

INDIA'S CHINA DILEMMA

Recent reforms have potential. India must decide how to acquire effective military capabilities in a post-Covid world.

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The sudden and tragic loss of 20 Indian army personnel in a treacherous ambush by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), in Ladakh's Galwan valley has caused deep public anguish and anger, mollified, only partially, by the swift retribution visited on the assailants by our gallant jawans. Equally exasperating, for the public, has been the cavalier inconsistency of statements emanating from government sources in New Delhi on a matter of grave national importance; especially, since the contradictions have given comfort to the adversary and caused confusion at home.

Given that the Sino-Indian territorial dispute has been festering since the late 1950s, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the current lack of clarity amongst our decision-makers is rooted in incomprehension of the long-term strategic aims and objectives that underpin China's belligerent conduct. This is hardly a surprise, considering that we have failed to devote adequate intellectual capital, intelligence resources and political attention to acquisition of a clear insight into China and its motivations. Even when intelligence is available, analysis and dissemination have fallen short.

Consequently, it would seem that, from Nehru's naïve hopes, encapsulated in the "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai" mantra, to PM Modi's prolonged courtship of Xi Jinping, India has been groping in the dark, while grossly misreading China's real intent. As we watch Beijing's sinister border strategy unfold, the absence of a matching counter on India's part becomes painfully obvious.

Indians, as devotees of chess or 'shatranj', have been thinking in terms of striking blows, fighting pitched battles and finally checkmating the opponent. A similar Chinese board game, 'wei qui', is described, thus, by

Henry Kissinger: "If chess is about decisive battle, wei qui is about a protracted campaign and 'strategic encirclement' where opponents seek to occupy empty spaces and then surround and capture opposing pieces. While chess encourages single-mindedness, wei-qui generates guile and strategic flexibility."

Since 1995, China has been issuing a defence white paper (DWP) every two years or so. These thematic public documents articulate China's national security aims, objectives and vital interests and also address the 'ends-ways-means' issues related to its armed forces. The 11 DWPs issued so far, are a model of clarity and vision – and provide many clues to current developments. It is a measure of our complacency and indifference towards national security that no Indian government, since independence, has deemed it necessary to issue a defence white paper, order a defence review or publish a national security strategy. Had we done so, it may have prepared us for the unexpected and brought order and alacrity to our crisis-response.

Historically, China is heir to an ancient system, based, not on sovereign equality of states, but on the divine and boundless reach and authority of the Chinese Emperor. Even in current discourse there are enough pointers to show that an ascendant China, sees itself on track to realizing its 'strong nation dream', of becoming the world's No.1 power by surpassing and then replacing the US. A part of the 'China dream' is the establishment of a 'unified global system', or empire, termed tianxia ('all under heaven' in Mandarin). Translating its enormous economic gains into coercive military power, China expects neighbouring nations to submit to its hegemony.

In order to show India its place, China had administered it a 'lesson' in 1962, and may, perhaps, be contemplating another one in 2020, with the objective of preventing the rise of a peer competitor. For China, the 'line of actual control' or LAC, representing an unsettled border, provides strategic leverage to keep India on tenterhooks about its next move while repeatedly exposing the latter's vulnerabilities.

India's strength has been twofold; her own innate culture which flowered through the ages, and her capacity to draw from other sources and thus add to her own.

Jawaharlal Nehru

There is probably no other instance, world-wide where two antagonistic neighbours have left such a long border, un-determined, unmarked and unresolved for so long. Our diplomats derive considerable satisfaction from the 1993 Border Peace & Tranquility Agreement, which, according to former Foreign Secretary, Shivshankar Menon, "...effectively delinked settlement of the boundary from the rest of the relationship." But to a layman, it appears that by failing to use available leverage, for 27-years, and not insisting on bilateral exchange of LAC maps, we have created a ticking time-bomb; with the trigger in China's hands. While 'disengagement' may soon take place between troops in contact, it is most unlikely that the PLA will pull back or vacate any occupied position in Ladakh or elsewhere; in which case, India needs to consider a three-pronged strategy.

At ground-level, we need to visibly reinforce our positions, and move forward to the LA Call along, enhancing the operational-tempo of the three services as a measure of deterrence. Indian warships should show heightened presence at Indian Ocean choke-points. Cyber emergency response teams, countrywide should remain on high alert. While building-up stocks of weapons, ammunition and spares, the MoD should seize this opportunity to urgently launch some long-term 'atma-nirbharta' schemes in defence-production.

At the strategic level, the government must moot a sustained process of engagement with China at the highest politico-diplomatic echelons. The negotiations should seek multi-dimensional Sino-Indian modus-vivendi; encompassing the full gamut of bilateral issues like trade, territorial disputes, border-management and security. Simultaneously, at the grand-strategic level, India, should initiate a dialogue for the formation of an 'Indo-Pacific Concord for Peace and Tranquility,' inviting four members of the Quad as well as Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia.

Finally, in 1962, India's Parliament, had expressed, "the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India," a resolution

interpreted as a pledge for the restoration of Aksai Chin. As a nation, we need to be pragmatic enough to realize that neither conquest, nor re-conquest of territory is possible in the 21st century. Parliament should, now, resolve to ask the government, "To establish with utmost urgency, stable, viable and peaceful national boundaries, all around, so that India can proceed, unhindered, with the vital tasks of nation-building and socio-economic development."

(Courtesy: *The Indian Express*, July 27, 2020)

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India-China relations post-Galwan

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India and China have experienced one of the most tense and challenging phases in their uneasy and troubled bilateral relationship. In mid-June in the Galwan valley of eastern Ladakh, the Indian military lost 20 lives—including that of a Colonel—at the hands of personnel from the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Indian soldiers were reportedly attacked with rudimentary weapons such as nail-embedded sticks, stones and knuckle-dusters.

While the loss of life has outraged India, there has been no official confirmation of the losses sustained by the PLA. The situation along the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC) has become even more tangled with PLA troops moving into locations in Ladakh hitherto not claimed by Beijing. India's preoccupation with the Covid-19 pandemic and its thin tactical presence in Ladakh seems to have presented an opportunity that the PLA exploited.

The anger and dismay in India stems from the fact that although the two countries have a complex dispute over territory that stretches almost 3,800 km from India's extreme northeast region encompassing the state of Arunachal Pradesh all the way to Ladakh (which resulted in war in October 1962), the 1993 agreement between the two had ensured that peace and tranquillity prevailed along the LAC. As a result, despite the two armies being

in proximate contact and engaging in regular patrolling along the LAC, not a shot had been fired in anger since 1993. This was breached in Galwan in June 2020, and while technically no shot was fired, the tragic loss of life has led to an erosion of trust towards China. This, in my view, will have long term consequences not just for India's bilateral relations with China, but also its ties with other Asian countries who all have varying degrees of engagement with Beijing.

Even after the incident at Galwan, there remained considerable anxiety over the potential for military escalation due to continued transgressions across the LAC. A surprise visit by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ladakh on July 3 added to the speculation that a limited conflict could ensue. However, a high-level telephone conversation between the Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on July 5 led to a lowering of the temperature, and both sides agreed to a gradual process of disengagement.

While India is seeking a return to the April status quo—that is, the situation on the LAC prior to the first PLA incursions in eastern Ladakh—Beijing's commitment to the July 5 agreement remains unclear. Thus, the situation along the LAC in the near future is likely to be a continuation of the prickly stand-off, with the two opposing security forces monitoring each other's movement and fortifications from a distance of a few kilometres.

As a result of the Doval-Wang talks, a temporary buffer-zone is envisaged. This is likely to add a new element to the management of the long festering territorial dispute. It could morph into a new and slippery formulation, given that since 1993, India and China have been operating within the framework of an LAC, with each side holding different views of where the line actually lay and periodically conducting patrols along their own versions of the border.

The establishment of buffer zones is not without its problems. In creating a buffer zone and agreeing to no patrolling, the possibility of new pockets of no-man's land appearing in other contested sectors of the border increases. While a line is one-dimensional, a zone is two-dimensional, with both length and breadth, and

may therefore widen the quantum of disagreement. On the Indian side, there is worry that creating buffer zones may mean that territory hitherto claimed by India will permanently become a zone of disengagement with no clear ownership. Full details have not been released, but Indian commentators have noted that while the PLA has agreed to move back in sectors such as Galwan, it continues to remain in other areas along Pangong Lake and the Depsang plain. Moreover, criticisms have begun to surface over how the buffer zones have been demarcated, with a recent editorial in the *Indian Business Standard* noting that the zones “should have been carved equally from Indian-claimed and China-claimed territory.”

These issues raise questions about whether the ‘buffer zone’ formulation can truly pave the way for a peaceful long-term *modus-vivendi*. China's behaviour elsewhere in its own neighbourhood over territorial issues makes it difficult to be robustly optimistic about Beijing's purportedly ‘peaceful intentions’. China's actions apropos the South China Sea, where it has competing claims with several Southeast Asian states, and its long-standing dispute with Japan over the Senkaku islands, as well as the imposition of an increasingly stringent Chinese legislation in Hong Kong are illustrative of a more assertive attitude.

Paradoxically, the domestic discourse and narrative within the country portrays China as a peaceful nation committed to its own economic development, and also one that is seeking to redress the many wrongs and humiliations it has suffered at the hands of the West. Thus, the latest tensions with India are being ascribed to errors and mistakes made by Delhi while Beijing is portrayed as blame-free.

