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(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

WHAT GANDHIJI MEANS TO US

India was an infant democracy, having won independence only five and a half months earlier. Still, it was a nation that was thrown into a state of shock and disbelief on that fateful Friday evening, January 30, 1948, when the news spread about the assassination of the Father of the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi was a different father. He had little time for his own family. His family was the largest in the world. It had no caste or religion. It transcended boundaries and borders. Three hundred and thirty three million people of India wept and many of them went without food that night. The radio, the only available medium for quick transmission of news those days, wept throughout broadcasting doleful music and messages of grief.

We were boys then who did not immediately understand the reason for such mourning and overwhelming grief when we returned home from the playground after a game of cricket. Some of us even heaved a sigh of relief as the sun set on the horizon as there would be no school the following day. Shocking it was to see our elders crying, glued as they were throughout that night to the radio set. Food was not cooked in the house and almost all the elders fasted in grief. Tears rolled down everyone's cheeks when the radio broadcast a sobbing Jawaharlal Nehru's "Light has gone out of our lives" speech. Friday, January 30, 1948 was the gloomiest day in every Indian home. 31st was no less. Millions of people cried inconsolably hearing, Melville de Mellow's commentary, broadcast live by All India Radio, on the funeral of Gandhiji that Saturday evening.

Sixty years after that, raising the question '*what Gandhiji means to us*' might sound odd if not ridiculous. Still it has its own relevance even though some question the 'relevance' of Gandhiji for today's India of a billion

plus people most of whom do not know much about him. We have seldom been a nation during the last sixty years to know the value of the Father of the Nation. We are still a backward country, fragmented socially and culturally with a large percentage of population, larger than the population of the United States, living below the poverty line. There are, of course, islands of prosperity where people feel people differently from the mainstream.

Romain Rolland called Gandhiji "A Christ without a cross." Gandhi bore a greater burden, a heavier load of human misery and suffering and for much longer time, than Christ had done. He also led as pure and hard a life as the heroes of our epics had supposedly done to protect righteousness. Gandhiji's religion was for the entire humanity, not for a region or set of people. "Not a Sunday show", as he himself declared, "but an hourly and minutely mentor and monitor" emanating from a belief "in the ordered moral government of the universe" that is "subject to the acid test of reason." In short 'a religion that would free the world of all ills.'

True economics stands for social justice and Swaraj means freedom in terms of empowerment of the weak. Ernest Barker wrote that Gandhi "had a Platonic feeling that governing and administrative persons should live on a pittance, content with the opportunities of service and not expecting greater rewards." Such ideas would be considered weird and 'uncivilized' in today's India where the salaries of top leaders and civil servants get revised steeply and regularly as they too have to compete with those in the affluent private sector. Gandhiji may not mean much to those in politics, especially those in power. But to the vast majority of people not only in India but all over the world he means a lot. Because "he stirred up loving hearts to action" and "lived *for* as well as *in* mankind."
- The Editor

"India should return to herself, her own culture, her civilization, her genius and her individuality." - MAHATMA GANDHI

Sharada Prasad is no more...

In the death of Shri H.Y.Sharada Prasad India has lost an erudite scholar and astute thinker who ably served Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi as an advisor and speech writer. In 1995 Shri Prasad visited Visakhapatnam along with Rajmohan Gandhi. In a letter he wrote to the Editor of the Bulletin, dated 17 January 2002, Shri Prasad said: "I follow your Bulletin regularly and I can claim to keep in touch with you."

Centre for Policy Studies conveys its profound grief and condolences to the members of the bereaved family. His article below was published in the Times of India in 1990.

GANDHIJI VERSUS GANDHIANS

- H. Y. Sharada Prasad

One of the most thoughtful conversations I have witnessed was between Ivan Illich and Indira Gandhi. The unconventional thinker had been invited to India.

"I did not want to come to India," he began. An unusual thing to say to the Prime Minister of a country which had invited him, and wholly contrary to the rules of polite conversation. "Because I had a deep prejudice against India." He noticed that his listener's eyebrows had arched higher. "The reason for my prejudice was that you had got Gandhi on the cheap... in a prophylactic dose." In short, he felt we had immunized ourselves against his teaching.

If the Gandhian medicine had been at least partially ingested by us, we would not be having so much violence in the land. We have begun to accept violence as part of the Indian way of life. Newspapers have begun relegating Punjab and Kashmir to the back page. Even ten violent deaths a day do not seem to merit more than a single column heading. All India Radio has invented a masterly euphemism for murder, killings, bomb-throwing and riots which are referred to as "un-toward incidents." The Hindi equivalent is "apriya ghatnaye," as if the hurling of a bomb is nothing more naughty than a street urchin throwing a stone. Have we come to this, that we even shy away from calling violence by its name?

The Indian Mind

Many in India must wonder whether we deserved

Gandhiji. It has sometimes been said that Gandhiji came before his time. But don't all revolutionary thinkers come before their time?

