



BULLETIN

Vol.15 No.3
February 2, 2011

OF THE CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES (GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

'CORNERSTONE' AND CONSCIENCE

“Perhaps the greatest political venture since that originated at Philadelphia in 1787” wrote Granville Austin, the celebrated American author of two scholarly works on India’s Constitution and democratic experience. His first book *Indian Constitution : Cornerstone of a Nation* was followed by *Working a Democratic Constitution—The Indian Experience*. The skill and speed with which the Constituent Assembly of India drafted the Constitution, a record-breaking document in both volume and length, in the midst of tragedy and turmoil, amazed Austin whose own country had taken much longer time to draft a very much shorter document. B.R.Ambedkar exulted with justifiable pride: “This Assembly may well congratulate itself for having accomplished so formidable a task in so short a time.”

Beginning in December 1946, with the first of its eleven sessions, the Constituent Assembly consisting of over 300 members representing almost all shades of public opinion met for nearly three years to produce the historic document of 395 articles and 8 schedules. In all the members sat for 165 days to debate and discuss in detail the articles of the draft Constitution. There were persons of luminous intellect and deep knowledge whose words of wisdom and notes of caution enhanced the quality of debate and made the task considerably easier. The oratory of celebrities like Radhakrishnan and Sarojini Naidu cast a spell on the house. The legal acumen of B.R.Ambedkar, Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, B.N.Rau, N.Gopalaswami Ayyangar and K.M.Munshi infused clarity and profundity into the philosophy of the constitution. There were those like K.Santhanam who felt that the fiscal provisions would make the states ‘beggars at the door of the Centre.’ T.T. Krishnamachari spoke strongly against ‘the imposition of Hindi’ by making it the sole official language. The only voice, wrote a

historian, heard in favour of reservation for women was that of a man R.K.Choudhuri!

Radhakrishnan made a stirring speech on the national flag and in the words of S. Gopal, “the best exposition of the symbolism of the Indian tricolor. The white band at the centre he saw as representing the sun’s rays, the path of light, the light of truth, of transparent simplicity. But one had to traverse this path to attain the goal of truth; and so in its centre stood the wheel, Ashoka’s wheel of the law. Dharma, or righteousness, was not static. The saffron band on top denoted the spirit of renunciation. Leaders, to be worthy of their responsibility, had, like Gandhi, to be disinterested, dedicated spirits. The green strip at the bottom indicated that our efforts to build a paradise had to be here, on this green earth”. Gopal narrates how Nehru and Radhakrishnan ‘matched their talents to the hour’ by agreeing to speak till the historic midnight hour in ‘an oratorical time bound relay race.’! Radhakrishnan would take the floor as per the deal and speak till the midnight hour when Nehru would rise to administer the pledge!

In the process of making the Constitution our founding fathers proclaimed certain fundamental values that would guide the nation’s future. Tolerance, peace and reconciliation were values meant for the humankind at large. The architecture of Indian democracy was ably designed and values so shrewdly set that decision making would be based on debate, discussion and consensus. Their efforts were not wholly in vain as evidenced by events that unfolded in the years that followed. Austin described the Constitution as the cornerstone of our nation. It is also the conscience of the people of India who may fumble and falter but will not fail to live up to its ideals and goals.

- The Editor

Equipped with basic qualifications attitude and experience for creating and working a democratic constitution, Indians did not default their trust with destiny. - Granville Austin

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

- **Shri K. Chakravarthi** IAS(Retd.)
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Prashanti Nilayam

Shri Chakravarti who was selected for the Indian Administrative Service in 1960 joined Sri Sathya Sai Organization in 1981 and became the first Registrar of Sri Sathya Sai Deemed University. The distinguished civil servant opted to leave the prestigious administrative service for the higher and nobler service in Sri Sathya Sai Trust as Baba's trusted lieutenant. CPS offers its grateful thanks to Shri Chakravarthi for presenting a copy of his recent address to teachers of Sri Sathya Sai University and other educational institutions and also an article with permission for publication in the Bulletin. His address to the teachers is published here.

Salutations at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. Esteemed Vice-chancellor and Teacher-friends. Not having been a teacher, I cannot tell you what you should be doing as teachers. I can at best tell you what I would expect of my teacher as a student then, and as a continuing student even after entering the Administrative Service. By being so, I have escaped the plaintive cry of the poet, "Breathes there a man with soul so dead?"

I would expect of my teacher to have great scholarship - a scholarship that's so forbidding that my respect towards him is spontaneous. He would have wide reading and deep understanding. He would be an engaging conversationalist who would take me through the complexities of the subject with effortless ease. He would render the most difficult concept so elusively simple. He would choose his words with great care so as to convey the full import of his communications. He would be a great storehouse of information, a great repository of knowledge and a symbol of wisdom in such a way that he defies the poet T S Eliot when he complains "Where is the wisdom, lost in knowledge, where's the knowledge lost in information?"

I would expect him to be incisive in his analytic rigor. He would be quick to see through the inconsistencies in my logic and with a few deft touches bring order to my edifice. He would demolish my thesis with a certain intellectual ruthlessness, but without any damage to my self confidence. He would allow me to learn on my own and yet would be there to lean on.

He would lay before me the vastness of the subject and the successive steps through which I should be able to see my way. He will not minimize the difficulty but encourage me to traverse the ground on my own but with the assurance of his guidance.

He would enable me to see different fascinating facets of the problem and allow me to choose the one in which I will find my metiere. He would be so demanding that sometimes I could feel he's heartless and expect of me to put in superhuman effort leading me to feel whether it is at all worthwhile to continue with him. He would be such a mind reader that he would immediately ease the pressure and would restore in me the zest for learning. He would ye me to the farthest limits of my ability only to make me realize that I am capable of doing far more than what I thought I could. He would be strict but not harsh, gentle but firm. He would teach me how time is precious by engaging himself in a variety of assignments and moving from one to another with ease and dexterity. He would be extraordinarily hard working and still have no trace of strain. He would have time for everyone and give the impression that time is so elastic. He would give himself so utterly to others that one is left to wonder whether he has any time for himself.

He would take me through the maze of arguments and counter-arguments with such thoroughness that I am left with the feeling that there's more to reality than what meets the eye. He would tear apart and then put together. He would make me bisect and to dissect and then ask me to put them together. He would expect me to assemble, disassemble and reassemble. He would help me see a pattern in the apparently vast assemblage of inchoate data. He would provide me, the wayfarer, guideposts in the long journey towards self-discovery and self-fulfillment. His immense knowledge and capacity for self-renewal would give a freshness to old ideas that everyday is a new dawn and every student a guided self learner.