This self-image is in stark contrast with how others view the creeping assertiveness of China and the flexing of its military muscle. From India's point of view, if China's current orientation is maintained, the much-touted harmonious Asian century could transmute into a sullen and contested Chinese century. The post Galwan stand-off with India could well be a critical litmus test for determining the strategic texture of Asia

(Courtesy: *Centre on Asia and Globalisation*, June 24, 2020 – July 14, 2020)

P.V Narasimha Rao

The Skillful Steersman

A.Prasanna Kumar

“No Chief Minister, being the leader of his state, has so far led the socio-economic revolution and no state administration has so far braced itself to face the challenges of qualitative socio-economic transformation“, said P.V.Narasimha Rao, the 50 year old Congress leader before taking charge as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. A surprise choice for the high office of the Chief Minister, P.V.Narasimha Rao took charge with the conviction that he was ‘a harbinger of the socialist revolution’ that was going to be ushered in under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. P.V. declared at Vijayawada that he “would implement the Congress election manifesto whatever be the consequences”. As Hugh Gray wrote, P.V.’s pronouncements about the strict implementation of the provisions of the Act ‘incensed powerful landed castes’ of the coastal belt and Rayalaseema. It is significant that both the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, D.Sanjeevaiah, the first Dalit leader to become Chief Minister and P.V. who brought in land ceilings legislation did not belong to the ruling castes and both paid heavy price for it.“ P.V. and Sanjeevaiah showed qualities that rank high in the Indian cultural context; learning, gentleness, spirituality,”wrote Bernstorff.

At fifty, P.V. came to be recognized as a poet and scholar endowed with a mastery over several languages, English, Telugu and Hindi in particular. No ordinary achievement in politics that P.V.Narasimha Rao was a legislator for 15 years and a minister of ten years standing having held more than six portfolios, displaying zeal for reform and innovative skill of a high order for a hardly fifty year old politician. He was shrewd enough to bear in mind that if there were seasoned politicians and vastly experienced leaders like Sanjiva Reddy, Brahmananda Reddy and Channa Reddy on the treasury benches there were stalwarts on the other side in the opposition like P.Sundarayya, T.Nagi Reddy, Chandra RajeswaraRao and M.Basavapurnaiah,all Communists,

veteran Gandhians like Vavilala Gopala krishnayya and Tenneti Viswanadham and north Andhra leader Gouthu Latchanna. P.V. benefited from his association with them and earned a reputation for his parliamentary skills and administrative abilities. In an interview with this writer in 1982 M.Chalapathi Rau, former Editor of National Herald, rated P.V.Narasimha Rao as ‘the best parliamentarian of that period’and ‘one of the ablest’ he had seen. P.V. also came in for criticism and even derisive comments for his inability to take quick decisions. Vavilala Gopalakrishnayya, a shrewd opposition leader summed up P.V.’s style of decision making thus: “He used to examine every issue thoroughly, weighing the pros and cons with care. He did take time to come to decision but oftentimes it was the correct decision.” As a minister P.V. made a deep study of the subject assigned to him in both state and national politics. When he was minister for law and jails he brought about reforms in prisons and created the open air jail system in which prisoners were educated through lessons and trained in vocational skills. As religious endowments minister he improved temple administration and won public acclaim for resolving the problem of reconstructing the sanctum sanctorum of the famous Bhadrachalam temple. Following an earthquake, the sanctum sanctorum developed cracks in the structure built by Kancharla Gopanna in the 17th century. The repair work could not be undertaken due to a controversy over its reconstruction. As Religious Endowments Minister P.V.went to Kanchi Mahaswami Sri Chandrasekhara Saraswati Swamigal for guidance and as per the Mahaswami’s advice, the structure was rebuilt as the original designed by Bhakta Ramadas. As education minister P.V. introduced Telugu medium for instruction in intermediate and degree courses in colleges. He established and chaired the Telugu Akademi for the promotion of Telugu language and culture. Elected to Lok Sabha P.V. ably managed different ministries he headed in the Union cabinet including foreign affairs, defense, and HRD. His best was when he chaired committees and conferences at the international fora where he was greatly admired for his erudite presentation of India’s policy.

‘Jawaharlal Nehru and P.V Narasimha Rao did not have much in common except that they both were

intellectuals. Nehru had a temper, PV a temperament 'wrote K. Natwar Singh. There were, however, interesting similarities, between Nehru's successor Lal Bahadur Shastri and P.V. reminding one of K IswaraDutt's tribute to Lal Bahadur Shastri. 'Least demonstrative of politicians his greatest asset is his freedom from pretension. He is conciliatory without being compromising and he can put up a stiff back when he feels he must. His unruffled demeanor, imperturbability and cool brain are precious possessions which any Prime Minister in the world can envy. He has risen to eminence with less self-propulsion or more detachment. He is neither a demagogue nor a doctrinaire...not a daring pilot but a skillful steersman.' Iswara Dutt quotes Barratt's words : 'It is leadership, not of dictators , nor of spellbinders but of those who seek the collaboration of the led . That is what true democratic leadership means and that is what PV's style of leadership, in general, reflected. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's biggest failure was his inability to prevent the destruction of Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. Least charismatic among India's Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao failed to build up a group of trusted loyalists in the Congress party in his long political career. In power or when out of power he revealed occasionally his hidden sense of humour. One such instance was when he cracked a joke at Foreign Secretary Eric Gonsalves and his wife Rose who had a hectic schedule during the visit of Gaston Thorn President of the European Commission. P.V. the then Minister for External Affairs said to Eric Gonsalves : " Eric every day you have 'the Rose' , today you have a 'thorn 'too! Eric might have heartily laughed while PV, as Natwar Singh wrote must have 'smiled without a smile.'

(The writer is one of the authors of the book *P.V.Narasimha Rao Years of Power*, Har Anand, 1993 Ed. Narendra Reddy)

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The P.V. I Knew

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[P.V. Narasimha Rao, or as PV as he is popularly called, is much in the news in the two Telugu States because of the decision of the Telengana government to commemorate the birth centenary of Telengana Bidda. This article recounts my acquaintance with him. Before I begin, I should enter a caveat; my association with him was not as deep and close as that of my friend late P.V.R.K. Prasad who was his Secretary when PV was Chief Minister (CM), and later was his Media Adviser when PV was Prime Minister (PM) , and ran sensitive errands on behalf of PV including liaising with Peetadhipathis in order to resolve the Ramajamabhoomi issue. Those who want an insider view may read Prasad's *Asalemi Jarigintate* (English translation *Wheels behind the veil (CMs, PMs, and beyond)*). An ultimate insider's view is available in PV's autobiographical novel, *The Insider*; this novel covers the period till Anand, PV's alter ego, resigns as CM. PV wanted to write a sequel covering his Delhi career but that was not to be as he passed away before he wrote it].

My acquaintance with PV goes back to 1969 during the 1969 Telengana agitation. In December 1968, I received orders posting me as Sub-Collector, Jagtial in Karimnagar district. Although I grew up in Coastal Andhra, and my knowledge of Telugu language and culture was as good as an 'ethnic' Andhra, I had no idea where Jagtial and Karimnagar were. This ignorance is symptomatic of the fact that, as is said of the United States and Great Britain, Andhra and Telengana are two regions separated by a common language. It was said that during the Telengana agitation in 1969, the agitators would stop buses going towards Vijayawada on the highway from Hyderabad and identify those from the Andhra region by holding a very popular leafy vegetable, and ask the passengers to tell its name: if a passenger said it was Gongura, he was from the Andhra region, and if on the other hand he said it was Puntikurahe was from Telengana! Fifty-eight years after the state of Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956, the two

Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be
increase of sorrow.

Bertrand Russell

regions parted ways with the nullification of the merger of Telangana with the Andhra State. Fifty-eight years of the two regions being together as a single political unit could not dissipate the fog of mutual miscomprehension which envelopes Telugu people ; divided by history, the differences between the two regions, one that was ruled by the Nizam and the other by the British, could not be erased. My grandfather's pronunciation of Jagtial as Jagatthalai (very end of the world in Tamil) seemed a correct characterisation of that remote place. Come to think of it, Jagtial was more connected with Maharashtra than with Coastal Andhra or Rayalaseema. There was a long tradition of migration to Bombay for employment; Brahmins from Dharmapuri and Manthani in Jagtial division are to be found in large numbers in Bombay engaged as priests and cooks. Maharashtra was a marketing outlet for the handloom products produced in the division. Decades later, direct bus services were started between Jagtial and Bombay. A month after I received my posting orders, I travelled to Karimnagar from Machilipatnam by bus after locating it in a map and making elaborate inquiries about travelling to that place. Come Warangal, my bus ran to a huge rally demanding the formation of a separate Telengana state, a foretaste of what was in store for me in my new station; the Telengana agitation loomed large over my two-year odd stay in Jagtial. It took a long long while for my bus to move out of Warangal, for though a big town it is a one street town sprawling like a thin ribbon along the highway from Hyderabad to Vijayawada, and a huge rally like the one I saw could choke the highway.