It is also claimed that no nation other than India could have produced a Gandhi. But he himself was under no such illusion. A new little book "Gandhi And Charlie" traces the friendship between the Mahatma and C. F. Andrews who once advanced the theory that the Indian mind was especially hospitable to non-violence, having renounced blood-lust in its past.

Gandhiji would have none of this. "Is this historically true? I see no sign of it either in the Mahabharata or the Ramayana. The incarnations are described as certainly bloodthirsty, revengeful and merciless to the enemy. The battles described with no less zest than now, and the warriors are equipped with weapons of destruction such as could be possibly conceived by the human imagination. The finest hymn composed by Tulsidas in praise of Rama gives the first place to strike down the enemy." This was written on July 6, 1918. In the years that followed, there were moments when the people of India gave amazing demonstrations of non-violent behaviour. But they were short moments. The partition riots were thousands of times more murderous than Chauri Chaura. The Mahatma lost faith in his magic. His own sacrifice did not appease the Kali.

Today there is an attempt to invoke the name of Rama in calls for new battles, the same Rama that Gandhiji mentioned in his letter to Andrews in 1918, the same Rama uttering whose name Gandhiji died. And what are our Gandhians doing about it? The word Gandhians calls to my mind another incident. I once asked D. G. Tendulkar, author of the eight-volume "Life Of Gandhiji," why the Mahatma who had discouraged many from writing his biography had let him do so and even co-operated with him. D. G. replied: "Because he knew I was not a Gandhian and so he could trust me." There is a great deal of difference between Gandhiji and Gandhians. Gandhiji was ready to admit he was in the wrong. To Gandhians he and they are invariably right. Gandhi had an open mind, their minds are closed. Gandhiji had a sense of humour, he laughed. Gandhian gentlemen and ladies are afflicted by seriousness. The greatest current preoccupation of Gandhians is Nehru-demolition. But Nehru was a creation of Gandhiji.

Caste Tensions

Some historians maintain that Gandhiji's life was a

failure, for he lost and Jinnah won and India was divided. Forty years after his death it looks as though he is losing another battle – this time to Ambedkar. It is sad that Gandhians are not coming forward with any ideas on how to handle caste tensions. Constitutional safeguards are understandable and constitutional action is always preferable to the unconstitutional sort. But Gandhi was never tired of telling us that there were more things between heaven and earth than constitutions. A nation's heart ought to be larger than its constitution. The conquest of violence will be the great challenge before humankind in the coming decades. It will not do to assume that violence will disappear the same way imperialism and racial discrimination have. The latter did not yield ground on their own. They were pushed out. Millions strove and suffered to do so. Historical forces do not operate on their own, human will creates history.

In this world-wide battle against violence, Gandhiji will remain a great inspiration. But whether India will play a part – as it did in the fight against imperialism and racialism – remains to be seen. We seem to be engaged in small things. Our Gandhians, who have become a closed shop, seem to be concerned more with problems like decentralization and opposition to big irrigation projects. Not that decentralization and conservation are unimportant. But it does not help if the abler Gandhians turn themselves into social scientists and seminar stars rather than social activists. Violence is growing everywhere in the country. It can be conquered only through the methods of Gandhiji. Will our Gandhians help in this task, or are we condemned to proving Illich right in thinking that Gandhiji belongs to the world and not India?

(The Times of India, September 1, 1990)

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WORLD DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS-4

- Prof. M.N.Sastri

YOUTHQUAKE

The world currently contains the largest generation of young people aged between 10 and 24 years – a phenomenon described as *YOUTH QUAKE*. One in every four persons in the world is a youth. Nearly seventy percent of the youth live in developing countries. This number in the developing countries will continue to rise for another thirty years. At the same time both the number and percentage of youth in the industrialized countries are projected to fall. This creates different sets of economic and social challenges

The UN World Youth Report 2005 says that some 209 million young people, or 18 percent of all youth currently live on less than US\$ 1 per day and 130 million on less than US\$ 2 per day. Although the current generation of youth is the best educated so far, 113 million children are not in school and 130 million are illiterate. Young people are reaching adolescence earlier and marrying later, with premarital sex appearing to be on the rise. Ten million young people, most of them from Africa and Asia, are currently living with HIV/AIDS, which is the primary cause of mortality among the youth, followed by violence and injuries. This epidemic is also having a devastating effect of the sexual and reproductive health of young people, as they are particularly vulnerable to infections. There has been an unprecedented rise in the use of illicit drugs worldwide. The demand for drugs among the youth in the developing countries has increased to levels typically found in industrial countries. Juvenile delinquency continues to be a threat to the society. Over the past decades young people have been increasingly involved in conflicts and militant activities. Political and religious leaders have not taken any meaningful steps to contain the militancy among the youth but have been involving them in militant activities.

