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70th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

It was on December 10, 1948 that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was passed by the United Nations General Assembly. Hailed as ‘the international Magna Carta of humankind’ the Declaration is a testament to human dignity and self respect and a beacon of hope to millions of poor and oppressed people of the world. It was, indeed, a historic occasion that three years after the horrendous Second World War, during a period of intense cold war rivalry, the Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

The drafting committee constituted by the United Nations consisting of eighteen members, chaired by one of the most respected ladies of that time, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, a doughty champion of the rights of women and the underprivileged people, completed the task in less than two years. Significant contribution was made by the Canadian jurist John Peters Humphrey, the Director of the Division of Human Rights in the United Nations Secretariat who prepared the first draft that formed the basis of the Declaration and French jurist Rene Cassin who produced the second draft drawing inspiration from the famous Code Napoleon of 1804. Franklin Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms proclaimed in 1941 and the Beveridge Report released in 1942 also impacted the Declaration.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights had ‘moral but no legal obligation.’ The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights made in 1976 provided ‘legal sanction to most of the Declaration.’ The debates in the U.N. General Assembly on the articles of the Declaration revealed the ideological differences and rivalries of the bipolar world. Rene Cassin who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968 for his work in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights summed up the articles under five categories. Articles 1 to 11 relate to individual rights, 12 to 17 to civil and political society, 18 to 21 deal with spiritual, public and political freedoms, 22 to 27 social, economic and cultural rights and the last three 28 to 30 constitute ‘the pediment that binds the structure together.’

Eleanor Roosevelt, the brain behind the historic document, worked with indefatigable energy to enable its completion in time. Presenting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the U.N. General Assembly in the winter of 1948 she said that ‘it was not a statement of law and legal obligation but may well be the international ‘Magna Carta’ of ‘all people everywhere’’. Eleanor struck a poignant note when she asserted that Human Rights were based on ‘a spiritual fact’ and that man must have freedom to develop his full stature and ‘through common effort to raise the level human dignity’. She continued her work with missionary fervour as US Representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights till 1953, even after ceasing to be the Chair of the Commission.

Eleanor, the practical idealist had, however, no illusions about the capacity or keenness of governments to protect and promote human rights. In a memorable message she asked: “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.... Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Seventy years after the Universal Declaration was adopted and decades after it has been beefed up by international covenants and treaties, protection and promotion of Human Rights are seen more in breach than in practice. Still, the Declaration serves as a charter of universal values, a source of hope and inspiration to humanity at large.

The Editor

To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity

Nelson Mandela

INDIA-JAPAN RELATIONS; THROUGH A REALISTIC LENS

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The roots of the putative ‘rise of the East’, according to author Pankaj Mishra, can be traced to May 1905, when a Japanese fleet, commanded by Admiral Togo, decimated much of Imperial Russia’s navy at the Battle of Tsushima Strait. Europe’s humiliation by an Asian Power – inconceivable till then - galvanized patriotic sentiment all over the eastern world, especially in India, and set the stage for its retreat from the east.

It may be a leap of faith to link PM Modi’s close personal bonding with Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, to this century old event, but India’s high regard for Japan is certainly rooted in shared history. The warm Modi-Abe relationship has been built over twelve meetings, including four summits, since 2014. Such symbiosis, unusual in international relations, has, understandably, heightened interest in the 13th India-Japan Summit, scheduled on 28th-29th October 2018 in Tokyo.

There are other reasons too, for observers to anticipate that the Indo-Japanese relationship will, at last, deliver tangible results. Primary amongst them is China’s economic and military rise, its growing belligerence and its refusal to comply with the existing rule-based order. The alarm-bells rung by China’s capricious actions in the East and South China Seas, and its relentless quest for Indian Ocean foot-holds, have focused sharp attention on maritime-security in the region. The Belt and Road Initiative, hawked to the world, as a benign bid to enhance regional connectivity is, actually, a project of geo-strategic significance to ensure China’s long-term economic security, while reshaping the global geo-economic order.

Along with enhanced maritime-security consciousness has come a realization of the seamless nature of the oceanic domain; resulting in the coinage of new terms and concepts. The ‘Asia-Pacific’ entity, created, post-WW II, by the US, having outlived its utility, has been stretched westwards, almost certainly, to include India, and craft the new ‘Indo-Pacific’ paradigm.

Japan, as a resource-deficient island state and a major economy, is totally dependent on sea-lanes for its energy, commerce, industry and security. Despite crucial reliance on the seas, Japan faces serious capacity limitations in its ability to protect its sea-borne trade and energy traffic. Apart from the tyranny of distance (a ship could take up to 18 days to cover the 12,000 km from Japan to the Persian Gulf) it is also constrained by constitutional curbs on maintenance of military/naval forces and their deployment overseas.

India, as a significant naval power, with a dominant peninsular location astride shipping-lanes, plays a major role in ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean and environs. Close cooperation with a democratic India, located mid-way along trade-routes connecting East Asia with the Middle East and Africa, would be advantageous to Japan. At the same time, a technologically deficient India has much to gain from a relationship with an economic and industrial power like Japan.

Japan and India have, no doubt, been drawing closer, since 2001, after lifting of Japan’s post-Pokharan II sanctions. Regular prime-ministerial exchanges have yielded a ‘special strategic partnership’ as well as a landmark civil nuclear agreement. A Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2006, and Japan was, formally, admitted as the third member of the ‘Malabar’ Indo-US naval exercises last year.

There is, however, a sense of dissatisfaction, in New Delhi, that the Indo-Japanese relationship has remained below potential, and that Japan does not accord due importance to India in its security calculus. This discontent arises mainly from the fact that the decade-long security dialogue, has failed to throw up any deliverables, so far. There is, also, frustration that, apart from trying to foist an amphibian-aircraft, Japan has offered neither hardware, nor technology needed by India’s military. Finally, there seems to be a difference in perceptions about China; while Japan highlights its own security concerns in the East and South China Seas, it is seen as downplaying multiple threats that India faces from China.

Expectations from the forthcoming Modi-Abe discussions must, therefore, remain anchored in

Scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth; they are intended to purify reason and illuminate

the truth.

Mahatma Gandhi

reality. In this context, two major factors with a strong bearing on India-Japan security relationship must be recognized.

The US-imposed post-WW II Constitution denies not just the right of belligerency to the Japanese State, but also the authority to raise armed forces. Japan, therefore maintains three wings of a putative ‘Japanese Self Defence Force’ (JSDF). With a budget of US \$ 50 billion, the compact JSDF is formidable in capability, but fettered in ability to undertake combat operations or overseas deployments. Notionally, there are, also, constraints on the transfer of arms and technology to other nations, but in 2015 the Japanese government selectively waived Constitutional provisions to permit the JSDF to provide material and logistic support to allies. In any case, PM Abe’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party has been committed to Constitutional revision since its founding.

Equal in significance, are the conditions imposed on Japan by the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty, which grants US, the means to establish a large military presence in East Asia, and binds the two militaries in an intense operational embrace. Restrictions imposed by this treaty, on military-related assistance to other powers, without US consent, seem to weigh excessively with the Japanese defence bureaucracy.

Given adequate resolve, however, a modus vivendi could be found for navigating these hurdles, in order to realize the potential of the Indo-Japanese defence and security relationships. The two PMs should be buoyed by the fact that India and Japan are amongst the few Asian nations that carry no historical burden of the past.

Paradoxically, while the Japanese are keen to forget their Imperial past, Indians recall, with emotion, three historical landmarks in India-Japan relations; Japan’s accord of recognition to Subhash Bose’s ‘Provisional Government of Free India’ in 1943; Justice Radhabinod Pal’s vociferous dissent in the ‘Tokyo War Crimes Trials’ of 1946; and the signing of a separate Indo-Japanese Peace Treaty, according honor and equality to Japan, in 1951.

One hopes that history will serve to inspire our future relationship.

Man cannot live alone. He has to live in society as he is a social being. He can attain peace and happiness, only where he strives for the progress of society.

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A tipping point: The Khashoggi killing is the blurring of global moral values and principles

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The killing of the Saudi Arabian dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul, on the premises of the Saudi consulate, has been described by US President Donald Trump on Tuesday (Oct 23) as the “worst in the history of cover-ups, a total fiasco.” He added: “They had a very bad original concept. It was carried out poorly... Bad deal, should have never been thought of. Somebody really messed up.”

This public statement ends the ambiguity that characterised the US position on the Khashoggi affair, wherein the dissident journalist of Saudi origin — but a US citizen and a Washington Post columnist — had “disappeared” after visiting the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2. Turkish officials claimed that the journalist had been tortured and killed within the consulate.

However, Washington chose to remain ambivalent, given the Trump affinity for the Saudi monarchy and for reasons that span from US geopolitical and commercial interests to the Beltway’s personal ties with the royal family.

This public castigation by the US President was driven by growing anger and dismay within the US about the killing and the clumsy denials by the Saudi regime. The US censure comes in the wake of the assertion made by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday that Khashoggi was targeted in a meticulously planned operation. It has increased the diplomatic heat on Riyadh by publicly demanding that the 18 suspects detained by Saudi Arabia be extradited to Istanbul to face trial.

Apart from the Saudi-Turkey rivalry, the Khashoggi killing raises a number of complex and disturbing issues. While dissidents the world over have been ruthlessly targeted by authoritarian regimes (recall the manner in which Russian dissidents have

mysteriously disappeared or died in the UK, or the Chinese detention of their dissidents including Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo), the Istanbul killing stands out for its sheer audacity and vileness.