I was expected to understudy the Revenue Divisional Officer for a month and then take over as Sub-Collector. However, hardly had I landed when I was directed to move Godavarikhani, a colliery town, to liaise with the army which was called in to assist the administration to restore order as there were many violent incidents of violence and arson, and the police lost control of the situation. My counterpart was an equally callow youth, a second lieutenant who was commissioned just a year ago. Mercifully, order was restored the moment the army contingent arrived, and I spent the next three days patrolling the sprawling mining town along with the lieutenant. In an introspective mood, I wondered often how I would have acted if there were incidents. Would

I have acted as a balancing force tempering the natural inclination of the army 'to shoot first and ask questions later'? I am not sure I would have; it was more likely that I would have reinforced the impetuosity of the young lieutenant. A few days later I met P V Narasimha Rao who was then a junior minister of state in charge of law and endowment. Who would have thought that just in two and half years he would be Chief Minister? Whatever, come to think of it, it was only decades later that I had official interaction with him when I was in the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD, Department of Education) and he was Prime Minister. As an IAS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre, I met PV on many occasions, particularly when I was the State's 'ambassador' to the Delhi durbar during 1986-88. He knew me fairly well enough to inquire whenever I met him *emayya, bagunnava?* (How do you do?). Once PV became Prime Minister, my friends and old associates of PV, P.V.R.K.Prasad and A.V.G.Krishnamurthy, were inducted in the Prime Minister's office. In spite of my familiarity with PV and his associates, I used to meet them only on official business, so much so that Krishnamurthy jocularly observed *memu ikkada vachina tharvatha mammalni poorthiga marichipoyaru* (After we came here, you have totally forgotten us).

PV was an accidental PM much as he was an accidental CM. His five year reign as PM was tumultuous; no one expected him to be the PM in the first place, and once he became PM no one expected him to last the full five-year term of office. Though written off again and again as he encountered one trouble after another, he escaped one entrapment after another with an astuteness and guile that would have earned praise from Houdini the magician. That feat by itself would merit PV a place in History. More importantly, PV's reign is a watershed in India history marking a sharp transition in Indian economic and political landscape. PV's reign is momentous for being a watershed in Indian politics. Looking back, it was in this period that India entered firmly the age of competitive electoral politics at the national level on a sustained basis; it was also the period which marked the end of Nehruvian era and the unquestioned sway of the liberal-left worldview. The rise of the BJP as a major political force challenged

the hegemony of the ideas about nationalism, national identity and secularism which were regnant from Independence. And that rise can be linked to the Ramajanmabhoomi which loathe it or love it, loomed large over the country, and was one of the largest political mobilisations the country had ever witnessed. The Ramajanmabhoomi movement was also a highly divisive issue as the Janmabhoomi was not an empty site; on it stood the Babri Masjid which purportedly was constructed by Babar after demolishing a Hindu temple. The demolition of the Babri Masjid is a defining moment not only in PV's life and career but also in Indian history, and PV's handling of the Ramajanmabhoomi movement and his culpability or otherwise in the demolition of the Babri Masjid would be debated forever.

The launch of the economic reforms during PV's reign is a world-historic event akin to that which happened in China after Deng Xiaoping became the paramount leader in 1978. For the first time, the Government sought to dismantle the license-permit-control Raj rather than simplify that Raj. Until about 2011, contemporaneous, conventional wisdom credited Manmohan Singh with every economic reform initiative that occurred during PV's reign, and laid the blame on PV for restraining Manmohan, and stalling the reform process on political considerations. Though belatedly, PV is now being given the credit due for selecting Manmohan Singh in the first place, for extending support to the reform initiatives, and exercising the political judgment necessary for modulating rhythm and pace of reform. The design of reforms cannot be a pure technocratic exercise as political judgment is required on how much pain a country can endure, how pain is to be distributed, whether to raise taxes or cut spending on this or that group, and what the income-distribution effects of the policies ought to be without losing political legitimacy. And further, the Prime Ministership of Manmohan Singh had proved beyond doubt that he could not have accomplished as Finance Minister whatever he did without the support and guidance of PV. It is now fashionable to praise the 'Great Unmentionable', the epithet that Ramachandra Guha gave to PV to capture the efforts of the Congress Party establishment to erase memory of PV from public mind. Even though belatedly, PV's contribution in initiating and steering economic reforms is being given due credit despite the temptation to view his tenure

solely through the prism of Babri Masjid, and despite determined efforts by the Congress Party establishment to make him an unperson. What PV accomplished is all the more remarkable as he was not the paramount leader that Deng Xiaoping was, and he presided over a minority government in a rambunctious democracy.

PV's achievement as Prime Minister was the fairy tale of the ugly duckling which turned into a swan. No one expected him to be the CM of Andhra Pradesh. In September, 1971, just when it looked that the politically and administratively astute Brahamananda Reddy had tided over the Telengana agitation, Brahmaananda Reddy was eased out even though he had the overwhelming support of the Congress Legislature Party, a pointer to the fact that like the Chinese Emperors being dependent upon the mandate of the heaven for continuance on the throne, Congress Chief Ministers of the State held office at the pleasure of Congress High Command. To everyone's surprise, the Congress High Command chose PV who had no political following at all. All through the fifteen months he held the office of Chief Minister, he had to struggle for survival, and lacking a political base he had to rush Delhi for instructions and assurances of support so often that he acquired the reputation of being a Chief Minister who visited Hyderabad once in a while from Delhi. He also acquired a reputation for being indecisive and vacillating. Even though his tactical moves still gave rise to the comment that he was indecisive and vacillating his overall performance as PM surprised many who had watched his performance as CM. PV proved right the saying that persons grow in office; compelled to swim or sink, a Self hitherto unknown and immured deep within manifested itself determined not to miss an opportunity to make a mark in history. And history did present him a great opportunity by way of an unprecedented macroeconomic crisis. Unlike Rajiv Gandhi's Government, PV's did not arouse great expectations; however, true to the contingent nature of history, the PV Government heralded a new era.

PV built up his political career by always swearing by Nehru and Indira Gandhi and shied away from the imperative of breaking from the past economic policies. Reportedly, he considered his greatest achievement as CM to be land reforms, and it was the bitter opposition of the landlords affected by the land reforms that fueled the

Andhra agitation. Yet so grave was the macroeconomic situation when he took over as PM that business as usual would no longer do. The country was on the verge of a default of foreign loans even though only a few months earlier the country's gold reserves had to be airlifted as pledge for a loan that the country took to tide over an economic crisis. While in MHRD I made quite a few trips to ASEAN countries. Every visit to South East Asia those days immensely saddened me for I could not miss the fact that countries which were underdeveloped compared to India during the colonial rule had overtaken India in economic development, and that underneath the seeming civility of officials of those countries was a condescending attitude of nouveaux riches towards a poor relation who lost out in life. I came to know from Vivek Katju, a diplomat in our mission in Kuala Lumpur, that the most humiliating moment of his life was when at a trade fair a Malaysian company refused to accept a bank draft issued by the State Bank of India on the ground that the foreign exchange reserves of India were abysmal and the credit rating of the State Bank were low. In the face of the unprecedented crisis PV did not hesitate to take a new path, ignoring the harsh criticism of almost all desi economists that the economic reforms were anti-poor LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation). Paraphrasing 'Road not Taken,' a famous poem of Robert Frost, PV took a road 'less travelled by', and 'that made all the difference'. Most of the time he was a mauni baba, a sphinx eloquently silent, and yet there was at least one occasion when he made it clear quite eloquently that business as usual would no longer do. At a meeting of senior officers of the Government on January 30, 1993, an unknown PV surfaced to convey some home truths and called upon the senior officers to take note of the change in policy and be responsive to that change:

"We talked of socialism for forty years. And we have many friends- very convinced socialists in socialist splendour, millionaire socialists, great champions of socialism ... we have people who have taken advantage of socialist system to bring about general prosperity, but anyhow they have to start from somewhere, so they start with themselves, that is the kind of prosperity they want... Let us understand that this kind of thing will not work, will not pass muster and the people will not forgive us for continuing this hypocrisy."

The earth-shattering speech did not receive as much attention as it ought to have- though the next day the Sunday Times ran a front-page story with the headline 'End socialist hypocrisy, says PM'. The question posed by PV, are we, meaning politicians of the ruling party and civil servants, sufficiently motivated to push the big change, was a very relevant question that was often posed by the media and businessmen. During his first foreign visit to West Germany as Prime Minister in September 1991, a German industrialist is reported to have asked PV whether he expected the bureaucrats would allow him to go ahead with reforms, for bureaucrats were bureaucrats whether in Germany or India. PV is said to have replied that the Indian bureaucrat was a 'well trained animal'. In retrospect, it should be said that by and large the answer of PV was right for almost everyone in the economic ministries attuned themselves to the new thought and the New Speak- perhaps more than necessary. However, many others continued to be Old Believers, particularly in the States where Governments tended to give more priority to build vote banks through populist measures, and officers supposed to be socially committed were idolised. During the Raj, there were two types of ICS officers- the *amirparwa* (protector of princes) who saw the value of Indians as individuals and Indian institutions, were distrustful of applying Western doctrines wholesale and believed in some sort of indirect rule through native chiefs, and the *garibparwa* who were usually busy, bustling men hostile to Indian chiefs and wanted to rule directly and push through change. If one excludes the large segment of *chaltahais* (indifferent types), a similar differentiation continues even now; to put it figuratively while some look to the World Economic Forum, Davos, the ideology of others was in synch with the World Social Forum. However, outside the economic ministries *garibparwa* constituted the majority, and many civil servants were those days attracted by the role of the social activist because of a mixture of moral and political considerations. Strange but true, a District Collector of Chittur, Andhra Pradesh used Velugu Bata, a neo-literate broadsheet, to criticize Manmohanomics.