The proliferation of information and communications technology, which has accompanied the process of globalization during the last decade, has presented both opportunities and challenges for the youth. Jose Antonio Ocampo, UN Undersecretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in his foreword to the World Youth Report observes, "While there is still enormous diversity among young people worldwide, the process of urbanization and rapid advances in information and communications technology have arguably contributed to the emergence of a new global media-driven youth culture."

Many youth, especially in the developing countries, have not been benefited by the opportunities offered by globalization. Education systems do not match the market requirements and as a consequence more educated youth end up being unemployed or underemployed. Despite the fact that youth are receiving more education, youth unemployment has increased to record levels. With a total of 88 million, youth unemployment is the highest in Western Asia, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. In rural areas, lack of employment leads the youth to migrate to urban areas. These migrants do some service to the urban people. In due course they begin to emulate urban

lifestyles. When they cannot afford to do so they engage in criminal activities. It is projected that by 2030, as many as 60 percent of the urban dwellers will be under the age 18. If timely measures are not taken in terms of providing basic services, employment and housing, the urban youth bulge will grow up in poverty.

Of particular concern is the proliferation of street children and homeless orphans in urban settlements in developing countries. They are vulnerable to abduction and trafficking and sexual abuse and diseases. They also face the risk of being involved in or victimized by crime.

India and China, the most populous fast developing countries provide a contrasting picture of youth population. In 2006 the youth population of the 10-24 age group in China was 319 million (24 percent) as against 331 million (30 percent) in India. The projected figures for 2025 are 256 million (18 percent) for China and 349 million (25 percent) for India. The drop in the youth population of China is the result of its one-child policy. In 2020 the average age of an Indian will be only 29 years, compared to 37 for China and the US, 45 for Western Europe and 48 for Japan.

India has thus the largest youth population in the world. Capitalizing this rich youth potential, India can become an economic power in the coming years. Unfortunately no serious efforts are on board to channel the youth power by training them in the skills required for gainful employment. Large sections of the youth are also frustrated with societal, economic disparities, lack of agrarian and industrial reforms and the indifferent attitude of bureaucracy and political leadership. Added to this, religious, fundamentalist and external forces capitalize on the weakness of the youth.

In such a scenario, the Naxal (Maoist) movement presents itself to the youth as an alternative that claims to work for a more egalitarian society. The movement is more grass root-based and more sensitive to the needs of the poor and oppressed. Large swathes of territory covering over 40 percent of geographical area in the sub-continent extending from "PASUPATI (Kathmandu) to TIRUPATI" (AP) with 35 percent of population have become the haunting grounds of this movement. Its challenge would be one of the key factors that will determine India's growth paradigm in the coming years. Failure to provide India's youth pool with the skills required for playing its role in the nation-building programmes could result in a demographic nightmare.

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Diamond Jubilee of a Launch **PANDIT NEHRU IN VIZAG**

Excerpts from Jawaharlal Nehru's speech made in Vizag when he came here to launch the first vessel, *Jala Usha*, built by Hindustan Shipyard on March 14, 1948.

'In launching this ship many thoughts come to me, because this is the first ship of such size to be built and launched in India in many centuries. Inevitably one thinks of the ages when ship-building was one of the premier industries of India Somehow the launching of a ship brings to mind the analogy of the ship of State which was also launched a few months ago in weather As I was watching this good ship *Jala-Usha* launched into the sea, I thought of the ship of State entering the sea. Let the sea be a symbol for us in the future. Let us send the ship of State, that is India, into the sea with a stout heart and in that way not only develop India but enhance her stature and enable her co-operate with other nations.'

(Selected Speeches, Vol-I, p-118)

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MEDIA

- Dr. R V Vaidyanatha Ayyar IAS (Retd.)

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Institutional Role

A free society is inconceivable without a free press. The maxim that democracy is government by discussion is qualified by the condition that the discussion should be informed and "rational." Media has the institutional responsibility to facilitate informed and rational discussion, and to help citizens make intelligent choices through continual provision of accurate information, setting agenda and placing issues in a proper context. The role of the press, which before the advent of radio was the one and only media, was considered so important that it was named the *Fourth Estate*. Editors and journalists are "officeholders", though not elected or selected by the citizens. Many journalists have, rightly so, a high sense of self-esteem, and consider their vocation to be a calling. They "see themselves as guardians of the public's right to know; the sole custodians of truth; and they see every move they make motivated by the need of the public to know." They feel that they are the watchdogs of public interest, and have a duty to expose

corruption in high places and improper exercise of power. An adversarial attitude to Power and Authority comes instinctively to the journalistic profession. It has been said of the TV network correspondents in the United States:

Privately almost all network correspondents expressed a strong belief in their ability to effect change in public policy through their work, if not as individuals, then certainly as a group. Some considered their political powers "frightening" and awesome," while others merely depicted them as a necessary part of the political process.

