to their seizures. Many studies show that people with epilepsy tend to work more conscientiously than others to prevent losing the job. Those suffering from epilepsy are usually declared unfit for jobs of professional drivers of motor vehicles, pilots, people working at unprotected heights or with open and or moving machinery and live electrical cables, jobs involving train running and passing duties, and certain categories of jobs in the defence services are not suitable for persons with epilepsy.

Marriage:

As mentioned, today a person with epilepsy can have a legally valid marriage and epilepsy is no more an illness to claim for divorce.

Insurance:

Insurance benefits were not available till recently for PWE. However, some insurance agencies have started to include epilepsy in their Health Insurance plan.

* * *

RESURGENCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES: NEED OF THE HOUR

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In India, at the dawn of independence, though Science and Technology received priority, Social Sciences and Humanities retained their respect and recognition. The loud talk about their relevance was not heard in those days. In fact, even in pre-independence era Social Sciences and Humanities, called Arts did well. Apart from the British colonial policy of producing clerks to serve the British Raj, the nationalist movement has spurred the academic communities and intellectuals into an indispensable study of Social Sciences and History. Further, the entire corpus of rationalist ideology had been given a boost and the young dynamic minds of the day started making a study of India's past glory and initiating discussions over democracy, constitutional reforms, legal institutions

and above all, how India's social, economic and political future ought to be moulded. All these had created a favourable positive ambience in which the academic study of the Arts and Social Sciences have gained primacy and respectability.

India's Independence and the Social Sciences

In the early years of Indian independence Social Sciences were regarded as an intellectual resource to be utilised for achieving the goals of freedom. One concrete manifestation of this encouraging trend for Social Science disciplines was the unprecedented expansion of public services to help the reconstruction of the country. The very attractive prospects in Foreign Service and the administration, Police and allied civil services further propelled the need for a study of Social Sciences and Humanities in higher education. The syllabuses prescribed by the Public Service commissions were such that the Arts subjects like History, Political Science, Public Administration, Sociology, Anthropology etc are considered preferable as examination subjects even by the students of Science and Professional Courses. This consideration has helped enrolment in Social Sciences in universities and colleges. Another source of employment entry is teaching – both at the secondary and tertiary levels. The phenomenal spread of schools and colleges has meant a huge catchment area for teachers and lecturers. A chain reaction was set in motion in which more universities and colleges continued to give space to Social Sciences and Humanities departments and this in turn necessitated recruitment of more teachers of these subjects. Further, the emergence of the concept of a welfare state commitment, despite all its inadequacies in implementation, has indeed provided a great space for public services expansion. This has helped keep up the disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities in great demand.

In addition to this, the establishment of institutions like Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and the Indian Council for Philosophical Research (ICPR) and the relevance of research findings in the Social Sciences to public policy making have further enhanced the image of these subjects. This situation existed even during nineteen seventies and eighties.

Globalization and Social Sciences

With the arrival of Liberalisation, Privatisation and

Unless a man has been taught what to do with success after getting it, the achievement of it must inevitably leave him a prey to boredom.

Bertrand Russell

Globalization (LPG) and technological innovations during the nineties of the last century, Social Sciences have, however, received a death blow. Globalization has opened doors for global level opportunities for the students of engineering and technology. The expansion of private sector industrialisation and even more significantly, the explosion of the information technology has opened up new vistas and ample opportunities for the students of engineering and technology. The result is the exponential growth of engineering and technology education sector. There is no doubt that the general degree level educational institutions have also grown in number, but the number of technical – professional colleges, in terms of ratio, have grown faster.

Technology, particularly Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the whole dynamics of society. The liberal education tradition cultivated during the nationalist movement has been relegated to a secondary position. Such concepts as wisdom and deep understanding of human beings have given way to overemphasis on skill and technology. Education for earning has come to replace education for understanding the society, refinement and wisdom. Ethics and values have taken a back seat in the rat race for power and pelf in materialistic terms. An unethical and unjust society is now in the offing. Consequently, of late Arts and Humanities such as Literature, History and Philosophy and other Social Sciences have ceased to be relevant. The boon in service sector has made education prepare the students for specific professions. Education has now become more concerned with creating employees than with man making. Education has moved away from character building to skill acquisition.