(To be concluded)

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If you want to get laid, go to college. If you want an education, go to the library.

Frank Zappa

Mental Health and the State of Social Culture

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(Keynote address delivered at a national seminar at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, in the eighties of the last century. Published in several journals including the NAMAH, quarterly of Sri Aurobindo Society. In the interim, India's military security challenges, both current and long-term, came into unintended focus in this month even as the nation is grappling with the pandemic and its tragic impact on millions of citizens.)

Some years ago, in a London street, a man approaching ninety was knocked down by a car. He died. A post-mortem examination showed that the man had sheltered in his body three major diseases, any one of which ought to have killed him long ago. But his widow asserted that the jolly old man had never complained of any uneasiness. Alas, since the diseases failed to kill him, Time, it seems, had to take recourse to a speeding motorcar to achieve its end.

How should we describe this man – as healthy or unhealthy? This, of course is a question only a non-medical man would ask. I suppose, the world of medical science would find it impossible to describe him as healthy, a body that had been the repository of three dangerous diseases, even though the owner of the body never bothered about them. That should remind us of Jules Romain's comedy Doctor Knock, in which the definition of a healthy man is a sick fellow who is unaware of his sickness.

We do not know to which category the old man belonged - to the category of those for whom ignorance is bliss or to the category of those who are aware of their physical ailments but have overruled them by the dint of a conscious decision to do so. In a country like

India there must be millions who have diseases but are ignorant of them. But times are changing. The spread of medical care to the remote rural areas and the spread of social awareness in general, will make them conscious of their right to healthcare and consequently of their ailments. Knowledge will increase sorrow to an extent, in the Biblical sense. But this is an inevitable phase in our social evolution. Culture is that which does not let one remain ignorant of problems, but which enables one to face the problems with courage and fortitude.

Defining culture, of course, is more difficult than defining health. From the dictionary meaning of the term, which is refinement, to Mary Poole's naughty diagnosis: "Culture is what your butcher would have, if he were a surgeon," the range of definitions of this term is vast indeed. But, I believe, Andre Malraux sums up the essence of all such definitions when he says, "Culture is the sum of all the forms of art, of love and thought which, in the course of centuries have enabled man to be less enslaved."

No doubt, culture and freedom go together. Culture brings deliverance from fear and leads us along the path of freedom from ignorance. However, in its practical use, the term has three broad connotations:

Culture in an academic sense and the level at which the department of culture of a government functions, embraces such refined activities as pursuits in literature, dance, music and different forms of art. Secondly, culture has a social connotation. The behaviour of the people of a certain land at a certain period of time, their beliefs, their codes of conduct, their common interest, constitute the scope of their culture in this sense. Then there is the third — the individual culture. In every society, there will be many individuals who are below the level of the social culture of the time, but there will always be some who belong to a level that is above the average social culture. Through examples of kindness, courtesy, compassion and quest for true values in life or through creative achievements in certain fields, such

The better I get to know men, the more I find myself loving dogs.

Charles de Gaulle

individuals, in the long run, raise the level of the social culture. Whatever be the criticism directed against them during their lifetime, society marches ahead by inspirations derived from their ideas and adventures.

When we focus our attention on culture's relevance to health, we concern ourselves with culture in the second of the three senses of the term — the social culture. It is no longer an issue of dispute that after the minimum necessary nourishment has been given to the body, what determines its wellbeing is the consciousness of the man, including the ripples of emotions in him, his reactions to small events around him, his vulnerability to numerous provocations of different kinds, his aspirations, ambitions and philosophy of life. A sound health is the outer expression of our inner harmony or at least a balance. The role of consciousness in all functional physical disorders has been more and more recognised since the 19th century, particularly since the advent of psychoanalysis. However discounted some of Freud's theories might have become, the shockers he sent through passages like the following one, obliged man to take a second look at himself: "When a member of my family complains that he or she has bitten his or her tongue, bruised her finger, and so on, instead of the expected sympathy, I put the question: Why did you do that?" Though Freud has added force to the knowledge, the knowledge that behind numerous inconveniences in which we find ourselves, there is a secret hand – my own hand – was well-recognised.

Psychopathology of everyday life

But one great lacuna that has been inherent in Freudian and Post-Freudian psychoanalysis is their lack of knowledge of the innermost faculty of consciousness, what the Indian seers have termed as the soul. Consequently, the search for tracing the psychological cause beneath any ailment has tended to arouse in the patient a certain sense of guilt. Since an ailment is an outcome of disharmony, the patient must have suppressed something untoward, something

morally or ethically unsound within himself. But here could be a totally different reason for an ailment. The spiritual lore informs us that one's whole life — as well as one's lives to come — are a process of one's growth towards his ultimate Destiny, realising one's true self, which is equal to realising the Divine. In this process, the cardinal role is played by the soul. If the soul finds a certain situation not conducive to this process of growth, it might feel restless. The restlessness of the soul is transmitted to the emotional being and the mind, where it may manifest as emotional or mental imbalance. It may also be transmitted to the body where it may manifest as a physical malady.

An effort had been made in ancient India to develop a culture that would make man aware of the existence of his soul and its demands, while harmoniously channelising all the other faculties of man, emotions, mind, etc. in a purposeful direction. As Sri Aurobindo puts it in *The Foundations of Indian Culture*:

"But while it is the generous office of culture to enrich, enlarge and encourage human life, it must also give the vital forces a guiding law, subject them to some moral and rational government and lead them beyond their first natural formulations, until it can find for life the clue to a spiritual freedom, perfection and greatness. The pre-eminent value of the ancient Indian civilisation lay in the power with which it did this work, the profound wisdom and high and subtle skill with which it based society and ordered the individual life, and encouraged and guided the propensities of human nature and finally turned them all towards the realisation of its master idea. The mind it was training, while not called away from its immediate aims, was never allowed to lose sight of the use of life as a discipline for spiritual perfection and a passage to the Infinite."

We cannot say at which point of time the social culture of India fell from this ideal role it once played. The process of this fall - the sequence of

A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her age.

Robert Frost

rituals taking the place of the spirit, forms usurping the content, a social order and division of duty meant to allow greater facility and freedom to the individual hardening into lifeless rigidities (the caste system, for example) and choking the very freedom it was designed to champion, had been long and gradual. But today we have suddenly fallen into a whirlpool and turmoil. I do not wish to use the flattering phrase transition, which is a perpetual state, so far as our social culture is concerned. Maybe, those who have achieved a certain detachment born out of either a rare positive equanimity or a widespread cynical inertia, are not quite shocked by the situation. But let me narrate a small case which, I believe, is representative of a certain psychological condition.

A boy who had a moderate education in his village school and had been obliged to take up a job in the city, has suddenly turned insane. Born in a decent, though poor family, he had conventional moral and religious upbringing. He was intelligent, kind to others and a bit idealistic. His master transferred him from domestic service to a coffee parlour run by him. He was taught how to operate the video. He began enjoying his duty. On the fifth night, at the middle of a show, he suddenly turned violent. He spat on the audience and tried to smash the TV set and when seized by his boss, kicked him hard. He was of course taken hold of and treated to a brutal assault by his employer to which all the patrons present contributed liberally. The report is, he is recovering from the assault, but it is uncertain when he will be cured of his insanity.

The fact is, when he saw the blue films he was obliged to show, he could not satisfy himself about the logic of this depth of human depravity. Is it just for sake of money?

If some 'rogues' (his term for these 'artists') could let themselves be photographed in that condition, how could a gentleman - his boss - exhibit the scenes again for nothing more than money?

Such questions, bottled up in him for a few days,

suddenly seemed to have caused an explosion.

The state of mind the boy exemplified may be dismissed as an extreme case, but we cannot or must not undervalue the state of mind itself and the possibility of its subsequent manifestations in numerous less anarchical ways. Violence and obscenity seem to be absorbed; they are not. They thrive, albeit secretly, as massive influence.

The video has invaded the small towns, bazaars and even villages and there is an organised abuse of this technology. A destruction is at work - probably in no way less loathsome than any physical destruction, and perhaps more dangerous, for it is an attack on the human mind. Local newspapers are full of reports of teenagers thronging these cosy parlours continuously exhibiting pirated pictures. A teacher who observed them wrote that they looked bewildered, though thrilled.

What some Western money-spinners are exporting to our country through willing Indian agents is bound to have far-reaching effects. Forget about the consequences of the loss of work and study in a developing nation, but implanting and stimulating grotesque lust in the minds of youths, some of whom go even half-starved, can land them into bizarre situations. What is involved is not a change of values, but a perversion of values, a situation which is notorious for its rapport with the underworld commerce in drugs.

Most of the young pleasure-seekers lured to blue and uncensored movies will suffer from some psychological imbalance, be it apparent or not, for the very primary reason that the ethical values they have inherited (in spite of themselves) and that are stored in their subconscious are bound to revolt at the filth that they are now dumping into themselves.

The situation once again emphasises the dichotomy between the technological power at the disposal of man and his capacity to make proper use of it. It is doubtful how much a government can do

to prevent the unfortunate process. But what about all the well-wishers amongst our people - the political parties, social and cultural organisations? If there was any occasion for Satyagraha in recent times, here it is. Why should they not rise in to plug these hell-holes?