But beyond these, I would expect of my teacher to have a sense of humour, the ability to laugh at himself and at the world. He would be a man of wit who sees the sublimity and the absurdity of the world. He would have a keen sense of what's right and wrong and have a passion for getting right things done in the right way. His

Let us face the future not with easy optimism or with any complacency or weakness but with confidence and a firm faith in India. - Jawaharlal Nehru

A Tale of the Blushing City

- Prof. Manoj Das

(A seer among scholars the venerable Prof Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville and teaches at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book My Little India.)

personal life is seen as being founded on virtue and has a quiet sense of public morality which makes him a true representative of the human race. I would expect him to show a strong insistence on the unity of the universe and man's duty as part of a great choice for all his doing. I would expect him to be others-centric and not self-centric, I would expect him to teach that "we are all members of a world-wide brotherhood and that all of us live our lives as fellow-workers with God."

I would expect him to open vistas of enquiry beyond the subjects I study and research. I would expect him to make me understand that there are many things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in my philosophy. I would expect him to let me know the futility of counting the grains of sand on the sea-shore but set sail on my journey, crossing the seas, through gentle breeze and stormy weather, through the rhythmic waves and great tides. I would expect him to tell me that all great tasks have humble beginnings and if the world cannot be reformed, I reform myself so that I see the world through my reformed eyes. He will tell me that there are times for action and time for reflection so that I do not show Hamlet-like inaction and Othello-like lack of reflection. I expect him to teach me that there are great discontinuities in human progress and evolution, and yet there's a great continuity so that I understand that while all else change externally, human nature remains more or less the same, and the quest for the good, the noble, the lofty and the sublime will always be there for me and everyone else.

He will help me see so much beauty and so much goodness, leaving me to wonder how much beauty and goodness must be with the architect behind this creation; that the world is not built by random bricks of chance and that a great design is behind it, and the more I see the randomness, the greater is the clarity of the design. I expect my teacher to let me know the secret of his childlike wonder at seeing this creation, despite his weighty scholarship; that behind his sage-like visage, there are gleaming eyes eager to capture eternity, through the vanishing brilliance of the moment.

I expect my teacher to teach me as much through his silence as his eloquence. Needless I say that I expect him, by human measure, the nearest to God?

★ ★ ★

Lamentations at Sawai Jai Singh's death had hardly subsided when claims to the throne, each excelling the other in their thunders, were heard from Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh, two of the foremost among the offsprings of the late Sawai's legally married consorts, numbering 28. Ishwari's mother was the princess of Jodhpur and Madho's mother was of Mewar. Both had the backing of their maternal houses, but Mewar being the weaker of the two, their rivalry ended in Ishwari's triumph. The victor lost no time in giving all his attention to the construction of a victory tower.

It was too late for him to wish he had better given his attention to fortifying his throne! Madho Singh who was still roaming in the city in disguise, cultivating sympathy among the nobles and inciting the generals, was growing more and more determined to stage a comeback as the tower rose higher and higher to culminate at its seventh storey, casting an impressive shadow on the sand. Madho would pick up handfuls of sand and swear vengeance.

Soon he enrolled the support of the Holkar and invaded Jaipur. Ishwari's army was routed. His beloved Victory Tower must have become the most intolerable eyesore for him, as he looked back while retreating. He could not have erased it from the skyline. At first he thought of blinding himself before long frustration led him to immolate himself.

Madho Singh toyed with the idea of demolishing the tower or alternatively, to adorn it with scenes of his rival's humiliation. But better sense prevailed; he left it in peace. Posterity called it Ishwarilath.

The year 1875 was a milestone in Jaipur's history not because of Prince Albert's trip to the city, but because Sawai Ram Singh, the then ruler, decided to offer his royal guest a bazaar blushing pink! Did he read "I am the very pink of courtesy" in Shakespeare's Romeo and

Juliet Rose is the colour of hospitality in Rajasthani tradition, I was told. In the years that followed, pink became the colour of Jaipur.

Over the decades it had taken me several visits to appreciate Jaipur, old and new—the ruins of its Nagar Gurh or Tiger Fort, a little away from the present city; and below it the cenotaph of Jai Singh designed by himself amidst other tombs; its sprawling Ramniwas Gardens; and Acharya Vyakul's one-man indology museum, Chandra Mahal, also known as the City Palace; and the formidable Amber fort on the hills.

Much more important than any other historic monument of this region was Amber (pronounced Ameer), named either after Amba, the Mother Goddess, or Ambikeshwar, an illustrious scion of the dynasty of Lord Rama of Ayodhya, for the Kachhawaha rulers of Jaipur trace their origin to Kusha, Rama's son.

Gradually expanded through generations of prosperous rulers on the rose-tinted granite rocks, the massive serpentine walls of the fort protect a veritable treasure of fancies and designs, dominated by an exquisite marble palace glimmering with thousands of tiny mirrors.

'Rarely in any other medieval fort will you find such a judicious combination of provisions for comfort and security,' commented my companion.

According to Manucci, the Rajput princes were so very mad after war and fascinated by the death it offered that 'it was rare to see one of them die of disease.'

Probably Munucci was also right when he said, 'Had they been of one mind, they would have crushed every other tribe and race.' But each prince had a peculiar mind of his own and that explained the octopus-like expansion of Mughal power and its ruthless tightening of grip over them. To put it more bluntly, mountains of individual ego levelled them collectively.

Here at Amber, however, a highly unorthodox effort had been made to achieve a civilized coexistence between the Rajput and the Mughal powers - not once but twice.

Akbar was offered the hand of the daughter of Raja Bihari Mall of Amber which he gladly accepted and Prince Salim (Jahangir) was the offspring of this wedlock. Again, Raja Bhagwan Das, Bihari Mall's adopted son, arranged

his daughter's marriage with Prince Salim when the latter was in his teens. The untimely death of the princess made Salim quite unsettled, at least for a while, as he records in his memoirs.

Alas, the memory of all such unusual marital generosity of Amber was thrown to the winds by Aurangzeb when he was out to accomplish his fanatic mission. He razed to the ground 66 temples around Amber itself. Along with them were destroyed a large number of ancient manuscripts.

The British rule ended the feud among the rulers of Rajputana. They now rivalled one another in endearing themselves to the new masters.

'How did the people receive the merger of Jaipur with the Union of India?' I asked a veteran Jaipurian.