Many senior correspondents and editors in India have a similar belief in their power over men and matters. As with other professionals, including civil servants, journalists are guided by complex motives. Public spirit is tempered by private aspiration, ambition and craving for recognition. Peer recognition and professional reward come from feats of *expose* [investigative journalism], crisis reporting and shaking up of Power and Authority.

The Double-Headed Institution

Media has a dual character, in two senses. It is a medium as well as a creator of news, attitudes and agenda. It conveys as well as directs. The news it reports alerts policymakers, interest groups, and political parties to emerging issues, and to threats and opportunities. Media is a very useful vehicle for policy and political entrepreneurship, for advancing ones interests and causes. An event or development that is reported is an opportunity to gain popularity by taking up an issue and by pressing government to respond to it in a way that it prefers. It alerts government to the need to address an issue either symbolically or substantively. Without the media, every one would be groping in the dark. Yet the media is not a passive medium. Information is often conveyed and commented upon with a view to shape the public agenda, mould public opinion, and push action along a particular course towards a particular goal. Media reduces the costs of collective strategies for attracting media coverage to their interests and causes, and their collective action.

The dualism of the media in the second sense lies in the fact that media is not only a calling but also a business, as much a business as selling soap. In fact, some are dependent upon cross-subsidization from the other lines of business owned by the proprietor. As a business media is under constant pressure to sell, and to offer what sells, rather than what as the Fourth Estate it ought to

offer. World over, there is a tendency towards concentration in the media business. Giant media conglomerates operate in many countries and offer a vast variety of business spreading across books, newspapers, radio, TV, film and other entertainment. As Big Business media has been the target of sharp criticism. Thus

As more organs of the media are controlled are owned by large corporations, whose prime interest is financial, the journalistic principles of a publication can be compromised by – or dissipated in –business needs. The demand [is] for more circulation, more advertising, and more profit. To achieve these, the media will cater to populist fears and prejudices, entertain instead of enlighten, pander instead of lead. They reduce big issues to oversimplified personality battles, because both people and disputes make good reading and viewing.

There is some merit in the criticism, particularly regarding television. However, it is important to bear in mind three factors: ● media cannot survive without being a business, ● size of firms and concentration in markets are often the result of exogenous factors like technological change rather than endogenous corporate policies, and ● there are limits to what government or business can offer to people what they ought to have than what they wish to have.

There is an intrinsic tension between the two roles of media, as a quasi-public institution and media as business. This intrinsic tension erupts occasionally within a newspaper or news channel, with the editor and the proprietor taking different views of their roles, and of what and how something should be reported. As in similar confrontations in partnerships, say between ministers and civil servants, it is not proper to consider that one side is always right and the other always wrong.

Coverage, Style and Treatment

The praxis of policy requires a good understanding of how media would respond to an issue or event. The policy entrepreneur needs to continually assess how the issues and the policy-in- the making would play in the media. It is useful to draw a distinction between *coverage, style and treatment*. Coverage encompasses questions like what constitutes news, and what ends up being reported. Style relates to the general tone and tenor adopted by a newspaper to present reports. Coverage and style very much depend upon what the proprietor and editor would like their newspaper

to be. And which clientele they wish to cater to. The clientele could be general or specialized, international, national or local. For example, an elaborate exposition of accounting standards would find a place, may be even on the front page, in a business newspaper but would be considered too arcane by a newspaper with a general audience. Some newspapers would like to cultivate an image of being somber and magisterial as *The Hindu*, *Times*, London or *The New York Times* were in yesteryears; some cultivate the image of being congenial, and sometime outright tabloid. Coverage is related to two factors: *intrinsic audience interest* [IAI], and *societal significance* [SS]. A newspaper wishes to cover reports that are of intrinsic interest to its clientele. The more people to whom it matters, and the more it matters to them, the more newsworthy an issue or an event is. The more the coverage of newsworthy issues and events, the higher is the circulation, and in turn the higher are the advertisement revenues, income and profits. Issues and events, which a newspaper considers socially important, that is of SS, are also covered. However, the choice of issues and events to be covered is influenced more by IAS than SS, a source of regret for activists and public interest groups. In general, the following types of stories are newsworthy: ● events and issues that affect the daily lives of people, ● the unusual and the extraordinary, such as natural and man-made disasters, ● Events and issues connected with Causes in vogue such as environment, ● events and matters that arouse curiosity and inquisitiveness such as the lives and lifestyles of celebrities, ● events that shock such as victimization, social oppression, and profiteering, ● *expose* of corruption in high places, misdemeanor, and bungling by government functionaries, and ● controversy, conflict, spectacle, and drama.