The physiological constancy in man, known in psychology as 'homeostasis', as physiologist Walter Bradford Cannon termed it, is broken again and again because of the stress caused by the bizarre social developments of our time - thanks to the rapidly growing consumerism invading rural India, unreal concepts of progress resulting in ecological destruction and the chimerical ideas of happiness and prosperity, running after which, people turn to criminal activities like adulteration, smuggling, hoarding, and corruption in its myriad forms on the one hand and grow power-hungry, clutching at their positions at any cost, spreading a culture of lies, the anti-culture, on the other.

The observations made so far might have laid accent on the influence of the present state of social culture on mental health. But certainly we are in an age when we see the wall between physical health and mental health fading out. In fact, how and when a decadent or perverse culture will breed a new disease, is unpredictable.

Now, a healthy lifestyle immediately brings us back to the question of the character of the social culture which surrounds us. Whether AIDS is a scourge originating in man's certain depravity or not may be a matter of dispute, but can the "healthy lifestyle" demanded become at all possible without a check on cultural degradation at the social level?

What can check this cultural degradation? Rules and regulations can surely go a long way; moral and ethical education can play a meaningful role, but nothing short of a change in our concept of values is going to really change the situation. Only a strong trust in the destiny of man, a faith that man is not only a combination of a body, a life-force and a mind, but

also something far greater than all these faculties, can make us cultivate a better social culture. Does this mean that we have to be spiritual? There is nothing amiss in it, if it is not a negative spirituality which rejects life with all its splendours, but a positive spirituality which looks upon life as a spark of the Divine and the physical body as the Divine's laboratory. I firmly believe that such an attitude, if nurtured by a particular section of our intelligentsia, can radically alter the present trends of culture and their unfortunate impact on health. Which is that particular section of the intelligentsia? Let me quote a message of the Mother which contains the answer.

"Truth is supreme harmony and supreme delight. All disorder, all suffering is falsehood. Thus it can be said that illnesses are falsehoods of the body and, consequently, doctors are soldiers of the great and noble army fighting in the world for the conquest of Truth."

So, dear doctors, we look forward to see you in the role of fighters for the conquest of Truth.

(From ManojDas '*Of Mystics and Miracles and other Essays*')

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USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS DELAY AND DELIVERY OF JUSTICE.

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It is difficult not to picture a major role for technology in the judicial process. Today, the core activity of judging seems typically human; a priori, it appears impossible to program a machine with rules that allow it to decide a case where other rules have failed. Before the introduction of e-commerce (think

We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children.

Lester Brown

Amazon, Flipkart etc.), however, one could have said the same about shopping. Much of the legwork has been eliminated by the introduction of trusted brands, public key cryptography, and digital image transmission.

Findings of expert studies show the need for developing an ICT (information and communication technology)-based system to provide timely justice and effective management and control of subordinate courts.

- Stage wise case progression tracking system - from initiation to finalization
- Case flow management system
- Adjourment tracking system
- Punctuality enforcement system
- Judicial hours management system
- Interlocutory applications management system
- Cause list management system
- Rate of case reduction management system
- Automation of registry level processes
- Automation of registers, periodical statements and returns
- Intelligent systems for capacity building of judges
- Online automated auditing system of judicial performances

By the use of the present-day technology, the above systems can be conveniently developed to optimize the functioning of the Indian judiciary to facilitate litigants' access to justice. However, it is not possible to promote usage of ICT in courts, unless proper training at all levels is imparted to judicial officers as well as subordinate staff. Regular training programmes need to be organised for judges as well as court officials. A conspicuous lack of comprehensive computerisation in district courts and subordinate courts due to failed or incomplete attempts has also severely limited the benefits of ICT adoption in the Indian judiciary as a whole. The eCourts project was designed to overcome this limitation with its particular focus on the lower courts.

Courts project is an initiative of the government to deal with delays as an attempt to introduce ICT in the judiciary. It is a Mission Mode Project being implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the

National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), for computerisation of judiciary and digitisation of judicial activities. In line with the current government's flagship Digital India project and focussed largely on computerisation of subordinate courts, the eCourts project is a crucial step in fashioning an efficient judiciary that could also possibly be litigant-friendly.

The adoption and use of IT in judicial proceedings is being encouraged under the 'e-courts' project, which could be integrated within the proposed reforms to reduce pendency. There is, however, a singular factor that impacts pendency adversely, more than any other reason: the prevalence of adjournments. Until there is effective control over the grant of adjournments by the courts, pendency will remain a major issue. Excessive adjournments are a key factor leading to delays in the disposal of cases, an aspect that has been recognised by the courts themselves on numerous occasions.

Whilst the primary focus of a system like the ICT is the legal logjam, there are other issues as well that hinder a common man's access to justice. Technology can address that as well.

A digitalised manner of registering complaints and creating accountability is the need of the hour. Filing an FIR, a civil case, an RTI application, consumer grievance, application for document verification, licensing, etc., in a digitalised manner increase the accountability of the authorities while saving a lot of hassle for the common man.

Courts also provide regular case status updates through their web portals. In a recent legal development, the Prime Minister has launched a new website of Supreme Court of India which features an all new Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS). This feature also enables digital filing of cases. Under the ICMIS digital filing, an applicant is simply required to file the grounds of appeal to the Supreme Court and the system will automatically retrieve other documents pertaining to the case from the High Court concerned.

As Richard Susskind and Daniel Susskind note in their book 'The Future of the Professions':

"In preparation for litigation, intelligent search

systems can now outperform junior lawyers and paralegals in reviewing large sets of documents and selecting the most relevant, while Big Data techniques are underpinning systems that are better than expert litigators in predicting the results of court decisions, from patent disputes (the LexMachina service) to the US Supreme Court. Similar technologies, such as Kira and eBrevia, are being used by corporate lawyers for due diligence work.

Fundamental challenges to the courts are also being launched. Legal technologists are asking whether court is a service or a place; whether people and organizations in dispute really need to congregate in physical courtrooms to settle their differences. One alternative is the virtual court. Already used for vulnerable witnesses to give evidence or for preliminary hearings in criminal cases, this is a conventional courtroom set-up in which participation—by lawyers, parties, or witnesses—is via some kind of video link. Another alternative is online dispute resolution (ODR), recent proposals for which in England and Wales were welcomed by the Master of the Rolls, the top civil judge, as “an exciting milestone in the history of our civil justice system”. Here, the process of resolving a dispute, especially the formulation of the solution, is conducted across the Internet—from quarrels amongst citizens to conflicts between individuals and the state. One example is ‘e-adjudication’, one of various ODR techniques that are used to sort out a staggering 60 million disagreements that arise amongst traders each year amongst eBay users (more than three times the total number of lawsuits filed in the entire US court system). This is based on a widely available platform for ODR, known as Modria. Another is Cybersettle, a web-based ‘e-negotiation’ system that handled over 200,000 personal-injury and insurance claims of a combined value of almost \$2 billion.

Yet another is Resolver, a free web service that helps UK consumers pursue their grievances with over 2,000 organizations.”

Amidst the above reality in other jurisdictions, could India really afford to lag behind? In my humble submission, we would undermine the usage of technology to address the delay and delivery of justice at our own collective peril.

Being Nehruvian in these difficult times

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan

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On his 56th death anniversary, Nehru is best remembered for his leadership, vision and capacity to spot talent across sectors.

To many, the term ‘Nehruvian’ has come to symbolise all the great qualities that India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was known for in his lifetime — decency in public life, an immense capacity to recognise and harness talent beyond boundaries, and the audacity to have a grand and rounded vision for his country.

On the 56th anniversary of his death, we’ll do well to ask ourselves what made Nehru the foremost Nehruvian of all time. We could start with decency in public life. He had a remarkable capacity to reach out to his ideological rivals, even inducting the die-hard Rightist and founder of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, into his Cabinet. Sheikh Abdullah, whom Nehru had incarcerated for over a decade, rushed back to New Delhi from a mission to Pakistan to personally mourn his passing away.

Honing talent

To be Nehruvian is to have a tremendous nose for ferretting talent, and on that count, Nehru was an ace. No Indian Prime Minister matched his capacity to reach out to the very best in every field and give them the freedom to create great things. True, Indira Gandhi came close, but could never really match her father in this respect.

There was Homi Bhabha for atomic energy, and Vikram Sarabhai for space; Nehru brought them in. India’s Northeastern States were saved from an inundation of people from the rest of India, thanks to the advice Nehru sought from Verrier Elwin, a remarkable Britisher with an unmatched understanding of the place and its people, and also the first foreigner to become an Indian citizen.

. Climate change will prompt a large- scale movement of people that will threaten stability and democratic politics.

John Podesta and Todd Stern

The famous artist, Nandalal Bose, was brought in to embellish the original manuscript of the Constitution beautifully with artwork drawn from India's past. It was Nehru who got Le Corbusier to design India's first planned city, Chandigarh. The famous husband-and-wife design team, Charles and Ray Eames, were invited to tour India at his behest. On the basis of a report they presented, the iconic National Institute of Design came up in Ahmedabad.

At no time in India's history had so much been created as in the 17 years Nehru was Prime Minister. The IITs and IIMs owe their existence to him. The massive Hirakud Dam — the longest and second-largest in the world — came up across the Mahanadi under Nehru's watch, as did the Bakra and Nangal Dams. Within five years of India becoming a Republic, the Bhilai Steel Plant was up and running. One could go on for the list is long and stunningly impressive.

Tumultuous times

One can only marvel at how Nehru, with hardly any administrative experience when he took over as India's Prime Minister at 58, could see so many projects through, and that too in such unpropitious times and terrible circumstances. This came out of his ability to look beyond immediate challenges and dream big for the future.