'We of the elite were more or less in tune with the changing times. We were happy when, in 1956, Lord Mountbatten visited Delhi and President Rajendra Prasad entertained him to a state banquet. The Maharaj Kumar of Jaipur stood at attention behind the President, as the adjutant of his bodyguards, signifying his commitment to the new India through his allegiance to the symbol of the Republic, the President.'

I remembered the veteran's observation when later I read about Lord Mountbatten's reaction to another episode with the Jaipur dynasty: when the Rajmata, 'the widow of Mountbatten's closest Indian friend and of whose children he was a trustee' was imprisoned. The Rajmata was imprisoned for illegally concealing gold, a charge which, it was said by some, would not have been pursued if she had not also been an active political opponent of the Prime Minister. Mountbatten was indignant on her behalf and did his best to intercede, but to small effect. 'I must say that every time I visit India it tears at my heart-strings,' he wrote after his visit of 1966. Ten years later he found the prospect so depressing that he almost began to wonder whether he could bear to go there at all.' (Mountbatten: The official Biography by Philip Ziegler)

I was descending from the fort. 'Come on, Sir, enjoy a ride on my excellent camel,' invited an aged but extraordinarily agile and smiling man with a soiled turban. And, lowering his voice, he said in the manner of passing

on a secret, 'This is an auspicious creature. A ride on this one today, an auspicious day to boot, will bring you good luck, will make you rich.'

'My friend, don't you know what the Bible says?' I asked him. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven." Must you make me worse than your camel?' 'Sir, where is the time for me to think of heaven? I must be able to fire my oven at the end of a day with my meagre earnings!' I was about to tell him, 'Why, then, don't you ride the camel yourself and grow rich?' But that would be rude. I undertook a brief ordeal. After all, his salesmanship was far more humble and civilized than what we encounter from sophisticated vendors of commodities and comforts.

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WORLD DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS - 18

- Prof. M.N. Sastri

Diseases

"The Earth has a skin and that skin has diseases; one of its diseases is called man."

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Diseases can be broadly classified as infectious and non-infectious diseases. Infectious (also called extrinsic or communicable) diseases can spread from person to person and are caused by microscopic organisms (germs or pathogens), which include a wide variety of bacteria, viruses, protozoan and parasite bodies. Some examples are smallpox, malaria, tuberculosis, influenza and HIV/AIDS. Medical science is still struggling to grasp the causes of many devastating non-infectious and chronic disorders such as heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer's disease. Schizophrenia, cancer and diabetes. Intrinsic conditions of the body as a result of hereditary conditions, dietary deficiencies and lifestyles are believed to have some influence on their incidence.

In terms of threat to human security from premature deaths, infectious diseases rank number one among the diseases. These diseases are on the rise and are killing more people worldwide because of unruly urbanization and the failure of governments to control the mosquito population and other pathogens in the tropical regions. They are responsible for over 25 per cent of premature deaths. These diseases are also called *diseases of poverty*

as their impact is most severe among the poorest people who live in unhygienic conditions with the lowest material, physical and financial resources and limited or no access to integrated healthcare, prevention tools and medications. The top five infectious diseases worldwide in terms of early mortalities are: Respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, Diarrhoea (including Cholera), Tuberculosis, and Malaria According to a recent report more than 3,000 people died from cholera in Zimbabwe in the later half of 2008 due to interruptions to the water supplies together with shortage of healthcare. Asthma and other respiratory ailments are problems millions of locals suffer at sites like abandoned metal mines and factories and polluted urban complexes. Polluted areas are growing as the world population swells and people in developing countries like China, India and Vietnam buy more goods like automobiles, electronics and other consumer goods and take to habits once mostly limited to rich countries like the US and Europe.

Civil unrest and war contribute to the spread of infectious diseases through the extensive movement of troops and equipment as well as displaced persons carrying with them infectious organisms and their vectors. For example, dengue increased in SE-Asia during World War II and the immediate post-war period due to the spread of mosquitoes and different virus strains throughout the region. Natural-disasters such as earthquakes and flooding often create conditions favourable to the outbreak of communicable diseases.

Human activities such as forest clearance, road and dam building, and clearing natural habitats for agriculture and mining and pollution of water bodies and coastal waters are promoting conditions under which pathogens thrive and cause infections. In addition, the disturbance, degradation and alteration of intact habitats and landscapes that tend to keep infectious agents in check are shifting the natural balance and triggering the spread of new and existing diseases. Some examples are Ebola, Rift Valley fever, Lyme disease and Western Nile vims. Unprecedented population growth, accompanied by rapid and unplanned urbanization resulted in the extensive growth of urban slums without adequate water and waste management; create an excellent environment for these infectious diseases to flourish.

Global air, sea and land transport networks continue

to expand in reach, speed of travel and volumes of passengers and goods carried. These activities help the spread of infections, disease pandemics and vector form pathogens. With the expansion of international air travel, an infected person can carry a disease from almost any part of the globe to any other point over periods shorter than the incubation periods of most diseases. As a result, pathogens and their vectors now move further, faster and in greater numbers than ever before. For example, jet travel is the cause for the spread of *chikungunya*, first discovered in *Africa*, in the 1950s, reemerging in the 2000s across South and South-East Asia.

Global warming is yet another factor that contributes to the spread of infectious diseases. Warm climate provides a favourable habitat for microorganisms, fungi and insects that not only cause a dramatic increase in tropical infectious diseases (e.g. jaundice, dysentery, cholera and meningitis) but also alter habitats to such a degree that people are forced to migrate as “environmental refugees.”

The loss of biodiversity from human activities is also a cause for the spread of diseases. Several species act as “buffer species” to several pathogens (viruses, bacteria and fungi). According to a recent report when these species disappear” or decrease in number, pathogen transmission increases across a wide range of infectious disease systems. For example the Western Nile virus disease spread in the US is linked to a decrease in the density of bird population. The Lyme disease and several other viral infections are examples of such infectious diseases.

With great advances in immunotherapy it has become possible to control and eliminate some infectious diseases. For example, smallpox has been eliminated in the world. Currently a major programme is on for the eradication of poliomyelitis.