Turkish media reports reveal that the team from Saudi Arabia which “supervised” the killing had among them a specialist equipped with a bone-saw to dismember the body of the slain journalist. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the body parts have been buried or hidden within the residence of the consulate staff and more gory details of this killing are likely to be revealed soon. The Turkish President has drawn attention to the gross violation of the principle of diplomatic immunity and has argued that while the Saudi consulate does enjoy such privileges, the fact that such a murder of a US Green Card-holder took place on Turkish soil warrants Ankara’s intervention.

How a Saudi-Turkey-USA modus vivendi is arrived at amidst the current blood and body-splattered imbroglio will shape the principles underpinning diplomatic immunity internationally in the years ahead.

More than the limited sector of diplomatic principles and protocols is the rather complex domain that governs the conduct of international relations and the engagement between nations. State power has an inherent oppressive element embedded in it and democracies are no exception to this thumb rule. How political dissidence is dealt with varies with national culture, countries and the leader in question. In the Khashoggi case, the journalist, who once had very close ties with the Saudi royal family, had become critical of the young crown prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) — he paid with his life.

Will moral principles and ethical values shape the global response to this killing of a journalist?

President Erdogan declared, “Covering up a savage murder like this will only hurt the human conscience. We expect the same sensitivity from all parties, primarily the Saudi Arabian leadership.” Cynics can draw attention to the manner in which Erdogan himself and Turkey, in general, have dealt with their own political dissidents, but the Khashoggi case has turned the global spotlight on the Saudi profile in an embarrassing manner.

Long accused of supporting radical Islamic ideologies and terror groups (recall the identity of the perpetrators in the 9/11 Twin Tower attack), Saudi Arabia has a dismal human rights record when it comes to journalists and political dissidents. Yet, given its hydro-carbon primacy in the world and individual geopolitical compulsions, most nations defer to Riyadh and prefer to turn a Nelson’s eye to many of its transgressions.

The Khashoggi affair appears to be the tipping point to this pattern — even a very empathetic USA (that has long lived with the contradiction of the world’s oldest democracy supporting a regime that, till recently, forbade women from driving a car) is now talking about a firm response. US Vice President Mike Pence claimed that the American decision will be one that “reflects the values and national security interests of the nation and will also make sure the world knows the truth.”

However outraged global opinion is currently over the Khashoggi death, it is more likely that normative principles and values will be “trumped” by the complex geopolitical and energy considerations that Saudi Arabia represents. It is pertinent to note that India, China and Russia have been muted in their public statements about this sordid issue — there is a sub-text here which is a disquieting reality check about the unalloyed realpolitik contours of international relations.

(Courtesy: E-Paper *The Dailyo*, 24 October 2018)

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

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What followed thereafter was a rapid decline in political morality. The Companies Act was amended in due course to legalise political donations by private companies. Political parties, with their insatiable thirst for funds, started violating FCRA with impunity. Some of us questioned it and filed a PIL before Hon’ble Delhi

Often we mistake stability, in terms of security and economic activity, to mean a country is doing well. We forget the third and important pillar: rule of law and respect for human rights.

Kofi Annan

High Court. In their landmark judgement delivered in February, 2014, the court directed the government to proceed under FCRA against the errant political parties. Appeals filed by those political parties before the apex court were dismissed. Instead of submitting itself to the court direction, the present NDA government chose to amend FCRA retrospectively to avoid FCRA proceedings against the political parties. In other words, the government had no hesitation whatsoever in opening the floodgates to foreign agency funding, a prospect that should cause distress to any right thinking person, committed to safeguarding the national interest.

Meanwhile, the same NDA government went one step farther, by amending the Companies Act to lift the cap on company donations and introducing a dubious system of “electoral bonds” that hide the identity of the donor companies and the donee political parties. This is truly bizarre, as the same government had no compunction in announcing to the nation, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, that it would leave no stone unturned in putting an end to the scourge of corruption.

In the recent elections in Karnataka, a scientifically conducted survey showed that the total amount showered by the political parties on electioneering was more than Rs10,000 crores. Compare this with Rs 40 lakhs given by a private agency to political parties fifty years ago, that rankled the conscience of the political leaders across the board at that time!

Had Madhu Limaye been alive today, he would have wondered whether the Indian nation that he was witnessing was truly independent!

On behalf of the civil society, some of us have approached the apex court against the amendments to FCRA.

While individuals may take upon themselves the responsibility of filing PILs on behalf of the civil society, there is no substitute to the civil society collectively discouraging profligacy in electioneering.

An inclusive democracy based on proportional representation:

In the 2014 General Elections to the Lok Sabha, BJP won 31% of the votes and, along with its allies

in NDA, won 38.5% of the votes. On the other hand, BJP's and NDA's tallies in the Lok Sabha seats were 59% and 62% respectively. BJP along with its allies came to power on the basis of the majority of seats won by them, not on the basis of its vote share.

If one were to accept that the will of the ruling political executive represents the will of the people, it might imply that the will of the legislators elected by only 38.5% of the voters should supersede that of the legislators elected by more 61.5% of the voters. Had the Constitution provided a system of proportional representation, such a situation would not have arisen and possibly the pattern of representation in the legislature would have been more in tune with the proportion of votes polled by different political parties.

During the Constituent Assembly deliberations, one Member did raise this point on January 4th, 1949 in the following words.

“The present electoral system, of single member constituency according to me, is very defective. The one pervading evil of democracy is the tyranny of the majority that succeeds in carrying elections..... The common system of representation perpetuates the danger and the only remedy is proportional representation. That system is also profoundly democratic for it increases the influence of thousands of those who would have no voice in the Government and it brings men more near an equality by so contriving that no vote shall be wasted and that every voter shall contribute to bring into Parliament a member of his own choice and opinion.”

One can justifiably argue that, since such a system is not available, we have no other option than to work with the existing system in which governance is carried out by the group of political parties that command the majority of seats in the legislature and what they decide should be accepted as representative of the “political will” of the people.

While this could be a practical way for the people to delegate their authority to the ruling political executive, it is necessary to distinguish decisions that concern day-to-day governance from the decisions that concern major public policy issues.

We have not followed the inspiration of Gandhiji and professionalism of western institutions..... all democratic norms and institutions have been destroyed systematically by our politicians”.

The makers of our Constitution were aware of the need to bring in the larger political consensus into decision taking by making it mandatory that more than two-thirds of the legislators should decide on important issues such as introducing an amendment to the Constitution or impeaching a Constitutional authority. In the case of all other major policy issues, they hoped that the elected governments would be prudent enough to adopt an inclusive, consultative approach in taking decisions. What we witness these days is an unending confrontation between the ruling party and the opposition, whatever be their respective political affiliations. While the ruling party is often dictatorial, the opposition seems to oppose for the sake of opposition.

We, as a part of the civil society, will have to ponder over this shortcoming in the framework of our Constitution and campaign for shifting to a consensus-based governance as a medium-term reform and a system of proportional representation as a long-term arrangement.

Political defections:

The 52nd amendment to the Constitution added the Tenth Schedule which laid down the process by which legislators could be disqualified on grounds of defection. Accordingly, the anti-defection law was enacted in 1985. More than three decades have gone by since then. What we witness today is the brazen way in which almost all political parties have been defying the law. Legislators are purchased like animals in a livestock market. Those defecting from one party to another display no qualms in hoodwinking the people who have elected them. They seem to lack any ideology or political morality. Those who are expected to enforce the anti-defection law have themselves become a part of the problem.

The only way for the civil society to teach a lesson to such defectors is to boycott them in public meetings and dis-associate themselves with the political parties that encourage such defections.

The role of the local authorities:

Devolution of authority to local institutions close to the people has manifold advantages. It provides

scope for participative decision making, nurtures local leadership and enhances public accountability.

In 1992, 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution provided statutory status to Panchayats and municipalities respectively and listed their responsibilities elaborately in the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules. While these Constitutional provisions recognised the importance of Gram Sabhas in villages, there are State laws that provided for setting up "Area Sabhas" and "Ward Committees" in municipal areas. Part IXA of the Constitution requires that urban planning bodies should have elected representatives on their Boards so as to allow the local people to have a say in decision making. In practice, however, Panchayats, Municipalities, Gram Sabhas, Area Sabhas and Ward Committees are either dysfunctional or they function without any authority. In our own city, Visakhapatnam, there has been no elected body to oversee GVMC since 2012. VUDA which is the premier agency for urban planning has none to represent the people, which is violative of the letter and spirit of Part IXA of the Constitution. The more worrisome aspect of this is that there has been no whisper of protest from the citizens of the city!

In the Scheduled Areas notified under the Constitution, Gram Sabhas have been specially given substantive powers under the PESA Act. However, tribal Gram Sabhas have got marginalised in violation of the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

Unless the civil society raises its voice and registers its vehement protest by voting against the errant political parties, this situation will remain unchanged.

Democracy can degenerate into a dictatorship:

During the Chola rule in South India in the 10th, 11th and 12th Centuries A.D., while a monarchy ruled the people, there were village committees that supervised the activities of the King's officers in different fields. The schemes in the kingdom were subject to regular audits. There was a well designed village justice system. The Chola rulers had respect for democratic institutions.