If the Covid crisis looks terrible to us today, we need only visualise what India was going through at Independence. The country Nehru inherited from the British was impoverished, near illiterate and hopelessly broke. It had just emerged from a horrendous famine that had devastated Bengal, killing millions. Partition hit the country hard with millions of refugees, who had witnessed the most horrific killings of their loved ones in newly created Pakistan, flowing into India and overrunning the capital, New Delhi.

In a moment like that, anyone in Nehru's place would have found it convenient to pander to majoritarian sentiments and cast India as a Hindu state. Instead, displaying a courage that could, in the light of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination have cost him his life, Nehru steered the Constituent Assembly to draw up and adopt

the most secular and socially-sensitive constitution in the world. It gave a tremendous leg up to the country's historically discriminated sections — its Dalits — while leaving the minorities, especially the frightened Muslims, at ease.

To be Nehruvian is to have a capacity to overcome personal prejudices and dislikes. Faced with a rival as formidable as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, it would have been natural for Nehru to marginalise him. The differences between Nehru and Patel were real enough, and it is common knowledge that it took Gandhi to broker a peace between them.

However, such differences hardly mattered to Nehru, who left it to Patel to oversee the integration of India's princely States into the Indian Union, something which, as the historian Ian Copland observed, swelled “the area of the new Indian state by over half a million square miles and its population by nearly 90 millions; redrew the political map of the sub-continent and overthrew an entire governing order.”

Economic order

The economy was a major concern for Nehru. His chosen method to make it grow through planned development came from expert support from the eminent statistician, PC Mahalanobis. It was remarkably successful. As the economist Pulepre Balakrishnan, writing in *The Hindu*, noted: “the acceleration of growth achieved in the 1950s has not been exceeded since. Also, that India grew faster than China in the Nehru era.” Contrary to popular perception, India under Nehru was no wasteland.

In Covid, the Indian Republic faces the greatest of existential challenges in its short history. At such a moment of terrible economic and social upheaval, the government would do well not to attempt to manage the crisis all on its own. By itself, the Indian government lacks the capability to do so, as even the US under President Donald Trump is discovering much to its horror. Rather, it should take a leaf from Nehru and access the best talent available to put the country back on its feet again, rather than let it grasp at straws from the sidelines.

There is plenty of talent available out there, not

Patriotism is, fundamentally, a conviction that a particular country is the best in the world because you were born in it.

George Bernard Shaw

just in India but also elsewhere in the world too, which can make a big difference. Faced with a challenge as humongous as Covid, in a quintessentially Nehruvian gesture, the government under Narendra Modi should bring them in. Nehru would not have hesitated.

(Courtesy: *Business Line*)

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LISTENING TO ECHOES FROM THE PAST

Dr. (Mrs.) Prema Nandakumar

It was 1954. The excitement of becoming a student in the Andhra University was great. I was familiar with the campus, as my own father was a Professor here and both of us were used to taking our morning and evening walks in its vast area. As a child, I had admired for long the women students who seemed self-possessed, wearing starched cotton sarees and walking with tons of books and notebooks in their hands. It was only when I got the syllabus and list of books to be purchased, did I realize that I had entered waters that were not easily fordable.

The syllabus included a history of England. At that time England for me was the festival of Great Britain as father had recently returned from England and brought me a powder compact (treasured and used by me still!) commemorating the festival. He had been speaking about the technological and scientific advancements England had made and how it commemorated the centenary of the 1851 Exhibition held when the land was ruled by Queen Victoria.

It was when studying the history of England did the class gently slip into the Middle English period. After those early Viking attacks and their kind, the first major assault on England occurred during the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 A.D. The language and literature received a tremendous transformation. William II of Normandy led an army made up of Normans, Bretons and Frenchmen. The House of Wessex which was the dynasty ruling the land ended when its last representative, King Edward the Confessor died. His brother-in-law Harold ascended the throne. When the Norwegian king

Harald Hardrada attacked, Harold was able to defeat him at Stamford Bridge. But Harold could not stop William II who won the Battle of Hastings. Harold was killed and William II was crowned. Apart from other changes like giving his people a good portion of the land to manage, he favoured Anglo-Norman, derived from Old French as the official language. French words poured into the English language. The English language as we know it, the language of Shakespeare and Milton, William Wordsworth and Christopher Fry, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo was now born.

Naturally, the writers of that time could choose their language, partly out of their own knowledge and partly to reach out to a particular section of the community. Like a bhasha writer in India choosing to write in Sanskrit today, there were also scholarly persons who chose to write in Latin at that time. The first history of England thus came to be written by Geoffrey of Monmouth in Latin in the early part of 12th century. *Historia Regum Britanniae* is a history of Britons, the original dwellers of the island and the ancestors of the Welsh, the Bretons and the Cornish people. Within a short period a poet named Wace wrote a work based on it titled *Brut* in Norman French. Apparently there was a ready audience to know about the history of the land, myth-encrusted or otherwise. The first English history inspired by this work was brought out by Layamon by the end of the 12th century. This early Middle English poem is also known as *The Chronicle of Britain*.

According to Geoffrey, the original historian, the island received its name from Brutus, a great grandson of Aeneas. Students of Sri Aurobindo's works have never had any problem with the mythology of the West. There is always some illumination from him. Aeneas the son of Goddess Aphrodite, was a cousin twice removed of Hector. He would flee the city of doomed Ilium on the last day of the Trojan War and become the founder of Rome. His grandson Brutus would be the founder of Britain. This was history as we jotted down points in the classroom. In later years, I would get into the presence of heroic Aeneas speaking brave words of sterling patriotism in the Book of the Assembly in Sri Aurobindo's *Ilium*. This is *desa bhakti*, forever blessed by history!

. By-passers of the World unite, you have nothing to lose but your blockages.

K. Natwar Singh

“Nor should a life that was honoured and noble
be stained in its ending.

Nay, then, the mood of a child would shame a grey
headed wisdom,

If for the fault of the people virtue and Troy were
forgotten.

For, though the people hear us not, yet are we bound
to our nation:

Over the people the gods are; over a man is his
country;

This is the deity first adored by the hearths of the
noble.

For by our nation’s will we are ruled in the home and
the battle

And for our nation’s weal we offer our lives and our
children’s.

Not by their own wills led nor their passions men rise
to their manhood,

Selfishly seeking their good, but the gods’ and the
State’s and the fathers’.”

Aeneas was indeed a worthy progenitor of heroes. Among them was the founder of Britain, Brutus. Layamon’s Brut belonging to the earlier part of Middle English, has plenty of Anglo-Saxon words, reminding us constantly of Old English. But it has a goodly number of Norman-French words as well. Layamon’s audience was not from the court. It was the poor peasantry of Worcestershire which was almost illiterate. They loved to hear tales of past heroism, and Layamon obliged them by giving the early history of Britain. And why did Layamon write in English when the current fashion was either Latin (to appear classical) or French (to chime in with the victor)? A shrewd suspicion voiced is that when Layamon wrote his work, Henry III was the king of England and he liked to raise the flag of English and make himself known as an Englishman, in the process giving the cold shoulder to the Old French dialects that had been the fashion (and necessity) for a while. It is a situation not unlike the Dravidian Party leaders like E.V. Ramaswami, M. Karunanidhi and M.G. Ramachandran giving total importance to the Tamil language though Tamil was not their mother-tongue. This political move in England was welcome for English literature, for

now it began to grow strong, drawing freely from other languages.

We were not expected to read Layamon. Only, we had to know something about him from secondary sources. I had no problem there. So many histories of English literature to dig into, but my favourite was actually a translation from French! Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian were French scholars and the English translation was by W.D. MacInnes. This was a detailed history and I felt proud to be sitting with this fat volume in hand, as though that made me look like a scholar! Anyway I had a choice of histories in my father’s library but this book became my favourite and continues to live with me, though the book calls for gentle handling these days. I was committed to three years of living with English literature in 1954. I thought I might as well know something about the first historian in English. In any case, I had to “for examination purposes”!

Legouis and Cazamian did not disappoint. Their book assured me Layamon was actually “a pure German by race and tongue”. He admired the Britons and hated the Saxons as invading barbarians. But there was more of Arthurian legends in this section than on the dynasty of Brutus. From here and there in translations of Geoffrey of Manmouth and the Welsh Chronicles and the help of the Professor we students gathered some material. It made quite a myth-studded history as we have in Indian itihahas.

Brutus was the son of Silvius. His mother died in childbirth. When he was fifteen he accidentally killed his father while out hunting. Brutus was exiled from his native Italy and while travelling through Greece he received the homage of some Trojans who joined him. While journeying further in the oceans, Brutus and his people landed in Devon. Heroism and probably avoidance of the kind of violent destruction that victors are tempted to indulge in, brought him the friendship of the locals. He became a king, and the land came to be called after him as Britain. He is said to have ruled for a long time.

Brutus married Ignoge of Greece. They had three sons, Locrinus, Kamber and Albanactus. Since names from this history would pop up in our books on the

history of Elizabethan literature, I took down notes and generally felt pleased with myself for my studiousness. Then all the names including Gorboduc, Ferrex and Porrex became just a vague memory.