With advances in scientific knowledge efforts are continually on to control the killer infections. Not long ago there was a confident assertion that malaria could be eradicated through the use of DDT and other insecticides by destroying the mosquitoes that transmit the diseases and by using the drug Chloroquine to treat the patients infected with the lethal form of malarial parasite—*Plasmodium falciparum*. Over time the

mosquitoes throughout the tropics have developed immunity to most of the insecticides and even to Chloroquine. As a result malaria is once again spreading. According to the latest World Malaria Report released by the WHO, malaria is endemic in 109 countries with 3.3 billion population at risk. The WHO estimates put 350-500 million cases of malaria worldwide of which 270-400 million are infected with the *falciparum* parasite. The disease is sweeping across Sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia, including India, and Latin America. The biggest burden is borne by Africa with 90% of cases, most being children below 5 years. About 3,000 children die of malaria every day in Africa. According to the 2010 WHO report there were an estimated 9.4 million new cases of tuberculosis in 2008 with 1.8 million deaths. The number of cases is rising each year globally especially in Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia. In India two patients die every three minutes.

The discovery and isolation of penicillin, the first of the class of miracle drugs called antibiotics, during the 40s has been hailed as the greatest contribution of medical science for fighting several infectious diseases. These antibiotics such as Streptomycin, Aureomycin, Chloramphenicol and a class of broad spectrum antibiotics such as Tetracycline, proved very effective against a wide range of infections such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid, gonorrhoea and syphilis. With the use of antibiotics these diseases dipped to remarkably low levels the world over. The microorganisms, equipped with a gene that enables them over time to produce an enzyme that disables the antibiotics are now turning into new strains of organisms (superbugs) resistant to a wide range of antibiotics. Infections from such antibiotic-resistant superbugs are being reported from all over the world. The only antibiotic that combats these bugs is *polymixin* but it is toxic to kidneys. Many pharmaceutical companies have slowed or halted their research to develop new antibiotics because of high risk and low reward.

The resistance developed by microorganisms to antibiotics can be illustrated with the dreaded disease of tuberculosis. A few years after its discovery in the 40’s the antibiotic Streptomycin proved to be a very effective anti-TB drug. But soon it was realized that the TB microorganisms could gain resistance to the single drug and often to two. Ultimately a three-drug combination of

Rifampin-Isoniazid-Pyrazinamide seemed invincible. By 1960s the number of TB cases in the western countries fell so low that it was confidently concluded that the disease would be wiped out. But by 1990s it became evident even that the three drug regimen was not effective in treating the newly emerging multiple drug resisting (MDR) strain, which posed a greater risk to human health. Drug resistant TB arises when people are poorly treated or take substandard medicines. Findings by WHO indicate that drug resistant TB has been identified in all regions of the world but most frequently in the countries of the former USSR and in Asia. According to a 2010 WHO report 4.4 lakh people globally got infected with MDR TB in 2008 while 1.5 lakh died of MDR TB. India and China are home to 50% of the world's MDR TB cases and 3% of all new TB cases in India can't be treated with standard drug regimens.

One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century is fighting the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) arising from the infectious Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus is thought to have originated in the non-human primates in the Sub-Saharan Africa and transferred to the human in the 20th century. The virus is transferred from person to person through unprotected sexual intercourse (homosexual or heterosexual), transfusion of infected blood, and use of infected needles and instruments without sterilization or sharing of needles and syringes by HIV infected drug addicts and from infected mothers to the babies. According to the WHO 2007 figures, 33.2 million are living with HIV/AIDS the world over. Majority of these are in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-East Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. India accounts for 2.5 million HIV-positive patients. The virus has so far defeated the best efforts to develop a vaccine by evading and undermining the immune system. Recent reports however indicate some success in developing a vaccine for the dreaded virus. The world now faces epidemics of microbial resistance. Who will be the winner - the disease causing microbes at the bottom of the tree of evolution with their increasing resistance to antibiotics or the human at the top of the tree of evolution with the help of medical science?

Another infection of nonhuman origin is the Bird Flu,

which is spreading the world over forcing the culling of millions of ducks, chickens and wild birds. The infection has also spread to humans, causing more than 250 fatalities. The swine flu, believed to be born out of a mix of human and *bird* flu viruses that infected pigs and originated in Mexico is yet another viral epidemic, with a high transmissibility rate, spreading across the continents. The disease was even declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. To date the impact of the disease was not found to be very different from that of a typical flu. It is alleged that pressure from drug companies led the WHO to this situation resulting in profit to the pharmaceutical and medical companies. The WHO has however denied these allegations.

While scientists are battling the microbial infections, great advances in biotechnology and bioengineering have opened up opportunities for producing microorganisms in modified forms for use as weapons of war against which humans, animals and plants have no immune defence. Though the UN Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention prohibits the production of biological weapons, some countries are reported to be engaged in developmental activities in this area. A recent report does not even rule out the possibility of terrorists unleashing microorganisms which could spread disease and destroy crops with devastating speed.

Lifestyle diseases (also called diseases of civilization) are becoming more and more widespread. In the wake of industrialization, lifestyles and eating habits in western countries and in the affluent societies elsewhere have changed substantially through the rising consumption of meat, dairy products, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products. There has also been a significant reduction in physical activity resulting in the prevalence of obesity. These factors have been responsible for the rise in the incidence of diseases such as Alzheimer, cancer, atherosclerosis (heart attacks and strokes), renal failure, diabetes (type 2) and depression. The WHO estimates atherosclerosis and diabetes kill about 20 million people every year, more than the number killed by wars, famines, AIDS, TB and malaria combined. The International Diabetic Federation says that India hailed as "the diabetic capital of the world" with 40.9 million diabetics, is heading towards a diabetic explosion, with 87 million

people to be affected by 2030. China's 43.2 million diabetics will rise to 62.6 million while the number of diabetics in the US will rise from 26.8 million to 36.0 million. A report by the Centre for Disease Control, US says that nearly 27 percent of Americans are considered obese. Every American consumes 3,800 calories per day as against 2,350 calories in a healthy diet. To meet this demand the US produces 80 billion pounds of meat, with poultry alone making up 35 billion pounds. Animals are raised in miserable conditions, crammed together on factory farms filled with high calorie, corn-based feed that fattens them up and help move them to the slaughter house as fast as possible. While it takes up to two and a half years to raise a grass-fed cow, it takes just fourteen months with this feed to make it slaughter-ready. With rising consumption of processed and fast foods, the incidence of obesity is on the rise in developing economies too. Obesity has affected 5 per cent of Indian population. Beef reared in industrial conditions are dosed with antibiotics and growth boosting hormones, which leave residues in milk and meat. A recent study showed that American girls as young as seven years are entering puberty at double the rate they were in the late 1990s probably as a result of obesity epidemic and also the hormone residues in the environment entering the food they consume. The antiobesity drugs increasingly used by people are not only unlikely to provide lasting benefit but result in several side effects such as high blood pressure, faster heart rate, drug addiction, restlessness and insomnia as well hormonal disturbance.