Newsworthiness is enhanced by the style of presentation. The human angle comes out more vividly if a participant narrates the story instead of a reporter or any other third party like an expert. This is all the more so in television whose strength lies in its visual appeal. This is the reason why reporters insist that the person briefing them should be willing to be identified in the report, and further allow his remarks to be put in quotes and attributed to him. This is a demand that is not to the liking of civil servants groomed in the tradition of anonymity. Narration by a participant has also the advantage of making the story spicy as the participant brings into the narration passion, and is likely to go beyond bland narration of facts, and offer opinions and

take positions. A controversy becomes livelier if both sides are asked to present their side of the story. Apart from presenting balance, it dramatizes conflict. In such conflicts, a pugilist comes off better than a staid official or a professor. Spicy one-liners are more effective than complex elaboration of facts and ideas, more so in the sound-byte world of television. Stories about ideas, policies and programs in the abstract neither appeal to the journalists nor to the audience; nor are they easy to address. If one wishes coverage of policies and programs it is necessary to infuse a human touch in press briefings and handouts- or to use cliché, give a spin.

Treatment relates to the elaboration of an issue. There can be different forms of treatment: ● a factual narration of facts and description of events, ● an interpretation of facts and events, ● an extensive analysis and exposition of significance and consequences ● advocacy and position taking in a campaign mode.

In general, SS influences treatment more than IAI. The confluence of IAS and SS shapes coverage and treatment. Issues that are low in terms of both IAS and SS are likely to receive low coverage; the treatment is likely to be matter-of-fact. An example is the transfers and postings of government officials. If, however, a celebrity like Kiran Bedi is transferred, one can expect not only high coverage perhaps on the front page, but also editorial comment and center page articles. Issues that have high IAI but low on SS would receive moderate coverage and a little interpretation. Examples are weather and sports in general.

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A PRIME MINISTER'S INDICTMENT OF THE BUREAUCRACY

Memorable words from Rajiv Gandhi's speech in Parliament in October 1988 in support of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

It was Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister who "attempted to give a national dimension to the process" of revitalizing the foundations of our democracy. As Rudrangshu Mukherjee put it "by pursuing in earnest the project of institutionalizing village self-governance through Panchayats, Rajiv Gandhi was carrying an idea that was close to Mahatma Gandhi."

The speech Rajiv Gandhi made in Parliament on October 1989 in support of the Constitutional

Amendments Bill was significant for two reasons in particular. First as he aptly said “ these constitutional amendments are of truly historic and revolutionary significance.” The young Prime Minister was attempting to do what his predecessors could not and in the process was aiming to bring in a paradigm shift in Indian democracy. In his own words: “Our basic aim is to secure constitutional sanctity for democracy in the panchayats and nagarpalikas and devolution to them of adequate power and finances to ensure the people’s participation in the development process.”

To him the amendment bills constituted “the most significant transformation in the governance of the Indian polity since the Constitution entered force.” Secondly Rajiv Gandhi made a bold and frontal attack on the evils plaguing the system. In a way the Prime Minister was owning up responsibility on behalf of the Congress party that had been in power except for a short while for the failure of the ruling party to strengthen the most important third tier, the foundation of the federal system. The indictment of the union and state governments for failing to check corruption and other related evils was no less forthright. Corruption, said Rajiv Gandhi, could only be ended by giving power to Panchayats and by making Panchayats responsible to the people. They are also,” asserted the Prime Minister “ a charter for ending bureaucratic oppression, technocratic tyranny, crass inefficiency, bribery, jobbery, nepotism corruption and millions of other malfeasances that afflict the poor of our villages, towns and cities. The bills are the warrant for ending the reign of the power brokers, of the intermediaries whom Shakespeare called ‘the caterpillars of the commonwealth.’” He claimed that the bills would fill ‘a yawning gap in the polity.’ The Jawahar Rozgar Yojna and the Nehru Rozgar Yojna would empower the elected representatives of the people at the grassroots by placing the responsibility for development administration in their hands. The Prime Minister came down heavily on the sluggish and corrupt bureaucracy at the local level. The choice of harsh words deserves special attention because the nation’s highest political leader put his accusing finger at the officialdom for scuttling the development process and for preventing the people from exercising their right to actively participate in the political process. “ No longer,” warned Rajiv Gandhi “ will the people have to run from one bureaucratic closed door to another, from one indifferent official to another. No longer will they have to bribe and cajole their way to securing their legitimate rights. We are bringing to an end the

Kafkaesque nightmare through which the people at the grassroots have lived. Their problems will now be solved at their doorsteps.” Rajiv Gandhi not only wanted to create ‘an all India system of local self-governance’ but also a uniform system of reservation for the disadvantaged sections through legislation relating to it in the domain of state powers. Rebutting criticism about the encroachments being attempted by the union government over the powers of the state governments, Rajiv Gandhi said that care was taken ‘to leave the state list as it is and to leave it entirely to state legislature to draft the law on the subject and to formulate and pass the necessary orders.’ The essential purpose, according to Rajiv Gandhi, was to ensure regularity in elections and forestalling arbitrary and prolonged suspensions. Some state governments viewed the amendments with suspicion and feared a dilution of their powers because of the flow of funds from the union government directly to the local bodies.