On the other hand, even though we have a

The time has arrived for change in both the philosophy and administration of the distribution of powers between New Delhi and state capitals, whether or not this means altering the Constitution

Granville Austin

democracy today, as defined in the Constitution, there has been a tendency to supplant it with dictatorial approaches based on deification of individuals.

In his address to the Constituent Assembly on November 29, 1949, referred earlier, Dr Ambedkar had cautioned the nation on this in the following words.

"In India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

Every citizen in our country should carefully ponder over these ominous words of Dr Ambedkar, as what the Constitution drafted by our elders visualised is a government of the people, by the people, for the people, as aptly described by Abraham Lincoln, not for the aggrandisement of individuals. Deification of individuals and hero worship tend to nullify the spirit of democracy that is essential for the nation's progress.

Where should reform begin?

Democracies become alive only when its constituent institutions become vibrant. Deeper the democratic processes, better will be the quality of development. Civil society organisations should take note of this, come together and campaign for empowering such institutions so as to breathe life into our democracy.

These changes cannot take place unless the civil society assumes responsibility for taking up a campaign. Each one of us, as a responsible citizen, should act without delay, as this is a matter that is going to affect the welfare of our children and grandchildren. If we wish to see the changes cited above actually taking place, we need to change our own mindsets. There cannot be a more appropriate advice than what Gandhiji has given to us. "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

The ensuing elections to the Parliament and the state legislature as well as elections to GVMC, if ever they are held, present a golden opportunity to us to test these ideas. Each of us can play a vital role in our

respective areas, wards, villages and municipalities. Ward-wise, village-wise lists that identify the local problems to be solved by anyone seeking election to a public office should be put forward as "people's manifestos", which should bind the candidates to written commitments. While such manifestos may not be strictly enforceable, one could name and shame the defaulters on that basis at a later stage.

Paradigm changes are the cumulative outcome of a series of incremental changes. We as citizens can trigger incremental changes that could finally add up to basic transformation in the electoral system.

Edward Norton Lorentz, an MIT mathematician, who studied the theory of chaos, put forward the so called "butterfly effect" that describes a small perturbation in one corner of the planet generating a disruptive turbulence in another part of the planet. We should perhaps draw inspiration from this to generate a minor change in the immediate future that can trigger a major change in the electoral system in the long run.

(concluded)

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Shifting Perceptions and Images-III Curzon the Patron Saint of Indian Archaeology-1

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European scholarly interest in India began long before the East India Company turned from a trading firm to a ruling power. Description of monuments and temples by European travellers, attempts to locate the ancient Indian cities mentioned in ancient Greek and Roman books and the interest that India aroused among French Enlightenment philosophers like Diderot and Voltaire are well documented. A new phase in oriental studies began when the East India Company acquired power in Bengal and Warren Hastings was appointed Governor, Bengal in 1774. Knowledge about India and its people was needed to control the territory acquired and its people, and to harness the resources of the territory for commercial gain. Analogous to the study of primitive communities by anthropologists, colonial administrators attempted

The Congress is opportunistically communal while the BJP is ideologically communal

Mukul Kesavan

to gather every type of knowledge about the land and people of the countries their country had colonised. Systematic exploration of India and its people began with the founding of the Asiatic Society in 1784 with William Jones, puisne judge of the Supreme Court at Fort Williams and an eminent scholar-administrator, as President. For about half a century after its founding, the Society was the fount of exciting new knowledge about ancient India and its culture as well as a gushing stream of publications which were rapidly translated into European languages like French and German. The extraordinary interest about India that the Society's publications aroused among European scholars is also due to the fact that Jones and his fellow members of the Asiatic Society strived to locate India's civilisation in the larger world of Europe's classical antiquity by undertaking comparative studies of several features of Indian and European antiquity, the most famous of such studies was that of languages. The common origin of Sanskrit and European languages that Jones posited, and the attempts to locate India's civilisation in the larger world of Europe's classical antiquity 'brought India into a familiar framework, and so made the strange and exotic comprehensible in European terms for a European audience'. All in all, the exploration of India's part by Jones, Colebrook and other Orientalists was based on textual studies, that locating ancient texts, editing them, studying them and translating them.

A new phase in colonial exploration of India began in the 1800s; governing the new territories required a more intimate knowledge of the territories and the people inhabiting those territories than what could be provided by textual study of 'dry as dust' manuscripts. From 1800, field surveys began to gain importance; the pioneers of such surveys were Francis Buchanan who surveyed Mysore and later Bengal Presidency, and Colin Mackenzie who surveyed Mysore and later became India's first Surveyor General when the Survey of India was established to provide an institutional base for the conduct of topographic survey of India. Mackenzie is supposed to have visited every place of archaeological interest south of the Krishna river, amassing every object laden with culture and history, and making detailed

drawings of everything he could not collect. With the help of his Indian assistants he produced about 2000 drawings of antiquities and copied 8000 manuscripts. Mackenzie's amassing every object laden with culture and history that he came across is of a piece with the vastly practiced pastime of relic hunting and 'tope' (Buddhist stupa) opening in search of antiquities which went on even in late nineteenth century. Most of the loot eventually made its way to private collections and museums in the Western countries; till the 1860s it was standard practice to despatch objects found during excavations or dismembered parts of structures to Britain, particularly the Indian Museum, London set up in 1801 along with a library at East India House, headquarters of the East India Company. When the claim 'might is right' no longer sufficed as a justification for the appropriation of the cultural objects of colonies, a new argument was put forth: carting away the cultural objects found at the sites of monuments and archaeological excavations to the museums was necessary for their preservation and protection from the ravages of nature, and pillage and despoliation by natives. Whatever mitigating factors which existed for the colonial appropriation of cultural objects from India were knocked away by the shabby way in which the objects were handled in the Indian Museum. To illustrate, the 120 'Elliot Marbles' of Amaravati sent to Britain in 1859 lay in a wharf for a year and later consigned to the stables of Fife House where the Indian Museum was located. There they lay till 1867 when James Fergusson, who was collecting Indian cultural objects for display in the Paris Exhibition, found them. The state of the Indian Museum was described as a 'curse'. Critics complain that the India Museum was crammed, claustrophobic and amateurish, and that 'when you get to it you find a bonded warehouse and not a museum in straightforward airy order'. Mercifully, upon the dissolution of the East India Company the Indian Museum was also disbanded in 1879, and its collections dispersed among institutions in London such as the British Museum (eg., the Amaravati Collection), the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library, the Museum of Natural History and Kew Gardens. The collections received from Indian

Ours is a noble Constitution worked in an ignoble spirit.

Museum formed the core of Indian collections of all these institutions. With the dissolution of the Indian Museum and the growth of museums in India the prospects for preserving and displaying Indian antiquities in Indian museums brightened up.

A new approach to the study of India's past made its appearance in 1830s. What William Jones is to unravelling India's past through textual study Prinsep is to a similar unravelling through archaeological exploration, numismatics (study of coins) and epigraphy (study of inscriptions). Gradually extracting history from material objects emerged as a major strategy for unlocking the secrets of India's past. From 1861 onwards, Government supported archaeological exploration intermittently. All through the nineteenth century archaeological investigations and preservation of monuments received intermittent support largely dependent on the individual taste and proclivity of the Governor-Generals and the Governors of Provinces. Pioneers like Alexander Cunningham, often called Father of Indian Archaeology, made stellar contribution to the understanding of India's past, and opened a vast and fascinating field to be explored. However, for all their contributions, the pioneers were amateurs who picked up some knowledge about experience through experience, and had an 'unbelievable unawareness' of the developments in archaeological method and technique taking place in other parts of the world. Consequently, their excavations were no more than prospecting for objects and inscriptions. A telling example is that Cunningham did excavations at Harappa but missed out its significance because he was unaware of the techniques of deep excavation, and shared the preconception of his contemporaries that India had no worthwhile material remains prior to the Buddhist era. And further, they shared the view that the best way to preserve was to cart off objects from sites to museums, preferably British. An egregious example is the proposal of a G.W.Terry, Superintendent of J. J. School of Arts, Bombay that the frescoes should be peeled off from the walls of the Ajanta caves by a special peeling-off method, and the peeled frescoes deposited in the safe custody of a museum. The ostensible reason was that in their present position, the Ajanta frescoes were accessible only to

a few, and even to those few they were only dimly visible. In contrast, in a museum 'all the antiquarian and artistic world could see them'. The proposal was wholeheartedly supported by Cunningham who also expressed the view that the frescoes were liable to 'injury from percolation of moisture through the fissures in the rocks'. Mercifully the Government rejected the proposal as it felt that the process for peeling was very risky.

II

And then came Curzon; his viceroyalty is considered to be the 'dawn of a new era' of Indian archaeology. He who was a genuine orientalist so fascinated by the East that he made himself one of England's leading specialist on Asia. As a young MP he toured Central Asia, Persia and India in pursuit of his interest in Asia as well as part of the meticulous preparation for the post of Viceroy which he aspired. He visited India thrice visiting not merely cities but remote areas like the northern-most areas of Kashmir bordering Afghanistan and Tajikistan; as an ordinary traveller fresh from the university he 'had observed the state of its antiquities with pain and regret', and was convinced that Britain as an Imperial Power had a strong and urgent obligation 'of expiating the carelessness of the past, and escaping the reproaches of posterity'. He landed in India with a twelve-point agenda of action which included preservation of archaeological remains. Within a few weeks of his arrival in India he declared the archaeological policy of his government. Curzon's claim to fame for his contribution to Indian archaeology rests on four transformational acts: (i) organising the ASI as a permanent department of the Imperial Government with a comprehensive mandate encompassing all aspects of archaeological work(exploration, documentation, research, epigraphy, numismatics and preservation), and burying once and for all the wrong notion that archaeological work was temporary; (ii) choosing a young academically trained archaeologist in preference to an old scholar-administrator; (iii) providing the preservation of India's built heritage a legal framework through enactment of the comprehensive 1904 Act, and ; (iv) the zeal and passion he brought to bear on the preservation of the

We have strayed from the right road and must get back to it and understand Gandhiji's teachings and apply them in life.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

built heritage of the vast Indian sub-continent, and putting an end to the belief that preservation was too costly a commitment for the Government.