The incidence of depression is on the rise especially among urban population. It is a disorder sensitive to an environment that produces feelings of helplessness, sometimes even driving people to commit suicide. It is most pronounced among the elderly as well as adolescents and young adults who have been deprived of the opportunity of spending life surrounded by relatives and friends. There are also diseases called diseases of choice, such as alcoholism and drug abuse that lead to addictive behaviour. The health effects associated with alcohol consumption include cirrhosis of liver, epilepsy, cardiac diseases and alcoholic dementia. The world is increasingly facing massive social problems arising from alcoholism.

Illicit drugs (stimulants, narcotics and hallucinogens) have become part of modern life and one of the gravest threats to the human society. Illicit drug use is becoming a serious public health problem affecting almost every community. They provide the thrills, kick and excitement and escape from anxiety. There are nearly 200 million drug addicts worldwide, with India accounting for an estimated 75 million. The use of illicit drugs is increasing rapidly among the youth in all parts of the world causing serious health, security and social problems. Figures suggest that more money is spent on illicit drugs than on food. Over the past few decades the illicit drug industry has grown into a highly organized multinational enterprise, employing hundreds of thousands of people, including women and children, and generating well over US\$ 320 billion every year. The value of illicit drugs exceeds the value of international trade in oil and almost equals that of global arms trade. The money from drug trafficking is used for buying arms to promote terrorist activities in several countries. The main drug producing centres are Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Iran, Myanmar, Peru, Pakistan and Thailand.

An interesting development is finding methods to greatly increase the human lifespan beyond 100 years or even make it limitless by identifying longevity determinants and their exploitation. An international team of scientists has recently claimed that they have identified a gene that appears to prevent cells from ageing and help individuals to live for more than hundred years. According to Ray Kurzweil our technological and genetic knowhow is marching at such a furious pace that in 20 years' time we should be able to replace our kidneys, livers, hearts and even brains with functioning vital organs made by human hands, making us live for ever.

"Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die"

This biological revolution will benefit only the super-rich " who will be able to grow their own replacement organs, take specially designed drugs made just for them and use genetic research tools to alert them of any possible health dangers for them or their children." 'The futurologist Paul Saffo says that this will help the very rich, who alone can afford these benefits, becoming a

We need a philosophy which bridges the gulf between action and contemplation, work and worship, the secular and the sacred. - Swami Ranganathananda

completely separate species. He further observes, “Imagine if the very rich can live, on average, 20 years longer than the poor. That is 20 more years of earning and saving. Think what that means about wealth and power and the advantages you pass on to your children.

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Policy Crisis in Higher Education: Reform or Deform?

- Prof. Jandhyala B G Tilak

Professor at the National University of Educational
Planning and Administration, New Delhi

Introduction : Higher education in India is engulfed with several problems and major reforms are long over due. But unfortunately the system has been characterised with a big policy vacuum for a long period. Somewhat surprisingly, all of a sudden, now there is a rush for reforms, in what is described as an ‘epochal year’ for education reforms that witnesses a paradigm shift in education policies. It is a period of speedy reforms intended to be brought through a series of legislative measures. There are currently 8-9 Bills being formulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India relating to reforms in higher education and they are at various stages. The several bills are: (i) The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010, (ii) The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and University Bill, 2010, (iii) The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010, (iv) The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010, (v) The Universities for Innovation Bill 2010, (vi) The National Commission For Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill, 2010, and may be (vii) a Bill to enable Public-Private Partnership in Education.

It may be necessary to look at all these bills and other initiatives being taken together, as they constitute a package of reforms that the government plans to make for the development of higher education. However, at the same time each one has also to be examined in detail, as each one individually and all collectively have serious long term implications for the development of higher education in the country.

As reflected in the several of the legislative initiatives taken by the Government of India, there are a few underlying assumptions and features that bind them together. First, they reflect a new understanding of the government on the role of the State in the development of higher education. Traditionally State has been an active player – in policy making, planning and providing higher education in India, like in most other countries of the world. The emerging assumption of the present time is that the State can minimize its role in higher education, not because of lack of funds, but because of the emerging conviction that higher education is not a sector that the government should be bothered about. Government can adopt a policy of laissez-fairism; and at best, it can confine its role of an enabler, one which provides a loose framework of rules and regulations for those who wish to enter into the business of education. In a sense, the Bills assume that higher education can be left to a large extent to the markets. Secondly, formulated in the neo-liberal environment, all the Bills assume either explicitly or implicitly, and even encourage, commoditization of higher education and consequently privatisation and even commercialisation of higher education. Corporate sector is given an enhanced role in higher education: members of the corporate sector are to be made members of the governing bodies of some of the new institutions that are proposed to be set up. In fact, a few institutions, including grants-giving organisations are to be established under the Companies Act! Thirdly, several bills perceive higher education as one that is to serve more global needs than to serve national social and economic purposes. The Bills aim at making India a global education hub that serves global markets. Fourthly, the underlying assumption of all the bills is that the existing institutions cannot be reformed and they need to be replaced by new structures; or that even if they are restructured and revitalized, they will not serve the neo-liberal goals, as they were set up in a period characterised by an altogether different development paradigm. Hence it was assumed that better altogether new organisations are established in place of the existing ones. Fifthly, the several Bills provide for setting up of new autonomous institutions. These institutions will not only enjoy a very high degree of autonomy – completely free from government or social control, but also they are accountable to none.

The freedom struggle was a wide movement with a common aim in which diverse political and ideological currents could co-exists. - Bipan Chandra

Autonomy, not 'autonomy with accountability' will be the feature of many of the new institutions. Sixthly, while some of the bills (like the bill that prohibits unfair practices and the one meant to set up Educational Tribunals) are ostensibly very well-intended, they mark only a very small step in right direction and they are highly inadequate to solve the problems and innumerable unfair and corrupt practices that our higher education system is inflicted with. Seventh, in contrast to policy initiatives made earlier only after extensive consultations in the meetings of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), in which education ministers of all states participate, and consensus is reached on the issues, the process of making the present set of bills does not recognise the need for the union government to consult states on issues relating to education, which is a concurrent subject on which state governments spend considerable amounts – in fact, higher than what the union government spends — from their budgetary resources, affecting the 'meaningful' relationship between the centre and the states that the National Policy on Education (1986) promised. Only in case of the draft Bill relating to the NCHER, there have been extensive public discussions and also in the CABE meeting. Eighth, the way the four bills were introduced in the Parliament without any prior consultation with the public marks some kind of a haste and secrecy on the part of the government, which are not necessary in a democracy like ours in launching a package of reforms in a sector like higher education. Ninth, the several bills also highlight the lack of cohesion, if not presence of friction, between not only the union government and the state governments, but also between several ministries/departments involved in higher education at the central level, as the coverage of some of the bills excludes institutions of higher education run by different ministries/departments, like health, and agriculture, and even sub-departments of the Department of Education, like teacher education; and some ministries/departments have already proposed parallel legislations. Lastly, the several Bills, together, are characterised with absence of a long term and holistic vision of development of the society and the role of education therein.