Fancy my excitement when the fragment of Sri Aurobindo's play, *The House of Brut* was published! It was a gift from the Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual (Calcutta) of 1962. The introduction was very brief: "Sri Aurobindo wrote this fragment during the early part of his stay in Baroda, probably in 1899. The idea for *The House of Brut* seems to have come from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* or another chronicle of early Britain." Back again to those days of anxious searchings, attempts to understand so alien a history, learning to cope up with descriptions of winter and the roar of turbulent seas, not unlike the experience of the poet Firdausi.

‘Much have I labored, much read o’er
Of Arabic and Persian lore,
Collecting tales unknown and known;
Now two and sixty years are flown.
Regret, and deeper woe of sin,
‘Tis all that youth has ended in,
And I with mournful thoughts rehearse
Bu Tahir Khusrawani’s verse:
‘I mind me of my youth and sigh,
Alas for youth, for youth gone by!’” ‘

But no such regret comes near me of those days when I was energized to get back to these names that sounded familiar: Albanact, Locrine, Cambre, Humber. I realised that in Baroda Sri Aurobindo had been digging into English history deeply and was planning to write a play or a series of plays on the descendents of Brutus. Sri Aurobindo's conceptions were always Himalayan and he was ready to do hard work and complete his projects. He had been toying with other subjects too but then Mother India in shackles was an image that drew him away from all such literary activity in the first decade of the twentieth century. Later on, the Alipore Bomb Case played havoc with his manuscripts. So we have hardly a couple of pages of the play, *The House of Brut*. The rest is lost.

Sri Aurobindo knew Latin and French and so Geoffrey of Manmouth and Wace were no problem. He could read them and understand. He was living in Britain. It was logical that he should dive deep into its history. By his time brilliant historians had begun to write about Britain but Geoffrey was the first! And his history of Britain gave colourful information. Brutus had three sons: Locrinus, Kamber and Albanactus. When Brutus died his kingdom was divided between them. Kamber had Wales, Albanactus received Scotland and Locrinus became the king of the area now known as England. Cornwall, however, was ruled by the father-in-law of Locrinus called Corineus. Without the knowledge of Corineus, Locrinus married another wife, Estrildis whom he made his queen after the death of his father-in-law.

The first wife, Gwendolen was incensed. She had a big following in her natal land and soon went to war with her own husband and killed him. Estrildis, along with her daughter was killed. Gwendolen became the queen of England now and abdicated in her son's favour after fifteen years. Perfect plot for an Aurobindonian five-act play a la Shakespeare!

The dynasty of Brut, raised in violence, continued with violence. There were steady rulers and tyrants, fratricides and murderers. There were heroes too. Ebraucus who ruled for thirty-five years is famous for sacking the city of Gaul and creating a city which is today known as York, derived from his name. As we turn the pages of this early history, some familiar names gently stroke our memory cells. Hudibras of 1st century B.C, a fine king. But for students of English literature the name means Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (17th century), a satire on the English Civil War. The character of Sir Hudibras would do justice to our contemporary politicians haranguing when the election fever is on:

“His ordinary rate of speech
In loftiness of sound was rich;
A Babylonish dialect,
Which learned pedants much affect.
It was a parti-coloured dress
Of patch'd and pie-bald languages;

Accuracy to a newspaper is what virtue is to a lady; but a newspaper can always print a retraction.

Adlai Stevenson

‘Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
Like fustian heretofore on satin;
It had an odd promiscuous tone,
As if he had talked three parts in one
Which made some think, when he did gabble,
That had heard three labourers of Babel ...”

Back to the dynasty of Brutus. Another name that catches our eyes is Leir who ruled for sixty years. This is the King Lear who had three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, the hero of Shakespeare’s great tragedy. Sri Aurobindo, the Shakespeare-enthusiast would have noted how colourful a play could be written from the bare bones in the narrative of Geoffrey of Monmouth. He would also have observed how Shakespeare had transformed a happy ending to a tragedy. In the history Cordelia survives and succeeds her father as the queen. Subsequently her sisters depose her and she dies in prison.

Some two hundred years later once again the literature enthusiast has a historical person for dramatic presentation. King Gorboduc was the last of the dynasty of Brutus to occupy the throne. He had no peace in his old age. History speaks of the problems of inheritance created by his sons Ferrex and Porrex. Since we had a paper on Elizabethan literature, the play, Gorboduc: or Ferrex and Porrex was required reading. “Jointly authored by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville”, we wrote down in our note books diligently, and listed out its importance in the Elizabethan dramatic canon. A historical play; the first play in English to employ blank verse; closer to Greek plays of bloodshed than to Church-inspired morality plays of Middle English literature and so on. Probably I found it all tedious and terrifying too for Gorboduc’s wife kills her own son Porrex because he had killed her favourite son, Ferrex. I kept on and on because of the lure of a first class at the end of three years. But I am glad I did, for today I can remain alone with my thoughts of how much Sri Aurobindo would have discussed with himself regarding the ambitious undertaking, The House of Brut.

It is quite clear, the work was meant to be a five-act Shakespearian play. Also, it is possible, Sri Aurobindo was thinking of completing a trilogy, as the title shows.

Already English literature had two well known plays on two major kings of the dynasty of Brut. King Leir was somewhere in the middle and Gorboduc brought up the rear. So how about the beginnings of this dynasty which had managed to lumber through almost one thousand years? Could a play put at the starting point of the dynasty explain the historical events of later times? Sri Aurobindo may have conceived The House of Brut as an answer.

He seems to have chosen the most dramatically tragic situation in the immediate family of Brutus. The dramatis personae lists names that can be found in *Historia Regum Britanniae*:

“Brutus, Prince of Britain.
Corineus,
Assarac, his brothers.
Devon, son of Corineus.
Cambre, Prince of Cambria,
Albanact, Prince of Albany,
Lochrine, Prince of Leogryns: Sons of Brutus.
Humber, King of Norway.
Offa,
Sigfrid, Norwegian leaders.
Guendolen, daughter of Corineus.
Estrild, A Pictish princess, concubine of Humber.”

The first question that accosts us is the presence of Brutus in the the list of characters. Did the first act deal with the death of Brutus and the division of his land? Since Humber and Estrild are present in the second act, Brutus would not be appearing on the stage. Perhaps Brutus was not there even in the first act but appeared (or was to appear) in some context, somewhere in the play. The Shakespearian touch would have been complete with the Ghost of Brutus appearing before the sons!

From the placement of action in this fragment from the second act, it is clear that the play would have dealt with Humber’s killing Of Albanactus. The war-cry of blood-thirsty Humber makes this clear:

“Spare not to drain this sweetened juice of earth,
You Vikings! How it bubbles to the lips
Vigorous as newspilt blood. Drink deep, and shout
‘Glory to Thor and Humber!’ With the sun
Upon the force of Albanact we march.

The one function T.V. news performs very well is that when there is no news we give it to you
with the same emphasis as if there were.

David Brinkley

Shout, Norsemen! Let the heavens hear your menace.
Drinkhael!”

An accent Sri Aurobindo would recapture again
during the Second World War:

“We have seen the sign of Thor and the hammer of
new creation,

A seed of blood on the soil, a flower of blood in the
skies.

We march to make of earth a hell and call it heaven.
The heart of mankind we have smitten with the whip
of the sorrows seven;

The Mother of God lies bleeding in our black and
gold sunrise.”

Estrild’s presence in his camp is proclaimed with
fierce savagery by Humber himself:

“Have I not slain the Alban hosts and bound
The necks of princes? Yea, their glorious star
And wonder for whom three kingdoms strove,
Estrild,

Led to my ships? The queens of the Orcades
Are slaves and concubines to private Norsemen.”

Ironically Estrild means Battle Goddess! Born
in glory, but bound to slavery by Humber and taken as
a victor’s trophy by Loctrine, she seems to have found
a brief interregnum of joy and motherhood with him.
History tells us that she perished with her daughter when
Gwendolen defeated Loctrine and killed him. How would
Sri Aurobindo have handled her presence? Another
Rodogune, born to sorrow and drown in the ocean of
sorrow in mortal things, perhaps.

Humber himself is typical of the man who thinks he
is a superman because of some negligible battle victories
which has filled his wretched coffers. He has reached a
stage of megalomania when he thinks of himself superior
even to their god, Thor:

“Have I not harried Ireland, Denmark, Orkney?
Shattered the Pictish wheels, broken their scythes,
Unpeopled living tracts? Why then prefer you
Thor’s self to me? Has he filled up your ships
With gold and wines of France, rich rings and jewels,
Metals untold and beautiful sharp steel?
Who has enriched and aggrandised you all
Till you are gods, to each hand a country’s wealth,
To each sword a century’s glory? Who has given

The commonest men beauty divine to sleep with,
Made queens your slaves and kings your thralls, you
Norsemen?”

So, day after day, whenever I happen to take up
some book of Sri Aurobindo, I get lost in conversations
with the voices that call from the past and marvel. My
father was right. One has to read the entire literature of
the world if we seek to understand the Aurobindonian
canon. Is it possible?

* * *

Linguistic Communities and New Historiography

Constructing a Maritime Tradition in Colonial Odisha - I

Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty

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of India, Adjunct Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Human
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University of Orissa and Former Professor and Head,
Department of English, University of Hyderabad.

Mid to late 19th Century witnessed the attempts of
a new literati in colonial Odisha to fashion out different
versions of ‘histories’ and ‘historiography’ including the
maritime ones. The European settler colonies dotting
the Coromandel Coast, including the undivided Bengal,
generated native interest in the maritime traditions,
especially in the fabled Kalinga region that subsumes the
present territorial limits of modern Odisha.