The Home Office was keen that Vincent Smith, a retired ICS officer with many historical publications to his credit, should be appointed as the Director General (DG), ASI on the ground the DG should be an oriental scholar with good knowledge of India and Indian languages. Curzon had very different views on the qualifications the DG should possess; he looked for not an oriental scholar but a professional archaeologist, academically trained with rich field experience in undertaking excavations and preservation. He had very clear views on what should be done in archaeology, and he felt that a young impressionable professional was more likely to follow the new paths he wanted Indian archaeology to traverse than an old India hand with set views. The selection of John Marshall was an inspired choice. Marshall studied archaeology at Cambridge with a ‘record of the highest’ and cut his teeth on excavations in the Near East, the site of major archaeological excavations in the late nineteenth century. He introduced scientific excavation in India as a result of which historical facts were deduced for the first time from archaeological excavations, the best example of such dedication being discovery of Harappan civilisation which is not mentioned in any text or inscription and which pushed back the history of Indian civilisation by a couple of thousand years and established that the Indian civilisation was as old as the Egyptian and Sumerian civilisations. Curzon’s choice of Marshall proved to be right ; Marshall could recognise the true significance of the excavations at Harappa (done under the supervision of Dayaram Sahni) and Mohenjo Dao (R.D.Banerjee) because he had no preconceptions about India’s past, and could draw inferences from evidence gathered in excavations in defiance of conventional wisdom. Before Marshall could come into his own he had to undergo tutelage under Curzon. Curzon not only set the agenda for Marshall to the minutest detail but also mentored his recruit down to the last detail. Thus, Curzon ASI insisted on the publication of a crisp annual report by ASI; when Marshall submitted the draft of the inaugural issue Curzon commented, ‘it is too long,

it contains unimportant details, there is too much of first person singular and the information is given in a strictly official style, which will excite little or no interest’. He even found the binding inappropriately pretentious and insisted that it should be replaced by a more modest binding. Even a cursory reading of Indian Archaeology, 1888-1907 would bring out the elaborate instructions Curzon issued to Marshall again and again on renovation and restoration of monuments. His instructions bear the imprint of an expert because his knowledge of architecture and conservation was so deep that it had been said he could have made a living as an architect; and further, through extensive tours before being Viceroy and study he became an authority on Islamic architecture. Marshall’s statement that ‘he had been my guru and I his pupil’ says it all. After Curzon left India in 1906 Marshall was in sole command of ASI for 23 years and left a lasting imprint on Indian archaeology. Through the offer of scholarships, he was able to attract many Indians to archaeology, quite a few of whom rose to be DGs, ASI (eg., Daya Ram Sahni and K.N.Dixit). The Conservation Manual prepared by John Marshall ‘was, and still is believed to be the most forward-looking and scientific document of its time, enumerating conservation principles to be adopted for India’s monuments, while keeping in mind their rich diversity in terms of their function and material’. The 2014 Policy itself builds on Marshall’s Conservation Manual and incorporates the experiential knowledge of ASI as well as international charters and practices. Even the Guidelines for Conservation: A Technical Manual prepared in 1989 for INTACH by Bernard Feilden, a noted authority on the conservation of heritage buildings, was based on Marshall’s Conservation Manual.

What is significant about ASI is the fact that there never was a British equivalent of the ASI created by Curzon with a comprehensive remit which encompassed all aspects of archaeological work. Cultural policies including policies for heritage preservation are anchored in a country’s political tradition. Deep rooted perceptions and beliefs prevalent in the country about what the State ought to and ought not to do in the area of culture shaped the

This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country.

Swami Vivekananda

policies and institutional arrangements for heritage preservation and management. In France, in 1790, a year after the Revolution, the Commission des Monuments was established, two years later a law was enacted to safeguard historic objects and buildings, and a permanent inspectorate general of historic monuments was established in 1830, its main tasks being inventorying monuments and remains and preserving them; countries like Belgium (1835), Spain (1844), Russia (1869) and the Netherlands (1874) followed the French example. In contrast to the State-driven centralised heritage management in France and a few other European countries, in Britain the preservation of historic buildings largely depended on private, voluntary effort through trusts and charities like the National Trust founded in 1895.

In European countries with a strong statist tradition the idea that ancient monuments constitute a national heritage spawned the idea that the nation has an indefeasible right to national heritage, and the State as the custodian of national interest has the right to intervene to protect national heritage and curtail private rights, if any, over immoveable and moveable heritage. In concrete terms, the State alone could give permission for restorations, removals, or works of repair even in respect of sites and built heritage in private custody. The State has not only the duty of preserving the monuments, but also the duty of repressing and punishing all attempts at vandalism. No one has the right to destroy or alter objects of art and antiquity even if he owns them. Excavations could not be undertaken without the permission of the State. If the remains of ancient public buildings such as temples or city walls come to light in excavations on private grounds, they pass at once into the possession of the state, the proprietor of the soil receiving an indemnity. The State has the right to interdict, save by its previous permission, the exportation from the country works of art, collections of coins, and of rare manuscripts and documents; and finally the State has the right of precedence in the acquisition of objects found in excavations, and other articles of value whenever their proprietor desires to send them out of the country. By early twentieth century, most of these ideas were incorporated in the laws of quite a few

European countries. Britain was a study in contrast; the ideas that private property was sacrosanct and that voluntary efforts should be encouraged reigned supreme for a long time. The first legislation, the Ancient Monuments Act, 1882, was limited to fifty archaeological remains. A provision which compelled a private owner, who possessed an ancient monument and wished to destroy it, to offer it to the Government first for purchase elicited the criticism that it was ‘an invasion of the rights of property... in order to gratify the antiquarian tastes of the few at the public expense’ and was rejected. Slowly but steadily, through a series of legislative steps, the British system of heritage protection began to expand its scope both in terms of coverage and Governmental initiatives with the result that the gap between British and Continental laws had narrowed down considerably even after that narrowing down the role of the Government is very limited to countries like France.

Curzon would not let the laissez-faire British attitude to heritage management prevail in India. Two years after the ASI in its present form was constituted, Curzon got the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (hereafter referred to as the 1904 Act) enacted. It was closer to corresponding laws on the European continent, and was ‘fully equipped with the compulsory clauses, prohibitions, and penal sanctions, of which people in the mother country are so shy’. When Charles Rivaz, an ICS official, objected to the provision prohibiting export of objects of historical and artistic interest claiming that the ‘provision was inquisitorial and imprudent’ Curzon observed:

‘If I go to an antiquarian’s shop at Venice and buy a number of so-called Old Masters or bronzes or stained glass or objects d’art or marbles, he has to send a list of my proposed purchases to the local authorities and procure their permission before any of my purchases can be exported from the country. Without this permit, his packing case would not be passed by the Customs officials.

I really do not see why what works well in Italy should necessarily break down here’.

It is appurtenant to point out that extracts from Baldwin Brown’s book, *The Care of Ancient*

The modern politician in any part of the world does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations.

Sri Aurobindo

Monuments, an eloquent plea for State intervention in the management of built heritage in Britain, were printed and widely circulated among ASI officials. Curzon wanted to give the best cultural heritage law for India than be bound by the British precedent.

(to be concluded)

* * *

An unconventional thought

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan

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A Schumpeter column in an August 2018 issue of *The Economist*, praised Singapore's management of its wealth funds, now close to a trillion US dollars, and Norway's which already has that much. Large as these two funds are, together they constitute less than a tenth of what is there globally.

Investing these funds is risky business today, so great are the uncertainties. Long ongoing conflicts in West Asia and the Middle East are dampening the enthusiasm to bet on those parts. Aid dependent Africa, has never delivered on growth while xenophobic Eastern Europe, looks a poor bet.

China, unlike India, has huge investable resources but usuriously deployed, they throw a big shadow over much of Asia and Africa. Realizing this, the nonagenarian President of Malaysia travelled to China to stop further ' largesse' flowing from there into his country. Debt-ridden Sri Lanka has had to cede a part of its territory as well as the Hambantota port to China on terms similar to what made Hong Kong a British colony in 1842. Unexpectedly, a chance has arisen for India to tap into such funds with a promise of high returns over extended periods.

A democratic India holds nearly twenty percent of all humanity. Unlike fast-aging China, its demographic dividend should last a couple of decades longer. The world will be doing itself a favour to ensure such an India emerges as an advanced, environmentally sound economy with a highly educated population and skilled workforce in about a decade from now. This is just what is required to counterpose, or even provide

an alternative model to a China which for all its glitz is environmentally unstable while emerging as the most humongous panopticon in history. Most importantly, investors stand to benefit from such investments, guaranteed by the Indian state, most.