Every Bill looks like a quick-fix solution – poor and inadequate, to a specific problem. For example, it is well noted that the present size of the system of higher

education is highly inadequate and that the government may not have sufficient resources for large scale expansion and to increase the gross enrolment ratio to 15 per cent by 2012 and then gradually to 30 per cent. The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill is viewed as a solution to this. The problem of quality of education and lack of autonomy is to be tackled with the setting up of innovation universities as proposed in the Innovation Universities Bill. It is presumed that autonomy or no autonomy, it does not matter for the existing universities. The issue of the absence of a national database of academic records and awards is to be dealt with by the proposed National Academic Depository Bill that aims at building an efficient electronic database facilitating secure storage, efficient retrieval etc., by the central and state governments. The problem of inadequate and ineffective system of regulation by the existence of a large number of regulating bodies is to be tackled by the Bill that proposes to set up the NCHER. That there are several unfair and corrupt practices prevalent in our institutions of higher education is acknowledged with the Bill that prohibits unfair practices. The problem that our higher education system is vexed with numerous legal conflicts, over-burdening the courts, has to be answered by the Educational Tribunals Bill. The Bill for National Accreditation Authority has to ensure improved methods of accreditation and assessment and to make accreditation mandatory for all. The Educational Tribunal Bill and the National Accreditation Authority Bill are also expected to meet the requirements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) that insist on setting up methods of transparency and grievance redressal mechanisms before higher education is 'committed.' Thus the several Bills view higher education in small fragments, in bits and pieces and not as a holistic process. The Bills also do not recognise the need to strengthen the existing institutions. Further, the solutions thought in the form of the Bills are inadequate in some case, and are not necessarily based on sound thinking. One also notices no effort to relate one Bill to the other. Some of these bills are ill-conceived, and are based on questionable presumptions and untenable assumptions.

Higher education system has been characterised with a big policy vacuum for a long period. Now it is a

I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, but to live also for God and world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. - Sri Aurobindo

period of reforms on fast-track mode. Reforms are intended to be brought through legislative action. The Bills are also formulated as independent pieces of reform, without a comprehensive policy framework on higher education. Broadly, they lack an overall long term holistic vision for development of higher education. It is doubtful whether these bills help to reform or deform higher education in India.

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No Black and White : Only Shades of Gray - I

- Dr. R.V.Vaidyanatha Ayyar IAS

Former Secretary, HRD, Govt. of India (Retd.)
and Former Professor, IIM, Bangalore

Emergency was promulgated on June 25, 1975, a week before K left Kakinada. As he saw his colleagues in districts getting into action to incarcerate the political opponents of the Government under MISA (Maintenance of internal Security Act), K heaved a sigh of relief. His posting in the Commercial Tax Department was a haven, and he was spared the ordeal of actions of whose propriety he was not sure. Before he left Kakinada, he saw the Emergency in action. He was walking along the Main Road in Rajahmundry; suddenly, he heard someone shout slogans against the Emergency and Indira Gandhi. The passers-by were startled, and literally ran for cover. They did not want to be seen anywhere near the trouble-maker and get into trouble. In no time, the police arrived and led him away in a van. K was anguished: how can shouting political slogans be a crime? As a student, he himself shouted political slogans. His anguish was all the more painful as he hero-worshipped Indira Gandhi. For many of K's generation, Indira Gandhi's election as Prime Minister was to use the evocative title of K.A.Abbas's book, The Return of the Red Rose. For them, Indira Gandhi assuming office marked a resumption of the Nehruvian era, and an end to the interruption of that era by the brief interregnum during which Lal Bahadur Shastri was the prime minister. The little man did do well during the conflict with Pakistan, and through his bold decisions erased the charge of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit that he was a prisoner of indecision. However, the impression of many like K was that he accomplished little in the domestic arena,

and worse he did not seem to do anything to carry forward Nehru's vision of a socialistic pattern of society. He seemed shy of even speaking about the socialistic pattern. K was therefore happy that he gave way to Indira Gandhi. He first saw her in Vizag, a little before he was selected to the IAS; her convoy slowly passed by K's house, and standing in an open car and waving majestically to the people who lined the streets, she looked like a Faerie Queene. In the early years of his service, K was still emotionally a teenager. Her struggles with the Syndicate were his struggles, and her victories were his. Intoxicated by the columns of the Economic and Political Weekly, his only regret was that she was not going far and fast enough on the socialist path. Her victory in the Bangladesh War, and cocking a snook at the imperious Nixon and his henchman Kissinger enhanced her as status as Empress of the People's hearts. And, slowly but steadily her image began to go downhill, and she was transformed from a Faerie Queene to an ogre. In 1974 Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was picked by Indira Gandhi for the presidency. He was widely perceived to be the Prime Minister's rubber stamp; that image was superbly represented in Cho Ramswamy's Tuglak which happened to see in Secunderabad. The audience burst into laughter seeing a character playing the role of the presidential candidate resolutely practicing the act of mechanically signing whatever is put up to him for signature. K's own perceptions moved in sync with popular perceptions about her. People around her like L.N.Mishra seemed to be shady, and increasingly, she seemed guilty by association. K was baffled by the series of developments in 1974 and 1975: the Nav Nirman Andolan in Gujarat, and Jayaprakash Narayan's Sampurna Kranti (Total Revolution) in Bihar. He could not view the agitation of students in Guajarat against price rise and corruption of the Chimanbhai Patel government as an ideological struggle like say Bank Nationalisation. K felt, that the fact that a 'reactionary' like Morarji Desai supported the agitation did not alter the basic issues involved. K admired the resolute character that Indira Gandhi displayed in her previous struggles; in the new context K viewed the same character as hubris. The 'foreign hand' was invoked so often as to be utterly ridiculous. The frequent use of the expression fascism to describe any opposition protest seemed to be jarring. K was jolted by