As a result of these 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments made in 1993 India has moved towards ‘multi-level federalism’ with the democratic base of the Indian polity significantly widened. There are now 600 district panchayats, about 600 block panchayats at the intermediate level and 2,50,000 gram panchayats in rural India where 72.2% of India’s population lives. Urban India with a population of 27.8% has 96 corporations, 1700 town municipalities and 1900 nagar panchayats. There are more than 3 million elected representative in local bodies including a large percentage of women and representatives from the weaker sections of the society.

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GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE - I

- Prof. D.V. Bhaskara Rao
Retd. Professor, Andhra University

In recent years climate change has been the main concern of scientists, politicians, administrators and the general public alike. In scientific terms climate is the description of the atmosphere, oceans, biosphere, cryosphere (sea ice, snow cover, continental ice and mountain glaciers) and the land surface. The climatic system is mainly driven by the radiation energy coming from the planet Sun. This solar energy induces motion of the atmosphere through non-uniform heating at the earth's surface and due to the typical characteristics of

the revolution of earth around its own axis and around the Sun. It is known that earth's climate passed through several changes with 3 glacial periods at about 2,300 and 700 million years ago with interspersing warming periods. This natural variability of the climate with a time scale of tens of thousands of years was explained by astronomer Milankovich that changes in eccentricity, obliquity and the orbital precision would produce climate variations with a periodicity of 100000, 40000 and 19000 years respectively.

At the present time, climate change and global warming are nearly synonymous with the observed trends of increasing temperature of the earth's surface and enveloping atmosphere and its consequences as observed in climate variations. Global warming is identified since 1970s almost synchronizing with the global industrialization. The earth-atmosphere system has a mean temperature of 15 C due to the presence of the atmosphere as compared to an expected temperature of 18 C without the atmosphere. The constituents of the atmosphere play the role as of a greenhouse (glasshouse) allowing the incoming solar radiation to pass through but absorbing the terrestrial radiation emitted from the earth's surface. This effect is known as "Greenhouse effect and the gases that contribute for this effect are termed as "Greenhouse gases". Of all the constituents, carbon dioxide is identified to be chief contributor for the present global warming with its concentrations rapidly increasing due to the rapid industrialization since 1950s. Observations of carbon dioxide concentrations show a rapid increase starting from 1950s with the amount of 295 ppm (parts per million volume) in 1910 to 310 ppm in 1950 and 365 ppm in 2000. Analysis of past data clearly indicates increasing trends in the temperature at the rate of 0.128°C/decade during the last 50 years as compared to 0.074°C/decade in the last 100 years. Methane, another greenhouse gas, is 20 times more effectual than carbon dioxide at entrapping heat in the atmosphere resources from rice paddies and fossil fuel manufacture. Methane concentrations are noted to increase from 900 ppb (parts per billion volume) in 1900 to 1100 ppb in 1950 and 1800 ppb in 2000. Nitrous oxide is another greenhouse gas with its source from nylon and nitric acid production, cars with catalytic converters, the use of fertilizers in agriculture and the burning of organic matter. Rigorous in-depth modeling studies have shown that the observed global warming during the last 3 decades is due to the increase of the concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases.

The observed increase of temperature is over both the land and ocean surfaces, but with the increasing trends to be more over land. For the Indian region, the trends of warming are 0.22°C/decade during 1971-2005 as compared to 0.05°C/decade during 1901-2005.

One of the important consequences of global warming is the sea level rise due to melting of polar ice. The Arctic and Antarctic polar ice cap regions are maintained through a mass balance with the oceans contributing 8mm of water as snow fall and the same amount of water returning to the oceans through the melting at the edges of icebergs. This balance was affected in recent years with the observed increase of global average sea level of 4 cm during the last 50 years. The estimated rates of sea level rise are 0.3 to 0.8 mm/year during 1910 to 1990 and 2.8 mm/year since 1992 whereas it is 3.8 mm/year during the period of 1999-2004. The global warming during the 20th century has significantly contributed to the observed sea level rise through thermal expansion of sea water and wide spread loss of land ice. The sea level rise, a consequence of global warming, is expected to have impacts on coastal systems with an implication that many of these impacts will be detrimental especially for the three-quarters of the world's poor who depend on agricultural systems.

Climate changes have occurred in the past, but always gradually, over thousands of years, giving ecosystems time to adapt. The rapid change that is currently taking place will leave ecosystems vulnerable. Over the next hundred years, the earth's surface temperature is projected to increase by 1.4 to 5.8°C which will be greater than that experienced over the last 10,000 years. The large quantities of water locked in the polar ice caps and glaciers will be released as a consequence of warming. This, together with an increase in the thermal expansion of the oceans, will make the global mean sea level rise by 9 cm to 88 cm. The river Ganges originates in the Himalayas, and is fed by several glaciers. Gangotri, the longest of these with 26 km, is found to be retreating at a rate of 20 m a year compared to about 16 m per year in the past. If the present trend continues, river Ganges could initially swell in volume because of increased melting but then dry out as the water supply in the mountains runs low. This will endanger the lives of about 400 million people who live in the river's plains and depend upon it for their supply of water.