A mere fifth of the USD20 trillion funds swishing around can help unleash the entrepreneurial and innovative forces in India, especially millions of its young, transforming the country into a well-developed one in less than a decade. The money needed is much less than what the United States has expended on its war on terror since 2001 but which is still twice India's annual GDP in PPP terms.

The United States has thrived on the back of innovation through history. If it was Edison and Ford in the past, today it is Google, Microsoft, Apple and Amazon. Another startup upstart, Chesapeake Energy, kicked off the fracking revolution which made the United States energy self-sufficient.

Improbable as this may sound, such a revolution can be unleashed in India if only some of the idling trillions can be infused into innovative startups with the kind of energy, and drive that can overcome India's educational and environmental challenges in ways government programmes have failed to do so far. Surely that's worth a try!

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The Gate Swings Wide With a Protesting Jar-II

Dr.(Mrs.) Prema Nandakumar

When was it man reached the height of civilization? Certainly not just now. He did it millennia ago. Even if we cannot take into account the heights reached which have gone unrecorded, we have plenty of ancient texts for a few thousand years. The Mahabharata, for instance. Man seemed to have evolved to perfection even then. Apart from battle heroism, he had begun to use his brain so effectively by positing the term Dharma to rule over all the action of man and help him move out of the "prison-house" of the body in its

The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

John F. Kennedy

present state to gain entry into a new world and form.

So, the possibility of the Greater Dawn has always been there. Also has been present the hurdles which bar the way. The truth about this and the definite victory have been brilliantly imaged by Sri Aurobindo in the gate that opens as Savitri proceeds to enter the inner countries. The very idea of opening out to a new life is objected to by the resisting forces as when Savitri knocks against the ebony gate at “the dim portal of the inner life”. A grave voice warns her of dire consequences while terrifying visions rise from nowhere :

“A dreadful murmur rose like a dim sea;
The Serpent of the threshold hissing rose,
A fatal guardian hood with monstrous coils,
The hounds of darkness growled with jaws agape,
And trolls and gnomes and goblins scowled and stared
And wild beast roarings thrilled the blood with fear
And menace muttered in a dangerous tongue.”

The best of the aspirant communities are not able to dare beyond this first step. It needs a heroism of a rare kind to put down the fears, anxieties and worries about the future, if we take to a new life. These emotions are brilliantly captured as the trolls and gnomes that scowl, the wild beasts that roar, chilling the blood: ‘What will happen to me?’ If one fails to quell this initial hysteria, then one must needs agree to a humdrum life of tamas, an ant in a swarm. The problem is further compounded by feelings like “what will others think?” as also how others do their best to dissuade idealists from taking a new turn in their lives. Persons like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Ramalinga Vallalar and the Lady of Karaikal were made of sterner stuff. It is because such people have also been there since the beginning of evolution that we have conquered new worlds, ascended higher planes.

Savitri is made of divine stuff. With no hesitation whatsoever, she takes the next step:

“Unshaken her will pressed on the rigid bars:
The gate swung wide with a protesting jar,
The opponent Powers withdrew their dreadful guard;
Her being entered into the inner worlds.
In a narrow passage, the subconscious’s gate,
She breathed with difficulty and pain and strove
To find the inner self concealed in sense.”

However, victory is not yet. There is still a long way to go. But it seems clear enough from our gazing around the happenings in the world that we have reached a point in evolution when it is not merely a peep into it and a hesitant pressure on the gate. Right now, the gate seems to have swung wide. The breathtaking views of a world in process of transformation is becoming clear at last. There is no need to make a long list to underline this sense of the gate having swung wide. I see it wherever I turn. In the most interior village which is still a stranger to tarred roads, I am able to achieve instant communication with my daughter across the seven seas by touching the cellphone in my hand. The days of waiting for the Friday post to get my father’s letters from England in 1950 are gone. Distance has been annihilated!

Also consider the compression of time in getting things done today. I see before me my grandmother in the darkling kitchen trying to light a fire for making hot water as the doctor waits in the main room to boil an injection needle for the patient. Today the microwave boils my water in a matter of seconds. Even rice gets cooked in five minutes, unlike the traditional forty minutes when I used the steam-Rukmani cooker in the 1950’s. Transformation has been so quick and intense that I realize the doors for the next step in evolution have swung open wide.

Unfortunately, the dangers, the retarding forces and threats to peaceful and cultured living have also multiplied a millionfold. As with everything else in this subject a single example would be enough. A person is killed in a street fight in a village or a small town which turns into a communal clash there. The

India now stands at the threshold of the kind of super power status it will eventually achieve

information would have seeped out only after several days in the past centuries. By the time the news came, the immediate anger would also have cooled down. Information technology gives news instant coverage. I believe the Iraq war action was seen live on the television. All the time we have this problem of containing news so that passions are not unleashed. It appears to be an increasingly losing battle to get a settled peace anywhere in the world. After seeing the burning twin towers over the television when I was in the United Kingdom that day, I have been carrying around an unerasable image with me. If it has not corroded my soul it has been because of living with the epic Savitri. Otherwise where does one turn for gaining hope?

These man-made terrors apart, there is the fury of Nature, inexplicable terrors like the Tsunami, the climate change and so on. Many of these ills are again man-made. All these are the protesting creaks of this ebony gate that is swinging open right now. But we have not given up for the evolutionary instinct in man continues to sow and reap, harvest flowers and decorate altars, publish poems and hold seminars, nurture children with hope while children continue to care for the elders. There are exceptions which prove the rule. Evolution has obviously reached a time when it is pressing upon the gate fiercely. While humanity has always been connected at the soul-level (*Isavaasyamidam sarvam*), it is now connected physically also by information technology and the world becoming a global village. Naturally, the evolutionary pressure is also the result of a collective anxiety to reach out to the higher plane of consciousness. Because the pressure is a collective pressure, the gate has to open wide. It is doing just that but with a very loud protest. Unfortunately the protests do keep us away from entering in boldly. We seem to be afraid even to envisage the possibility of a breakthrough in the canopy of the Mind that covers our crown.

Fortunately for us, in spite of ourselves, the sense of mutation is seizing us “as a collective of humanity.” Indeed, we have now become almost physically aware of the fact that no man is an island.

We have to move forward together and we have to work for the ‘other’ as much as for ‘myself’ unlike the traditional yogic systems. This constant awareness of the ‘other’ (whether it is by the media or the unseen process) is very much with us now. Only, we have to become conscious of it and seize the opportunity and fill our individual goblets with the consciousness of togetherness.

For this daring, collective action, again, we have a striking image in Savitri.

“I saw the Omnipotent’s flaming pioneers
Over the heavenly verge which turns towards life
Come crowding down the amber stairs of birth;
Forerunners of a divine multitude,
Out of the paths of the morning star they came
Into the little room of mortal life.

I saw them cross the twilight of an age,
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn,
The great creators with wide brows of calm,
The massive barrier-breakers of the world
And wrestlers with destiny in her lists of will,
The labourers in the quarries of the gods,
The messengers of the Incommunicable,
The architects of immortality.
Into the fallen human sphere they came ...”

Some of the wondrous discoveries and inventions of the twentieth century could be the work only of barrier-breakers and “labourers in the quarries of the gods.” Then why doubt about the change that is taking place right before our eyes? It appears quite explicit; no, “‘involution’ is no longer latent and implicit.” If we take the scene in, we will not be afraid to face the future either and will not be lonely any more. Thanks to this consciousness of the ‘other’ we can sense the big change that is coming upon humanity. The Gate is definitely swinging open and the moment of Involution touching Evolution around this time of ours does not seem to be far off. If evolution is tapasya

In a world riven by inter-religious violence and misunderstanding, Gandhi’s ideas and example may yet provide a moderating influence.

and involution deva prasaada, if the former is yoga and the latter is Grace, if the former is man and the latter the Divine, the statement is a challenge to posit proofs. The challenge has to be met by presenting concrete proof. When shall we do it if not Now, in this year of the Great Adesh that brought the Master to Pondicherry and began a New Matrix of time?

One of the witnesses for this process would be the small group of serious thinkers and activists who have pointed out the hole in the ozone layer and the need for helping nature preserve her rhythm. Not being a student of science, nor of an age when I dare to learn new subjects, I have gathered enough from my scientist daughter that there is a methodical destruction of ozone by atomic chlorine and bromine. The same information technology that has dire results in spreading terror has also been helpful in bringing global awareness to this problem. I have myself been associated with the opposition to the building of nuclear power plants in India. The much-touted statement of using atomic power for peaceful purposes has never convinced me. Interestingly enough such protests by people who have neither political nor money power can yet have some positive results. In the case of atomic power projects, it has at least made the powers-be defensive and hopefully they will take stringent precautions against accidents and terrorist threats. This is a very positive case of collective humanity in action. It could be no more than “a press of uncertain powers and drifting wills”. Yet, when there is concerted, united, pressing action, the evil has to scatter and make way for the descent of Truth.

Savitri gives a bright indication of how to retain one's faith when caught in this moment of Time. Do I dare to hope? Is failure inevitable? Was creation a big lie? The despair of one who never had the courage to retain faith is touched upon by T.S. Eliot:

“Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden.” .

Savitri had taken the passage. She had opened the door. And she had successfully negotiated into the new life with the help of a time-tested instrument.

“Out of the dreadful press she dragged her will
And fixed her thought upon the saviour Name;
Then all grew still and empty; she was free.
A large deliverance came, a vast calm space.”