***It is the prime responsibility of every citizen to feel that his country
is free and to defend its freedom is his duty. - Sardar Vallabhai Patel***

the judgement of the Allahabad High Court which set aside Indira Gandhi's election. The grounds on which her election was set aside seemed to K to be far too trivial, but her reaction baffled him more. The drummed up shows of support near her house elicited revulsion; the declaration by D.C. Barooah, the Congress Party President, that 'Indira was India and India Indira' sickening. The imposition of the Emergency startled him; the events thereafter were shocking. Even the censored newspapers conveyed enough of the unseemly events such as the demolitions in Turkman Gate, Delhi. A brief visit to Delhi was a queer experience. The city was plastered with the images of Indira and Sanjay, and with the new commandments of Indian polity, the Twenty Point and Four Point Programmes. As he moved in Delhi, he conjured visions of Moscow during the Great Terror and of the ubiquitous Big Brother in Orwell's 1984. Mercifully, as later events brought out, the administration in Andhra Pradesh was hardly affected by the Emergency though a new breed of rough and tough leaders who sought to imitate their mentor Sanjay Gandhi appeared on the political scene. Sanjay visited Hyderabad once, and the city was decked as if an Emperor were visiting, with state public sector undertakings vying with one another to put up welcome arches. K heaved a sigh of relief when elections were announced and all the imprisoned leaders were released. The defection of Jagjivan Ram thrilled K. He recalled with delight the episode in Vishakhadatta's Sanskrit play *Mudrrakasa* in which the tribal chief *Parvataka* offers timely help to *Chandragupta* to overthrow the hated *Nandas*. During the election campaign, *Lok Nayak* Jayaprakash Narayan addressed a rally at the Exhibition Grounds just opposite K's office. As if they were conspirators committing *lèse majesté*, K and Sastry slipped away from the office, and walked over to attend the election. JP looked pale and sick, and had to be physically carried to the stage. To K, he appeared to be the Saviour of Indian Democracy; through his suffering, he appeared to redeem the nation from the curse of dictatorship. On the day when the votes were counted, K was shattered when Indira Gandhi carried the State winning all but one seat; his gloom gave way to euphoria as the results from North India began to pour in, and Indira and Sanjay themselves were defeated. Around midnight, Sastry came over K's house to celebrate the victory of good over evil.

K had high expectations from the new *Janata* Government. He believed like millions of others that the struggle against Emergency was a Second Freedom Struggle, and that a New Republic was born as a result of that struggle. K can still recall the reaction of his service colleagues when the All India Radio beamed the news of the Acting President B.D. Jatti giving in to the demand of the Janata government and dissolving nine state assemblies. There was a get together of the officers on the lawns of the Lake View Guest house, and the moment the news was broadcast they greeted it with childlike glee and thunderous applause. Newspapers were full of lurid reports about Emergency excesses, and the market was flooded with quickie *exposé* books debunking Emergency and Indira. They made pleasant reading. And then, as if it were just a short dream, the Janata Government fell, and Indira Gandhi came back to power backed by a massive mandate. K felt like the Puritans at the Restoration of the Stuarts. The Second Republic proved to be a false dawn, and the country seemed set for another spell of personal rule. He could not help recall the saying of Marx that great historic facts and personages recur twice, once as tragedy, and again as a farce. Freedom struggle in 1947 culminated in the great tragedy of Partition while the Second Freedom Struggle culminated in the farce that the Janata Government turned out to be. That was how events appeared to K as they occurred; looking back, they now appear differently.

Very soon after its publication in 2000, K read P.N. Dhar's book, *Indira Gandhi, the 'Emergency', and Indian Democracy*. The scales fell from his eyes as K read the book. Dhar was Indira Gandhi's Secretary from 1973 to 1977, and witnessed from his privileged position the tumultuous events that culminated in the Emergency and the happenings during the Emergency. Unlike some other confidants of Indira Gandhi, he was not an unabashed supporter of her and everything she did. Dhar had high regard for Jayaprakash Narayan and tried to negotiate a truce between him and Indira Gandhi. His account of that period was objective to a degree that is rare for memoirs of persons who held high office. After reading Dhar's account, K was aghast at his naivety in his reaction to the events of 1970s. A series of thoughts crossed his mind. How could he condone the attempts in a democracy to force elected legislators to resign? How

could he condone Jayaprakash Narayan's call to the police and army to disobey 'immoral' orders? One can understand illegal orders. But what are immoral orders? Who is to define what is morality? Is the army, or civil service for that matter, a voluntary association whose members are free to determine their own terms and conditions of work, and free to decide which orders of the government are moral and need to be implemented? Was there anything concrete that Jayaprakash Narayan had to offer in place of the existing polity? To attempt to dismantle an existing structure without having something concrete to replace it is anarchism. Can an infant democracy like India afford anarchism? As he mulled over these questions, K realised that Indira Gandhi alone could not be held solely responsible for the Emergency. The Emergency indeed is, as Ramachandra Guha famously put it a few years later, 'a script created jointly by JP and Mrs. Gandhi'. Indulging in a little bit of 'what if' history, K believes that Emergency would have been avoided if only Justice Krishna Iyer had either outright refused stay or granted a full stay of the order appealed against. While admitting Indira Gandhi's appeal against the judgement of the Allahabad High Court, he allowed Indira Gandhi to continue without having the right to vote in Parliament. Had he refused the request for stay altogether, she would have ceased to be Prime Minister and been in no position to impose Emergency. Had he stayed in full the High Court order, the battle would have shifted to the judicial arena obviating the need for imposing Emergency. The rather too clever-by-half order left no option for Indira Gandhi but to employ apparently constitutional means to put down extra-constitutional attempts to depose her. Once her continuance as Prime Minister was approved by the highest judicial forum, agitation for her resignation was improper. Perceptions are black and white, but the 'reality' is gray. Governance and judgement, legal or historical, necessitate dabbling with various shades of gray.

Around the time K read Dhar's book, as Secretary, Culture, Government of India, K was organizing the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Republic, and he also came across the prescient statement of Dr. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly in November 1949, wherein he conveyed his views as to how politics should be conducted in the Indian Republic that was in the offing :

"If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us.