(concluded)

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA – II

(Lecture delivered at Centre for Policy studies,
on July 2, 2008)

- Prof. V. Balamohandas

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(Lecture delivered at Centre for Policy Studies, on July 2, 2008)

We had a great past in that students world over used to come to have their education in the world famous the then Nalanda and Takshasila Universities. We have the treasure of Vedic Knowledge giving us an edge over others in the world. Modern Higher Education was initiated by the British Indian Government when they have established in 1857 universities in the presidential states of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta with the objectives of introducing Indian Elite to European Culture and to produce a cadre of Indians to serve British Administration in Law, Medicine and Teaching. Brain power of India is supposed to be the best in the world with creative talents. Indian Higher Education is the third largest in the world after China and USA. It consists of a variety of institutions with specific objectives for the benefit of students. The status of higher education in India was reviewed by several committees at different points of time and important recommendations have been made from time to time. Higher Education, since it is on the concurrent list is initiated and developed by a complementary role of central and state governments. The Government of India came up with an exclusive HRD Ministry for the overall development of education in India. Many institutions like UGC, AICTE, BCI, MCI, NCTE, etc. have been set up to take care of the special needs. English continues to be medium of instruction and examination for professional courses and research courses enabling those students to have employment in all English speaking countries in the world. Considerable adaptability and flexibility have been found in different stakeholders of higher education.

Our university system has been fragmented with all sorts of vertical and horizontal barriers. Funny enough, we have come to believe in discipline specific universities. We seldom realize that all cutting edge disciplines are essentially cutting across disciplines and departments. There is mismatch between supply and demand for higher education. There is also mushrooming of institutions. The enrolment in higher education is at about 9% while the world average is 25% and in developed countries it is at the level of 80 to 90%. The contradictions between the

rules and reality are many in the policies of the regulatory institutions. There is multiplicity of regulatory institutions also. Higher education in India is said to be over regulated and under governed. The system suffers from lack of effective leadership. The practice of appointment of Vice-Chancellors on political/communal basis is a serious problem. The continuation of the legacy of British affiliating system only in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is a matter of concern. The concept of autonomous colleges has not been encouraging. There is no norm/ceiling for affiliated colleges under the jurisdiction of a university. The infrastructure provision is inadequate in some cases and where it is provided the use is not at the optimum level. In many institutions there are complaints of over crowding in class rooms. The quantity and quality of research is very poor. We are not able to reach the level research even in Chinese Universities in terms of number of research degrees and/or Scientific Papers. Rigidity in subject combinations does not encourage the inter disciplinary studies. Cafeteria approach is found in many of the western universities.

The higher education system must provide for accountability to society and create accountability within. Evaluation of courses and teachers by students as well as peer evaluation of teachers by teachers should be encouraged. There must be focus on upgrading infrastructure, improving the training of teachers, etc. It is particularly important to enhance the ICT infrastructure. A portal on higher education and research would increase interaction and accessibility. A knowledge network would connect all universities and colleges for online open resources. It is necessary to formulate appropriate policies for the entry of foreign institutions into India and the promotion of Indian institutions abroad, while ensuring a level playing field for foreign and domestic institutions within the country. Access for all deserving students be ensured. It is essential to ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to participate in higher education due to financial constraints. Institutions should follow a needs-blind admissions policy. There must be a well-funded and extensive National Scholarship Scheme targeting economically underprivileged students. These recommendations of NKC have far reaching implications for the higher education system. Some are said to be the repetitions of the earlier committees without their reference. The different stakeholders should actively participate in discussions on these recommendations and the consensus arrived at has to be implemented. The

Central Government has already initiated action on some of these recommendations. The higher education will do well if Mc Kinsey 7-S framework is applied as criteria. The 7-S framework includes structure, systems, style, staff, skills, strategy and shared values We need a forward looking strategy for the generation of human resources, which safeguards our interests at global level and also satisfies our internal need for skilled human power. Emerging national needs require the Indian higher education system to organize itself to educate students in competence, skills, knowledge and attitude to succeed in an interdependent world. We should always ensure access, equity, relevance and excellence in higher education. *(concluded)*

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YOUTH FOR THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN VALUES

A voluntary organization has been launched on August 14 for the propagation and promotion of human values in the society beginning at the individual, home, school and college level. Sponsored jointly by Vijay Nirman Company and Centre for Policy Studies (Gayatri Vidya Parishad) the organization will be headed by Shri V. Ajay Kumar, Director Vijay Nirman. Counsellors drawn from educational institutions and service organizations and elders with experience and expertise in their professions are associated with the organization.