The changes brought by the waves of globalization and rapid industrialisation have disturbed social harmony and given rise to a different kind of social unrest. The roses of a modern world providing the human beings with enormous wealth, tremendous facilities and physical comforts do hurt the society in the shape of intolerance, erosion of values and degeneration of human virtues. These symptoms have their impact on the political arena. The Indian political system which was once considered unique for its ‘moral and spiritual force’ is today afflicted badly with criminalization of politics, populism, nepotism, bribery, inefficiency, corruption, violence, greed, drift and complete

absence of transparency in the functioning of the institutions, subverting the very foundations of the Indian Democracy. The post independence generations have drifted away emotionally and otherwise from the hallowed past of pre-independence struggle when people displayed implicit faith in and abided by the time-tested values of selfless nationalism and self-effacing patriotism of spiritual savants and social thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Thus more than ever, there is a need to remind the present generation of the self sacrifices of our nationalist leaders like Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose and Balgangadhar Tilak and the universal moral principles for which our nationalist movement sought for.

Relevance of Social Sciences

Social Sciences, which inculcate the cherished values of the nationalist movement, civic virtues and ethical conscience have supreme relevance to the present day Indian Society. We have a rich heritage of wisdom coming from ancient times in combining the secular, moral and spiritual elements in the educational process. We have also the legacy of great thoughts on education by great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Swami Vivekananda’s profound convictions that education should be man – making and character – building and also acquiring mastery of modern knowledge (Western scientific and secular) is essential for the purpose of achieving material progress for the benefit of the Indian masses. Mahatma Gandhi, who led the greatest non-violent revolution in the history of mankind, considered education as an effective means to enhance the potentialities of the child and his/ her character, also stressed that the social relevance of modern science and technologies should be seriously considered in the context of poverty and degradation of millions of Indian people. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who laid strong foundations for scientific research and technological development laid stress on the importance and necessity of ethical values in the pursuit of knowledge. Thus our nationalist leaders and saints have recognized the importance of both the scientific and spiritual knowledge for the betterment of the Society.

Science and Technology are no doubt essential as they have conferred on man innumerable benefits and

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

Bertrand Russell

comforts. But Social Sciences are also equally needed as they will promote social and moral values in the society. In this complex and socially fragmented society they alone can enable us to learn the simple art of living together as brothers and sisters. Further, they can give direction to the policy makers and administrators to formulate policies and programmes to make this world of human existence meaningful, safe and secured. They will provide an 'intangible reward' to the society by strengthening the young minds with conscience based education. Neglecting Social Sciences implies the defeat of the very purpose of education. As such intellectual leaders, policy makers, social thinkers, cultural guardians and above all champions of social resurgence should assert the legitimacy of Social Sciences (including the Humanities) as a necessary tool for national efflorescence and integrated development. Or else

there is the fatal possibility of our technological society turning into a 'Rakshasa Raj' as the philosopher – statesman Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan put it aptly.

Conclusion

It is not too late to realise that the study of and research in Social Sciences are as important as in physical, natural and technological subjects. It is said that 21st century would be a century of Bio-sciences and it will be true also of Social Sciences. Mere scientific and technological advancement is not enough for the establishment of a new equitable social order and promotion of good life. As policy sciences, social sciences and social scientists can play a positive and significant role in the establishment of a better polity, economy and society in India.

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Centre for Policy Studies completes 23 years and its Bulletin 22 years today. CPS offers its grateful thanks to its well wishers, contributors of articles and readers of the Bulletin for their generous support and cooperation.



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(Edited and published by A. Prasanna Kumar
Website : www.centreforpolycystudiesvizag.com
Email: ayyagariprasannakumar@gmail.com and
printed at Sathyam Offset Imprints Ph : 984 999 6538)