For us too the saviour Name will be the constant guardian. In the meantime we will contemplate on the thousands of aspirant communities throughout the world trying to build the next future and invoking the descent of Light in their own individual ways. The Tamil adage says: They who have faith in the Divine are never destroyed, such is the assurance of the Four Scriptures. Meanwhile let us turn to the Sun of Knowledge with hope and cheer, and struggle forward to usher in the Life Divine.

The New Year message for this year has been the one issued by the Mother on 31 December 1971 on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's centenary. She had told us:

“To understand his (Sri Aurobindo's) teaching better and try to put it into practice, is certainly the best way of showing our gratitude to him for all the light, knowledge and force which he has so generously brought to the earth.

May his teaching enlighten and guide us, and what we cannot do today, we shall do tomorrow.

Let us take the right attitude in all sincerity, and it will truly be a Bonne Annee.”

A sterling message of self-confidence. Fifty years ago, on a grey day when I was in a moment of deep despair, my father opened his poetry book at one page and left it with me to read by myself.

“Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

Democracy is always a beckoning goal, not a safe harbor. For freedom is an unremitting endeavour, never a final achievement.

Justice Frankfurter

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
 It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd
 Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
 And, but for you, possess the field.
 For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,
 Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.
 And not by eastern windows only,
 When daylight comes, comes in the light;
 In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
 But westward, look, the land is bright!"

That was nearly five decades ago. The poem has remained a mantra to overcome all my failures, disappointments, dejections and frustrations. When we draw close to the end of Savitri is it only Savitri, Satyavan, his parents and the other inmates of the hermitage walking in the forest at night? No! We are all walking in that forest with them, right now:

"Then while they skirted yet the southward verge,
 Lost in the halo of her musing brows
 Night, splendid with the moon dreaming in heaven
 In silver peace, possessed her luminous reign.
 She brooded through her stillness on a thought
 Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,
 And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn".

(Concluded)

* * *

Counter-Disaster Staff Training

Domain Specialist: Disaster Risk Reduction

Dr. K. R. Sastry

Consultant, Disaster Management

In Introduction

In brief, disaster management is an important issue in the development realm. Development is a complex phenomenon and can perhaps be equated with economic growth. In India's developmental

trajectory, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), meaning fostering risk mitigation, must help bolster resilience of communities to face calamities with equanimity. Also, disaster mitigation planning will have to be taken up alongside environment and development concerns. It has been realized that disasters erode developmental gains when they are not adequately protected. In fact, it has been observed that disasters and socio-economic development are closely connected; and, the gains of development are envisaged to addressing disaster risks; but there is also a possibility for the turn around to take place. Investments in disaster reduction normally signalize huge savings in terms of unwarranted losses and restoration costs. DRR is, thus, a means of reducing the costs of poverty alleviation and of addressing the underlying risk features. This means that the real cost of addressing the underlying risk drivers is actually less, if DRR is incorporated into development. Over all, the new paradigm shift with regard to disaster reduction signifies that development cannot be sustained unless disaster mitigation is built into the development process. It also emanates from the conviction that investments in mitigation are much more cost effective than spending unnecessarily on the relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation measures.

It was resolved at the Sendai Conference, held in Japan, on 18 March 2015 to firm up a new global agenda, which became popular as Sendai Framework (SF) for a re-engineered action to shape a more solid and people-centered implementation program for the next 15 years, i.e., till 2030. In essence, the key requirement was to help all the countries to strengthen governance arrangements and improve supervision of investments for addressing the underlying risk factors and ensure that DRR is incorporated into every investment, for example, creation and maintenance of critical infrastructure. The Sendai Report of 2012 argues that the "practice of DRR is a defining characteristic of resilient societies, and should therefore be integrated—or-'mainstreamed'—into all aspects of development." To attain socio-economic transformation of India, role of capacity building in realizing DRR should not be undermined. One of the ways to realize this vision is by organizing uninterrupted realistic training programs for DRR personnel belonging to all the development

The Russian people are Tsarist. The people need a Tsar, whom they can worship.

Stalin

ministries/departments in the Government. More to the point, Climate Change (henceforth, CC) continues to rise on the schema of practitioners and policy people obsessed with the mounting evidence that it is real, observable, and threatening to undermine the fruits of development.

The findings of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNIPCC) were approved by the national academies of science of all the G-8 Nations consisting of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US, Canada, and Russia—as well as those of China, India and Brazil. Many more think that CC has a direct impact on the prevalence and gravity of disasters in addition to causing them more frequently. As a result, there have been growing efforts to mainstreaming DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) both in precept and practice into development. Accordingly, a comprehensive training apropos linking DRR and CCA into development plans should be taken up, to facilitate addressing these intertwined concerns. A spurt in the intensity of natural disasters with increasing frequency and tenacity, induced by man's dalliance with nature; and, the associated activity and attendant losses subsuming financial overheads is mounting pressure on the need for improved approaches, procedures, skills and tools to evaluate and alleviate disaster risks.

India is vulnerable to a large number of natural and man-made disasters. According to the Global Assessment Report of the United Nations Office for International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), India loses \$ 9 Billion every year due to disasters as its 58.6% land mass is prone to earthquake of moderate to very high intensity; over 40 million hectares (12%) of land is prone to floods and river erosion; and, of the 7,516 km long coastline, close to 5,700 km is prone to cyclones and Tsunamis. Over 68% of the arable area is prone to drought; while the hilly areas are at risk of landslides and avalanches. Vulnerability to disasters of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) origin does subsist. Emergencies, mainly those that occur in nature, might become cataclysmic events, when they join with vulnerability factors like where settlements are allowed to make and creating serious situations for

population density.

Consequently, DRR aims at minimizing disaster losses in the short-term and bring into being some attainable measures like capacity building of public, private and community organizations, besides strengthening their institutional competencies, as for instance, coping mechanisms; and, as a result making the community more resilient to face disasters with composure and to effectively manage new challenges. One ought to be aware of the massive impact the CC is encompassing on weather patterns, hydro-meteorological incidents and the frequency, intensity and unpredictability coupled with events of natural hazards. Without alleviation, these calamities will leave communities and countries more susceptible to devastation. As a result, mitigation measures should involve both structural and non-structural measures, in which counter-disaster staff training becomes vital.

Disaster Risk Reduction & Climate Change Adaptation: Twin national concerns

Undeniably, global climate change accelerates degradation of ecosystems and increase in disaster risks owing to rising severe weather-related risks: heat and cold waves, landslides, floods, drought, etc. In contrast, healthy, well-managed ecosystems are more vigorous against vulnerabilities within the critical sectors encompassing agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, water, forestry and health. A holistic approach to restore degraded environments to attain durable livelihoods through DRR and CCA is the sine-qua-non. Every effective development and planning process requires taking CCA on board. Alternatively, adaptation efforts themselves will often require several different kinds of interventions including creation of awareness among the communities to succeed. So, a comprehensive training program apropos mainstreaming DRR and CCA into development plans should be taken up to facilitate addressing these twin but entangled concerns for all the stakeholders, especially, the Government Officials, elected representatives (ERs) and the civil society organizations (CSOs)—NGOs and CBOs.

Probably, DRR and CCA are integrated to some extent at the apex level due to India's commitment

The prostate gland is one of nature's architectural errors.

A medical journal

toward Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA: 2005-15) and the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC-2008). Besides, a range of sector-wise subjects like water supply, health, agriculture, rural development, urban development, etc., embrace activities that could handle CC and disaster resilience. In contrast, when execution of these schemes is examined at the national, state, district and local levels, it is evident that no attempt was made to integrate DRR and CCA features into the sector-wise agenda of various ministries and departments. Such omissions weaken the facility to interpret DRR or CCA policies into action plans at the cutting edge level. This is where capacity development of Government staff engaged in planning and execution of developmental activities comes in handy. Making them conscious of the advantages of mainstreaming DRR and CCA into development planning will go far afield.

Thrust and Strategy

It was observed that the absence of coordinated emergency response amid national, state and district levels is a major issue to attend to. For example, it is vital that the District Planning Committee (DPC) (buttressed by the Constitution 74th Amendment), be trained on mainstreaming DRR and CCA, since it plays a crucial role in identifying mitigation activities for various disaster-prone regions in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This needs inclusion of DRR and CCA experts in program review committees to help the DPCs to appreciate the knowledge gaps with regard to precept and practice.

It follows that a comprehensive disaster reduction strategy ought to include coordinated and defined roles and responsibilities of officials; state and local governments, including Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to implement a timely response to emergencies; and, mainstreaming of local communities into an effective disaster reduction apparatus. In this task, the District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) play a pivotal role as they represent a potential entry point for integration of DRR and CCA concerns into development. Also, it may be stressed that DDMAs are district level organizations with a robust presence

across the country, where all the development departments join forces, and offer a unique platform for integration of DRR and CCA concerns into District Disaster Management Plans.

The prime driving force for disaster reduction is to outline a course of action besides constructing an edifice for synchronized and efficient mainstreaming of DRR into development plans, delivery of adequate assistance, and addressing the consequences of various calamities with appropriate alleviating measures, as enjoined by the Disaster Management Act of 2005. Also, one can even perceive the emphasis of the Disaster Management Act (especially, Section -11-B) on mainstreaming DRR. A comprehensive disaster reduction strategy would include coordinated and clear-cut roles and responsibilities, capacity of national, state and local governments to implement a timely response to disasters and integration of local level communities into effective disaster management systems. Improving the capacity of DDMAs toward integration of DRR and CCA concerns represents a potential entry point to address the gaps in implementation.