This essay will chronicle the efforts of a new
breed of contributors to journals like Utkal Sahitya that
attempted to construct its own brand of historiography
that relied largely on myths, legends, folklore and literary
sources rather than on empirically verifiable methods of
European historiography, current then and now, although
it may have evolved over a period in time.

While the Kalinga maritime tradition in the Bay of
Bengal, the Gulf of Malacca, the Indonesian Archipelago,
and the Indian Ocean Region were ‘facts’ of maritime
life from the Christian era, no systematic accounts in

It seems to me that television is exactly like a gun. Your enjoyment of it is determined by
which end of it you’re on.

Alfred Hitchcock

'historical terms' are available in the region as part of an archive. In the absence of this, efforts of writers like Birupakasha Kar and others appear to be part of a new imaginary in colonial Odisha for legitimating a demand for a linguistic state.

The Context

The British arrived in Odisha officially in 1803 nearly a hundred years after they annexed Bengal for political and economic gain. It must be noted that the British rule in Odisha was an indirect one. For the most part, especially in the feudatory states and kingdoms the so-called 'Gadhat' states, they ruled through political agents. In the coastal belt of Puri, Cuttack, Balasore and Ganjam, called 'Mogalbandi' there was the Zamindari system, much of which was controlled by Bengali owners, distantly located in Bengal and politically overseen by the local Gumasta [agent] and the British officials posted at Cuttack, responsible for land revenue and the maintenance of law and order. The economy was in shambles, as may be noticed from the writings of a sympathetic British official G. Toynbee. The taxes that the British levied in colonial India varied from place to place but the following extract may give a representative account of the situation prevailing in most parts of the country:

The taxes levied in different places varied with the idiosyncrasies of the Government or of the individual tax collector: but among them it may be noticed that people were mulcted for having houses to live in, or, if they had no houses, for their temporary sheds or huts. If they ate grain, their food was taxed at every stage in progress through the country; if they ate meat, they paid duty on it through their butchers. When they married, they paid for beating drums or putting up marquees. If they rejoiced at the set of Hindu festivals, they paid again; at the 'holi', for instance, on the red powder which they threw at each other; at the 'pala', on the ornaments which they tied to the horns of the cattle. Drinkers were mulcted by an exercise and smokers by a tobacco duty

Weavers, oil-pressers, fishermen, and such low-caste industrials, had as a matter of course to bear a special burden. No house or slaves or cattle could be sold, no cloth could be stamped, no money could be changed-even prayers for rain could not be offered, without payment on each operation of its special and peculiar tax. In short, a poor man could not shelter himself, or clothe himself, or earn his bread, or eat it, or marry, or rejoice, or even ask his gods for better weather, without contributing separately on each individual act to the necessities of the State! These were the regular taxes merely, and it certainly does not seem likely that any money could have slipped by owing to their want of comprehensiveness; but the revenue accounts of the times show that supplementary measures were occasionally found necessary to reach men who would otherwise have escaped.

To what extent would the state of the economy have a bearing on the nature of the colonial modernity practiced by the colonial State? The genesis of the first full-fledged journal in the region owes its existence to a mid century economic crisis: Utkal Dipika arose, as a direct answer to the great famine of Odisha dated 1866.

Colonial Modernity: Contested Space

Just as the Periodical Press has become axiomatic for reading social and cultural history today, perhaps the same could be said regarding its link with colonial modernity. One must begin the exercise by admitting that there cannot be a uniform and consistent alignment between the vernacular press and the colonial modernity in India; the vast complexity in the historical situation does not permit such a unilinear approach. This modernity arguably came in a complex, contestatory and ambivalent manner, and left lasting impressions on the political formations and the language communities.

The modernity propelled by the colonial State and its appendages rested upon the 'High Modernism' of the European Enlightenment with its belief in the primacy of the West and the rhetoric of progress. In the subject

Being President is like a jackass. There's nothing to do but to stand there and take it.

Lyndon B. Johnson

nations and regions such as colonial Odisha, it produced various forms of resistance and acquiescence. One will therefore have to deal necessarily with the fractured relationships and the complex negotiations between the two. Again, resistance to colonialism came in the form of homegrown vernacular or alternative modernity among the emerging gentry. What was the nature of such modernity and how did they evolve over time? Critics like Satya P. Mohanty and others in recent times have underlined some of these developments in the domain of the 19th Century cultural history in India. Next, one will have to unveil the theoretical underpinning while outlining the historical change recorded in the pages of the journals. And finally, we need to contextualize the periodical press and colonial modernity in nationalist and regional frames adopted by cultural historians.

English education comes Janus-faced to the native gentry. The best of the response, as we shall see later, went beyond mere acquiescence to questioning the dominant paradigms and programmatic action by the colonial State and administration. Where the subjugated could not respond on equal terms, they deployed the mode of irony and sarcasm as weapons. This is best expressed by Fakir Mohan Senapati through prose and poetry in Utkal Sahitya. Here is Fakir Mohan's narrator in Six Acres and a Third(Chha Mana AthaGuntha) mimicking the style and claims of the British historian James Todd:

There was only one pond in Gobindapur, and everyone in the village was used to it. It was fairly large, covering ten to twelve batis, with banks ten to twelve arms-lengths high, and was known as Asura Pond. In the middle once stood sixteen stone pillars, on which lamps were lighted. We are unable to recount the true story of who had it dug, or when. It is said that demons, the Asura, dug it themselves. That could well be true. Could humans like us dig such an immense pond? Here is a brief history of Asura pond by Ekadusia, the ninety –five-year-old weaver.

The demon Banasura ordered that the pond be dug, but did not pick up shovels and baskets to dig it himself. On his orders, a host of demons

came one night and did the work. But when day broke, it had not yet been completed: there was a gap of twelve to fourteen arms-lengths in the south bank, which had not been filled in. By now it was morning, and the villagers were already up and about. Where could the demons go? They dug a tunnel connecting the pond to the banks of the river Ganga, escaped through it, bathed in the holy river, and then disappeared. During the Baruni festival on the Ganga, the holy waters of the river used to gush through the tunnel into the pond. But, as the villagers became sinful, the rivers no longer did this. English educated babus, do not be too critical of our local historian, Ekadusia Chandra. If you are, half of what Marshman and Todd have written will not survive the light of scrutiny.

The point is simple: if one were to accept unquestioningly the 'historical truths' peddled by James Todd without the need for verification of 'facts' of the empirical kind just because he as an Englishman enjoyed a celebrity status, then why should the 95 year old, local historian Ekadusia's claim be discarded and treated as outlandish? In any case, it is now well known that a great deal that Todd wrote about the kingdoms of Rajasthan was garnered by fancy.

Fakir Mohan, as the narrator, however, is not primarily interested in the truth value of the [western] historical claims. By parrot-talking the sanctified 'historical' method, mechanically, listing items and building an inventory such as the following: 'covering ten to twelve batis, 'with banks, ten to twelve arms-lengths high,' 'gap of twelve to fourteen arms-lengths in the south bank,' etc. and casually slipping in the remark, as part of contrapuntal reading: 'we are unable to recount the true story of who had it dug,' he punctures the western pretension to knowledge and unveils the possibility of an alternative epistemology.

(To be concluded)

* * *

Two things are infinite – the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe.

Albert Einstein

**Women's empowerment only if they
become decision-makers:
P.V. Narasimha Rao**

(Newspaper report on Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao, former Prime Minister releasing 'EMANCIPATION BEFORE EMPOWERMENT – A Case Study of Women's Problems in Visakhapatnam' authored by Dr.B.Meena Rao, Dr.M.Vijayalakshmi and Dr.P.V.L. Ramana, at a meeting organized by Centre for Policy Studies, on August 6, 1999)

Emancipation of women leading to their empowerment will be possible only when they also became decision-makers, Mr.P.V.Narasimha Rao, opined.

Speaking after releasing 'Emancipation before empowerment' – a study of women's problems in Visakhapatnam brought out by the Centre for Policy Studies – he said that empowerment of women had been an accepted fact in the country for long, but due to disputes over property issues, certain distortions had crept in.

In Telangana region, he recalled, a wife in a household played a distinct role in family affairs and husband would consult her before spending money. In farmers' families women were also wage earners and so they had a say in decision making. Gender equality of sorts was prevalent in such a set-up, but it was absent only in elite families because of property issues, he said.

During the freedom struggle, he pointed out that women equally played an important role, including

courting imprisonment.

Mr. Narasimha Rao said that when the Centre presented the New Education Policy document, the issue of empowerment of women as part of that policy was discussed threadbare at all levels.

He said that mere passing of laws on subjects like dowry and gender equality would not do unless the implementation machinery was also geared up to do the task.

Stating that 33 per cent reservation for women that was available in the country was unique, and not even in advanced countries like the U.S. women did have such a privilege, he added.

Congratulating the effort of the Centre for Policy Studies, he said that this study should be the beginning for a more comprehensive studies leading to measures that would fulfill the objective.

The former Prime Minister also honoured Dr. B.Meena Rao, Dr.M.Vijayalakshmi and Dr. P.V.L.Ramana, who undertook the task of preparing the study.

Mr.A. Sankara Rao, trustee of the Centre, presented a shawl to Mr.Narasimha Rao. Earlier, Prof. A. Prasanna Kumar, Director of the Centre, welcomed the gathering.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*, August 8, 1999)

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