(to be continued)

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The Deodis of Hyderabad

- Mrs. Rani Sarma

(Summary of a lecture delivered by Mrs. Rani Sarma at an author-speak meeting organised by Centre for Policy Studies on Jan. 7, 2011)

The concept of heritage conservation is not very old. It was only after the World War II, after much of Europe's heritage was destroyed that the world woke up to the concept of heritage conservation. In Europe entire cities like Warsaw and Amsterdam and long stretches of streets stood stripped of their heritage. Singapore also suffered serious losses of its heritage, but for a different reason. Soon after Singapore became independent 1965, in the first flush of excitement of building a brand new city, the city went on a demolition spree and pulled down many of its old structures, thereby destroying much of its heritage. It was later, after they demolished most of their heritage that the city planners realised that the city had lost its character. India neither had a cataclysmic event like the World War nor did it go on a demolition spree like Singapore; much of her heritage is degraded, and many of her ancient cities like Benares, Ujjain, Kanchi and Madurai have lost their historic core because of the apathy and indifference of the authorities and the passivity of the people.

The city of Hyderabad is no exception. The city has a long history of 800 years, from the time it started as a

mud fort of the Kakatiyas, at Golconda. Subsequently Bahamanis, Qutubshahis and finally the Asaf Jahis reigned in the city. The heritage and the culture of the Golconda/Hyderabad developed over the centuries and it evolved into a sophisticated city with a composite culture. People from all over the world settled in the city and transformed it into an international commercial mart. The Deccani spoken in Hyderabad was a harmonious mixture of Urdu, Marathi, Telugu and Hindusthani.

The oldest and the busiest street of the city connected Golconda with Charminar, ending in what is today called the "Laad Bazar." Diamond and pearl merchants, perfumers and clothiers as well as the sweet meat vendors mingled with ease with arms dealers. Elephants picked their way in the narrow and busy streets just as palanquin bearers shouted their way through the milling crowds. Traders of Jewish, Armenian and European origin jostled in the market places buying and selling their wares.

The Asaf Jahis, like their predecessors, the Qutubshahis, built their palaces close to the Charminar. The premier nobles of the rulers, like the Salarjungs and the Paigas, built their sprawling feudal homes called Deodis on the roads radiating from Charminar. It was in the old Hyderabad that much of the city's built heritage concentrated. The Palaces of the Nizams as well as the deodis of nobles had pavilions with Shahjahani-multi-foliated arches, carved jharokhas and delicate fluted pillars. The pavilions of the Malavala Palace and the Diwani Deodi of the Salarjungs were so beautiful that visitors to the city thronged those beautiful structures. Most deodis had 'ainakhanas' of plate glass arranged in fanciful designs.

The deodis were decorated with exquisite furniture, expensive Persian carpets, chandeliers, miniature paintings, Venetian mirrors and works of art. Some of the nobles like Maharaja Kishen Pershad composed poetry and supported poets, some patronized artistes, and some like the Salarjungs were collectors of art.

The death knell of those resplendent structures came after the Police action of 1948. The dismantling of the feudal system resulted in the sudden impoverishment of the nobility. Cut off from their income, the nobles scrambled to sell their beautiful deodis and the valuable

artifacts, to make ends meet, to support their lavish lifestyle.

After Hyderabad was annexed with the Indian Republic, change was inevitable. But the change need not have resulted in the loss of the city's heritage. A Government, conscious of its heritage assets, would have saved at least some of the beautiful structures of the old city of Hyderabad. Such assets would have promoted heritage tourism and would have brought income to the exchequer, apart from preserving the pride of its people. Instead, the Government and its agencies resorted to road widening in the old city, thus destroying the centuries old culture and heritage in one stroke.

An insensitive Government, and an apathetic population stood by, while the city's heritage was systematically erased. Once beautiful deodis today house sundry ramshackle buildings and motor mechanic shops.

That is the story of every ancient city in India.

(The Deodis of Hyderabad - Rani Sarma 2008)

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Muse On Music

- Sri C.Sivasankaram

Music is heaven sent, not a product of the mind of perishable man. It is Veda. The lyricist sings through the mellifluous voice of S. Rajeswara Rao that the essence of samaveda is music and erudition. Sri Krishna says that he is samaveda of all Vedas. Music is the essence of the veda. The personality of godhead is revealed through the melodious rhythmic cadence of veda. In the process of divinizing of mundane man, the hand of music is unique. Music moves mountains. It is effective to mollify hearts of stone. It softens the coarse skins and educates them to see reason, to be humane and lead a kindly life.

When Sri Krishna sported the flute and many a gopika was charmed. It was irresistible for the daughters of plain nature to go against its invitation to the play of love. The flute emitted the music of love, music of ecstatic devotion. The love so emerged and the devotion so perfected had the sublime seal of eternity. Narada holds a musical instrument called Tambura. The definition of the name Narada is that Nara means Jnana (knowledge)

Da means giver i.e. the name Narada denotes giver of knowledge.

The Tambura heralds the visitation of the teacher of knowledge, meant to slake the thirst of spiritual have nots. The tambura enunciates by its sonorous music the knowledge of the spirit in its myriad modes that can painlessly penetrate the persona of the devotee.

Sri Krishna's flute transmits music to produce love and an earnest thirst of uplift of all. It reaches the cattle grazing in the pasture, the infant in the lap of its young mother, the snake in its anthill and they sway by it. Music helps induce the barren tree to sprout, to bear buds and bloom. Music cures ills of the body, mends morbid minds and wounded hearts. Music catapults man to horizons beyond clouds where he earthly lies broken plays with capricious clouds catch and run sport. As mind untied as it is from knots earthly he ponders, muses, meditates, contemplates and consequently he obtains a bunch of eternal truths. Music has no caste, no creed and no country. The religion of music is humanity and its language is to arrange fusion of finite with the infinite; to transform ephemeral into eternal the fleeting into

everlasting. Reality of humanity is revealed through the mystic power of music. Beethoven of Germany, Yehudi Menuhin of America, Ravi Shankar of Benares, M.S. Subbulakshmi of south India and Venkataswami Naidu of Andhra, to cite a few are ageless friends of mankind, weavers of ties of fraternity, builders of bridges of unity. Oneness of mankind is being palpably guarded by music.

We are living in a strife ridden, war-torn terror stricken terrible world. It has become so sensitive that a foolish whim of a warlord may spark off a world conflagration. If the men at the helm of affairs sit calmly lending a ear to music before they give vent to violence the result will not be catastrophic.

Gandhiji was accustomed to listening to Bhajans. Music's accent is on integrity of humanity, Counselling peace, tolerance, conciliation and amicability. The goddess of learning is known as Vinapani. Lute and the heart have a common message to deliver. Music is the medium for the delivery of the message.

Peace, Peace, Peace.....

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