Engendering “political will” with raising public responsiveness apropos the nature and value of mainstreaming DRR and CCA is one of the important issues now. This would make clear the issues of governance and “political commitment” to the elected representatives (ERs) like MPs, MLAs and elected leaders of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The strategy currently adopted is developing trainers by organizing Training of Trainers (ToT) programs for staff of training institutions, which in turn, help prepare the Government personnel for public service. Concepts of DRR and CCA should be inculcated in unison with mandatory training during the initial years of officers’ grounding by the training institutions. The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs), like AP HRD Institute, Bapatla, State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs), etc., across the country should conduct refresher courses from time-to-time. Help from various sources having considerable knowledge on calamities vis-à-vis management of environment, now labeled Climate Change Adaptation and DRR in

Doctor is one on whom we set our hopes when ill and our dogs when well.

preparedness planning is the sine-qua-non. This could be launched at the State, District, Block, Village and Community levels. The number of target groups could be larger as it includes officials of all government departments, legislative elites like MPs, MLAs, elected representatives of PRIs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), namely, NGOs and CBOs.

Disaster Reduction Training

(a) **Need for Training of Personnel:** In India, certain types of disasters are recurrent in certain areas and their vulnerability could be estimated well in advance. Specific measures, i.e., action plans of long-term and short-term natures could be prepared and implemented to lessen the ill-effects in potentially disaster-prone areas. In the process, there is a dire need to look at the contemporary DRR measures and review the existing and long-term development policies; and counter-disaster and CCA training for personnel is one of the strategies envisaged in this regard. Training programs ought to cover areas affected by a variety of calamities, i.e., cyclone, earthquake, flood and drought by bringing awareness among various stakeholders like officials, non-officials, civil society, corporate bodies, community, etc., in relation to ways of improving the situation, in the context of mainstreaming DRR and CCA with Sustainable Development.

(b) **Objectives of Personnel Training:** The process of analyzing disaster threats and reduction of the likely consequences to society, the economy and critical infrastructure, has been undertaken in order to identify the tasks that would crop up in meeting the needs of the situation every time a disaster strikes. Responsibilities for meeting those tasks should be fixed; also, the variety of disaster preparedness measures necessary should be listed. On the road to participative planning, all those with responsibilities in planning are to be involved in disaster reduction and preparedness. In this context, data collection, data mining along with creation and maintenance of management information systems (MIS) turn out to be the outcome.

According to G. N Ritchie, logistics planning and resources management, establishing connects between relief and preparedness as well as post-

disaster recovery in addition to ongoing DRR and development processes need to be organized. Public education and information programs are intended to increase community awareness and commitment to preparedness besides creating attitudes of self-help as opposed to dependence, by drawing mostly on the traditional local knowledge and experiences they internalize, nurture and own eventually. Training should repeatedly upgrade the staff skills by increasing its capacity to rescue, recover and manage shelters as well as maintaining good sanitation and hygiene. In this task, Government must support CSOs, Public and Private Partnerships (PPPs), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)--perceived to be the main theme for special consideration of the Union Government, to ensure effective environmental conservation in both urban and rural settings.

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BRICS Second Decade: Addressing Challenges of Demographics Transformations and Digital Technologies

Dr. MV.Lakshmi

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1. Introducing BRICS:

BRICS the five member grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, a unique grouping, enters the Second Decade. It would be rather intriguing how and why these 5 countries could form a grouping. It's unconventional because groupings are generally formed based on geographic proximity. It would be interesting here to note that the acronym BRICS was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper, "The World Needs Better BRICs". It was stated, that four large emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India and China would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and would be amongst the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so. The reach and spread of the BRICS is amazing, as it encompasses Latin America, Asia, Eurasia, and Africa.

This acronym could be an influencing factor, after a few informal discussions, the grouping was formed

After Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi was the most powerful woman of the twentieth century.

Sunil Khilnani

and the 1st BRICS (four members) Summit was held in Yekaterinburg Russia on 16th June 2009. South Africa was the fifth member to join the BRICS in 2011. Ten Summits were held from 2009 to 2018. This marks a Decade of the BRICS journey.

2. The first decade of BRICS

BRICS' first decade saw each of the member country, laying down groundwork for cooperation, from identifying areas of convergence on political issues to improving economic ties. The continuous interaction and engagement between, at various levels, ranging from high-level summit and ministerial meetings to various working groups and conferences, has also deepened over this span of 10 years. People to people connections have also started, leading to a better understanding of the BRICS nations' cultural diversity. In particular sports events of BRICS nations, enabled millennial generation, to have fun. And also to engage with people, representing 4 major continents, with diverse cultures. There is a degree of cooperation on issues such as trade, infrastructure, finance, urbanization and climate change. And a convergence of interests in working through multilateral organisations like the United Nations and WTO. Other Platforms like the BRICS Academic Forum and Business Council have enabled understanding of each other's industry, academia and government.

BRICS gained prominence during the first decade of 21st century due to several factors in the global environment. The great economic crisis has left the advanced economies slow down. It was the BRICS countries, in particular China and India were doing well in terms of GDP growth with around 7.5. Essentially the interest in BRICS, and the most important fact of BRICS being a factor to reckon with, is its demography comprising 43% of the world population and within this, two countries India and China have 1 billion plus each. Demography refers to the population size and age cohorts which has different implications for business, government and society. BRICS countries, in particular, China and India were a global attraction, because of huge

middle class population with buying power and were viewed as the biggest consumer market. China with the largest population in the world became a low cost manufacturing hub and was called "the factory of the world". India, with the second largest population of a billion plus, has a large middle class in economic terms consumers. India's leadership was also seen in the IT sector, and was called the "back office of the world". Brazil and Russia were reaping the benefits of the commodity boom in China and India. So these countries saw sustainable GDP growth rates while the advanced industrial countries have slowed down during the economic crisis.

3. BRICS Second Decade: Unfolding Challenge

Changing BRICS Demographics: BRICS in the second decade is in testing times as new challenges are unfolding. The changing demographic profile shows two BRICS countries - India and South Africa still have the demographic dividend. But then the big question – Is India ready to utilize the demographic dividend? The dividend is not automatic. The fast emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution or what is called Industry 4.0 combined with digital technologies that many experts term as "disruptive" pose challenges to India in particular. With the rapid pace of change in the world of work, traditional employment skills cannot fetch jobs. So there is a sense of urgency to provide employability skills for a large number of youth, in a time bound manner to reap the benefits.

Demographic Dividend explained: We can draw some interesting insights from a lecture by Senior Economist at the World Bank, Philip Schellekens on the world demographic trends, for instance one important observation he makes is a rise of Sub Saharan Africa, that could account for more than half of the global population growth between now and 2050. He further explains that the working-age population is in decline across the world, excepting Sub-Saharan Africa.

Countries with young demographics will experience two different types of demographic dividends. First, when there is temporary boost in the share of the working age population, there are fewer dependents who tend to benefit people as a whole

Political freedom is not worth a great deal if one can't free oneself from mental bondage.

Rabindranath Tagore

through the labour supply (China enjoyed this phase earlier). Authoritarian China was able to become the factory of the world. Also more working age population means increase in savings which helps in investments that boost growth. But today the global demographic trends have changed.

Schellekens second part of the lecture was focused on BRICS countries. He classifies world demography into four different types of countries

1. Pre-Dividend countries are all located in Sub Saharan Africa (or those with high fertility and low life expectancy)

2. Early-dividend or those with declining fertility while maintaining growth of the working age population (India and South Africa)

3. Late Dividend or those with declining fertility and life expectancy is increasing (Brazil, China, Russia)

4. Post-dividend or those with aging population, essentially the high-income countries like Japan and Western Europe.

India in particular is at a critical inflection point with the largest young population, and whether India will make the best of young India to convert the demographics into a dividend or as a lost opportunity only time will decide.

4.The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Emerging Digital Technologies

The concept of Industry 4.0: The idea of Industry 4.0 was officially presented during the Hannover Fair in April 2013 by Germany. The idea immediately caught the attention of every industrialized society. For entrepreneurs and people in the private sector, they saw in this concept a revolutionary change transforming manufacturing sector. And the governments of the advanced economies saw an opportunity to stimulate their sluggish economies. Industry 4.0 is very different from the first three industrial revolutions, which were essentially driven by one specific discovery or breakthrough. Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum, described that Industry 4.0 is based on “combination of Technologies”. 4IR (the Fourth Industrial Revolution) as it is popularly called

today is characterised by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres.

10th BRICS Summit – Industry 4.0 and Digital Transformation: The theme for the 10th BRICS Summit 2018, (held in Johannesburg, South Africa from July 25 to 27) is “BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution.”

10th BRICS Summit conceived Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) with an aim at deepening BRICS cooperation in digitalisation, industrialisation, innovation, inclusiveness and investment, to maximise the opportunities and address the challenges that are unfolding from the 4th Industrial Revolution. Additionally the BRICS countries were forthcoming and expressed the role played by the internet in promoting economic, social and cultural development, strongly acknowledged that skills development is critical in the increasing technology and knowledge driven global economies and the older skills set of many workers. Also at the 10th BRICS Summit member countries acknowledged the “importance of infrastructure development and connectivity and also recognise the strides made by African Union to identify and address the continent’s infrastructure challenges through NEPAD. A Digital Economy Working Group within the framework of the BRICS Business Council was also established. Another important issue at the 10th Summit, the BRICS countries have identified corruption as a global challenge and agreed to share experiences to increase mutual understanding and strengthen anti-corruption cooperation.