The main objectives are to a) create awareness of human values b) propagate and promote them through individual, group and collective endeavour c) to build bridges of understanding and goodwill among people and all sections of the society through educational, social and cultural activities and d) to strive to transform India of the 21st century with 550 million youth under 25 into a socially harmonious, environmentally clean and culturally vibrant nation

The basic goals to start with are a) to try to eliminate violence in thought, word and deed through meetings and constant interaction among the members b) to instill in the young minds such simple but important values as good manners, humility and service c) to help in the promotion of rules of traffic safety in order to eradicate road rage and rash driving d) to devise methods to prevent environmental degradation and to promote protection of the environment and e) saving energy and

water by switching off lights and fans when not required and preventing wastage and leakage of water. The involvement of teachers, students, media and elders is considered important for the success of the organization.

(Courtesy : *The Hindu*, 15-8-2008)

2B OR NOT 2B?

(from *The Guardian Weekly*, July 25-31, 2008, p 25-26)

Last year, in a newspaper article headed “I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking our language”, British journalist John Humphrys argued that texters are “vandals who are doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbours 800 years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary. And they must be stopped”.

As a new variety of language, texting has been condemned as “textese”, “slanguage”, a “digital virus “. According to John Sutherland of University College London, writing in 2002, it is “bleak, bald, sad shorthand. Drab shrinktalk ... Linguistically it’s all pig’s ear ... it masks dyslexia, poor spelling and mental laziness. Texting is penmanship for illiterates”. The use of initial letters for whole words (n for “no”, gf for “girl friend”, cmb “call me back”) is not at all new. People have been initializing common phrases for ages. IOU is known from 1618. There is no difference, apart from the medium of communication, between a modern kid’s “lol” (“laughing out loud”) and an earlier generation’s “Swalk” (“sealed with a loving kiss”).

In texts we find such forms as msg (“message”) and xlnt (“excellent”). Alms any wrd cn be abbrvated in ths wy- though there is no consistency between texters. But this isn’t new either. Eric partridge published his Dictionary of Abbreviations in 1942. It contains dozens of SMS-looking examples, such as agn “again”, mth “month” and gd “good” – 50 years before texting was born.

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SRI KRISHNA CHAITANYA (1486-1533) - II

- Sri Challa Sivasankaram

Days, months and years rolled by and hid in the abyss of eternal time. He was impatient, it was not time

to dither, to vegetate. A shrill call from ether induced him. The hour to act, act resolutely, he felt had arrived. On a fateful night in January following Makara Sankranti in the year 1510 at the age of 25 (denotes the letters that constitute Gayathri) while the village as a whole was caught in the solacing embrace of soul numbing slumber, like Siddhartha twentyfive centuries ago and Aurobindo about a century ago, Gauranga decamped. There intervened a sixteen-mile wide river between his village and Katva the place of destiny. He must swim. The adventurous fanatic within instigated Gaurang to swim lest the villagers including kith and kin, dear and near should hound him to persuade him to retrace steps and return to Mayapur. Inward askesis overpowered him. He was committed to asceticism. Sannyasa was his goal. He feverishly and tenaciously sought for it. He believed stubbornly that renunciation for the Vaishnava was untying of mortal wedlock and entering into spiritual and psychical wedlock with Sri Krishna. The hour arrived, the reputed ascetic Kesav Bharati initiated Gaurang into Sannyasa and named him 'Krishna Chaitanya'. This was the fourth name given to him since he was born. Sannyasa is the fourth and the final ashrama (Turiya Ashrama). Thus Chaitanya passed through all the 4 stages in name and form of attainment. He was an innocent renunciate. Wilde's sarcasm, "A saint has a past and sinner has a future". He disproves Oscar wilde. His life's ardent wish was realized. He was free, more free

than the bird soaring into high sky. He got the consent of his beloved mother to lead life as Sannyasin. Lived Aurobindo five centuries later. Sri Krishna Chaitanya ignored the woman. A saint has a past and sinner has a future who formed better part of his life by dint of wedlock. No attempt from any quarter at dissuading him from assumption of Turiya Asthama bore fruit. It was a supernal saga of triumph, Krishna Chaitanya had during the course of his constant movement, to effect considerable transformation in the careers of devotees who were convinced that their devotion and advocacy of a philosophy then in vogue were not faulty. This type of wooden complacency must be convulsed and in its place his philosophy, his school of thought, his novel way of awakening the people to the reality that Sri Krishna was the God without a second had to be inserted. In his triumphant march to attain his end he never wavered, never looked back. Forward was the march. He defeated the votaries of Advaita vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya. Many a pandit, maurya scholar downed their tail unable to withstand the shafts of argument unleashed by him. So ruthless besides being convincing were his skirmishes with heads of mutts and hierarchy that had been enjoying people's support in whichever form it was necessary to build the power and authority of it. They tottered, yielded way for Chaitanya's new fangled philosophy to have a heyday.

(to be continued)

"War of ideas can no more be won without books than a naval war can be won without ships". - FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT 11

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