BRICS countries in CPI Ranking: It is disheartening to note the CPI (Corruption Perception Index) ranking given by the Transparency International for the year 2017. Amongst the BRICS countries, South Africa is the least corrupt with a ranking of 71, followed by China at 77, India 81, Brazil 96, and Russia 135, scored the most corrupt. Freedom of expression is vital for exposing corruption and injustices that it causes.

‘Freedom from fear’ could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights.

Dag Hammarskjold

Nature of Digital Economies: The World Investment Report 2017 shows that the digital economy is fundamentally changing the way firms produce and market goods and services across borders. Digital economy is just not about the technology sector but about the digitization of supply chains across the sectors of the global economy. Hence, it is important for every country to develop domestic digital capacities. Policy makers around the world are grappling with the implications of digitalization, the impact of internet in economic interactions (e-commerce) to the use of new technologies in everyday life (e-health, e-education, internet of things); to adoption of digital technologies in business (robotics and big data) that are key drivers of the Industry 4.0. The digital economy further has major implications for government policy making, like data protection, internet governance and cyber security to tackle broader issues that could affect employment, equality, competition and tax systems.

Among the BRICS economies, India ranks lowest on information and communication technology development. However, India has successfully been able to launch many unique digital initiatives in the last few years. India has the world's largest national digital identification programme "Aadhaar". Launched less than a decade ago, It has already completed enrolment of one billion residents and have made use of cloud technology to allocate a unique 12-digit identification number to each person based on their demographic and biometric information. It is emerging as an important platform for linking individuals' banking transactions, utility bills, and physical address etc.

Similarly, India has taken several initiatives like Digital India, Make in India, Skill India and nurturing a start-up ecosystem encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. The Digital India programme, for instance, brought internet connectivity to 2,50,000 gram panchayats (village councils) in rural India by laying optical fibres across the country. Some of the state governments too are using Digital technology and leading in E-Government, Andhra Pradesh is one such example. The National Skill Development Policy and the recently developed National Skills

Qualification Framework are the initiatives taken by the government of India.

5. Conclusion:

While we can appreciate the BRICS countries for their accomplishments during the first decade, it must be acknowledged that some of the member countries have a long way to go to reap the benefits of Industry 4.0 and digital technologies. With very low ranking (as some of the most corrupt are from the BRICS), it is needless to say that there are imminent threats of cyber crimes, and digital frauds leading to trust deficit. The success of digital technologies will depend on the countries governance institutions. Responsible government is the enabler and facilitator. Today we have enormous opportunities, provided the government engages with all the stakeholders with democratic freedom. It is disturbing to note India's ranking on the CPI at 81. It is pertinent to observe here that Corruption Perception Index "CPI results correlate with the attacks on press freedom and the reduction of space for civil society organisations. In fact, what is at stake is the very essence of democracy and freedom". Delia Ferreira Rubio Chair Transparency International.

Business and government exist for society and not the other way around. Millennials are key drivers of the innovation and entrepreneurship driven digital ecosystem for human security, well being and happiness, in a sustainable environment. Young India is watching the government to see what it makes of the much talked about demographic dividend.

* * *

Book Review :

THE BILLIONAIRE RAJ

JAMES CRABTREE

(Published by HarperCollins Publishers India, 2018, Pg.358, Price Rs.799.00)

The Billionaire Raj by James Crabtree has come not a day too soon. It has arrived with a bang, richly deserving the high praise being showered on it. The 358 page long work on India's transition from a

Democracy has many virtues, but one of its concomitants is wastage of time and energy.

Jawaharlal Nehru

‘Licence Raj’ to ‘Billionaire Raj’ focuses on ‘three critical elements in India’s recent history – the rise of the super-rich, crony capitalism and the boom and bust cycle of India’s industrial economy’, a consequence of the two. Crabtree, the former Mumbai Chief of Bureau of Financial Times, now teaching in Singapore, has divided the work into three main parts – the first titled Tycoons, the second India Modified and the third The New Gilded Age.

James Crabtree begins his narrative with Mahatma Gandhi’s warning of 1916 that India faced a pernicious new kind of commercialism which ‘a century later seemed prescient.’ Said Gandhiji ‘Western nations are groaning today under the heel of the monster god materialism,’ he told students at a college in the heartland state of Uttar Pradesh. ‘Many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth, but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure.’

Friedrich Nietzsche’s famous words come to mind as one goes through the narrative: ‘What is to be feared is not the immorality of the great, but that immorality can lead to greatness’. Flamboyant buccaneers and ‘fat tycoons’ have captured the corridors of power aided by power hungry politicians and pliable bureaucrats. Crabtree exposes their misdeeds with information gathered with meticulous care from reliable sources. “Three factors – land, natural resources, and government contracts or licences – are the predominant sources of the wealth of our billionaires. The numbers are alarming – too many people have gotten too rich based on their proximity to the government,” writes Crabtree. Referring to the rise of bollygarchs, the author quotes Raghuram Rajan who asked: “If Russia is an oligarchy, how long can we resist calling India one?”

India Modified, the second part of the book, deals with scams, cronyism, middlemen and money power politics after the 2014 general elections. Narendra Modi’s ascent to the high office of the prime minister of India is interestingly presented. ‘He was an outsider, demonized by the intelligentsia, with a central government arrayed against him. But he has

broken through and will now produce the biggest churning that India’s power structure has seen since Independence,’ writes the author. Quite shrewdly Modi captured the ‘mood of anger and dissatisfaction’ of the people, especially the middle classes and understood their aspirations such as ‘a job with a salary, a reasonable school for children, and the chance to buy a motorcycle, or perhaps even a car.’ In the chapter on ‘Cronyism Goes South’, Crabtree refers to the nexus between politics and business in the southern states. He rates Andhra Pradesh as the second most corrupt among the five southern states and writes on Andhra oligarchs and the wealthy ‘Andhrapreneurs’ – the new class of carpetbagging but hugely risk-taking Telugu infrastructure entrepreneurs’.

The New Gilded Age, the third part of the book, brings into focus a medley of different role players and stakeholders including ‘the big fat tycoons, the media led by sensational muckrakers and the BCCI.’ Politicians and political parties are almost alike in their style of functioning and pursuit of power, having almost discarded ideology and idealism. Between the Congress and the BJP there is little to choose as observed by Mukul Kesavan that “the Congress is opportunistically communal while the BJP is ideologically communal”. After seventy years of independence and ‘successfully conducting sixteen general elections, besides hundreds of other elections India remains a flawed democracy. Crabtree quotes Ramachandra Guha who has called ‘India an ‘election only’ democracy, meaning that the majestic spectacle of its elections hides a less impressive reality in the years in between.’ The failures on the social and economic front are no less disturbing as evidenced by the disparities between the super rich and growing number of poor people. “India’s top 10% of earners take 55% of all national income – the highest rate for any large country. The main danger with extreme inequality is that if you don’t solve this through peaceful and democratic institutions then it will be solved in other ways....and that’s extremely frightening,” he warns. According to Thomas Piketty ‘the share of national income taken by India’s top one per cent was at its highest level since records began to be collected under the British Raj in 1922.’

Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that creates huge inequalities.

Pope Francis

Beneath James Crabtree's emphatic indictment of India's rulers and hijackers of democratic values, there is an undercurrent of empathy for and hope in India's resilience and capacity to regain her stature as 'a role model' democracy. He suggests that 'India 'must chart' a hybrid economic model of its own as India is the world's largest emerging market, a fact that should continue to attract investment from abroad, fully utilizing the untapped potential of India's people. India now stands at the threshold of the kind of superpower status it will eventually achieve. As democracy falters in the West, so its future in India has never been more critical. India's ambition to lead the second half of the Asian century – and the world's hopes for a more democratic, liberal future – depend on getting this transition right.' James Crabtree's book deserves to be read by all, especially by those engaged in the task of rebuilding India.

A. Prasanna Kumar

"Acceptance of new ideas key to harmony"

(Newspaper report on D.Ch.Tirupathi Raju Memorial Lecture delivered by Shri K.Durga Prasad, IPS (Retd) on 'Tradition and Modernity' on November 28, 2018 organized by Centre for Policy Studies)

The conflicts between tradition and modernity should be resolved in a subtle way by making a compromise, without discarding the former and resisting the latter. Acceptance of new ideas is the key to a harmonious society, said K.Durga Prasad, CRPF former Director-General and advisor to Home Department.

Delivering the D.Ch.TirupathiRaju memorial lecture organised by the Centre for Policy Studies at Visakhapatnam Public Library on Wednesday, he narrated how people were making use of modern technology in daily-to-day life.

Tradition

"We are modernising traditional practices to suit our convenience and vice-versa," he said.

Welcoming the chief guest and the audience, Dr.Perala Balamuralikrishna recalled the services rendered by late D.Ch.TirupathiRaju. Quoting Dr.SarvepalliRadhakrishnan, Centre for Policy Studies president A.Prasanna Kumar said, "It takes centuries to make history and centuries of history to make a tradition."

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*, November 29, 2018)

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